

THE PERFECT VOICE



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NCP leader Baba Siddique shot dead

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Nationalist Congress Party leader Baba Siddique, 66, was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Bandra East on Saturday evening.

Siddique had sustained multiple serious injuries and was admitted to the Lilavati Hospital. According to a source, the shooters fired three bullets at Siddique when he was passing by his MLA son Zeeshan's office at Nirmal Nagar.

"Someone was bursting fire crackers at the time. The shooters took advantage of the fire crackers' noise and fired the bullets. One bullet was stuck in his chest," he source said.

The police have reportedly caught one of the three shooters. Two other shooters escaped from the scene.



Siddique, the former minister and three-time Bandra West MLA, had quit Congress in February ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, and joined the

NCP led by deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Zeeshan is the Bandra East MLA.

"Two to three rounds were fired. Further probe is underway as teams have rushed to the area," a police officer said.

Siddique was provided Y-category security after he received threats a fortnight ago. The motive of his assassination is not yet clear. However, a source close to him said that the killing could be a result of rivalry in a Slum Rehabilitation project in the area.

Baba Siddique has served as minister of state for food & civil supplies, labor, food and drug administration (FDA) and consumer protection in the erstwhile Congress-undivided NCP government in the early 2000.

Saibaba dies after health complications



New Delhi: Former Delhi University professor G.N. Saibaba, who was acquitted in a Maoism case, passed away late Saturday evening following post-operative complications after undergoing surgery for gallbladder stones. He was 57.

He was undergoing treatment at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad.

The wheelchair-bound Saibaba was admitted to NIMS 10 days ago due to ill health. His aides said he suffered a heart attack around 8 pm and was declared dead at 8:30 pm. On March 5, he was acquitted by the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, following his arrest on May 9, 2014, in an alleged Maoist links case. He was released from Nagpur Central Jail on March 7.

A division bench of Justices Vinay Joshi and Valmiki SA Menezes set aside the life imprisonment sentence imposed on him and also acquitted five others accused in the case. The bench said it was acquitting all the accused as the prosecution failed to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt against them.

WHO IS BETTER EQUIPPED TO HIT THE TARGET?



President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi hold bow and arrow during celebration of the 'Dussehra' (Vijayadashami) festival organised by Shri Dharmik Leela Committee, Red Fort ground in New Delhi on Saturday.

Pics: PTI



Restoration work underway after an express train rammed into a stationary train on Friday at Kavaraipettai in Tiruvallur district on Saturday.

Pic: PTI

OTT platforms cause of moral corruption: RSS

By Correspondent

Nagpur: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday said the content on OTT platforms was one of the reasons for "moral corruption" and needed regulation through law.

Speaking at the customary Vijayadashmi rally at the Reshimbagh ground here, he stressed the need for value education.

"The kind of things shown on OTT platforms are so disgusting that talking about it too would be indecent. Hence, I have said there is a need to regulate it through law because it is also one of the big reasons for moral corruption," he said.

The National Education Policy has recognised the need for value education and devised the curriculum accordingly, but it will not be effective without the

teachers setting an example, and hence a new system of teacher orientation will have to be created, Bhagwat said.

Social media users too should be mindful that it is used to unite society and impart values, and not for breaking up society and disseminating obscenity and indecency, the Sangh chief said.

The foundation of a child's character is laid be-

tween the ages of 3 to 12 years, and it is shaped through education at home by watching the behaviour of the elders, the atmosphere and friendly conversations at home, he said.

Qualities such as self-esteem, patriotism, morality, sense of purpose and sense of duty are formed during this period of life, Bhagwat said, adding, "we need to understand this and start this work from our own home."

Gang rape accused in police custody

Pune: A court on Saturday remanded a 28-year-old man arrested in the Pune gang rape case to police custody till October 15.

The man was arrested on Friday morning, eight days after a 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three men on the night of October 3 in the Bopdev Ghat area on the outskirts of the city during an outing with a male friend. The assailants beat up her friend.

"The man was remanded in police custody till October 15 after he was produced before the court today. We are conducting further investigation," a police officer said.

The accused, originally from Madhya Pradesh, lives in the Undri area of Pune city. A history-sheeter, he has multiple cases of robbery registered against him in Pune district, according to police.

Police are yet to trace two other men, who also had a criminal record in theft cases, involved in the gang rape. About 700 police personnel were deployed to identify and trace the culprits, Home Minister Devendra Fadnis had said while congratulating police for the success.

US airstrikes target militant camps in Syria



Beirut: A series of US airstrikes targeted several camps run by the Islamic State group in Syria in an operation the US military said will disrupt the extremists from conducting attacks in the region and beyond.

The US Central Command said the airstrikes were conducted Friday, without specifying in which parts of Syria. About 900 US troops have been deployed in eastern Syria alongside the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces that were instrumental in the fight against IS militants.

Despite their defeat, attacks by IS sleeper cells in Iraq and Syria have been on the rise over the past years, with scores of people killed or wounded.

The Islamic State group seized territory at the height of its power and declared a caliphate in large

parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014, but was defeated in Iraq in 2017. In March 2019, the extremists lost the last sliver of land they once controlled in eastern Syria.

The US military said the strikes will disrupt the ability of the Islamic State group to plan, organize and conduct attacks against the United States, its allies and partners, and civilians throughout the region and beyond.

It said battle damage assessments were underway and there were no civilian casualties.

Last month, Iraq's military said that Iraqi forces and American troops killed a senior IS commander who was wanted by the United States, as well as several other prominent militants.

At its peak, the group ruled an area half the size of the United Kingdom.

-AP

Priority to unite people: Farooq

Srinagar: National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said the first priority for the new government in Jammu and Kashmir would be to unite the people of the two regions of the Union Territory and get rid of the "hated" that was "pushed" in the Assembly polls.

He also said restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood would be on the new government's agenda.

"Our first priority will be to unite Jammu and Kashmir and remove the hatred that was pushed in this election," Abdullah told reporters after participating in the Dussehra celebrations here.

The NC-Congress alliance has staked claim to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir after securing a clear majority in the polls. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and several Independent legislators have extended support to the coalition.

Chief minister-designate Omar Abdullah met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday and requested him to fix the date for the swearing-in.



