

THE PERFECT VOICE



550 tonnes of 'nirmalya', 360 tonnes of solid waste ... pg 3



Howling tactic to capture elusive wolf ... pg 6



Sense of unity helped prevail in ACT final ... pg 10

Cabinet Accepts One Nation, One Election

If proposal implemented in 2029, 17 state assemblies will dissolve within three years

Only Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand, Odisha, AP, Arunachal and Sikkim can have same govt for five years



Voters stand in a queue to cast votes during the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, in Anantnag district on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

New Delhi: Moving ahead with its "one nation, one election" plan, the government on Wednesday accepted a high-level panel's recommendations for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner after a country-wide consensus-building exercise.

Asserting that several political parties are already on board, the government said even those parties that are opposed to it may now feel pressure from within to change their stand due to the widespread support on the issue from the people of

the country. Announcing the Union Cabinet's approval to the proposal, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said an implementation group would be formed to take forward the recommendations of the panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind and detailed discussions would be held on various fora across the country over the next few months.

Asked by reporters when the recommendations could be implemented and whether a bill would be brought in the upcoming winter session of Parliament,

State of the States

While the Lok Sabha polls were held in May-June this year, states like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh also went to polls along with the parliamentary election. The Assembly election process for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana is currently underway, while Maharashtra and Jharkhand are also scheduled to go to polls later this year.

Delhi and Bihar are among the states that are scheduled to go to polls in 2025. The terms of the current assemblies in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry will end in 2026, while the terms of the Goa, Gujarat, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand assemblies will end in 2027. The terms of the state assemblies in Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Telangana will end in 2028. The terms of the current Lok Sabha and the state assemblies that went to polls together this year will end in 2029.

Vaishnav evaded a direct reply but pointed out that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said the government would implement it in its current tenure.

After the discussions are completed, implementation would follow in steps and it would be the government's endeavour to build a consensus over the next few months, he said.

Once the consultation process is over, the government will draft a bill, place it before the cabinet and subsequently, take it to Parliament for simultaneous polls to come into effect, he added.

Separately, the Law Commission is also likely to come up soon with its own report on simultaneous polls, of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a strong votary.

Sources said the Law Commission is likely to recommend holding simultaneous polls for all three tiers of the government -- the Lok Sabha, state Assemblies and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats -- starting 2029 and a provision for a unity government in cases like a hung house.

30 – Poll expenditure can be reduced by at least 30 per cent

The high-level panel studied election processes in seven countries -- South Africa, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Indonesia and Philippines. Simultaneous polls were held in the country between 1951 and 1967. The concept of simultaneous elections has featured in many reports and studies since 1983, essentially implying a return to the previous practice of conducting polls concurrently.

The country had simultaneous elections between 1951 and 1967 but thereafter, polls started getting dispersed due to various reasons, including mid-term elections. Holding all polls simultaneously will require a lot of manoeuvring, including advancing some elections and delaying some others. -PTI

The top 10 recommendations

1. Must develop a legally tenable mechanism in order to restore the cycle of simultaneous elections.
2. In the first stage, elections for Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies can be held together.
3. In the second step, the elections to municipalities and panchayats will be synchronised with Lok Sabha and state assemblies in such a way that elections to municipalities and panchayats are held within 100 days.
4. The president shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the "appointed date".
5. The tenure of all state assemblies formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha, will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls. After this one-time transitory measure, all Lok Sabha and assembly polls will be held simultaneously.
6. Fresh elections could be held to constitute a new Lok Sabha in the event of a hung House or a no-confidence motion, or any such event.
7. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the tenure of the House will be "only for the unexpired (remaining) term of the immediately preceding full term of the House.
8. When fresh elections are held for state legislative assemblies, then such new assemblies -- unless sooner dissolved -- shall continue up to the end of the full term of Lok Sabha.
9. A single electoral roll and Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC) shall be prepared by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by ECI.
10. The ECI may draw up a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make other necessary arrangements.

At 59 pc, highest turnout in J-K assembly polls

Jammu: A turnout of about 59 percent -- the highest in the past seven elections -- was recorded in the first phase of assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, Chief Electoral Officer P.K. Pole said, adding polling passed off peacefully.

However, he said the figures are tentative and there might be a fractional increase after the final reports are received from the remote pockets and postal ballots.

The first phase of polls covered 24 seats across seven districts.

Pole said the elections ended peacefully without any untoward incident.

There are reports of some minor incidents of scuffle or argument from a few polling stations but "no serious incident" occurred that could have forced a re-poll, he said.

"The polling percentage of 59 percent is highest in the past seven elections."

Fresh explosions in Bairut kill 9; 300 wounded

Bairut: Lebanon's Health Ministry said at least 9 people were killed and 300 were injured by second wave of device explosions on Wednesday. Lebanon's official news agency reported that home solar energy systems exploded in several areas of Beirut. A Hezbollah official said walkie-talkies used by the group exploded as part of blasts heard across Beirut.

Multiple explosions occurred Wednesday at the site of a funeral for three Hezbollah members and a child killed by exploding pagers the day before, according to Associated Press journalists at the scene.

Hezbollah's Al Manar TV reported explosions in multiple areas of Lebanon, which it said were the result of walkie-talkies detonating.

The pagers used by Hezbollah that exploded in an apparent Israeli attack were made by a company



based in Hungary, another firm said Wednesday as details of the mysterious operation began to emerge.

The attack heightened the simmering conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that risks escalating into all-out war.

The death toll due to the explosions of pagers used by the militant group Hezbollah near-simultaneously a day earlier in Lebanon and Syria has reached to 12 including two children. Nearly 3,000 people wounded in this explosion. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a so-

phisticated remote attack.

An American official said Israel briefed the United States on Tuesday after the attack, in which small amounts of explosive hidden in the pagers were detonated. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the information publicly.

Hezbollah and Israeli forces have exchanged fire nearly daily since Oct 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led attack in southern Israel triggered a massive Israeli counteroffensive and the ongoing war in Gaza. Since then, hundreds have

been killed in the strikes in Lebanon and dozens in Israel, while tens of thousands have been displaced.

Tuesday's attack -- and the fact that Hezbollah blamed Israel -- renewed fears that the two foes could lead to all-out war. Despite periodic cycles of escalation, the two have carefully avoided that so far, but Israeli leaders have issued a series of warnings in recent weeks that they might escalate operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The attack in Lebanon started Tuesday afternoon, when pagers in their owners' hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding -- leaving blood-spattered scenes and panicking bystanders.

It appeared that most of those hit were members or linked to members of Hezbollah but it was not immediately clear if people with no ties to Hezbollah were also hit. -AP

Nine-year-old raped in front of younger sister

Nagpur: A nine-year-old girl was raped in front of her younger sister in Pardi area here, police said on Wednesday.

The accused, yet to be identified, offered the victim's five-year-old sister Rs 20 to stay silent.

The incident took place on Sunday afternoon when the two girls were alone at home as their parents, daily wagers, had gone to work, said an official.

The family had moved back to Nagpur three months ago from Gondia where they had been living for the past few years.

The crime came to light when the victim told her parents what had happened after they returned. They immediately went to the Pardi police station and the medical examination confirmed rape. As per the five-year-old's account, the attacker was a Marathi-speaking man with a 'tilak' on his forehead. Further probe is on.

Venus, Chandrayaan, Gaganyaan on agenda

New Delhi: The Union government on Wednesday approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission to bring back moon rocks to earth, to send a spacecraft to orbit planet Venus and to expand the Gaganyaan project to build an Indian space station.

The Cabinet approved to build a Next Generation Launch Vehicle capable of placing heavier payload in orbits, which could also be key to achieving the targets of setting up a space station and landing an Indian astronaut on the moon.

The government has allocated Rs 2,104 crore for the Chandrayaan-4 mission. "A natural successor to Chandrayaan-3 is the demonstration of the ability to collect lunar samples and return them safely back to Earth," ISRO Chairman S. Somnath said. The Chandrayaan-4 will involve multiple launches, and the premier space agency is set to perform a space docking experiment later this year.

Other Cabinet approvals

- Development of the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) which will be used for operating missions to the BAS and sending an astronaut on moon
- Expansion of the Gaganyaan programme to build the first Anatriksh Station
- Pradhan Mantri Janatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan to improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities
- Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE) scheme to support cutting-edge research and development in biotechnology
- Setting up the National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality

India seeks review of Indus Water Treaty

New Delhi: In a significant move, India has served a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a review of the 64-year-old Indus Water Treaty, citing "fundamental and unforeseen" changes in the circumstances and impact of persistent cross border terrorism.

The notice was issued to Pakistan on August 30 under Article XII(3) of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), government sources said on Wednesday.

India and Pakistan signed the IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of negotiations with a sole aim to manage cross-border rivers.

India's notification high-

lights fundamental and unforeseen changes in circumstances that require a reassessment of obligations under various articles of the



treaty, the sources said.

Among various concerns, the important ones include change in population demographics, environmental issues and the

need to accelerate development of clean energy to

meet India's emission targets, they said.

India also cited the impact of persistent cross border terrorism as one of the reasons for demanding

the review.

It was the second time in over one-and-half years that India issued a notice to Pakistan seeking

modification of the IWT. With this notification, India has called Pakistan to begin government-to-government negotiations in order to review the treaty under the provisions of

Article XII(3), the sources said.

In January last year, India issued the first notice to Pakistan seeking a review and modification of the treaty following Islamabad's "intransigence" in handling certain disputes.

New Delhi took the significant step months after the World Bank announced appointing a neutral expert and a chair of Court of Arbitration to resolve the differences over the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

The World Bank, being a signatory of the pact, sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two

sides on the use of waters of a number of cross-border rivers.

India issued the previous notice as it was particularly disappointed over the appointment of the Court of Arbitration.

New Delhi considers the start of the two concurrent processes to resolve the dispute a violation of the provision of the graded mechanism prescribed in the pact and wondered what will happen if the mechanisms come out with contradictory judgements.

India has not cooperated with the Court of Arbitration.

- PTI



The notification was issued in the background of a separate prolonged controversy with respect to Kishanganga and Ratle Hydro Projects," said a source on the latest notification. In this regard, the World Bank has simultaneously activated both the neutral expert mechanism and the Court of Arbitration on the same set of issues. The Indian side has, therefore, also called for reconsideration of the dispute resolution mechanism under the treaty.

BJP MP Anil Bonde booked over Rahul remarks

By Correspondent

Amravati: An FIR was registered against BJP's Rajya Sabha member Anil Bonde on the charge of intention to cause riots on Wednesday over his controversial remarks against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, police said.

Bonde has kicked up a row, saying Gandhi's tongue should be singed as his remarks on reservation were "dangerous" and hurt the feelings of the 'bahujan' and majority communities.

The FIR against Bonde followed a sit-in protest by Congress leaders, including Amravati MP Balwant Wankhede, MLA Yashomati Thakur, former Minister Sunil Deshmukh and the party workers at the office of the city police commissioner.

A case was registered against Bonde at Rajapeth police station in Amravati under sections 192 (Wantonly giving provocation



with intent to cause riots), 351 (ii) (the act of intentionally causing another person to apprehend the use of criminal force) and 356 (Punishment for defamation) against MP Anil Bonde.

"The language of chopping off the tongue is not proper, but what Rahul ji said against reservation is dangerous," Bonde said on Tuesday while reacting to remarks made by a Shiv Sena MLA against Rahul Gandhi.

"Hence, if anyone speaks anything absurd in a foreign country, then rather than chopping off his tongue, it should be singed. It is necessary to certainly singe the tongues of such people - be it Rahul Gandhi, Dnyanesh Maha-



rao or Shyam Manav and people who hurt the feelings of the 'bahujan' and majority," Bonde said.

Maharao, an author, is accused of making derogatory comments on Hindu deities recently, while Manav is an anti-superstition crusader.

Sanjay Gaikwad does it again

In yet another provocative statement, Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad has threatened to "bury any Congress dog" coming to his programme.

On Monday, the Buldhana legislator's announcement of a 'reward' for anyone chopping off Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tongue had set off a huge political row.

Talking to reporters on the same day, Gaikwad is heard saying in a video that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde - who heads the Shiv Sena - will attend a programme about the government's flagship 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana' for women in his district.

"If any Congress dog tries to enter my programme, I will bury them then and there," Gaikwad is heard saying.

The MLA had earlier announced a Rs 11 lakh reward to anyone who "chops off" Rahul Gandhi's tongue for his remarks on scrapping the reservation system.

"I have made the statement. If I have not apologized, why should the CM do so?...Of 140 crore people in the country, 50 per cent of the population gets reservation. And I am firm on the statement I made about the person who spoke about removing reservation," Gaikwad said.

Three children killed as tractor knocks them

Mumbai: Three children were killed and six people were injured after a tractor carrying a Ganesh idol knocked them down in Dhule district on Tuesday.

The accident took place around 12.30 pm at the Chitod village in the Dhule tehsil where the Ganesh immersion procession was about to start. An officer said that the tractor's regular driver had got down for some work and another member of the Ganesh mandal, which had organised the procession, climbed into the driver's seat and started the vehicle.

The police said he lost control, causing the tractor to move in the reverse direction at high speed and plow into the crowd behind. The deceased were identified as Pari Shantaram Bagul, 13; Shera Babu Sonawane, 6; and Lahu Pawra, 3. One of them was the niece of the man who started the vehicle, the police said.

The man in the driver's seat fled from the spot, but the police detained him.

Athawale blames Ajit Pawar for no cabinet berth



By Correspondent

Palghar: Union minister Ramdas Athawale has claimed that due to the inclusion of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP in the Mahayuti government, his party RPI (A) did not get any ministerial berth in the state despite a promise.

He also expressed confidence that the ruling Mahayuti will secure 150 to 160 seats in the upcoming elections to the 288-member state assembly.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was talking to reporters at Dahanu in the district on Tuesday.

"RPI (A) did not get any ministerial position

in the Maharashtra cabinet after Ajit Pawar joined the Mahayuti government. Our party had been promised cabinet positions, chairmanship of two corporations, and roles in district-level committees. But all this could not happen due to Pawar's inclusion," Athawale said.

"For the upcoming Maharashtra elections, the RPI (A) should be given 12 seats to contest. We should also be given representation in the state cabinet," he said.

Ajit Pawar-led NCP joined the Eknath Shinde-led government in the state in July last year.

The RPI (A) is part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) alliance led by the BJP.

Prison doctor asked for money, claims accused

Mumbai: An accused in the firing incident outside Bollywood actor Salman Khan's residence on Wednesday alleged that a prison doctor asked for money to treat his fractured finger.