Sanju Samson celebrates his century during the third and final T20 International cricket match between India and Bangladesh in Hyderabad on Saturday.

Pic: PTI

At 297, India record highest score in T20I

Hyderabad: A pillaging maiden T20 International hundred by Sanju Samson turbo-charged India to a record-breaking 297 for 6, their highest total in the format, against Bangladesh in the third and final match here on Saturday.

This was also the second highest total in the history of T20Is, going past Afghanistan's 278/3 against Ireland in Dehradun in 2019.

India's previous highest T20I total was 260/5 made

against Sri Lanka in 2017 in Indore.

The hosts have already taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series after wins in Gwalior and New Delhi but the academic nature of the match did not hinder the belligerence of Indians.

It was channelised by Samson (111, 47 balls, 11x4, 8x6), who hammered the second fastest T20I century by an Indian after Rohit Sharma (35 balls), and Suryakumar (75, 35 balls, 8x4, 5x6), biffing 173

runs during an electrifying second wicket stand.

After electing to bat, India lost opener Abhishek Sharma (4) early in the innings, falling to a poorly-timed pull off Tanzim Hasan, but what followed was pure mayhem.

It is quite tough to put to shade an innings of Suryakumar in T20Is but Samson did that with a knock of rare brilliance.

Perhaps, stung by the modest outings in the first two matches of this series, Samson strode out

with purpose.

The changed attitude found an immediate on-field expression as the right-hander pummelled pacer Taskin Ahmed for four consecutive fours -- two cover drives and as many flicks -- in the second over of the innings.

It was the perfect teaser for the blockbuster action that unfolded in the next 10.3 overs.

No bowler was spared during the batting extravaganza that was based on the single-minded and

simple philosophy of naked aggression.

It was so glaring in the 10th over when leg-spinner Rishad Hossain came to bowl. Hossain erred in line and length and Samson creamed him for five consecutive sixes.

But the most stunning shot in Samson's innings was a six off the backfoot off pacer Mustafizur Rahman. The Kerala man, waiting deep inside the crease, judged the slower ball to perfection, and whacked it over extra

cover for a maximum, eliciting a quick shake of head from the bowler.

Soon, he brought up his hundred off 40 balls with a boundary off off-spinner Mahedi Hasan and celebrated with a roar and punch before getting melted into a tight embrace by his captain.

Suryakumar too had his own moment when he smashed Tanzim for three fours and a six while reaching his fifty in 23 balls.

-PTI

Conspiracies testing nation's resolve: Bhagwat

The RSS chief says 'Deep State', 'wokeism' and 'cultural Marxist' are declared enemies of all cultural traditions

By Correspondent

Nagpur: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday said India has become stronger and more respected in the world with enhanced credibility in the last few years but sinister conspiracies are testing the country's resolve.

Attempts to disturb and destabilise the country seem to be gaining momentum from all directions, while a narrative is being spread in Bangladesh to portray India as a threat, he said.

Addressing the annual Vijayadasahmi rally of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Nagpur, Bhagwat said firmness of personal and national character becomes the foundation of strength for the victory of auspiciousness and righteousness, whether the situation is favourable or not.

"Everyone feels Bharat has become stronger and more respected in the world with enhanced credibility in the last few years. A country becomes great due to the national character of its people. This year is important as RSS steps into its centenary year," he



said.

Besides hopes and aspirations, challenges and problems also exist in India, he said.

"We should draw inspiration from personalities like Ahilyabai Holkar, Dayananda Saraswati, Birsa Munda and many more who devoted their lives to the country's welfare,

dharma, culture and society," said the RSS chief.

The ongoing Hamas-Israel war is a cause for concern about how far the conflict will spread, he said.

Bhagwat expressed satisfaction that the recent assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held peacefully.

"Due to the people, gov-

ernment and administration, the country's image, power, fame and position on the world stage is growing. But sinister conspiracies have appeared to destabilise and disturb the country," he said.

Bhagwat said it is expected that certain powers whose vested interests are affected by India's rise in the world would let it grow only within certain limits. Despite their claim to be democratic and committed to world peace, they do not hesitate to attack others or overthrow their democratically elected governments through "illegal and/or violent means," he said.

Similar evil attempts can be seen around India, especially in the border and tribal areas, he said.

According to Bhagwat, a narrative is being spread in neighbouring Bangladesh, which recently witnessed a

massive political upheaval, that India is a threat and they should join Pakistan as a defence against Bharat. Who is spreading such a narrative, he asked.

The RSS chief said a tyrannical fundamentalist nature exists in Bangladesh. A sword of danger hangs over the heads of minorities, including Hindus. Hindus have now come out to defend themselves, he said, adding that they will need the help of all those favouring humanity and harmony, especially the Indian government and fellow Hindus from all over the world.

"That is why infiltration from Bangladesh into Bharat and the population imbalance caused by it has become a matter of serious concern even among the common people," said Bhagwat.

"Being unorganised and

weak is like inviting atrocities by the wicked. Hindus need to be united," he stressed.

Bhagwat said 'Deep State', 'wokeism' and 'cultural Marxist' are declared enemies of all cultural traditions.

In a multi-party democracy, petty selfish interests have become more important than mutual harmony, pride and integrity of the nation. In the competition among parties, these key aspects are considered secondary, he said.

The attempts to create divisiveness on caste, language and province lines have become bigger than national interest. Their modus operandi is to stand in support of one party and advance their destructive agenda in the name of "alternative politics," he said.

Bhagwat also raised concerns over "unprovoked

massive stone pelting" on Ganesh immersion processions during recent Ganeshotsav and condemned acts like attacking a particular section of society, resorting to violence without reason and trying to create fear.

There is a need to remain fully alert and prepared and to identify these evil tendencies and those who support them, he said.

The first condition for a healthy and able society is harmony and mutual goodwill among different sections and it cannot be achieved through some symbolic programme, he said, describing tolerance and harmony as Indian traditions.

"Everyone should participate in mutual festivals and they should become festivals of the entire society," said the RSS chief.

Bhagwat described the

Kolkata rape-murder as shameful and said attempts were made to protect criminals. The nexus of crime, politics and poisonous culture is ruining society, he said.

He also emphasised the importance of environment conservation and pitched for a developmental path based on Indian tradition. "Do not import what is made in the country," he said, battling for 'swadeshi' behaviour.

In its centenary year, RSS, which was founded on September 27, 1925, will take up issues like harmony and goodwill in society, and environment, the awakening of values, civic discipline, self-esteem, restraint and discretion in thought, speech and action, organised strength and spotless character as the basis of peace and progress, he added.



Tension erupts during RSS procession in Ratnagiri

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Tension erupted in Ratnagiri city during a procession of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) after members of a minority community allegedly shouted slogans, police said on Saturday.

The police have registered two cases following the incident in the Konkarnagar area on Friday night, an officer from

Ratnagiri city police said. "We have registered two cases based on complaints. Five accused have been identified, and we have issued notices to them. No one has been arrested so far," he said.

When the RSS took out a procession (path sanchalan) in the area on the eve of the Dussehra festival, people from Muslim community shouted slogans that allegedly hurt

religious sentiments, the officer said.

He said there was no violence, but several people gathered at the police station late last night and demanded first information reports against persons involved in the incident.

Cases have been registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and a probe is underway, the officer added.

CRIME WATCH

Man held for killing wife

Thane: A 29-year-old man from Thane city has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife, apparently suspecting her of infidelity, an officer said on Saturday. Bhaskar Narayan Sadavarte, a resident of Siddeshwar Talao locality, strangled his wife Pramila (27) on October 9, he said. Sadavarte was trying to escape to Nanded when police tracked him down and arrested him from Kasara in Thane district, said police spokesman Saitesh Salvi. The kin of the victim told the police that Sadavarte killed her as he suspected she was not loyal to him, the official said.

Man stabs wife to death

Thane: A 41-year-old man from Maharashtra's Thane district has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife over the custody of their children, an officer said. The couple - Nadeem Khan and his wife Amrin (36) - from Mira Road has two children, aged 2 and 10, and was caught in a dispute over their kids' custody, the official said. The woman had gone to the police station to seek some help on Friday. Since the cops were busy, she told them she would return after some time and went to the nearby school to meet her child. On her way to the school, Khan picked up a quarrel with Amrin and stabbed her to death, said the officer from Mira Road police station.

Three held for kidnapping baby

Thane: The police in Thane rescued a five-month-old baby boy within hours of his abduction and arrested three persons on Saturday, an officer said. The infant was abducted from under the Rabodi bridge, where he was sleeping with his mother late on Friday night, an officer said. The Thane Nagar police registered a case under section 137 (kidnapping) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and launched a probe. Based on the CCTV footage from the area and technical inputs, the police zeroed in on the accused and rescued the baby within four hours of the abduction. The accused have been identified as Javed Ajmat Ali Nhavi (35), Jayshree Yakub Naik (45) and Surekha Rajesh Khandagle (34), he said.

Pankaja promises to take cognisance if Dalits, OBCs are 'troubled'

By Correspondent

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Ahead of Maharashtra assembly polls, BJP leader Pankaja Munde on Saturday reached out to Dalits and Other Backward Classes (OBC), vowing to take cognisance if they are "troubled".

Munde, who lost the Lok Sabha polls on her home turf Beed district, the epicentre of Maratha protests led by activist Manoj Jarange, was addressing her annual Dussehra rally at Sawargaon Ghat, the birthplace of Sant Bhagwanbaba, a saint of her Vanjari community.

State agriculture minister and her cousin Dhananjay Munde and Laxman Hake, who had protested opposing any potential dilution of the OBC reservation, were among those who spoke at the rally.

Munde expressed her concerns over the rising caste schism within society.

"If a vehicle hits someone, people ask the caste of the driver. People want to know the caste of a person who has committed brutality against a small child



and killed her. We don't want such a society," she said.

The BJP national secretary warned that they would take cognisance if the poor, Dalits, OBCs and others are "troubled" in the state.

Munde said she inherited the legacy of her father and late BJP stalwart Gopinath Munde and thanked people for giving her respect despite her electoral setback.

"To reciprocate for the respect I received, I will tour the state. The poor are waiting for good days by keeping their faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Now, we must play our cards," she said.

She also appealed to la-

bourers from her area involved in the sugar industry not to leave for work before casting their votes. Sugarcane cutting season starts in October in Maharashtra.

Elections to the 288-member state assembly will likely be held in November. BJP is a partner in the ruling Mahayuti coalition, also comprising Ajit Pawar-led NCP and Shiv Sena headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"I never discriminated between the villages that voted for me and those that didn't during fund allocation. A mistake happened this time (in Lok Sabha polls), but we want to overcome that failure," said the former state minister.

Referring to the Lok Sabha polls in Beed, where she lost to Congress' Bajrang Sonawane by about 6,500 votes, Munde said, "I'm not desperate for a post. Five persons lost their lives (by suicide) before I became an MLC. Even though I don't hold any post, I will not abandon those who have supported me."

NCP leader Dhananjay Munde said Gopinath Munde and Pankaja Munde struggled for the people, not for themselves. "Today, people from all communities are here. The crowd here today shows that we are all united," he said.

Without taking the name of Jarange, who incidentally held a Dussehra rally at Narayangad in Beed dis-

This event was particularly memorable as it marked the reunion of the cousins, Pankaja and Dhananjay after a gap of 12 years. In 2009, Dhananjay had not attended the event for the first time since Pankaja's father the late Gopinath Munde had nominated her for the Assembly election. Pankaja took the stage to introduce her son, Aryaman Palwe, to the crowd. She expressed her deep love for her followers, emphasising that they are more important to her than her own son.

Congress MLA Sulbha Khodke suspended

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Congress on Saturday suspended Sulbha Khodke, MLA from Amravati, for six years for "anti-party activities" ahead of assembly elections.

Khodke was one of the seven MLAs who cross-voted in the legislative council elections which resulted in the defeat of PWP leader Jayant Patil, a candidate of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi alliance of the Opposition, earlier this year. There were numerous complaints about Khodke working against the party, said state Congress chief Nana Patole in a statement.

The decision to suspend her was taken on the instructions of the party's Maharashtra in-charge Ramesh Chennithala, he said.

Khodke's husband is a close aide of deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. She is likely to join the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, sources said.