Harpal Singh, arrested for his alleged role in the April incident, made the allegation before judge B D Shelke when he was produced before the special court for Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act (MCOCA) here through video link.

Salman Khan residence firing

The court directed the chief medical officer (CMO) of Talaja jail, where Singh is lodged, to submit a report, and also asked the jail authorities to provide necessary treatment to the accused.

Two motorcycle-borne men fired five rounds outside Galaxy Apartments in Bandra, Salman Khan's residence, in the early hours of April 14.

Police, who claimed that the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was behind the attack, have arrested six people in the case so far.

Singh told the court on Wednesday that the ring finger of his right hand had a fracture for the past eight months.

The CMO demanded Rs 10,000 for referring him to a "higher center" (hospital), he alleged.

The court has asked for report by October 7.

Mohammad Chaudhary, another accused in the case, told the court that he had infection in the right leg. The court directed the CMO to provide medical treatment to him.

Bodies of couple, daughter found

Nashik: The bodies of a man, his wife and their 10-year-old daughter were found in their home in Nashik city, with police suspecting that the couple died by suicide after killing the child.

The bodies of Vijay Manikrao Sahane (41), his wife Dnyaneshwari Vijay Sahane (32) and their daughter Ananya Vijay Sahane were found in their residence at Gangadeep Row House, Saraf Nagar,

on Tuesday.

According to Vijay's father, nobody responded when he returned home after finishing some work in the evening. His neighbours then called the police, who forced open the main door. While Vijay and Dnyaneshwari were found hanging from ceiling fans, Ananya's body was also found. It seems that the couple committed suicide after strangling their child.

Malik's son-in-law injured

Mumbai: NCP MLA Nawab Malik's son-in-law Sameer Khan sustained injuries after his car met an accident in Kurla. Khan is undergoing treatment.

The incident occurred when Malik's daughter and Khan were returning after a routine check-up at a hospital. "When they were getting into the car, the car driver accidentally pressed down the accelerator, and the car hit a wall.

Uddhav Sena planned to sell ticket, claims MLA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: In a sharp attack on Uddhav Thackeray, ruling Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Bornare has claimed a plan was devised to seek money for fielding a candidate on the undivided Shiv Sena's ticket in the Vaijapur constituency during the 2019 assembly polls.

Bornare said had Bal Thackeray been alive he would have hung Uddhav Thackeray upside down

for allying with Congress. Shiv Sena (UBT) has not yet responded to Bornare's allegations.

Bornare's comments come days after Thackeray slammed "traitors", without naming Bornare, for betraying undivided Shiv Sena and aligning with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"A person who worked as the chief minister of Maharashtra for two-and-a-half years (Uddhav

Thackeray) has lost his mental balance. Perhaps the only thing he did was allot a ticket to a Shivsainik like me. But many things happened while giving this candidature," said Bornare.

A video of Bornare ranting against Thackeray has gone viral. "A plan was made to sell the ticket to a person from the Vaijapur assembly constituency in exchange for money," Bornare claimed.

Bornare, who was with undivided Shiv Sena earlier, had defeated Abhay Kailasrao Patil of NCP (undivided) in 2019 from the Vaijapur assembly seat in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district. He also accused Thackeray of using intemperate language against him.

"The individual says I would have been strung upside down. This is the language used by a former chief minister.

CRIME WATCH

Body of man found in abandoned godown

Thane: The body of a man was found in an abandoned godown at Panvel in Maharashtra's Raigad district, police said on Wednesday. It was found on Tuesday afternoon, they said. "A passerby noticed the body in the godown opposite a church located near the Panvel railway station. After being alerted, a police team went to the spot and sent the body for post-mortem," an official of Panvel Town police station said. As per the initial probe, the victim was strangled to death. He is yet to be identified, he added.

Three injured as rivals clash

Thane: Three persons were injured after two rival groups clashed over a land dispute in Bhiwandi taluka of Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Wednesday. The incident occurred in Sontikli Naka late last night, and the police arrested 10 persons in this connection, inspector B N Kumbhar of Padgha police station said. "Two rival groups clashed over an old land dispute. While two persons were injured after being attacked by members of a group, another one was hurt in firing," he said. The police arrested seven persons belonging to one group and three from another camp, he said, adding that two cases of rioting, assault and others were registered based on the cross-complaints lodged by the two sides, he said.

Juvenile booked over intimate photos

Thane: The Navi Mumbai police have registered a case against a 17-year-old boy for allegedly befriending a 15-year-old girl and persuading her to share her intimate photos and videos, an official said on Wednesday. The two minors had met on Instagram. Since August end, he allegedly made the girl share her private photos and videos, the official said. After learning about the visuals, the girl's mother filed a police complaint. The Panvel Taluka police on Tuesday registered a case against the juvenile under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 45 (abetment of a thing), 77 (voyeurism) and also under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the official added.



Muslims at an Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi procession in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday.

Pic:PTI

SC's no to plea for curbing noise pollution

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a plea for curbing noise pollution and unregulated use of laser beams during festivals in Maharashtra.

While rejecting the petition, the top court noted festivals like 'Ganapati puja' are over in the state and, moreover, the Bombay High Court has already permitted filing of representations to the officials concerned in cases of violation of the judgement on the issue.

On Tuesday, a bench comprising Chief Justice D. Y. Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was hearing a plea filed by 'Akhil Bhartiya Grahak Panchayat' seeking directions to regulate use of laser beams and loudspeakers at public functions including religious festivals.

Ranade gets support from Congress

New Delhi: Days after noted economist Ajit Ranade was removed as vice chancellor of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, the Congress on Wednesday said it was a sad commentary on how institutional decay is taking place in an increasingly illiberal atmosphere.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said in February 2022, Ranade was appointed as Vice Chancellor of the prestigious Pune-based institute and this selection was widely acclaimed.

"In September 2024, he gets sacked on the grounds that he does not have 10 years teaching experience as per UGC rules. Isn't this strange? Surely, this information was available to the appointing authorities two years back," Ramesh said in a post on X.

Ranade is a highly educated and accomplished



personality with degrees in engineering from IIT-Mumbai, in management from IIM-Ahmedabad, and a doctorate in economics from Brown University.

These academic credentials cannot be bettered and he also has published a number of well-cited research papers and a long experience in the corporate sector, Ramesh pointed out.

He has been associated with academic institutions much before February 2022 as well, he added. All through, he has always maintained his professional independence and integrity, Ramesh asserted.

"Clearly there is more

to this than meets the eye. Whatever it is, it is a sad commentary on how institutional decay is taking place in an increasingly illiberal atmosphere," the Congress general secretary said.

Ranade was on Saturday removed as the vice chancellor of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) after the institute found that his appointment violated the UGC norms. The institute, a deemed university, had set up a fact-finding committee to examine the issue after Ranade's appointment was called into question.

A letter by the institute to Ranade stated that the committee was of the opinion that his candidature "does not conform to the established norms set forth by the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines," and hence he was being removed.

Two groups clash over immersion

Thane: Stones were pelted after two groups wanting to immerse their respective Ganesh idols first clashed in Thane district, prompting police intervention, an official said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred around 12.30 am in the Bhiwandi area, said Joint Commissioner of Police Dnyaneshwar Chavan.

"As a large crowd gathered at Vanzarpatti Naka amid the clash, police officials were deployed to diffuse the tension and maintain law and order," he said.

Videos of the confrontation, showing stone-pelting, and police response, have surfaced on social media.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is given that MR. K. MALLIKARJUN & MRS. VISHALA S. KALYANSHETTI were owner of the Flat No. A/401, on the Fourth Floor, building known as "SAMRAT MILLENNIUM PARADISE, situated at Village Bolinj, Tal Vasai, Dist Palghar. MR. K. MALLIKARJUN expired on 04/12/2013 and after the death of aforesaid deceased, DAKSHA MALLIKARJUN KALYANSHETTI (wife) & VISHALA S. KALYANSHETTI (mother) are legal heirs of the aforesaid deceased.

By an Agreement for Re-sale dated 24/08/2015 VISHALA S. KALYANSHETTI has sold the aforesaid flat to DAKSHA MALLIKARJUN KALYANSHETTI, therefore, Daksha Mallikarjun Kalyanshetti is sole owner of the aforesaid flat, therefore, if any other persons or legal heirs are having any right, title, claim and interest against aforesaid Flat then they can take the objection within 14 days from the date of this Public Notice in the office of R.T. PATHAK, Advocate, at 111, Kapadia House, Gaothan Rd., Virar(W), Tal: Vasai, Dist: Palghar with all relevant document.

R. T. PATHAK
Advocate
Date: 19/09/2024

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

I, Akshay Vijay Goynale, do hereby give authority to Advocate Sanket Gadagi to publish paper notice in respect of land situated at Village-Bhigaon budruk, Bearing survey no. 112 Hissa no. 1/3 Taluka-Vasai, District - Palghar. I state all the information for publication is given by me to the best of my knowledge. We start this place bungalow work anyone any type objection please contact my advocate- 9096470641.
DATE - 19-09-2024

SD/-
Sanket Gadagi

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that my clients MRS. ASHA BABUL PRAJAPATI AND MR. BABUL UNAJI PRAJAPATI have purchased Flat No. B/204, Magnum CHS Ltd., situated at Gokul Township, Village: Bolinj, Agashi Road, Virar (West) Tal-Vasai, Dist-Palghar, Pin - 401303 from MR. NARAYANLAL CHHOGALAL CHHIPA. Any person having any objection to sale or claiming any right, title or interest in said Flat by way of sale, exchange, gift, mortgage, charge, trust, possession, inheritance, lease, lien, attachment or any other right whatsoever. The same may be made known in writing to me at Shop No.23, Shree Vrindavan CHS Ltd., B/H Woodland Cinema, Virar (W), Tal-Vasai, Dist-Palghar, Pin 401 303 within 15 days from the date of issue of this notice, failing which society shall proceed to change the name as per rules & regulation.
Place: Virar
Date: 19.09.2024

(V.S.RIDDHI)
(ADVOCATE)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public that HARISHCHANDRA JAGANNATH POWALE proprietor of MAHENDRA TEXTILE STORES CO., was an owners of the Industrial Gala Nos. A-2, & A-5, Ground Floor, NEW SHASTRI IND. PREMISES CO-OP. SOC. LTD., Village Khari, Bhayander (E), Tal. & Dist. Thane, 401105. He expired on dtd. 01/09/1989. His wife TARAMATI H. POWLE expired on dtd. 31/12/2011. His son MAHENDRA H. POWLE expired on dtd. 27/08/1989. His son SUNIL H. POWLE expired on dtd. 09/09/2000. His son NARENDH H. POWLE expired on dtd. 25/06/2022. His Daughter in law LEENA N. POWLE expired on dtd. 01/07/2024. Now there is VANDANA H. POWLE, SWATI H. POWLE Daughters & SMITA SUNIL POWALE Daughter in law as legal heirs. They have asked me to issue no claim certificate. So, any person having any claim, right, title on the above referred Industrial galas or having any objection for issuing no claim certificate to them then please write to the undersigned within 14 days from the publication of this notice, failing which no claim certificate will be given to them which please be noted.

JOHN M. RODRICKS
ADVOCATE
Office No. 2, First Floor,
New Shanti Ganga Apt.,
Opp. Bhayander Rly. Stn.,
Bhayander (E) 401105
Legal heirs

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Rahul Gandhi should also talk carefully and not give anti-India statements. Jawaharlal Nehru had opposed reservation given by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to SC/ST communities. Similarly, Rajiv Gandhi had also opposed reservation."
- Chandrashekar Bawankule, Chief, Maharashtra BJP



-PTI

-PTI

Ganesh immersion sites

550 tonnes of 'nirmalya', 360 tonnes of solid waste

By Correspondent

Mumbai: As the 10-day Ganesh festival concluded, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has cleared more than 900 tonnes of 'nirmalya' (floral and other offerings) and solid waste from immersion sites across the city.

The BMC said in a release on Wednesday that it launched a cleanliness drive at all beaches, lakes and artificial water bodies created for immersion of Ganapati idols to make the spots available to citizens who go there for morning walks.

As many as 7,000 civic employees, school and college students and volunteers from NGOs collected 363 metric tonnes of solid waste, including wrappers and bottles, it said.

Over the past two days, the release said, 550 metric tonnes of nirmalya were collected from the Ganapati idol immersion sites. These offerings would be composted, which will take about a month and a half, it said.

Over 10 days, thousands of idols were immersed across the city in 204 artificial ponds and 69 natural water bodies, including lakes and the ones off the beaches.

The artificial ponds were created as part of BMC's efforts to encourage citizens to celebrate the Ganesh festival in an eco-friendly manner, the release said.

BMC said it had provided 500 'nirmalya kalash' (containers) and pressed over 6,000 people and 350 vehicles for the collection and



transportation of these offerings.

Meanwhile, the civic body's licence department pulled down 14,370 banners, boards, makeshift gates and placards that had been put up during or ahead of the festival across the city. The operation started around 12.30 am on Wednesday and continued for about 18 hours, it said.

According to the release, these included 7,715 regular and 807 political banners.

Over 37,000 Ganesh idols immersed in Mumbai

More than 37,000 idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Gauri were immersed in water bodies across Mumbai by Wednesday morning as devotees bade farewell to their favourite elephant-headed deity with the conclusion of the festival, officials said.

The immersion processions, which began on Tuesday morning on the last day of the Ganesh festival, con-

tinued smoothly throughout the night, with devotees thronging the city's beaches, lakes and artificial ponds for immersion of the idols.

The idol of Lalbaugcha Raja Ganesh - which like every year drew lakhs of devotees - was immersed into the Arabian Sea off the Girgaon beach in south Mumbai around 10.30 am. Thousands of devotees made a beeline to catch the last glimpse of the deity. Chinchpokliha Chintamani, another famous Ganesh mandal from Lalbaug and idols of few other groups were also brought to the beach for immersion.

Immersion took place at artificial ponds as well as Girgaon, Dadar, Juhu, Marve and Aksha beaches, among other spots in the megapolis.

"By 6 am on Wednesday, a total of 37,064 idols of Lord Ganesh and Gauri were immersed in various

water bodies across Mumbai. These include 5,762 idols of 'sarvajani' (community groups). Of the total, 11,713 idols were immersed in the artificial ponds set up across the city," a civic official said.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had made elaborate arrangements for the immersion by deploying thousands of personnel, lifeguards and emergency services to ensure that the processions pass off smoothly and safely.

The festival began on September 7 and culminated on September 17.