Jarange appeals for 'change' ahead of elections

By Correspondent

Mumbai: In an indirect appeal to his followers to vote against the Mahayuti in the upcoming Assembly election the Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil asked for a "change".

Jarange-Patil addressed his first-ever Dussehra rally at Narayan Gad in his home district Beed on Saturday. The rally was attended by lakhs of his followers. The rally was politically significant as it was held a few days ahead of the announcement of the Assembly elections.



"We need a change and promise me you will do it," Jarange-Patil appealed without taking

any party's name. The speech is considered as his indirect support to the Maharashtra Vikas



Aghadi (MVA). Jarange-Patil has been expressing his disappointment with the Mahayuti government for its "failure" in bringing the Maratha community in the ambit of Other Backward Class (OBC). Earlier this month, after ending his sixth hunger strike, he had warned the Mahayuti government that if "rightful inclusion" of Maratha community is not granted before the model code of conduct kicks in, then

those in power will not be spared.

It was in August when Jarange Patil had announced to his followers that there is no option but to get political power if they wanted a reservation. The activist said although he does not wish to enter politics, the necessity to secure reservation for the Maratha community might compel him to do so.

Jarange-Patil was expected to announce his political plans at the Dussehra rally. Although he did not speak much over his election strategy, he urged the sea of people around him to bring "a change" in Maharashtra.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Whether he (Mohan Bhagwat) is opposing or supporting it, diversity is here. They have been trying to make this country uniform.

'One nation, one leader', 'one nation, one election', 'one nation, one language', 'one nation, one clothing', 'one nation, one food'."



Pawan Khera, Leader, Congress

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: In a confident and aggressive address, Chief Minister Ekanth Shinde made a strong appeal to his party workers based on the Hindutva and several development scheme launched by his government in past two years and expressed the confidence that his government should return to power with a thumping majority.

"We freed Shiv Sena from those who betrayed Balasaheb Thackeray's ideals," Shinde stressed as he came down heavily against Uddhav Thackeray over his distaste for Hindutva ideals and his failures in handling the state administration and rampant corruption during his term as Chief Minister and for his failure to get any respect for his party within the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

"It was Balasaheb (Thackeray) who roared 'Garv Se Kaho Hum Hindu Hain'. But, now some people have grown allergic to the word Hindu. They are ashamed to call themselves Hindu. They are hesitating while calling Balasaheb HinduhridaySamrat. Those are like pebbles born out of a diamond. We have freed the Shiv Sena from such people who betrayed the thoughts of Balasaheb. Hence this Dussehra rally of the Azad (free) Shiv Sena is being held at the Azad Maidan," Shinde said as he



Some people have grown allergic to Hindu: Shinde

began his address.

While describing himself as the Chief Minister who has been working tirelessly for people by being among the people, he also taunted Uddhav Thackeray by saying, "This CM goes to roads to meet people and doesn't shut himself away in his home." While explaining the reasons behind his rebellion, Shinde said, "Balasaheb always taught us not to tolerate injustice. Hence, we took the decision. Had we not resorted to rebellion the true Shiv Sainiks would have been dishonoured and

decimated. Maharashtra would have gone back in years."

Shinde also indicated that he is there to survive in the game for a long time. "Earlier everyone thought that the Shinde government would fall in 2-3 months but the government completed 2 years. We have taken the state to number one on several counts. Had the MVA government been there in place, Maharashtra would have been left far behind," he said.

"When our government came, they kept giving

deadlines that our government would collapse. But this Eknath Shinde was enough for them," he said.

"If we hadn't taken that step, true Shiv Sainiks would have been degraded. After coming to power, we have made Maharashtra number 1 in investments and FDI," he said.

The Chief Minister further took a jibe at Uddhav stating that he is repeatedly visiting Delhi, pleading to be made the Chief Minister. "If we hadn't rebelled, the only news would have been that 'Babu woke up, and Babu went to sleep' (targeting Uddhav Thackeray). But now, he is roaming around every street, going to Delhi, pleading to be made the Chief Minister," he said.

Shinde said that when he visits the national capital, it's for the developmental work and not to "beg for the chief ministership".

"When we go to Delhi, it's for development. We don't go to Delhi to beg to be made Chief Minister."

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: Ahead of the crucial Maharashtra Assembly elections to be held later this year, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray sounded the poll bugle during the Dussehra rally at the historic Shivaji Park on Saturday.

Blasting the Eknath Shinde led Mahayuti government, Thackeray said, "This is not an easy fight. They have the power, they have central forces behind them, and with all their might, they want to finish me. But they don't know that I am not alone — the people of Maharashtra are with me".

"The Mahayuti government built the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj only for votes and that statue collapsed, but I want to tell you and promise you that when we come to power, we will build a temple of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in every district of Maharashtra. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a vote bank for them, but for us he is God. I respect RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, but I don't like his views. He is saying 'come together to save Hindutva, why didn't you or Modi save Hindutva in the last 10 years?'"

He remembered Ratan Tata and recalled a conversation wherein, he claimed, Tata had said, "I have JRD's legacy. You have Balasaheb's legacy. Every time I had to make a decision, I used to ask, what would JRD have done? I thought to myself, JRD had seen me work for all the years and had trusted me. Your story is also similar. You do what you deem fit. That is what Balasaheb has trusted you for".

Uddhav's son, MLA Aaditya Thackeray addressed the traditionally important and politically heavyweight Dussehra rally. He came down heavily on the Maharashtra government. He

They have power, want to finish me: Uddhav



said, "No jobs available in Maharashtra at present. The youth are educated, but unemployed. This government is only interested in doing corruption in various ways. Airbus has gone to Gujarat. Bulk Drug Park has been sent by this gov-

ernment to Gujarat. Medical drugs park has been sent from Raigad to Gujarat. We need to stop this. Because if they come to power, they will take even the Mantralaya to Gujarat".

"If you ask me what our priority is for our govern-

ment, it will be only one thing - giving jobs to the youth. I want to ask you. I am to fight for Maharashtra. Will you fight for the State with me? They have backstabbed my father. But let them attack us whichever way, we will fight. Let us take this torch in our hands and fight," he added.

The Sena made a full-fledged attempt to create the atmosphere prior to the rally. In its teaser, the Shiv Sena (UBT) talks about saving Maharashtra's pride and burying "traitors", a reference to MLAs who rebelled against Uddhav Thackeray, leading to the collapse of his government in Maharashtra.