More than 24,000 police personnel were deployed on Mumbai streets for security and crowd management.

The State Reserve Police Force, Quick Response Teams, Riot Control Police, Home Guards and Maharashtra Security Force have also been roped in, officials said.

Bid adieu to Lord Ganesh



TISS lifts ban on PSF

Mumbai: The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has withdrawn the ban imposed on Progressive Students Forum (PSF), a Left-leaning students' group active on campus. It has also modified the Honour Code for 2024-25 academic year, which included strict actions if students held political activities, participated in demonstrations which are "anti-establishment" and told them to keep away from "unpatriotic discussions".

The TISS banned PSF on August 19 for "misleading students" and "defaming institute". However, on August 24, it declared that the ban will be reviewed.

An office order issued by the officiating registrar on Monday informing about the status of the review, stated, "The same has been reviewed by the competent Authority of the institute and after detailed deliberations, it has been decided to withdraw the said order with immediate effect."

The undertaking that students have to sign, under the heading of disciplinary action, now states, "I acknowledge that TISS reserves the right to take disciplinary action against me for violation of its rules.

Both Senas confront each other over simultaneous polls

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Wednesday ridiculed the Centre for approving the proposal for 'one nation, one election', jibing that it could not hold voting in Maharashtra and Haryana together but intends to conduct simultaneous polls.

Sena (UBT) spokesperson and MP Arvind Sawant wondered whether 'one nation, one election' was a priority of the government when there were more pressing issues like unemployment, inflation, crimes against women and farmers' woes.

His party colleague and former Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray termed the move a "joke" and called it a ploy to extend the deadline for all pending polls for the next five years.

Sawant said, "The government should get an award for being bogus and cunning. You could not schedule the Maharashtra and Haryana polls together. You could not hold Mumbai civic body polls. Can't people see through this plan?"

Usually, the Maharashtra and Haryana elections are held around the same time. However, the Haryana and



Jammu and Kashmir elections have been scheduled together this time. The first phase of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls is being held on Wednesday.

Sawant said the government has lost the ground beneath its feet after the BJP, which won 240 seats in the Lok Sabha polls, could not get a majority on its own.

He accused the BJP of playing with democracy

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal for 'one nation, one election' as recommended by a panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind.

The high-level committee had recommended simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.



Aaditya Thackeray claimed the Centre is talking of 'one nation, one election' to extend the deadline for all pending polls for the next five years.

Thackeray dubbed the 'one nation, one election' proposal a "joke" saying the Centre cannot even hold simultaneous polls in four states. Polls for Jammu Kashmir and Haryana were announced but what about Maharashtra and Jharkhand, he asked.

In Maharashtra, civic body polls have been pending for over two years and the BJP is scared of holding the elections, Thackeray said.

Shiv Sena backs proposal

The BJP ally Shiv Sena on Wednesday welcomed the Union Government's decision to accept a high-level panel's recommendations for holding simultaneous

polls.

Party MP Shrikant Shinde, son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, said in a statement that besides reducing expenditure, the measure will foster national unity by synchronizing the election process.

"The initiative is expected to bring down enormous election-related costs and avoid the policy paralysis that occurs when various elections overlap. By holding simultaneous elections, the nation can focus on its long-term goals of economic and social development, ensuring that governance remains effective throughout elected terms," he said.

The Shiv Sena had declared its support in January when consultations began for simultaneous polls.

Shinde further described the proposed reform as forward-thinking, "a game-changer for the country's democratic structure, ensuring that governance is not compromised by the demands of frequent elections."

It will enhance the quality of decision-making and provide much-needed political stability, the MP from Kalyan said.

Loudspeakers harmful for Eid too: HC

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court said on Wednesday that if the use of loudspeakers and sound systems beyond permissible noise levels was harmful during the Ganesh festival then it also has the same effect during the Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi processions.

A division bench of Chief Justice D.K. Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar made the remark while hearing a bunch of public interest litigations (PILs) seeking a ban on the use of "DJs", "dance" and "laser lights" during the Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi processions.

The petitions urged HC to direct the civic bodies and police to refrain from granting permission for the use of such high-decibel sound systems.

The PILs claimed that neither the Quran nor the Hadith (holy books) prescribes the use of DJ systems and laser lights for the celebration. The bench referred to an order passed by it last month just before the Ganesh festival wherein it emphasised the ban on the use of sound systems and loudspeakers emitting noise levels beyond the permissible limits specified under the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, during festivals.

Railway official loses Rs 9 lakh to fraudsters

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A railway official here lost Rs 9 lakh to cyber fraudsters posing as CBI officers, who told him that he was involved in a money laundering case and then produced him before a "judge" via video call, police said.

The incident occurred on Monday and the victim was kept on a video call by the fraudsters for around 20 hours, an official said.

The 59-year-old victim works as Principal Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction) at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and stays at Colaba.

"On September 16 morning, the victim received a voice-recorded message on his mobile phone. It said his mobile phone will be blocked within two hours and for any queries he should dial '0' from his number. Accordingly, the victim pressed '0', following which a video call got activated," he said.

The caller introduced himself as a CBI officer and said he wanted to investigate the railway official in a money laundering case as his mobile number was linked to one bank account which



was used in the scam, he said.

The victim told the caller that he does not have any connection with any case and he does not have a second mobile number, the official said.

"The caller then told him that a mobile number was registered in his name and that was linked to a bank account used for the Rs 5.8 million money laundering case and there are 247 accounts, which are linked with one Naresh Goyal," he added. The victim went to his office for work. But the callers asked him to return home stating that CBI officers wanted to investigate him in the case. Accordingly, the victim went home, following which a video call was activated at 2 pm. "During this time, the fraudsters obtained all the details about the railway official's family background, his finance and property details from him.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"People from Delhi, Lucknow and Maharashtra are speaking the same language that he (Rahul Gandhi) will meet the same fate as that of his grandmother as well as his father. The Home Minister and Prime Minister are not taking action means they are with the people who make such remarks."

- Sanjay Raut, MP, Shiv Sena



State's first semiconductor manufacturing launched

Thane: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday inaugurated Maharashtra's first semiconductor manufacturing facility, which he described as a revolutionary step.

Addressing attendees at the project site in Navi Mumbai, Shinde said Maharashtra is an industry-friendly state, and emphasised the importance of semiconductor chips in everyday life.

This cutting-edge semiconductor project is being developed at Mahape by RRP Electronics in two

phases.

Shinde said investments exceeding Rs 36,000 crore have been secured by the semiconductor unit and products manufactured in this unit are expected to hit the markets as early as 2026.

"Industries do not come or go in one day," Shinde said in a veiled attack on the opposition parties that had claimed flight of industries from Maharashtra under the Mahayuti government.

He alleged the lack of support and cooperation from previous administrations forced industries to



look outside Maharashtra.

The Chief Minister said this semiconductor unit would play a pivotal role in enhancing Maharashtra's technological capabilities and hailed the importance of semiconductor chips, describing them as essential

components in modern life.

Claiming the successful implementation of the "Ladki Bahin" scheme, Shinde said along with industrial growth, infrastructure development is progressing simultaneously. "The rate of execution of

MoUs signed (at Davos meet) is over 70 per cent," the chief minister said, adding that Maharashtra has become an industry-friendly state where employment opportunities are expected to grow with the entry of new industries.

"The state government is committed to creating a conducive environment for businesses. We have decided to roll out the red carpet for industrialists by providing subsidies and single-window clearances," he said.

Citing a Niti Aayog report on the Mumbai Metropol-

itan Region's potential to contribute to the Indian economy, Shinde said Maharashtra is the growth engine of the country.

He said the semiconductor sector is integral to various initiatives launched by the government, including the recent crediting of money into the accounts of beneficiaries under the "Mukhyamantri Mazi Ladki Bahin" scheme.

Shinde hailed cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and Padma Vibhushan Anil Kakodkar for supporting the semiconductor initiative.

Rs 24,475 cr subsidy on P&K fertilisers



New Delhi: The government on Wednesday approved Rs 24,475.53 crore subsidy on phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers for the rabi season of 2024-25 to ensure supply of crop nutrients to farmers at affordable rates.

The Union Cabinet, has approved the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for rabi season 2024 (from October 2024 to March 2025) on P&K fertilisers. "The tentative budgetary requirement for rabi season 2024 would be approximately Rs 24,475.53 crore," an official statement said.

The decision is aimed at ensuring the availability of fertilizers to farmers at subsidized, affordable and reasonable prices.

The government is making available 28 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices through

fertilizer manufacturers/importers.

The subsidy on P&K fertilizers is governed by the NBS scheme with effect from April 1, 2010.

"In view of the recent trends in the international prices of fertilizers & inputs i.e. urea, DAP, MOP and sulphur, government has decided to approve the NBS rates for Rabi 2024 on P&K fertilizers." The subsidy would be provided to the fertilizer companies as per approved and notified rates of N (nitrogen), P (phosphorus) and K (potash) so that fertilizers are made available to farmers at affordable prices.

Continuation of PM-AASHA

The government has approved continuation of the PM-AASHA scheme, with an outlay of Rs 35,000 crore,

to provide better prices to farmers and also control price volatility of essential commodities for consumers.

The total financial outgo will be Rs 35,000 crore during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle up to 2025-26. The government has converged the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) schemes in PM-AASHA to serve the farmers and consumers more efficiently.

"The Integrated scheme of PM-AASHA will bring in more effectiveness in the implementation which would not only help in providing remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce but also control the price volatility of essential commodities by ensuring their availability at affordable prices to consumers."

-PTI

IGREL Renewables raises Rs 300 cr

New Delhi: INOXGFL Group on Wednesday announced that its renewable power generation platform IGREL Renewables Ltd has raised Rs 300 crore.

The funding round witnessed participation from marquee investors, including Akash Bhansali, Rohit Kothari, and Madhusudan Kela, through their respective entities, a company statement said.

INOXGFL Group, one of India's leading business groups, announced today that its privately held renewable power generation platform, IGREL Renewables Ltd, has raised Rs 300 crore equity capital, eventually resulting into a single digit dilution, the statement said. IGREL Renewables aims to reach an installed capacity of 2 GW (combination of wind and solar) by FY27 at a cumulative capex of ~ Rs 12,000 crore. IGREL has already placed firm orders for 200 MW and has signed additional 550 MW LoI (letter of intent) with Inox Wind today for wind capacities to be executed on turnkey basis.

Further, for its solar capacity development, IGREL has given multiple LoIs to leading solar EPC companies with plans to place additional orders in the near future. The company has already signed power purchase agreements (PPA), received LoIs from group companies and other large customers for more than 600 MW capacity.

Devansh Jain, Executive Director of INOXGFL Group, said in the statement, "I thank all our investors for their belief in IGREL."

-PTI



Australian Space Agency stall at the Bengaluru Space Expo 2024 in Bengaluru, Karnataka on Wednesday.

Pic:PTI

EaseMyTrip makes entry in medical tourism industry

Mumbai : On Tuesday, EaseMyTrip.com revealed its plans to expand its business by acquiring 49 percent of Pflge Home Healthcare and 30 percent of Rollins International. This move signifies its strategic entry into the booming field of medical tourism.

These deals are in line with EaseMyTrip's goal to provide comprehensive travel solutions by incorporating wellness and healthcare services into its offerings, as the company mentioned in a press release. Pflge Home Healthcare is a leading provider of in-home healthcare services based in Dubai. Rollins International operates in India. "As the demand for accessible and high-quality healthcare services continues to rise, acquiring these companies was essential to cater to the changing needs of travelers in search of wellness and medical services," says Nishant Pitti, the CEO and co-founder of EaseMyTrip.

Cash still rules with small towns

By Kailash Rajwadkar

Mumbai: India's digital payment constitutes around 69 percent of the total transaction volumes for the domestic merchants as per a survey conducted by Kearney and Amazon Pay.

However, primary research indicates that cash is still the preferred payment method across various segments, especially among the aspiring segment of consumers who earn less than Rs 500,000 per annum from small town residents,

and Gen Z consumers.

This online and offline survey was conducted with over 6,000 consumers along with over 1,000 merchants, across 120 cities, with representation from various regions, income groups, city categories, age brackets, and genders.

This report introduces the Degree of Digital Payment Usage (DDPU), a metric designed to measure the extent of digital payment adoption among various demographic groups, based on volume, variety and

openness. The survey indicates that income level is the most influential factor affecting digital payment usage.

The reasons for using digital payments vary widely. A comprehensive analysis combining various demographics uncovers the presence of distinct consumer archetypes, each with varying degrees of digital payment usage. For instance, high-income individuals in the top metros have the highest DDPU scores, while low-income

women in small towns have the lowest.

Within digital modes of payment beyond UPI, digital wallets and credit cards are more popular among consumers from upper middle class and affluent income segments than in other segments.

However, the next wave of growth in digital payments will be fuelled by increasing penetration in segments with lower DDPU, such as consumers in lower income groups and smaller towns.

Amit Shah to launch White Revolution 2.0

New Delhi: Cooperation Minister Amit Shah will on Thursday launch three key initiatives, including White Revolution 2.0, to transform the dairy sector.

Besides White Revolution 2.0, the other two initiatives are distribution of Micro-ATMs and Rupay-Kisan Credit Cards to dairy farmers, aimed at enhancing their financial access.

The White Revolution 2.0 targets 50 per cent increase in milk procurement by dairy cooperative societies over the next five years.

"We aim to provide access to dairy farmers in uncovered villages and panchayats, increasing the organized sector's share in milk procurement," a senior cooperation ministry official said.

The plan involves setting up and strengthening 1,00,000 existing district cooperative societies, multi-purpose district cooperative societies, and Multi-purpose Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (M-PACS). These will be linked to milk routes, with necessary infrastructure provided.

Initially, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) will fund the initiative

from its own resources, providing Rs 40,000 per M-PACS to 1,000 M-PACS. Future funding is expected from the proposed National Programme for Dairy Development 2.0.

The second initiative, 'Cooperation among Cooperatives', will provide interest-free cash credit to dairy farmers through Rupay-Kisan Credit Cards. "This will offer substantial savings to farmers who currently borrow at 24 per cent interest rates," the official explained.

Additionally, Micro-ATMs will be distributed to dairy cooperative societies, turning them into bank-mitras for District Credit Cooperative Banks. This move aims to bring banking services to farmers' doorsteps and keep cooperative funds within the sector.

The ministry has also planned the computerization of 67,930 PACS, potentially benefiting about 13 crore farmers. An action plan to form one lakh new multipurpose PACS, dairy and fisheries cooperative societies across all gram panchayats in the next five years has been chalked out.

-PTI



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with a child during the launch of NPS Vatsalya Scheme in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Pic:PTI

Faster immigration clearance at seven more airports

New Delhi: A special programme to fast-track the immigration process for pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders will soon be rolled out in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and four other major airports in the country, officials said on Wednesday.

The Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP) was first launched at Delhi's IGI Airport on June 22. So far, 18,400 people (Indians and OCI card holders) have registered themselves for the

service.

Work is in progress to start the FTI-TTP in seven more major airports - Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Cochin and Ahmedabad - the official said, listing the initiatives taken by the Union home ministry in the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government. The programme ensures faster immigration clearance and so far, 1,500 passengers have been granted the clearance through e-gates in Delhi.

The officials said that the FTI-TTP aims to facilitate

international mobility with faster, smoother, and more secure immigration clearance. In the initial phase, it has been started for Indian nationals and OCI card holders on a gratis basis, they said.

The FTI-TTP is similar to the Global Entry Program offered by the United States that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travellers upon arrival in America at select airports, another official said. The FTI-TTP will eventually be launched at 21 major airports in the country.

-PTI

Google wins court challenge in five year old EU digital ad case

London: Google won a court challenge on Wednesday against a 1.49 billion euro European Union antitrust fine imposed five years ago that targeted its online advertising business.

The European Union's General Court said it was throwing out the 2019 penalty imposed by the European Commission, which is the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer.

"The General Court annuls the Commission's decision in its entirety," it said in a press release. The commission's ruling applied to a narrow portion of Google's ad business: ads that the US tech giant sold next to Google search results on third-party websites.

Regulators had found that Google inserted exclusivity clauses in its con-

tracts that barred these websites from running similarly placed ads sold by Google's rivals.

The commission, the bloc's top antitrust enforcer, said when it issued the penalty that Google's behaviour resulted in advertisers and website owners having less choice and likely facing higher prices that would be passed on to consumers.

-AP

Godrej Capital in housing loan

New Delhi: Godrej Capital, the financial services arm of the Godrej Group, is gearing up to enter the affordable housing loan segment by December, with plans to grow its assets under management (AUM) to Rs 17,000 crore by the end of the current financial year, its Managing Director Manish Shah said on Wednesday.

-PTI

Windfall tax on crude petroleum slashed to zero

New Delhi: The government has slashed windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to 'nil' per tonne with effect from September 18.

The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) and is notified fortnightly based on average oil prices in two weeks.

The last such revision took place effective August 31 when the windfall tax on

crude petroleum was set at Rs 1,850 per tonne.

The SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from September 18, an official notification said on Tuesday.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies.

-PTI

BSE SENSEX		TOP LOSERS		BSE SENSEX		TOP GAINERS		
September 18, 2024		September 18, 2024		September 18, 2024		September 18, 2024		
%	POINTS	%	POINTS	%	POINTS	%	POINTS	
-3.49	TCS	4346.60	+3.65	Bajaj Finance	7632.25	-3.15	HCL Tech	1755.65
-2.15	Infosys	1892.35	+2.31	Bajaj Finserv	1887.50	-3.09	Tech Mahindra	1605.35
-2.79	Sun Pharma	1832.50	+1.61	Nestle India	2586.80	-1.79	Tata Steel	150.60
-1.44	Tata Motors	962.40	+1.55	ICICI Bank	1288.05	-1.44	Titan	3723.65
-1.29	Asian Paints	3274.20	+1.54	HDFC Bank	1694.35	-1.29	JSW Steel	955.60
-0.85			+1.19	SBIN	792.35			
			+0.99	LT	3729.65			
			+0.83	IndusInd Bank	1479.60			
			+0.64	M&M	2806.00			
			+0.57	Axis Bank	1238.35			

Deepika's company buys luxury Bandra Apartment

By Correspondent

Mumbai: KA Enterprises LLP, a firm owned by Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone and her father Prakash Padukone, has recently made a significant real estate investment, purchasing a luxury apartment in Mumbai's Bandra West locality.

The property, located in the Sagar Resham Co-operative Housing Society near the iconic Bandstand, was acquired for Rs. 17.78 crore, according to registration documents reviewed by Square Yards. Sagar Resham Co-operative Housing Society, developed by Enorm Nagpal

Realty, offers premium 4 BHK and 5 BHK apartments.

As per Square Yards, the newly purchased apartment spans 171.47 square metres (1,846 square feet) and comes with a designated car parking space. The deal incurred a stamp duty of nearly Rs. 1.07 crore and registration charges of Rs. 30,000. The transaction, completed in September 2024, was registered under KA Enterprises LLP, a global venture investment firm focusing on high-growth consumer and consumer-tech companies.

In a related transaction, Deepika's mother-in-law, Anju Bhavnani, acquired an adjacent apartment

in the same month for Rs. 19.13 crore. This property, spanning 1,822.45 square feet (169 square metres) in carpet area, also includes one car parking space. The stamp duty for the deal amounted to Rs. 95.68 lakh, with a registration fee of Rs. 30,000.

Interestingly, on the day of the acquisition, Anju Bhavnani's apartment was leased to her daughter Ritika Bhavnani and husband Jugeet Singh Bhavnani. The lease, registered under R.S. Filmcraft (OPC) Pvt. Ltd. and Oh Five Oh Talent LLP, has a tenure of 55 months. The monthly rent has been set at Rs. 8.20 lakh for the first 33 months.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Our economy should easily double by 2030. India's ambition to become the third-largest economy by 2026-2027 necessitates a cohesive grand strategy. India will be a big dominant player, it already matters and it will matter much more in global affairs, by 2047."

-B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog



Simultaneous Polls

Opposition calls proposal impractical, 'cheap stunt'

As the Union Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Ram Nath Kovind panel on "one nation, one election" on Wednesday, opposition parties called the proposed move impractical and a "cheap stunt" by the ruling BJP.



"It is not practical, it will not work. When elections come and they (BJP) do not get any issue to raise, they divert attention from real issues."

Mallikarjun Kharge, President Congress:



"One nation, one election is just another cheap stunt by the anti-democratic BJP. Why were the Maharashtra elections not announced along with the elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir?"

Derek O'Brien, MP, TMC



"One Nation, One Election is an impractical and unrealistic idea in our constitutional setting. One Nation, One Election goes against this vision and curtails state rights."

D. Raja, General Secretary, Communist Party of India (CPI)



"I have consistently opposed One Nation One Election because it is a solution in search of a problem. It destroys federalism and compromises democracy, which are part of the structure of the Constitution."

Asaduddin Owaisi, President, AIMIM



"They were incapable of holding simultaneous polls in four states and managed to hold elections only in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir. They are unable to hold simultaneous polls in four states"

Sandeep Pathak, MP, AAP



"The BJP has been trying this since long. It wants only one party to rule the country. It is trying to destroy the JMM in Jharkhand and it will try to destroy the regional parties using one nation, one election."

Mahua Maji, MP, JMM



"Our party's stand is positive on the approval given today by the Union Cabinet to the proposal but its objective should be in the interest of the country and the public."

Mayawati, Chief, BSP

Trump to meet PM Modi next week

New York: Former President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he's meeting next week with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi when Modi visits the US.

Modi is scheduled to be in the United States this weekend, along with the leaders of Australia and Japan, for a summit of the so-called Quad hosted by President Joe Biden in his Wilmington, Delaware, hometown. The group is formally called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, and it began as a partnership after the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

The popular and polarising Indian prime minister has advanced Hindu nationalism in his decade-long tenure.

The meeting between Modi with Trump had not been previously reported. The Republican presidential nominee referenced it for the first time while speaking at an unrelated event in Flint, Michigan.

The Indian embassy in Washington did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday night. -AP

Kerala man affected with Mpox

Malappuram (Kerala): A 38-year-old man undergoing treatment in Kerala's northern Malappuram district has been confirmed to have contracted monkeypox (Mpox) infection, the state Health Department said on Wednesday. The man, who came to the state from the UAE recently, was already admitted to a hospital here with Mpox symptoms, state Health Minister Veena George said.

-PTI

Over 5.56 lakh FIRs under BNS since July 1

New Delhi: Over 5.56 lakh First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered across the country under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) ever since its introduction on July 1, a senior official said on Wednesday.

For smooth implementation of the new criminal laws, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has also developed several mobile applications, including e-Sakshya for capturing, storing



and retrieving evidence through videography and photography.

The app has been adopted by 22 states and Union Territories and tested by 24

states and UTs.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 respectively.

Since July 1 till September 3, a total of 5.56 lakh FIRs have been registered in the country under the BNS, the officer said, high-

lighting the achievements of the home ministry in the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government.

Software patches have been designed and deployed in the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) pillar applications to incorporate the new criminal laws.

The key changes in the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) include e-Prisons, e-Forensics, e-Prosecution,

use of audio-video electronic means and electronic communication among others as per the new criminal laws.

Application patches of CCTNS/ICJS (23 patches developed by the NCRB), e-Forensics (6 patches developed by the NIC), e-Prosecution (7 patches developed by NIC) and e-Prisons (9 patches developed by the NIC) for implementation new criminal laws shared with all the states and UTs,

another official said.

A mobile and web application, NCRB SANKALAN of Criminal Laws, has been designed to help the users navigate the new criminal laws and till date has been downloaded approximately 5.85 lakh times.

The home ministry has set up a CCTNS technical support call centre with helpline number (14415) to assist the states and UTs.

Another app, Nyay Shru-ti, has been launched for efficient and secure communication between all pillars of ICJS ecosystem.

Cong files police complaint against NDA leaders

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday filed a police complaint over the recent statements of leaders belonging to the ruling NDA targeting Rahul Gandhi.

The party alleged that the statements were aimed at jeopardising the safety and security of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and to disturb peace throughout the country, especially in view of the polls in Jammu and Kashmir, and Haryana.

In the complaint submitted to the SHO of the Tughlaq Road police station by AICC treasurer and general secretary Ajay Maken, the Congress cited the recent remarks by BJP leaders Tarvinder Singh Marwah, Ravneet Singh Bittu and Raghuraj Singh, as well as that of Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad.

Maken sought registration of FIRs against the leaders. Speaking with the media after filing the complaint, Maken said, "We all know that late Indira Gandhi ji and late Rajiv ji have sacrificed their lives for the country. Even after that, they are giving such

threats."

Politics in India cannot stoop to a lower level than this, he said. "Not just one BJP leader, but many leaders have said such things, but BJP did not take any action," he said.

"Rahul Gandhi talks about SC, ST, OBC, tribal and minority people. That is why BJP people do not like his words. This is the reason why they are threatening him," he said. "But let me tell you -- This is the Congress party and we are not going to be scared or cowed down," Maken said.

Maken said, "On September 11, Marwah in a BJP event openly issued assassination threat against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, wherein he said that 'Rahul Gandhi baaz aaja, nahi toh aane wale time mein tera bhi wohi haal hoga jo teri dadi ka haal hua (you better behave, or you will meet the same fate as your grandmother)'".

It also cited Sena MLA Gaikwad's announcement of a bounty of Rs 11 lakh for anyone who will cut the tongue of Gandhi. -PTI



Congress workers stage a protest against Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad over their remarks on Rahul Gandhi in Agartala on Wednesday.

Pic: PTI

Cops delayed seizing belongings by two days: CBI

New Delhi: Police delayed seizing the clothes of Sanjay Roy, an accused in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, for two days though his role had been established on August 10, a day after the crime, CBI officials said on Wednesday.

Roy, a police volunteer, was arrested based on CCTV footage showing him entering the seminar hall of the college at 4.03 am on the day of the incident.

His role in the "commission of crime had already emerged" but Tala Police caused an "unnecessary delay of two days" in seizing his clothes and other belongings. It could have resulted in strong evidence against him, the officials said.

The central probe agency, which took over the case on August 14 following an order from the Calcutta High Court, has arrested former principal Sandip Ghosh and Tala Police station officer in-charge Abhijit Mondal in connection with the case. Both were found to be evasive in their responses, the officials alleged. The officials also accused the two of "malafide



Kolkata docs' five-point demand

Kolkata: Junior doctors continued their 'cease work' stir in hospitals and sit-in near Swasthya Bhavan, the state health department headquarters, on Wednesday morning demanding justice for the medic raped and murdered at Kar Medical College and Hospital and removal of Health Secretary.

The sit-in agitation outside the Swasthya Bhavan entered its ninth day while the 'cease work' stir in hospitals continued for the 40th day on Wednesday. Their demands are as follows

- Immediate notification of the chief secretary-headed task force in medical colleges
- The removal of Health Secretary N S Nigam
- Elimination of the threat culture in state-run hospitals
- Discussion on safety and security of doctors inside hospital premises
- Another meeting with Chief Minister

intention" and said they initiated the investigation with an attempt to "vitalize the evidence" and "vital data related to this case."

The CBI is now probing criminal conspiracy, if any, between Roy, Ghosh and Mondal, they said.

The CBI will certify details of "each and every phone call" to verify versions with a view to explore "the possibility of criminal conspiracy hatched among main accused and co-accused persons, if any", an official said. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two, Ladakh was separated from us, we were granted a UT status even as we fail to understand how it benefitted us. We have not forgotten what happened with Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019."

- Omar Abdullah, Leader, NC



RG Kar issue, burning of 'Sati' to feature in Durga Puja

By Supratik Sengupta

Kolkata: 'Sati-daha', the old practice of immolating widows, and Ajanta Cave's artworks will be among the myriad themes of this year's Durga Puja festival to be observed in the backdrop of the RG Kar hospital incident, which will also feature in graffiti around one of the Kolkata marquees.

Every year, several puja organisers in West Bengal choose themes, mainly social issues and current incidents, and use their pan-



dals, idols and lighting arrangements to depict them.

As protests against the

rape and murder of an on-duty doctor in state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital over a month ago

continued in and around Kolkata, debates are raging about whether pomp should be associated with the puja in this unhappy atmosphere.

While a section of the Durga Puja organisers are going ahead with their plans made well in advance, not ready to mix the festival with other issues, one has decided that it will feature the horrific August 9 incident in graffiti around the marquee.

"Amid the festivities, we will put up posters seeking justice for Tilottoma. There

will be graffiti on road in our locality and leading to the pandal demanding safety of women," an organiser of Naktala Nabapally Durgapuja committee in south Kolkata said.

A section of the media has been calling the deceased doctor 'Tilottoma' to avoid disclosing her real name. Identifying a rape victim is prohibited by a Supreme Court order.

"In our pandal, there will be graffiti demanding a world free of attacks on women, justice for sexual abuse victims and a call to

give women the right to claim the night. The artworks will be created by students of art colleges and locals," a puja committee spokesperson said.