RSS should introspect

Thackeray said the RSS should think whether today's "hybrid BJP" is acceptable to it. He said the BJP should be ashamed of calling itself "Bharatiya." He also compared it to the Kauravas, accusing it of showing arrogance.

Thackeray also promised to build temples of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in every district of the state after coming to power.



Ten held for duping people of Rs 1.47 cr online



Mumbai: Mumbai police's regional cyber cell has arrested 10 persons from different parts of the country for alleged involvement in five cases in which victims cumulatively lost Rs 1.47 crore, an official said.

The victims were lured into investing in share markets through a fintech company, after which the money was laundered through hawala channels and a web of fraudulently created bank accounts, the official said. Those held include Jayesh Unni (34), Arbaz Samir Khan (26) and Shailesh Purshottamdas Patel (53) from Navi Mumbai, Ajay Kumar Sukhdev Karche (51) from Malad, Amit Ram Singh (43) from Delhi, Hitesh Surat Singh (29) from Haryana, Nitin Chendwankar (47), Rajesh Sonawane (51) and Uday Salvi (47) from Mumbai, the official said. They were remanded in police custody and further probe into this online racket is underway.

Raj appeals for revenge against exploitation

By Swapnil R Mishra

Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray, while addressing the occasion of Dussehra, urged voters to grab the upcoming assembly elections as an opportunity if they want to take charge or control of their future.

Thackeray used the festive occasion to call for political upheaval in Maharashtra, urging citizens to "remove the weapons from the Shami tree" - a symbolic battle cry. He appealed to the people to take revenge against the political class that has allegedly exploited them for years, implying it's time for change.

Thackeray's podcast message on Dussehra is a powerful call to action. He begins by extending heartfelt greetings to all, acknowledging the significance of Dussehra as one of the most auspicious days of the year. However, he quickly shifts his focus to the plight of Maharashtra, emphasizing that while people exchange Shami tree leaves as a symbol of gold, the state's true wealth has been exploited for years.

He also criticised the ruling parties for their failure



to drive meaningful progress, urging citizens to demand more from their leaders in the upcoming elections.

"Infrastructure development alone doesn't define progress. While roads and flyovers are essential, they don't address the core issues. Similarly, widespread access to smartphones and gadgets isn't synonymous with true development. Real progress encompasses the betterment of society as a whole, lifting everyone. Unfortunately, despite years of promises, we remain stuck in stagnation, misled by the hollow assurances of our leaders. It's time to redefine progress and prioritize the well-being of our communities."

Thackeray urged voters to wield their most powerful tool - their vote - in the upcoming election, drawing inspiration from the

Pandavas' hidden weapons on the Shami tree in Indian mythology. Don't leave your vote idle, just like the Pandavas didn't leave their weapons unused.

"Don't let regret define your next five years. Make your voice heard by casting your vote. For too long, people have fallen into the trap of voting based on caste, community, or familiarity, only to regret the decisions made by those elected. This time, break free from these limitations and wield your vote as your most powerful tool for change."

He has been vocal about his disappointment with Maharashtra voters, expressing frustration that they've repeatedly chosen representatives who, in his view, have let the state down. He believes that the electorate should break free from traditional voting patterns and demand more

from their leaders. Thackeray has also emphasized the importance of constructive work and building rapport with voters, rather than just chasing votes.

He also criticised political parties for forming opportunistic alliances and forgetting the real issues. "These leaders keep forming strange alliances, but where do you stand in all of this? You are nowhere to be found in their plans," he warned.

With the elections around the corner, Thackeray passionately urges voters in Maharashtra to use their votes to bring about change, particularly the youth and farmers who have been marginalized for far too long. He's calling on them to wake up, reclaim their rights, and spark a revolution. This passionate appeal comes at a crucial time, with elections just around the corner.

"It's time for a revolution in Maharashtra. He's urging voters to reclaim their rights and reverse the state's decline, which he believes has been fueled by years of taken-for-granted votes. He also asked voters to realize his vision of a thriving Maharashtra that earns global admiration."

Court summons to parents



Thane: A Thane court has issued summonses to the parents of Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde, who was gunned down on September 23, to record their evidence in connection with the inquiry into his death.

The witness summonses were issued on Friday.

His parents, Alka and Anna Shinde, have been asked to be present in the court of the First Class Judicial Magistrate on Monday at 11am.

Shinde was killed in retaliatory action near Mumbai bypass after he snatched the gun of a policeman and fired shots while being escorted to Badlapur from Talaja jail as part of the probe into the case registered against him on the complaint of his former wife.

He was arrested in mid-August for allegedly sexually assaulting two minor girls in the Badlapur school where he worked as an attendant.

Man booked for sexually assaulting niece

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A 35-year-old Mumbai man has been booked for allegedly showing porn clips and sexually assaulting his 15-year-old niece when she was at his place during vacation.

The girl revealed her ordeal during a counselling session and the councillor on Friday registered an FIR.

According to police, the girl had gone to her uncle's place in April during vacation. "Whenever there was no one at home, her uncle would show her porn clips

and sexually assault her. He repeated the act multiple times over the month," states the complaint.

The girl was scared and did not reveal about it to anyone. Recently, during a counselling session, she broke down and narrated the incident. The counsellor then informed the girl's parents and filed a police complaint.

On Friday, police booked the accused man under section 376 (2)(i) 376 (2)(f) of the Indian Penal Code and 4(2) and 8 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The Congress which stood for orthodox Islamic practices like triple talaq, halala and hijab is now making all kinds of baseless remarks about the Hindu society. This is the design of the urban Naxal mindset that PM Narendra Modi talks about."



Sudhanshu Trivedi, Spokesperson, BJP

New contract for Shivaji Maharaj statue

The state government reserves Rs 20 crore for the new statue

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has awarded a new contract to Ram Sutar Art Creations for the construction of a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Sindhudurg, replacing the one that collapsed on August 26. The company, led by Anil Ram Sutar, is renowned for its work on the Statue of Unity in Guja-

rat, a monumental tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, 'India's Iron Man.'

The new statue will stand 60 feet tall, significantly surpassing the height of the previous statue, which was 33 feet. After the earlier statue collapsed just nine months after being unveiled, the government is taking extra precautions this time. The contract stipulates that the statue should



last for at least 100 years, with the builder responsible for maintaining it for the first decade.

The earlier statue, which had been unveiled by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on December 4, 2023, on the eve of Navy Day, collapsed in August 2024, leading to widespread embarrassment for both the state and

central governments. The state ordered an investigation, which revealed that the statue's downfall was due to corrosion, a weak frame, and poor welding. The findings prompted swift action to restore the statue and ensure a more durable structure.

The state government has sanctioned Rs 20 crore for the new project.

In response to the collapse of the original statue, two committees were set up: one to investigate the cause of the failure and another,

led by Mhaiskar, to oversee the construction of the new and larger statue. The new project is seen as a way to restore the honour associated with the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji, one of Maharashtra's most revered historical figures.

With heightened scrutiny on the project, the state government aims to ensure that the new statue stands the test of time, serving as a lasting tribute to Shivaji Maharaj and reflecting the state's pride in its cultural and historical legacy.

Infra projects worth Rs 15.39 lakh cr recommended

New Delhi: As many as 208 big-ticket infrastructure projects of different ministries, including roads and railways, worth Rs 15.39 lakh crore have been recommended for approval under the PM GatiShakti initiative so far, a top government official said on Saturday.

These projects have been recommended by the Network Planning Group (NPG) constituted under the PM GatiShakti initiative launched on October 13, 2021.

"So far, 208 projects have been assessed under the initiative worth Rs 15.39 lakh crore," Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters.

There are several benefits of using the system, including significant cuts in time and cost for planning these infrastructure projects, he added.

The maximum number of projects recommended by the group are related to roads (101), railways (73), urban development (12), and four from the oil and gas ministry. The inter-ministerial NPG meets every fortnight and appraises infra projects to ensure multi-modality, synchronisation of efforts, and comprehensive develop-



ment in and around the project location.

The initiative was launched to develop an integrated infrastructure to reduce logistics costs. All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects, entailing investments of over Rs 500 crore are routed through the NPG.

The NPG's approval is required before the clearance of the project by the Public Investment Board (PIB) or Department of Expenditure under the finance ministry.

The NMP (National Master Plan) has over 1,600 layers of geospatial data, showing all physical and social infrastructure of an area and land records in one place. It has been de-

signed for faster planning and better design so that the impact of an investment is maximised.

The NPG has representations from various connectivity infrastructure ministries/ departments, involving their heads of network planning division for unified planning and integration of the proposals.

All these departments approach the NPG first for approval before making a DPR (Detailed Project Report) at the planning stage. After the NPG's clearance, the project follows the normal procedure of approval by the finance ministry and the Cabinet.

Over 1,600 layers of data, including those related to

land, ports, forests, and highways, are available on the portal. Usage of the portal by different ministries, including social sector departments and states, is increasing, and it is helping in the proper planning of projects.

Also, as many as 156 critical infrastructure gaps to ports and for movement of bulk commodities like coal, cement, fertilisers and foodgrains, have been identified for intervention under the PM Gati Shakti initiative.

Nepal and Sri Lanka have shown keen interest in this initiative.

"We can roll it for them also. With Sri Lanka, we are working out the things," he said.

Indian mobile users to pay higher tariff

Mumbai: Indian mobile users should gear up to pay higher tariff as telecom companies may find it necessary to hike tariff in the coming years following the Supreme Court order last month on outstanding AGR (adjusted gross revenues) dues, according to a report by global brokerage house.

"We bake in tariff hikes of 15 percent in FY27 (estimated) for the three telcos — Bharti Airtel, Bharti Hexacom and IDEA. For 2Q, we expect subs losses for incumbents (BHARTI/IDEA), however ARPU should enjoy flow through of recent tariff hikes," said the JP Morgan report.

India's data yield (USD/GB) and ARPU (average revenue per user) as percentage of GDP per capita remains one of the lowest in the region (if not the world) nine years since Jio's launch.

Affordability of service and a benign regulatory environment gives Telcos the headroom to take successive tariff hikes before reaching the average trend of Asian peers. JP Morgan thinks this could precipitate persistent tariff repair over the next few years.

The Supreme Court had dismissed curative petitions filed by telecom companies like Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea against the court's 2019 judgment on AGR. The court upheld the Department of Telecom's (DoT) move to recover about Rs 92,000 crore from the telecom sector.

AGR is the fee that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) charges telecom operators for usage and licensing. The AGR is the basis for calculating the dues that telecom companies owe the government.

MONEY MATTERS

Avoid Listening to 10 Heads



By Kaustubh Kale

"Duss (10) Suron Ki Sunoge, Toh Sahi Kaise Chunoge?" This phrase resonates with the story of Dussehra, where Lord Ram triumphs over Ravana, a demon with ten heads, each representing a different distraction or temptation. In the world of personal finance, these "ten heads" symbolize the overwhelming number of opinions and advice people receive when managing their money. If you listen to every voice and follow every trend, you'll struggle to identify the right path for yourself.

Learn Personal Finance: Knowledge is Power

In today's fast-paced world, financial advice is everywhere—friends, family, colleagues, social media influencers, and unsolicited internet tips. Not all of it will be relevant to your unique financial situation. To navigate through the noise, it's important to take control of your financial education.

Start by understanding key financial concepts like risk, return, liquidity, and time horizon for different investment products. Risk refers to the potential loss you might face with an investment, while return is the profit you can expect. Liquidity indicates how easily an asset can be converted into cash, and the time horizon is how long you plan to invest before needing to access the funds. Learning

these basics will help you evaluate which products—be it mutual funds, direct stocks, gold, real estate, fixed deposits, or insurance—suit your goals and needs.

By educating yourself, you will develop a critical eye that helps you distinguish between helpful advice and noise. Whenever you analyze any instrument, all four criteria (risk, reward, liquidity, time horizon) must be considered in tandem and aligned with your financial goals (such as children's education, marriage, buying a home, vacations, cars, or retirement). Having a foundational understanding of these concepts ensures you don't fall prey to quick-fix schemes or misleading suggestions.