Posters with words like 'Justice for R G Kar' and 'We Want Justice' with sketches of a woman fighting abuses will be painted in red and black, he said.

The issue of attacks on women in a different form and from a different era will also come up in the puja marquee in the metropolis.

-PTI

Howling tactic to capture elusive wolf

Bahraich (UP): The Forest Department in Bahraich is employing innovative tactics to capture an elusive wolf, which it believes is the sixth and last remaining of the pack that has instilled fear among locals with several attacks in the last few months.

Having tried cages and diversion techniques, which led to the capturing of five wolves, the forest officials are now using 'wolf howling' --? playing a pre-recorded sound of a female wolf's cries through a loudspeaker to lure the animal into a trap.

Singh hopes the male wolf will be drawn to the sound and come closer to the traps set by the department.

Previously, the Forest Department had attempted to capture the wolf using various methods, including using elephant dung cakes, spraying children's urine on colourful teddy bears and deploying fireworks to deter the animal from



7	No of children died in wolf attacks
36	No of people injured in wolf attacks
165	No of forest personnel involved in operation
18	No of sharp-shooters, and policemen involved in operation

residential areas.

However, the rogue wolf has not been captured.

Eight people -- seven of them children --? have lost their lives in Bahraich's Mahasi tehsil, while around three dozen people were injured in wolf attacks since mid-July, according to officials.

DFO Singh said on Tuesday morning, the wolf attacked and killed a pet goat in the Sisaiya Chooramani village.

"Despite attempts to corner the wolf, it escaped when a large crowd

gathered at the scene," he added. The DFO said the wolf has been active in an area of about 20-25 kilometres, with increased movement detected near the Sisaiya Chooramani and Kolaiya villages.

District Magistrate Monika Rani said many of the attacks took place in homes without doors or where doors were left open. She said more than 300 such homes have received door installations and efforts are underway to enhance village lighting with high-mast and solar lights to

improve safety.

In light of the incidents, the government is providing immediate financial assistance of Rs five lakh to the families of the deceased and Rs 5,400 to the injured. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently conducted an aerial survey of the affected area and promised swift action to alleviate the residents' plight.

He also indicated that if the wolf continues to pose a threat, "it may need to be shot as a last resort."

-PTI

Partially-reusable NGLV gets Cabinet nod

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the development of a partially-reusable Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) with three times the payload capability of ISRO's workhorse Launch Vehicle Mark III.

It allocated Rs 8,240 crore for the development of NGLV, three developmental flights, essential facility, programme management and launch campaign.

It will be a significant step towards India's aim of establishing and operating the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and developing capability for Indian crewed landing on the moon by 2040, an official statement said. NGLV will have three times the payload capability at 1.5 times the cost compared to LVM3, it said, adding that the partially-reusable launch vehicle will provide low-cost access to space. NGLV will be demonstrated with three development flights. The government has set a target of 96 months (8 years) for the completion of the development phase. -PTI

Climate change risks grow faster for wealthy: Study

New Delhi: Economic risks for the wealthy due to climate change is growing at the fastest rates because of impacts to global supply chains and goods and services, even as the highest risks remain with the poorest around the world, according to a new study.

Across countries, lower-income consumers are known to face higher economic risks in a changing climate because of a low capacity to adapt.

However, researchers explained that inequality in consumption between varied income groups within a country is grounded in how easily one is able to substitute goods to adapt to the effects of climate change, including shocks to supply chains.

The team from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Germany found that low-income consumers are more vulnerable to supply shocks as they spend a greater share of their budget on hard-to-substitute necessary goods.

On the other hand, high-income consumers spent larger shares of their budget on easier-to-substitute goods so that they suffer smaller reductions of consumption, the researchers said.

"While current risk levels are lowest for high-income consumers, climate-driven risk increases may be largest. This may reduce adaptation advantages of higher-income consumers and thus result in substantial macroeconomic risks," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Nature Sustainability.

However, the risk for the wealthy is growing the fastest, they added.



The researchers added that inequality in consumption across income groups could trigger market processes, whereby higher-income consumers can afford higher prices for necessities, thereby inflating prices and pressuring lower-income groups.

For the study, the team looked at how erratic weather events, increasingly made more intense by climate change, affected global production and consumption across different income groups in 264 regions. In countries like the US and China, the researchers analysed province- or state-level data. The results confirmed those from previous studies that the poorest people around the world bear the greatest economic risks from climate change, they said.

"In the next 20 years,

climate change will increase economic risks from erratic weather. The highest risks remain with the poorest around the world. But the increase of economic risk is strongest for the wealthy, in countries like the US and the European Union," corresponding author and PIK scientist, Anders Levermann, said.

The team also found that economies transitioning towards net-zero carbon emissions such as Brazil or China are also highly vulnerable and face the highest risks due to severe impacts of volatile weather and adverse trade effects.

"Consumers all around the world, regardless of their income, will thus face increasing challenges due to global warming-- without a transition towards carbon neutrality we will eventually not be able to meet these challenges," Levermann said.

-PTI

NGT fines Jharkhand over Ganga pollution control

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal has imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Jharkhand for failing to assist it on proceedings regarding the prevention and control of the Ganga's pollution in the state.

The green body has constituted a special bench to deal with the Ganga's pollution across each state and district through which the river and its tributaries flow. Last November, the tribunal sought specific information on Ganga pollution from the chief secretaries of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.



In an order passed on September 6, a bench of National Green Tribunal Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said, "Counsel for the state of Jharkhand appearing virtually submits that he does not have the file. He is unable to assist

the tribunal. No competent authority from Jharkhand is virtually present to assist the tribunal. Hence, we have no option but to adjourn the matter today."

"In the circumstances mentioned above, we impose the cost of Rs 50,000 upon the state of Jharkhand for not rendering assistance," the bench, also comprising Judicial Member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and Expert Member A Senthil Vel, said.

In February, the tribunal fined the state Rs 25,000 after observing the "unfortunate" scenario where, despite repeated opportunities,

district magistrates -- who head of the district Ganga protection committees -- did not submit their reports.

"At this stage, we are taking a lenient view and imposing the token cost of Rs 25,000, which is to be deposited by the state of Jharkhand within one week and it will be open to the state to recover this amount from the defaulting district magistrates and report it to the tribunal," the bench had said.

In Jharkhand, the Ganga flows through the Sahibganj, Bokaro, Dhanbad and Ramgarh districts. -PTI

Sustainable water management needs to be everybody's business

New Delhi: Achieving sustainable water management cannot be done by governments alone, a senior Jal Shakti ministry official said on Monday while emphasising the need for cooperation from industries, academia and civil society on the matter.

A day ahead of the start of the eighth edition of India Water Week, Secretary of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Debashree Mukherjee said,

The event, held once every two years, brings together various stakeholders from diverse fields to discuss sustainable water management.

This year, the event will start on September 17 and continue till September 20.

"This year, the theme is 'Partnerships and Cooperation for Inclusive Water Development and Management,' which underscores a fundamental truth that achieving sustainable water management cannot



"It is an effort to bring together multiple stakeholders, to look at, learn from each other and also try and find solutions to the issues facing us."

be done by governments alone. Water needs to be everybody's business," she said.

In her briefing to the media, Mukherjee highlighted the diverse participation at the event, noting that state governments, industries, academia, international organizations, and even young students from engineering colleges and schools working on environmental issues were

all involved.

"It is an effort to bring together multiple stakeholders, to look at, to try and find solutions, to learn from each other but also try and find solutions to the issues that are facing us," she added.

The event's key sessions include a Global Water Leaders Plenary, featuring ministers from four international countries and eight Indian states, who will share their experiences on water management.

Mukherjee emphasised the inclusion of ground voices in these discussions, particularly two women water warriors who will speak about their real-life experiences managing water resources.

"We have organised a platform where practitioners from government, private, and non-government sectors will share best practices in implementing water sector programs. Additionally, startups will have an opportunity to pitch their ideas at our exhibition," she stated. -PTI

India meets Tanzania, Zimbabwe on water management

New Delhi: India held high-level meetings with Tanzania and Zimbabwe to enhance collaboration in water resource management and development, Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil said.

During his interaction with the delegation from Zimbabwe, led by Deputy Minister VP Haritatos, at the ongoing National Water Week-2024 here, Paatil said discussions were held on strengthening water management and driving agricultural reforms in the southern African country.

"Haritatos emphasised the importance of enhancing Indian investments in Zimbabwe's water sector, highlighting the pivotal role Indian companies like WAPCOS can play," Paatil said in a post.

"We assured the delegation of India's commitment to providing comprehensive technical assistance and fostering cooperation to address Zimbabwe's water-related challenges," he said.

Ensuring food security and supporting sustainable growth through innovative solutions in irrigation system design, improved water supply, Paatil added.

India to contribute to 35% of global energy demand: Puri at Gastech

By Seema Hakhu Kachru

Houston: Over the next two decades, India will contribute to 35 per cent of the global increase in energy demand, Indian Minister Hardeep Puri said on Tuesday, September 17 at a multinational conference held to deliberate on the world's energy needs.

The 52nd Gastech Exhibition & Conference kicked off Tuesday with strategic insights from the world's five leading energy ministers, including India's, at the George R Brown Convention Center.

The event, themed 'Transforming Energy Through Vision, Innovation, and Action,' brought into focus a need for global energy stability and rapid decarbonisation.

In his keynote address, Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri underscored India's increasingly dominant role in the global energy



landscape.

"If global demand is increasing by one per cent, ours is surging three times faster. Over the next two decades, India will contribute to 35 per cent of the global increase in energy demand," he said.

He framed India's challenge as an "energy trilemma," emphasising the need to balance availability, affordability, and a successful green transition.

"We are confident in our ability to manage and succeed in the green transition," Puri asserted.

The conference's opening ministerial panel, featuring officials from the US, India, Egypt, Nigeria, and Turkey,

If global demand is increasing by one per cent, ours is surging three times faster. Over the next two decades, India will contribute to 35 per cent of the global increase in energy demand.

- Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas

deliberated on critical geopolitical and industry challenges.

Geoffrey Pyatt, Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources, emphasised the United States' role in stabilising global energy flows and fostering international cooperation.

"With America's unprecedented energy abundance," Pyatt stated, "we are positioned to play a central global role, working closely with our international partners."

Egyptian Minister Karim Badawi spoke about his country's strategic position as a key energy gateway and stressed the necessity

of creating an investment-friendly environment.

Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Rt Hon Ekperikpe Ekpo, outlined the African nation's unique natural gas opportunities.

Industry leaders, including Chevron CEO Mike Wirth and Cheniere Energy CEO Jack Fusco, discussed the impact of India's energy policies on global strategies.

Wirth called for dialogues on energy futures, while Fusco emphasised the need for adaptable business models to meet evolving energy demands and climate goals. -PTI

EU warns deadly flooding, wildfires fast becoming norm

Brussels: Devastating floods through much of Central Europe and deadly wildfires in Portugal are joint proof of a "climate breakdown" that will become the norm unless drastic action is taken, the European Union's head office said Wednesday.

"Make no mistake. This tragedy is not an anomaly. This is fast becoming the norm for our shared future," said EU Crisis Management Commissioner Janez Lenarcic.

The worst flooding in years moved Tuesday across a broad swath of Central Europe, taking lives and destroying homes. At the other end of the 27-nation EU, raging fires through northern Portugal have killed at



Wildfire advances near Sever do Vouga, a town in northern Portugal that has been surrounded by forest fires.

last six people.

"Europe is the fastest warming continent globally and is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events like the

"We face a Europe that is simultaneously flooding and burning. These extreme weather events ... are now an almost annual occurrence," he said. "The global reality of the climate breakdown has moved into the everyday lives of Europeans."

one we are discussing today. We could not return to a safer past," Lenarcic told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

He warned that beyond the

human cost, nations are also struggling to cope with mounting bills for repairing the damage from emergencies and the lengthy recovery from disaster.

"The average cost of disasters in the 1980s was 8 billion euros per year. More recently in 2021 and in 2022, the damage is surpassed 50 billion euros per year, meaning the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of action," he said.

Terry Reintke, president of the Greens group in the European Parliament, said the cost for the EU since the 1980s was estimated at 650 billion euros. The EU is struggling to move quickly with measures to counter climate change and has

run into political opposition in many member states, where the political climate is turning against environmental issues and measures ranging from home heating to farm pollution.

"Our success will depend on how determined we are to combat climate change together in order to reduce emissions," Reintke said, adding that EU members must back its Green Deal.

The vast EU plan to become climate neutral by 2050 has come under increasing pressure from critics who call it unrealistic and too expensive. Populist and far-right parties have made it a key point of attack on the bloc's institutions. -AP

Exploding pagers made by Hungarian company, says Taiwanese firm

Experts believe explosive material was put into the pagers prior to their delivery

Taipei: A company based in Hungary was responsible for manufacturing the pagers that exploded in Lebanon and Syria in an apparent Israeli operation targeting Hezbollah's communications network, another firm whose brand was used on the devices said Wednesday.

The AR-924 pagers used in the attack were manufactured by BAC Consulting KFT, based in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, according to a statement released by Gold Apollo, a Taiwanese firm that authorised the use of its brand on the pagers.

BAC appeared to be a shell company.

"According to the cooperation agreement, we authorise BAC to use our brand trademark for product sales in designated regions, but the design and manufacturing of the products are solely the responsibility of BAC," Gold Apollo said in a statement.

The company's chair, Hsu Ching-kuang, told journalists Wednesday that the firm has had a licensing agreement with BAC for the past three years.

BAC Consulting Kft, a limited liability company,



was registered in May 2022, according to company records. It has 7,840 euros in standing capital, the records showed, and had revenue of \$725,768 in 2022 and \$593,972 in 2023.

At the headquarters in a building in a residential neighbourhood of Budapest, Associated Press journalists saw the names of multiple companies, including BAC Consulting, posted on pieces of paper on a window. A woman who emerged from the building and declined to give her name, said the site provides headquarter addresses to various companies.

BAC is registered to Cristiana Rosaria Bársony-Arcidiacono, who on her LinkedIn page describes

herself as a strategic advisor and business developer. Among other positions, Bársony-Arcidiacono says on the page that she has served on the board of directors of the Earth Child Institute, a sustainability group. The group does not list Bársony-Arcidiacono as among its board members on its website.

The AP has attempted to reach Bársony-Arcidiacono via her LinkedIn page and has been unable to establish a connection between her or BAC and the exploding pagers.