Have a Financial Advisor: Like a Family Doctor for Your Finances

Even with self-education, managing your finances can be challenging. This is where having a reliable financial advisor, much like a trusted family doctor, plays a crucial role. Just as your family doctor understands your medical history and offers personalized care, a financial advisor tailors their advice based on your unique financial profile—your income, savings, risk tolerance, and future financial goals.

A good financial advisor helps you stay focused on long-term objectives while steering you away from emotional, impulsive decisions. They provide holistic advice, guiding you through market ups and downs, and ensuring you maintain a diversified and balanced approach to your finances.

So, this Dussehra, remember: don't listen to 10 heads. Choose wisely, stay informed, and have a trusted financial guide by your side.

(The author is a Chartered Accountant and CFA (USA). Financial Advisor. Views personal.)



'If they wanted to act against a particular leader, they should have called it XYZ scam instead of MSCB scam'

How the MSCB earned profit after being ruined?

Big Co-Operative institutions, that too primarily the Co-Operative Sugar Mills in the state are our primary customers. The bank had traditionally followed the principle of surety-based loans. It sounds good that Rs 100 crore have been lent against Rs 800 crore worth of a sugar mill. But, when loans turned bad it was realised that realising the surety property was not feasible. Hence, we took a different approach. We tried to raise the repayment capacity of our customers. For that we taught financial discipline to sugar mills. We developed a rating system and charged differential rates for the mills based on their ratings for financial discipline. This improved their financial health and our recovery. Secondly, we recovered Rs 1049 crore towards the default guarantee given to the sugar mills by the state government. This quickly brought down our losses. But, that was not all. We had to work on sev-

eral other aspects also.

You are the only cooperative bank in the country, which has announced pension to its employees. How? Among the several steps that we took to put the bank back on the profit track majority were related to the employees. There were 3200 employees in the bank when I took the charge as the administrator. We brought in an attractive VRS scheme and now we have a total of 752 staff. After VRS we recruited some new staff also. We needed new skills and well educated staff. We gave them an extensive training. Then we brought in the pension scheme to ensure that the employees won't leave. We have been setting aside some funds, around 0.25 per cent of our net profits, for the employee benefits. We used those funds to be able to give Rs 10,000 as pension for the employees.

What lessons did you learn from the previous mistakes?

When I came in there was an army of 265 lawyers and there were discrepancies like lawyers' fees had crossed over a lakh of rupees for recovering an amount of Rs 60,000. So brought several amnesty schemes. Now we have some 7-8 lawyers.



THE PERFECT INTERVIEW

We tried to raise the repayment capacity of our customers. For that we taught financial discipline to sugar mills. We developed a rating system and charged differential rates to the mills based on their ratings for financial discipline. This improved their financial health and our recovery.

The Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) has announced 10 per cent dividend for its shareholders for the financial year 2023-24. The Bank that had been in deep losses of around Rs 1,100 crore in 2010 touched the landmarks Rs 57,265 crore annual turnover, Rs 615 crore net profit, Rs 6,530 crore of owned funds and net worth of Rs 4,618 crore for the first time in 113 years of its operations. In an interview to **The Perfect Voice's** Political Editor **Abhijit Mulye** the Chairman of the administrative board **Vidyadhar Anaskar** narrates the bank's success story. Excerpts...

As I earlier said all our loans used to be surety-based loans. But, we realised that it was easier to go in for out of court settlements than pursuing legal procedure to get back the lent money. We started ensuring the repayment capacity of our customers. We brought in a rating model for our customers based on their financial discipline, wherein they would get loans on

lowest rates if they have very well maintained financial discipline. Initially people were weary of the scheme. But, once they realised the benefits, and they are huge since even one percent rate cut means huge when loans are in hundreds of crore rupees, they started falling in line.

Are you still providing loans to sugar mills?
As lenders, we now

We also realised that since the cooperative sugar mills are part of an ecosystem, it is difficult to sell them off. And only buyers one would get are from private sector. So, we came up with a new system of renting the sugar mills.

don't just look at the assets they are holding. But we ensure that they have robust systems in place to be able to repay loans. We also realised that since the cooperative sugar mills are part of an ecosystem, it is difficult to sell them off. And only buyers one would get are from private sector. So, we came up with a new system of renting the sugar mills. We gave them back to the stakeholders on long term leases of 20-25 years while ensuring that they have good financial discipline in place. That way the ecosystem keeps working, rural economy keeps rolling and the rent we get goes directly to the repayment kitty, means we don't have to worry about that. Once all this was set, we even came out with Atmanirbhar Scheme to disburse loans to all sugar mills, cotton ginning and pressing mills. With this scheme we lent support to them when they needed it the most and won their trust. Most of those loans have already been recovered.

There was allegedly a scam called MSCB scam. What is it?
I wonder from where the figure of Rs 25,000 crore was brought in. Scam can happen in disbursement of loans. If we consider that all loans disbursed

during that period were 'scam' then the total loans disbursed during that period are around Rs 7,997 crore. If that is so, how can there be a scam of Rs 25,000 crore. I frankly feel that if they wanted to act against a particular political leader, they should have called it XYZ scam instead of calling it MSCB scam. It unnecessarily tarnished our image and several of our staff had to live under unnecessary stress for a long time.

What kind of help do you expect from government?

If Co-Operatives is brought under concurrent list much of our headache will be reduced. Also, the subject needs to be made a part of the school curriculum. Unless we do that the future for the Co-Operatives sector is bleak.

What are the future plans?

We at MSCB now have very strong financials. We are the top performer as per the performance assessment norms developed by the NABARD. And we are very close to the Bank of Maharashtra in terms of financials. So, I would like us to compete with and surpass the nationalised bank. That is our target as of now.

Godrej Properties acquires six land parcels

New Delhi: Realty firm Godrej Properties acquired six new land parcels in the July-September quarter to develop housing projects worth Rs 9,650 crore as part of its expansion plan amid strong demand.

Godrej Properties is one of the leading real estate developers in the country. It has a significant presence in Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune and Bengaluru.

To expand the housing business, Godrej Properties acquires land through out-

right purchases as well as forming partnerships with landowners for joint development.