Hezbollah said in a statement Wednesday morning that it would continue its normal strikes against Israel as part of what it describes as a support front

for its ally, Hamas, and Palestinians in Gaza.

"This path is continuous and separate from the difficult reckoning that the criminal enemy must await for its massacre on Tuesday," it said. "This is another reckoning that will come, God willing."

Explosives put before delivery
Experts believe explosive material was put into the pagers prior to their delivery.

The AR-924 pager, advertised as being "rugged," contains a rechargeable lithium battery, according to specifications advertised on Gold Apollo's website before they were removed after the attack. -AP

Secret Service faces scrutiny after attack on Trump

Washington: For the second time in more than two months, the Secret Service that protects the highest echelon of American leaders is under scrutiny - this time after a gunman hid in the shrubs along the fence of former President Donald Trump's golf course for 12 hours.

The man didn't get a shot off, but critics question how he could be just several hundred yards away from Trump - especially after the Republican presidential candidate's security was beefed up after his near-death experience in July.

Biden administration officials praised the agency's response, and former Secret Service agents say there are key differences between what unfolded Sunday and the security lapses at an outdoor rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, when a gunman climbed onto an unsecured roof nearby and opened fire, clipping Trump's ear and leaving a spectator dead.

Authorities say Ryan Wesley Routh camped with food and a rifle just outside the 27-hole Trump International Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Florida, where the former president was playing Sunday. A Secret Service agent ahead of Trump spotted the rifle's muzzle poking through the fence and opened fire. Routh fled and was later apprehended. It's long been known to law enforcement that places along the edge of the property leave Trump visible to those behind the fence, and some have questioned why it was not protected. But a sprawling golf course poses specific challenges, especially for a last-minute round, even with Trump's bolstered security.

US lawmakers condemn vandalism of BAPS temple

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: American lawmakers and community leaders Tuesday condemned vandalism of a Hindu temple in New York and called for bringing the guilty to the book.

"I strongly condemn this act of desecration of a Hindu temple in Melville, NY. Freedom of worship is a bedrock of our democracy. There is no place for acts of intimidation, harassment or violence. We need accountability and to make sure this does not happen again," Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna said.

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Melville, New York was defaced with hateful messages on Sunday night.

A spokesperson from the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in a statement condemned the defacement.

I am appalled by the despicable acts of vandalism targeting the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Melville. As our country faces a surge in political violence and acts of bigotry, we must stand together as Americans against all forms of hate.

-Ro Khanna, Indian American Congressman

"Peace, respect, and harmony for all, regardless of background or faith, are the bedrock of religious freedom in the United

States," the statement read. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi termed the act despicable, even as he called for unity among Americans.

"I am appalled by the despicable acts of vandalism targeting the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Melville. As our country faces a surge in political violence and acts of bigotry, we must stand together as Americans against all forms of hate," he said. Congressman Shri Thandapani said, "Such acts of vandalism, bigotry, and hate must be fully investigated. The BAPS community deserves answers and justice."

Hindu American Foundation called for an investigation into the incident by the Department of Justice.

Hindu PACT also demanded an FBI investigation into the incident.

-PTI

Trump's appearance after assassination bid

Flint: Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday made his first public appearance since Sunday's second apparent assassination attempt against him with an overflow crowd chanting "God bless Trump!" and "Fight, Fight, Fight!" as US Secret Service agents surrounded the stage to protect the Republican presidential nominee.

"It's been a great experience," Trump said in an evening town hall in Flint, Michigan, about holding events with thousands of

supporters. But he also went on to call running for president "a dangerous business" akin to car racing or bull riding.

"Only consequential presidents get shot at," he said. Earlier in the day, Vice President Kamala Harris struck a measured tone, even steering clear of mentioning Trump by name in an interview with Black journalists that starkly contrasted with the former president's own highly contentious appearance before the same group.

-AP

Chinese aircraft in Japan's waters

Tokyo: A Chinese aircraft carrier entered Japan's contiguous waters for the first time on Wednesday, leading Tokyo to convey its "serious concerns" to Beijing over China's increasingly assertive military actions around Japan, officials said.

The Chinese carrier Liaoning, accompanied by two destroyers, sailed between Japan's westernmost island of Yonaguni and nearby Iriomote, entering the country's so-called "contiguous zone," the Defense Ministry said. -AP

Trudeau says 'more work to do' after by-election loss

Vancouver: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Tuesday he's focused on the work ahead after the ruling Liberals lost in another by-election, raising more questions about his ability to lead the party into the next federal election.

For the second time in recent months the Liberals lost in a former stronghold when the Bloc Quebecois won the vote in the electoral district of LaSalle-Emard-Verdun Monday in Montreal in a tight three-way race with the New Democratic Party.

"Obviously it would have been nicer to be able to win... but there's more work to do," Trudeau said in Ottawa. "The big thing is to make sure that Canadians understand the choice they get to make in the next election," Trudeau said. "That's the work we're going to continue to do."

Election Canada results show the Bloc candidate Louis-Philippe Sauve finished with 28% of the vote. Liberals' candidate Laura Palestini collected 27.2% and finished just 248 votes be-

hind the winner. The NDP collected 26.1% and was about 600 votes behind the winner.

It's the second time in three months that Trudeau's party has lost a by-election in a riding they held for years. In June, the Conservatives narrowly defeated the Liberals in Toronto-St. Paul's.

The Liberals won every seat in Toronto and almost every seat on the Island of Montreal in the last election. Monday's loss "is a major blow for the Liberals," said Daniel Beland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal.

"This is a riding we would expect them to win under normal circumstances," Beland said in an email. "Not only did this not happen, they lost by nearly 16 percentage points in popular votes compared to their score in the riding back in 2021, when they had easily won there."

Andrew Perez, a longtime Liberal supporter and strategist, posted on social media that the loss is "yet another nail in Justin Trudeau's coffin."



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks during the U.S.-Egypt dialogue with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty (not pictured) in Tahrir Palace in Cairo, Egypt on Wednesday. Pic: AP/PTI

China sanctions US companies selling arms to Taiwan

Beijing: China on Wednesday announced sanctions on American companies selling arms to the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory and threatens to annex by force.

Chinese state media made the announcement, citing the Foreign Ministry, but gave no details on the companies involved. Taiwan is awaiting deliv-

eries of F-16 fighter jets, Abrams tanks and a range of missiles from the US.

China has been upping its threats to attack Taiwan, whose 2.3 million citizens overwhelmingly favour their current status of de-facto independence. Despite their lack of formal diplomatic ties, the US has long been a key provider of armaments and is legally bound to ensure the island can defend

itself. Along with buying weapons from the US, Taiwan has also been reviving its domestic arms industry. A fleet of submarines is underway, while mandatory military service for men has been extended to one year.

China has previously demanded US companies end cooperation with Taiwan's armed forces, with no apparent effect.

-AP

Dutch gov't asks for formal opt-out from EU migration rules

Brussels: The new Dutch government dominated by the far-right party of Geert Wilders officially asked the European Union for an exemption from its migration obligations on Wednesday, seeking to fulfil a campaign promise to drastically reduce the number of immigrants in the nation.

Dutch Migration Minister Marjolein Faber of Wilders' party wrote to the European Commission that the Netherlands wants out of regulations for accepting refugees.

"I have just informed the EU Commission that I want a migration opt-out within Europe for the Netherlands. We need to be in charge of our own asylum policy again!" Faber wrote in a letter Ylva Johansson, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, posted on social media.

On Tuesday, the government, which came to power in July, announced its policy blueprint for the coming year, including stricter policies to hold back or kick out migrants who don't qualify

for asylum. The announcement came just a day after party leaders were publicly bickering over their plans, underscoring divisions within the four-party governing coalition.

Even before the plan was made public, the European Commission warned the Dutch government that its approach wouldn't work. "We have adopted legislation. It's adopted. You don't opt out of adopted legislation in the EU," spokesman Eric Mamer said last Friday. -AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"He (Khamenei) is killing his own population oppressing freedoms like freedom of religion, freedom of speech, human rights that is completely outrageous and we hope Iranian people are going to be free one day from tyranny coming from Khamenei."

Reuven Azar, Israel Ambassador to India



UN to vote on Palestinian resolution

New York: The UN General Assembly will vote Wednesday on a Palestinian resolution demanding that Israel end its "unlawful presence" in Gaza and the occupied West Bank within a year, withdraw its military forces and evacuate all settlers.

The resolution is being put to a vote in the 193-member assembly as Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza approaches its first anniversary and as violence in the West Bank reaches new highs. The war was trig-

gered by Hamas attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, opened the assembly meeting Tuesday by saying Palestinians face an "existential threat" and claiming Israel has held them "in shackles." He demanded an end to Israel's decades-long occupation and for Palestinians to be able to return home to live in peace and freedom.

Israel's ambassador to the U.N., Danny Danon, urged member nations to



reject the resolution, describing it as "an attempt to destroy Israel through diplomatic terrorism" that never mentions Hamas'

atrocities and "ignores the truth, twists the facts and replaces reality with fiction."

"Instead of a resolution

condemning the rape and massacre committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, we gather here to watch the Palestinians' U.N. circus — a circus where evil is righteous, war is peace, murder is justified and terror is applauded," he said.

If adopted, the resolution would not be legally binding, but the extent of its support would reflect world opinion. There are no vetoes in the General Assembly, unlike in the 15-member Security Council.

The resolution is a re-

sponse to a ruling by the top United Nations court in July that said Israel's presence in the Palestinian territories is unlawful and must end.

In the sweeping condemnation of Israel's rule over the lands it captured during the 1967 war, the International Court of Justice said Israel had no right to sovereignty over the Palestinian territories and was violating international laws against acquiring the lands by force.

-AP

EDITORIAL

Overdue Praise

In a city that never sleeps, with a population of over 20 million, the Mumbai police face a Sisyphean task. Yet, during the recent Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations, they once again demonstrated their remarkable ability to balance order with tradition, ensuring a peaceful end to one of the country's most widely celebrated festivals.

Ganesh Chaturthi is not merely a religious festival but also a logistical nightmare. Millions of devotees flood the streets, throwing traffic off-kilter as massive idols are paraded through the city to the Arabian Sea. The city's overstretched and underpaid police force must ensure public safety, regulate traffic and monitor the ever-present threat of terrorist activity in a metropolis that has seen its fair share of attacks. Yet, year after year, the festival concludes with minimal incident. This year was no different, with 24,000 thousand personnel deployed to oversee the Visarjan.

What makes the police's performance even more impressive is the scale of their operation despite being hamstrung by a woefully inadequate force of barely 50,000 police officers. Not just festivals, but Mumbai's police have to cope with increasing crime and social unrest. In comparison, New York City, with a population of around 8 million, has over 36,000 officers. The ratio of police to citizens in Mumbai is a stark reminder of how little the force has to work with.

Despite this, the Mumbai police regularly pull off large-scale operations. The coordination required is staggering. But while they toil behind the scenes, they are often lambasted in public discourse as corrupt and incompetent.

The vast majority of officers work tirelessly in harsh conditions often without proper breaks, working in congested areas where pollution and stress are constant companions. In 2022, the Maharashtra government recorded over 1,000 cases of illness and mental health problems among police officers, a reflection of the strain under which they operate.

Moreover, the public's lack of faith in the police is partly fuelled by media portrayals. Bollywood films routinely depict police officers as either incompetent or corrupt, reinforcing negative stereotypes. In reality, many Mumbai police officers exhibit remarkable professionalism, particularly in high-pressure situations. The handling of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks showcased the bravery of the police force in responding to an unprecedented crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mumbai's police were lauded for their efforts in enforcing lockdowns and distributing food. The challenges faced by the Mumbai police are manifold. They contend with a demoralising lack of resources — lack of patrol cars, decrepit station infrastructure and outdated crime-fighting technology. But despite this, the police have shown incredible adaptability.

It is time to recognise that for every negative headline, there are untold stories of dedication and quiet professionalism. Rather than vilify them, we must understand the conditions they work under and the enormity of their task. If Mumbai is to continue as India's financial capital and cultural heart, its police force will need more than just our thanks — they will need the resources, reform, and respect they so rightly deserve.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

When Bureaucracy Stymies Security



By Vappala Balachandran

The assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1991, in Sriperumbudur, and the second attempt on former U.S. President Donald Trump on September 15, 2024, in Florida, illustrate a striking similarity: how bureaucratic inertia can undermine the security of the most threatened individuals.

The second attempt on the life of former US president Donald Trump on 15 September 2024 was foiled by an alert Secret Service (SS) agent who spotted a muzzle of a gun sticking out through the thick foliage while Trump was playing golf. Trump's sprawling West Palm Beach golf course is next to his iconic Mar-a-Lago mansion in Florida.

Unconfirmed reports said that the agent's attention was drawn to that portion of the foliage when he heard a cough. When he saw the muzzle, he fired in that direction. Upon this, suspect Ryan Wesley Routh tried to flee through Inter-State 95 but was caught by the police. The Washington Post said that digital footprints of Routh's cell phone revealed that he had hidden for nearly 12 hours in the bushes around the former

Bureaucratic complacency, be it in India or the U.S., has endangered the lives of high-profile leaders like late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and current Presidential candidate Donald Trump.

president's golf course. It is not clear whether drones were used to sweep the vast area surrounding Mar-a-Lago.

Normally US security authorities should have taken added precautions to guard the periphery of Trump's engagements in addition to his proximate security, after the failure of US SS on July 13 in Pennsylvania. On that day Trump escaped death by a whisker when Thomas Crooks, who was hiding in the periphery, shot him, injuring his right ear.

In this background, it was surprising to hear Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw saying on September 15 that "we would have had the entire golf course surrounded" had Trump been the president. "Because he's not, security is limited to the areas that the Secret Service deems possible." In other words, security goes only with the rank and not whether the person is the most threatened, as the 1991 Rajiv Gandhi assassination would prove.

SS acting director Ronald Rowe said Trump received its "highest" level of security. Yet the golf course was not checked in advance as it was not in Trump's official programme. When Trump suddenly decided to go, a security 'bubble' checked the area and detected the assailant. However, he did not clarify why drones were not used.

When asked about this, President Joe Biden reportedly said: "The service needs more help. And I think Congress should respond to their need." This was apparently after Speaker Mike Johnson of US House of Representatives criticised the allocation of manpower to protect Trump.

After the July 13 incident, Johnson had taken serious note of the failures of SS and had held a Congressional hearing which finally led to the resignation of the then Director Kimberly Cheatle on July 23.

A similar bureaucratic failure marked the first serious attempt on Rajiv Gandhi's life on October 2, 1986, at Raj Ghat. Much like the Florida incident, intelligence warnings had been issued. India's R&AW had alerted security agencies to an impending attack by a terrorist disguised as a gardener,



lurking in the bushes when Gandhi, President Zail Singh and other top leaders would assemble at 'Rajghat' to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. While security forces scoured the area, the assailant, Karamjit Singh, eluded them by hiding in a tree for over 16 hours.

He then fired a few shots at the gathering, causing superficial skin-deep injuries to some, as he had only an old pellet shot weapon. Had he been able to get a more deadly weapon like AK-47, the entire leadership of the country could have been wiped out.

Events preceding Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on May 21, 1991 resembled the bureaucratic answer given by Sheriff Ric Bradshaw. Although Gandhi demitted power after the December 1989 general election, he was the most

threatened person in India. As long as he was PM, he was guarded by the Special Protection Group, (SPG) modelled on the American SS. However, a law passed in 1988 allowed only the PM and family to be protected - not former PMs.

Hence former Minister of State (internal security) in the Congress government wrote to the late G.S. Bajpai, then Security (Security) on 3 February 1990, to extend SPG protection to the Gandhi family.

Documents filed at the Justice Milap Chand Jain Commission enquiring into the failure of Central and State authorities in giving due protection, commensurate with the threats faced by the late prime minister, revealed a cavalier manner with no decision.

Had the Tamil Nadu State organised security commensurate with the threats faced by the late prime minister, they could have ensured a sanitised area around the VIP to prevent unauthorised persons gaining access to the VIP. It was not done, resulting in the ghastly assassination on May 21, 1991.

(The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. He was part of the two-man high level committee, appointed by Maharashtra government to enquire into the police performance during the Mumbai 26/11 terror attacks. Views personal).

GLOBAL WATCH

Mossad and Hezbollah: The Escalation of a Shadow War

Israel's recent pager attack on Hezbollah, which left nine dead and nearly 3,000 injured, is the latest salvo in a covert war that has spanned decades, marked by targeted assassinations and clandestine operations. As the Middle East continues to churn with geopolitical unrest, this brazen strike, allegedly orchestrated by Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, reinforces its reputation for surgical precision in dismantling threats. The detonation of pagers across Lebanon, devices used by Hezbollah and other groups to relay critical messages, represents an escalation in Israel's ongoing struggle against the Iran-backed militant group.



The pager attack fits seamlessly into Israel's legacy of calculated, high-risk operations. For decades, Israel has employed pre-emptive strikes to neutralize threats, often before they materialize.

One of the most notable examples of Mossad's reach was the assassination of Ali Hassan Salameh, the mastermind behind the Black September group responsible for the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre. Known as the 'Red Prince,' Salameh was one of Israel's most wanted men. After years of eluding capture, Mossad tracked Salameh to Beirut, where he was finally assassinated in 1979 by a car bomb. The operation, part of Mossad's famed 'Operation Wrath of God,' was emblematic of the agency's ability to strike at the

As the Middle East continues to churn with geopolitical unrest, the brazen pager strike, allegedly orchestrated by Israel, reinforces its reputation for pre-emptive attacks.

heart of enemy leadership.

More recently, Mossad has turned its attention to Hezbollah and its Iranian backers. In 2008, Hezbollah's military chief, Imad Mughniyeh, was killed in a car bomb in Damascus, an attack widely attributed to Mossad despite official denials. Mughniyeh had been responsible for countless attacks on Israeli and Western interests, and his elimination was seen as a significant blow to Hezbollah's operational capabilities. Similarly, Mossad's campaign against Iran's nuclear ambitions has included the assassination of key Iranian scientists, such as Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was killed in a meticulously orchestrated ambush in 2020.

The pager attack fits into this broader pattern. By targeting Hezbollah's communication infrastructure and leadership, Israel is sending a clear message: no one is beyond its reach. The attack also serves a dual purpose—crippling Hezbollah's ability to coordinate its military operations while simultaneously striking fear into its ranks. The choice of pagers as the delivery mechanism for this attack is no accident. Mossad has a history of leveraging seemingly innocuous technologies to devastating effect. From booby-trapped phones to remote-

controlled bombs, the agency excels at turning the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Yet, despite its tactical successes, each targeted assassination or covert strike carries the potential for retaliation, and Hezbollah's promise of retribution is likely to keep Israeli security officials on high alert. Hezbollah has proven itself to be a resilient and adaptive force, capable of launching devastating attacks on Israeli soil and maintaining a robust presence across the Middle East. The group's deep ties to Iran, which bankrolls and arms its fighters, make it a formidable adversary.

The pager attack also comes at a time of heightened tension along Israel's northern border. Since the onset of the Gaza war in October, cross-border skirmishes between Israel and Hezbollah have become more frequent, with both sides testing the limits of escalation. For Hezbollah, the Gaza conflict is part of a broader regional struggle, and its leadership sees itself as the vanguard of resistance against Israel.

The detonation of the pagers has certainly rattled Hezbollah. But in the unforgiving dynamics of the Middle East, each victory is fleeting. Hezbollah's promise of retaliation ensures that this shadow war will continue.

STATES WATCH

Mamata Banerjee's Moment of Reckoning

For over a decade, Mamata Banerjee has been the unyielding face of West Bengal's politics — a street-fighter turned chief minister who dismantled the 34-year rule of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) with her fiery oratory and relentless grassroots campaigning. Yet, for the first time in her long tenure, Banerjee finds herself on the back foot, grappling with a crisis that has not only tested her leadership but also exposed the frailties of her administration.

The immediate crisis stems from the tragic rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9, which has sparked a wave of protests across West Bengal. The state's medical fraternity, including junior doctors, has taken to the streets demanding justice and safety. The agitation has disrupted healthcare services statewide, placing immense pressure on Banerjee, whose usual hands-on approach and combative rhetoric have proven insufficient to quell the unrest.

Fulfilling one of the five key demands of the protesting doctors, the West Bengal government transferred Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal, replacing him with Manoj Verma. Goyal, a twice-decorated officer and an IIT alumnus, has been moved back to the Special Task Force (STF) as Additional Director General (ADG) and Inspector

The transfer of Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal might offer temporary relief to her beleaguered govt., but the crisis of public trust, and institutional dysfunction remains unresolved.

General. This decision, coming after days of unrest, is seen as a tactical concession from Banerjee's government.

But the crisis persists and threatens to metastasize. In an uncharacteristic display of vulnerability, Banerjee recently offered to resign, declaring, "I want justice, I am only concerned about justice getting served." Her resignation offer, whilst dramatic, has been viewed by many as a sign of a beleaguered leader struggling to regain control.

Known for her iron grip on power and populist appeal, the West Bengal CM appeared reactive - a stark contrast to her usual decisiveness.

Banerjee had previously resisted Go-

yal's resignation by giving the upcoming Durga Puja as pretext. Despite this concession, the larger problem remains. The protests have continued, with the medical fraternity showing little inclination to relent. Banerjee's repeated pleas to the doctors to return to work and her public apologies have not stemmed the tide of discontent. Her gestures have been seen as too little, too late, by both critics and supporters alike. The intervention of West Bengal Governor C. V. Ananda Bose, who called for a "social boycott" of Banerjee, has only added fuel to the fire. The Governor's unprecedented



call, coupled with the Calcutta High Court's order for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the incident, has significantly heightened the stakes. The legal pressure, alongside the public outcry, has placed Banerjee in a rare position of weakness, with her administration appearing more fragile than ever.

Known for her ability to bounce back from adversity — whether surviving political attacks or overcoming the might of the Left

Front — this crisis poses a different challenge. It is not just a question of public anger but a deeper erosion of trust in her administration's ability to maintain law and order. The prolonged strike and the government's perceived mishandling of the situation have led to growing scepticism about Banerjee's leadership. What was once unthinkable — a serious challenge to the political dominance of 'Didi' — now seems plausible.





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KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 A supermoon rises behind a horse statue atop of Triumphal Arc during a partial lunar eclipse in Moscow on Wednesday.
- 2 Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama arrives to attend a prayer offered for his long life at the main Tibetan temple in Dharamsala on Wednesday.
- 3 Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris is greeted as she during an unscheduled stop to make remarks at Community College of Philadelphia on Tuesday.
- 4 Full moon is seen behind Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple, in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday.
- 5 Indian and American military personnel during the 20th edition of India-USA joint military exercise 'YUDH ABHYAS', at Foreign Training Node in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.



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All Pictures PTI, AP

EXPERT VOICE

Green Fuel and Shipping Corridors: India's Chance to Shine



By
Captain Naveen S Singhal



A large container ship consumes about 120 metric tonnes (MT) of fuel each day. This amount of fuel is equivalent to the daily energy needs of about 50,000 Indian homes. Shipping has been in the spotlight as a polluter since the Conference of Parties (COP)-16 in 2010. The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by the shipping industry are equal to Japan's GHG emissions at around 3%, and as per the current trajectory, this is likely to increase to 4.5% by 2050.

Fast forward to five years, and COP-21 (2015), in its 'zero emission shipping', established these highly ambitious targets for the shipping industry to be achieved by 2030:

- Demonstrate commercially viable zero-emission ships.
- Make zero-emission fuel vessels the natural choice for ship owners.
- Build 20 ports with zero-emission carbon-neutral bunkering facilities.
- Ensure 600 large ships operate on well-to-wake carbon-neutral fuel. Well-to-wake refers to fuel extraction from the 'well' to the ship's 'wake' when sailing.
- Crew safety is a priority on ammonia, hydrogen, and methanol-fuelled ships.
- Production of 16 million metric tonnes of zero-emission carbon-neutral fuels.

There are uncertainties about fuel carriage capacity, long-distance sailing, and safety concerns for seafarers since ammonia is emerging as the most promising carbon-neutral fuel for ships in the future.

Barring a few leading ship owners like Maersk and AET (Malaysia), most other shipping organisations are waiting and watching,

hesitant to invest in dual or carbon-neutral-fuelled ships. This reluctance is primarily due to the high cost of retrofits, new designs, and increased operational expenses. On the supply side, green fuel providers are also holding back due to a lack of buyers, so the paradox with green fuel continues.

Green corridors for ships, and where is India?

Green shipping corridors are bunkering facilities established along shipping routes to supply carbon-neutral fuel at competitive international rates, with a minimum diversion in their sea passage. Ships that use liner services or fixed routes can opt for such green corridors. Ships on spot charter may still need the dual fuel option, since the trading areas may not have green corridors or green fuel bunkering facilities. Interestingly, the number of green corridors has increased significantly from 21 to 50 since the last year.

The Government of India has identified three ports for green ammonia bunkering. Paradip Port, located on the East Coast of India in Odisha; Deendayal Port, also known as Kandla Port, situated on the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat; and V.O. Chidambaranar Port, located at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. How well are these ports positioned to become preferred green fuel bunkering options for ships passing through the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, whether eastbound

or westbound?

Options such as Cochin at 10° North and Vizhinjam at 8.2° North are strategically located near the passage for East and Westbound vessels. Policymakers should explore whether and how the value chain of green fuel supply can be developed around main shipping trade routes, requiring virtually no diversion.

An equivalent to the BRICS partnership, Brazil's CSN (Companhia Siderurgica Nacional Group), operates two terminals in Port Rio. They have signed for a green corridor with Port Sines in Portugal, which will cover the stretch of the Atlantic Ocean from south to north. Similarly, Adani's Vizhinjam could join hands with Singapore for a green corridor.

The longitudinal stretch spanning 45 degrees in the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Bay of Bengal region from Aden, Yemen, to Bandar Aceh in Indonesia is about 12% of the entire globe's surface area. The Indian Government must strategically capitalise on this maritime region where they have significant influence and establish a green corridor to become a dominant player. Without meticulous planning, expedited clearances, and expert involvement, India risks missing the boat and allowing ports like Colombo to gain upper hand.

(The writer is a Marine and Shipping consultant. Views personal.)

BUREAUCRACY MATTERS

The Intense Battle for Mumbai's Top Police Positions



By
Vikrant Joshi



A few DCP positions and one Additional CP post are currently vacant, and there is an expectation that they will be filled after the Ganesh festival. In my opinion, the contenders for these positions include Dr. Sudhakar Pathare, who is DCP Thane (Zone 4), S. B. Gunjal, DCP Thane (Zone 3), and Vivek Pansare, DCP Navi Mumbai (Zone 1). If you are wondering why I have mentioned these three, read on to find out.

Dr. Sudhakar Pathare was recently transferred to Satara as SP, but the current SP, Sameer Sheikh, persuaded CM Eknath Shinde to stop the transfer—it seems possible only in Maharashtra, especially for the CM's home district! With a stay order in place, Pathare has approached a powerful Thane politician to secure a Mumbai DCP role. Given that Pathare is due for promotion in the next 3-4 months, it might be more prudent to wait for his promotion and then assign him

Three major contenders—Dr. Sudhakar Pathare, Vivek Pansare, and S.B. Gunjal—are vying for Mumbai's vacant DCP and Additional CP roles. Explore how each is leveraging personal connections and political influence to secure a top post.

a suitable position in Mumbai.

Vivek Pansare, based in Navi Mumbai, has set his sights on the Social Service Branch of the Mumbai Police rather than a minor position in Mumbai. Beyond the responsibilities listed on their website, this post involves conducting raids on hotels and pubs—arguably one of the "most profitable per night" operations in the city. This crucial role helps regulate Mumbai's nightlife and curtail illegal activities.

S.B. Gunjal is weary of the daily pressures in Thane and is eager to transfer to Mumbai as DCP. However, he's looking for a post where "aamdani atthani, kharcha nahi" applies—meaning he wants to live within his salary without the added lifestyle temptations of a high-profile zone like Mumbai Zone 9, where expenses could far exceed his earnings. He is quite adamant about being posted in Zones 6, 7, or 12, where there's less "attention" and fewer distractions.

Any posting, whether in the IAS or IPS is highly coveted for Mumbai MMR, as it is considered the power centre. Whether you're in Navi Mumbai or Thane, the influence of Mumbai remains the same. So, everyone in their lifetime once wants to be a part of the great power, and in the government posting circles, time spent here is considered a golden period for these officers.

I know of an IPS officer who has managed to retain his posting in Mumbai for more than eight years

due to his wife. A Mumbai school headmistress who enjoys the lifestyle of a westernised Mumbaikar. Unfortunately for this well-meaning IPS officer, even if he wishes to explore postings in other cities, the wife uses her connections and ensures he remains in Mumbai!

I also know of a female IPS officer in Mumbai with a reputation for being 'dangerous' in her relentless pursuit of preferred postings that have been side-posted. Her domineering nature is well-known, often causing friction with other Additional CPs. In contrast, her husband, also an IPS officer, is diligent and non-interfering, quietly focusing on his duties. Despite her efforts, her superiors seemingly ignore her demands, and one can't help but feel some sympathy for her.

Now, coming back to the three 'mahashays' from Thane and Navi Mumbai vying for Mumbai postings, they are all leveraging their connections to advance. Interestingly, their source is the same influential politician from Thane. However, with the Home Ministry now under Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, only the DGP, the Thane Commissioner, and the Home Minister must make decisions about these postings—not any politician from Thane. As the competition heats up, ensuring a fair process is crucial for selecting the most qualified candidates.

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

Sense of unity helped prevail in ACT final



New Delhi: Skipper Harmanpreet Singh credited India's recent success to strong team camaraderie, emphasising that their deep bond and willingness to "die for one another" helped them overcome China to win the Hero Asian Champions Trophy

"The gold medal in last year's Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai, the gold medal in the Hangzhou Asian Games and the bronze from the Paris 2024 Olympics have instilled a deep camaraderie within the team."

for a record-extending fifth time. India rode on Jugraj Singh's late strike to defeat China 1-0 in a tense final in Hulunbuir on Tuesday. Pakistan won the bronze medal with a 5-2 win over South Korea.

"The final was really intense; the Chinese were breathing down our necks throughout the game and made it really difficult for us to create a clear goal scoring chance," Harmanpreet said in a Hockey India release.

"But the team over the last year has built immense trust in each other. We are willing to die for one another. It was this sense of unity reassuring us that we will find a way to win the game together."

Harmanpreet said India's successful run in last year has instilled a strong belief among players. Harmanpreet, who has been shortlisted for FIH's Player-of-the-Year Award after scoring 10 goals at Paris, once again led from the front as the team remained unbeaten in the competition.

Out of India's 26 goals in the competition, Harmanpreet scored seven and all were from penalty corners.

Harmanpreet said it is now crucial for India to keep building on the success. "We are proud to have retained

our title but the work doesn't stop now," he said.

"We have areas we need to improve; we need to build depth in our squad as well. The team will head back to camp after a short break and start preparing for the tournaments ahead to make our supporters proud again," he added.

India vice-captain Vivek Sagar Prasad said the Olympics bronze medal made India the "team to beat" in the tournament.

"All the teams in the group stage were tough to play against. The bronze medal from the Olympics painted a target on our backs; we were the team to beat," he said.

"But every single person on the team stepped up to make it seem like we were cruising past our opponents. The youngsters slotted in seamlessly, Krishan and Suraj alternated to bail us out of tricky situations."

"The defenders remained reliable, and the midfielders and forwards ran riot on the pitch. All in all, it was very enjoyable," he added. **-PTI**

Malvika stuns Paris Olympics medallist Tunjung

Changzhou: India's Malvika Bansod pulled off a sensational straight-game victory over Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the women's singles opening round of the China Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old Indian, ranked 43rd in the world, displayed immense grit as she saved three game points in the opening game to defeat the world No. 7 Indonesian 26-24 21-19 in a 46-minute match, marking the biggest win of her career.

Malvika, a B. Tech graduate in computer science from SRM University in Chennai, will next take on Scotland's Kristy Gilmour, a two-time Commonwealth Games medallist.

She was the sole Indian bright spot in the women's singles as compatriots Aakarshi Kashyap and Samiya Imad Farooqui exited in the first round.

Kohli, Gambhir bond over love for Tests

Chennai: Two feisty cricketers who love to get in the face of the opposition to get the best out of themselves. Gautam Gambhir and Virat Kohli were not expected to have a smooth relationship when the former was roped in as India's head coach.

But the two have decided to take the spice out of the chatter surrounding them by sharing a laugh and some thoughts on their aggressive personalities, love for Test cricket and similar aspirations growing up.

"Here we are putting an end to all the masala and spice," said Kohli as he interviewed head coach Gambhir for bcci.tv ahead of the first Test against Bangladesh here.

"That is a good start to the conversation," the southpaw said in response.

Gambhir played with an aggressive mindset all through his career and Kohli continues to play the game with the intensity of a teenager. Considering



that, their on-field confrontations in the IPL over the years were hardly a surprise.

In the insightful chat, the two strong personalities looked back at their days in Delhi and Indian cricket.

The conversation flowed after they watched footage of the 2011 World Cup final where Gambhir played a match-winning knock and shared an 83-run stand with his younger teammate Kohli.

"We have come a long way. From playing together for a long time, being part of the same dressing to having ups and downs," said Kohli before Gambhir added that everything that happened between them was in "good spirits".

Mbappé starts new Champions League campaign

Madrid: Kylian Mbappé renewed his quest to win a European title by scoring for Real Madrid in his first Champions League match with the club. Mbappé found the open net after a cross by Rodrygo just seconds into the second half of Madrid's 3-1 win over Stuttgart at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

"It was a great night," Mbappé said. "It was a tough match, as they always are in the Champions League, but it was important to start with



the win at home."

Mbappé celebrated with a gesture in which he appeared to blow candles and sending a kiss. Spanish media said it was to honor his mother's 50th birthday.

The goal gave defending champion Madrid a 1-0 lead before Stuttgart equalized with Deniz Undav in the 68th. Antonio Rüdiger put Madrid back in front in the 83rd and substitute Endrick closed the scoring deep into stoppage time to seal the victory for the defending champions.

It was Mbappé's 49th Champions League goal, putting him in the top 10 of top scorers all time in the competition. He has scored in three consecutive matches and has five goals

in seven games with Madrid so far in all competitions.

"I can do more," Mbappé said. "I'm feeling better match after match."

Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois was named the man of the match as he was key to keep Stuttgart from capitalizing on its many scoring opportunities.

Mbappé had been mostly quiet until scoring, with one of his clearest chances coming in the 25th minute after he entered the area and had his low shot was saved.

Harmalkar beats Deepan Mistry

Mumbai: Surendra Harmalkar on Wednesday defeated Deepan Mistry by 90 votes to become an Apex Council member of the Mumbai Cricket Association here.

Harmalkar got 185 votes against Mistry's 95, with one vote being declared invalid.

Harmalkar succeeds Abhay Hadap in the Apex Council as the latter is now the secretary of the cricket governing body after winning the election earlier this month.

Ponting joins Punjab Kings as head coach

New Delhi: Australian great Ricky Ponting was on Tuesday appointed head coach of Punjab Kings, replacing compatriot Trevor Bayliss in the under-performing IPL franchise.

The former Australian captain has made the switch to Punjab Kings from Delhi Capitals, a team he was part of for seven years.

"Ponting signed the contract yesterday and it is for four years. He will need that much time to build the squad. Ponting will take a call on the rest of the sup-



port staff," an IPL source told PTI.

Under Ponting, Delhi Capitals became a force to be reckoned with though the elusive title never came despite the team reaching the final in 2020. He has also coached Mumbai Indians.

Punjab too have never won the IPL since the

league's inception in 2008 and the four co-owners will be hoping the World Cup winning captain takes them all the way. Punjab's sole final appearance came way back in 2014 and they are one team which is often criticised for frequent chopping and changing. They have failed to finish even in the top five in the last seven editions and ended ninth out of 10 teams earlier this year. Bayliss was in charge of the side for the past two seasons with now retired Shikhar Dhanwan as its captain.

Asian Games medallist Kiran fails dope test

New Delhi: Asian Games bronze-winner shot-putter Kiran Baliyan has been provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for testing positive for a banned substance as a slew of athletes across sports figured in the latest list of dope offenders.

Surprisingly, Olympic medallist Bajrang Punia's name is missing from the latest update though he figured in a previous list issued by the NADA recently.

The NADA had, on June 23, suspended Punia for a second time, three weeks after its Anti-Disciplinary Doping panel (ADDP) had revoked his suspension on the grounds that he was not served a "notice of charge" by the national body.

NADA had on April 23 suspended the Tokyo Olympics bronze-medallist wrestler for his refusal to give his urine sample for dope test during the

Bajrang Punia's name missing from the list

selection trials held in Sonapat on March 10. The sport's global governing body United Wrestling World (UWW) had also suspended him.

Bajrang, who, along with Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik, spearheaded a long protest against ousted Wrestling Federation of India President Brij

Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly sexually harassing women grapplers, had appealed against the provisional suspension and the ADPP had revoked it on May 31 till NADA issues the notice of charge. The 25-year-old Baliyan, who had become only the second Indian to win a medal in women's

shot put in the Asian Games at Hangzhou last year, returned positive for metandienone, an anabolic androgenic steroid banned at all times.

She had won gold at the 2023 National Inter-State Championships and a silver in the 2024 Federation Cup. She stares at a maximum ban period of four years, if she is proven guilty. Hammer thrower Manju Bala, who had won a bronze in 2014 Incheon Asian Games, also figured in the list. She tested positive

for dehydrochloromethyl-testosterone (steroid) and SARMS LGD-4033 (ligandrol). Shalini Chaudhary, who won silver at the Federation Cup this year, also tested positive for the steroid metandienone. Long-distance runner Chavi Yadav tested positive for drostanolone, an anabolic-androgenic

steroid. Other top Indian track and field athletes like javelin thrower D P Manu, quarter-miler Deepanshi and middle-distance runner Parvej Khan have been serving provisional suspensions.

In wrestling, 2023 U20 World Championships bronze medallist Arju tested positive for stanozolol. Badminton makes a rare entry with doubles player Krishna Prasad Garaga, a member of the Indian team that won gold in 2022 Thomas Cup, testing positive for Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG). Wushu players T Menaka Devi, Manjinder Singh and Goutam Sharma figured in the list as the sport has seen a surge in doping cases recently.

Bhupendra Singh Byadwal (pencak silat), Ashish Phugat (rowing) and Ribason Singh Ningthoujam (canoe) are also among those who have been provisionally suspended by the NADA.

Roma fires Daniele De Rossi after going winless

Rome: Roma fired coach Daniele De Rossi on Wednesday in a move that was surprising despite the Giallorossi going winless in their opening four Italian league matches.

De Rossi, a former Roma captain, was hired in January to replace the fired Jose Mourinho and impressed so much during the second half of last season that he was given a contract extension in June through 2026-27.

"The club's decision is made in the best interests of the team, to get back on the desired path as soon as possible at a time when the season is still in its early stages," Roma said. "A heartfelt thank you to Daniele, who will always be at home at the Giallorossi club, for the work done in recent months with passion and dedication."

Tvesa, Pranavi lead Indian challenge in Spain



Dénia (Spain): Tvesa Malik and Pranavi Urs will spearhead the Indian challenge at the La Sella Open, starting Thursday, as the Ladies European Tour (LET) resumes action after a break for the Solheim Cup.

Tvesa and Pranavi, who have had modest seasons, will be joined by Ridhima Dilawari and invitee Seher Atwal. Diksha Dagar has taken a break while Vani Kapoor and Amandeep Drall are playing on the domestic Hero WPG Tour. Seher, a winner on the

domestic Hero WPGT like Tvesa, Pranavi and Ridhima, will go out on April Angurasaranee of Thailand and Emily Penttila of Finland, while Tvesa plays with Blanca Fernandez of Spain and Tiffany Chan of Hong Kong at the La Sella Golf Resort.

Pranavi tees off with Dorteia Forbrigd of Norway and Agathe Sauzon of France from the first tee as will Ridhima Dilawari with Linda Osala of Finland and Kim Metraux of Switzerland.

India look to spin a new story but tricky Bangladesh no pushovers

By G Unnikrishnan

Chennai: Littered largely with lopsided contests, India's hopes of walking down that familiar path will hinge on sorting an uncharacteristic batting infirmity against spin when they face Bangladesh in a two-Test series starting here from Thursday.

Bangladesh, who are fresh from a recent 2-0 drubbing of Pakistan, are no pushovers this time and this will add to India's list of concerns as they look to take that bold first step into a long season that features 10 Tests, including a possible berth in the World Test Championship Final.

India's 40-4 (win-loss) home record in the last decade is awe-inducing but there is an ever-little crack, which is getting more pronounced in the past three years, particularly in the case of star batter Virat Kohli.

Kohli was a constant in India's bull run at home since 2015, crunching runs for fun against all comers. But since 2021, his numbers against spin have dipped - an average of 30 in 15

Tests in this period.

This is not to hold against Kohli's extraordinary qualities as a batter, but it's an area that the champion cricketer himself will certainly want to improve upon.

Skipper Rohit Sharma has also been prolific in dismantling spin, especially since his promotion as an opener in 2017 against South Africa. He averaged over 90 against tweakers.

But since 2021, it has come down to a less flashy 44 in 15 matches. KL Rahul, a batter who is backed by Rohit as equally proficient against spin and pace, offers a slightly bleaker picture.

In the last three years, he has played five Tests at home but against the slower kind, the elegant right-hander's average has taken a beating and stands at 23.40.

Collectively, these stats need to be taken as an indication of waning skills but, perhaps, also as a reminder to refocus on perfecting the art of playing spin, often the core strength of batters from this part of the world. Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate



had stressed on this point recently after India's debacle against Sri Lankan spinners in a three-match ODI series which they lost 0-2.

There are bright points too in Rishabh Pant (five matches, average 70), Shubman Gill (10 matches, average 56) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (five matches, average 115).

However, the numbers of Jaiswal and Gill are constituted by their breakaway series against England earlier this year, but the Three Lions did not have an experienced spin attack to lean upon.

In contrast, Bangladesh have much more potent spinners in left-armers Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who can hurt any opposition on their day.

Here, India will bank on the firepower and innovative approach of Pant to unsettle and eventually take down the visiting spinners as the Delhiite is expected to return to Test cricket for the first time since his horrific car accident in 2022. In the bowling department, Jasprit

Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are certain to figure in the first eleven, and it's as formidable a unit as one would get irrespective of conditions.

India will ponder over whether to go with a third seamer in either Akash Deep or Yash Dayal, considering that the MA Chidambaram Stadium may offer a red-soil pitch, or field a third spinner in Kuldeep Yadav as is the prevailing trend in a home Test.

India can also consider the option of giving another run to Axar Patel as it can give a fillip to late order batting against a Bangladesh attack that also has two express quicks in Nahid Rana and Hasan Mahmud.

New head coach Gautam Gambhir too might have a small but significant personal goal in front of him, that is to start the first Test series under his tutelage on a winning note, after returning from Sri Lanka with a tad underwhelming 1-1 record from a white ball tour.

An obsessed pursuit of victory, he will want to set it right. **-PTI**