In its latest operational updates for the July-September quarter, Godrej Properties said it has added 8 new land parcels in the first six months of this fiscal with a total estimated saleable area of about 11 million square feet and total estimated booking value potential of around Rs 12,650 crore. This included the addition of 6 new land parcels in the second quarter of this



fiscal with an expected booking value of Rs 9,650 crore. Godrej Properties said it has already achieved 63 per cent of its annual guidance for new business development (land acquisition).

Gaurav Pandey, MD & CEO, Godrej Properties, said, "Our business development additions of Rs 12,650 crore in April-September will ensure that we continue to have a strong launch pipeline not just for

the current year but for years to come". This includes several projects at the prestigious Golf Course Road in Gurugram, he said, adding that the company has entered the market of Indore recently.

"We have built a deep understanding across the key real estate markets in India and are greatly excited by the potential the next several years offer for us to deliver sustained high-quality performance across all key operating metrics," Pandey said. Godrej Properties'

sales bookings rose 3 per cent to nearly Rs 5,200 crore in the second quarter of this fiscal on better housing demand. This is the highest ever Q2 (July-September) booking value achieved by Godrej Properties. During the April-September period of this fiscal, Godrej Properties' sales booking value grew 89 per cent annually to over Rs 13,800 crore.

The company has given a target of achieving Rs 27,500 crore worth of sales bookings in the current 2024-25 financial year. PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Extraneous items which have no relevance to trade or business are what are hurting the interest of trade and business. When we are trying to bring in too many extraneous elements into a free trade agreement, we are getting cornered into slow progress."



Piyush Goyal,
Union Minister for
Commerce and Industry

Three actors booked for insulting woman's modesty



Swasika

Beena Antony

Manoj

Kochi: Three well-known Malayalam actors were booked for allegedly defaming a woman artist through their YouTube channels, police said on Saturday. Cases were registered against television-cinema actor Beena Antony, her actor-husband Manoj and award-winning actress Swasika for allegedly "insulting the modesty" of the woman actor through social media platform. According to the Nedumbassery police, the complainant was the one who had recently raised allegations against some prominent actors in the Malayalam cinema after the release of Justice Hema Committee report following which cases were against them. "In the complaint, she alleged that Beena Antony, Manoj and Swasika insulted her through their YouTube channels out of revenge as she raised allegations against prominent actors," a police officer said. Cases were registered against the three actors.

Actor Sidhique questioned again by SIT in rape case

Thiruvananthapuram: Malayalam film actor Sidhique was on Saturday questioned again by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in a rape case registered against him. This is the second time he has been questioned by the SIT in the case lodged on a complaint by a young woman actor. Sidhique was questioned for close to two hours by the officials at the Cantonment police station here. He arrived for questioning around 10.40 AM and left close to 12.30 PM. The actor was questioned for nearly four hours by the SIT earlier this week on Monday. The rape case was registered against him after a young female actor alleged that Sidhique sexually assaulted her at a hotel in Thiruvananthapuram under the pretext of offering her a role in a film. The Supreme Court had granted Sidhique interim protection from arrest last week, after the Kerala High Court rejected his anticipatory bail plea. The High Court had cited the seriousness of the accusations and the need for custodial interrogation, while dismissing his bail plea. Sidhique has been booked under Sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code. He claims the complainant has been harassing him with false accusations since 2019.

30 lakh laddu prasadam sold during Brahmotsavams

Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh): As many as 30 lakh laddus were sold during the past eight days of annual Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple at Tirumala Hills, Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams (TTD) said. The nine-day annual Brahmotsavams, concluded today with around 15 lakh devotees having satisfactory darshan of Vahana Sevas, which includes 3.5 lakh on the day of Garuda Seva alone, sans the last day. "As many as 30 lakh small laddus, Rs 50 each, were sold this year during the first eight days of Brahmotsavams. Last year also the same number of laddus were sold," a senior official of TTD told PTI.

Meanwhile, a press release from the TTD, the custodian of the world richest Hindu temple said the Hundi collection stood at Rs 26 crore this year, up by Rs 2 crore over last year in the same period.

Quoting the Executive Officer, the release said over 26 lakh devotees were served Annaprasadam (sacred offerings) this year as against 16 lakh devotees during last year's Brahmotsavams. Around 4,000 Srivari Sevaks (volunteers) from around seven states provided services to lakhs of devotees this year as against 3300 last year.

As many as 45 medical doctors, 60 paramedical staff and 13 ambulances were used to provide better medical assistance to the devotees.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on behalf of the state government, presented silk robes to Srivari temple on October 4.



Devotees dressed as 'langoor' take part in a religious procession, marking the Navratri festival and 'Langoor Mela' celebrations at Durgiana temple in Amritsar on Saturday. Pic:PTI

Protestors march to CBI office demand speedy justice

Kolkata: Hundreds of protestors, comprising doctors, lawyers and members of civil society on Saturday led a march to the CBI office in the CGO complex in Salt Lake demanding fair and speedy justice for the gruesome murder and rape of a woman doctor of the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Originating from the Karunamoyee area in Salt Lake, the protestors marched towards the CGO complex located a few kilometres away shouting slogans like "We want justice."

They also expressed 'awe' at the CBI as the charge sheet of the central investigating body practically affirming the findings



of the Kolkata Police probe which nailed one Sanjoy Roy as the sole culprit, now under custody.

"We are surprised how the CBI can endorse the probe of the Kolkata Police in its charge sheet submitted a few days back. This to our mind lacks transparency and those others behind this cruelty should be exposed", one of the protes-

tors said. The police had put up barricades on the roads approaching the CBI office in the CGO complex. However, five representatives of the protestors were allowed to go inside the CBI office to submit a memorandum of demands.

The CBI is probing the rape and murder of the doctor of R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. -PTI

MP drug haul: Accused shoots himself in foot

Mandsaur: An accused in the mega mephedrone drug seizure in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh allegedly shot himself in the foot to escape "tough police grilling" and then surrendered in Mandsaur.

The Gujarat ATS and the Narcotics Control Bureau on October 5 seized 907.09 kg of mephedrone and raw materials to make the drug worth Rs 1,814 crore from a factory in Bagroda. "Prem-sukh Patidar alias 'farzi doctor' (phony doctor) was on the run after the drug haul. He surrendered at Afzalpur police station here with a gunshot wound in his left thigh inflicted with a country-made pistol. He is the fourth person to be arrested," said Mandsaur SP Abhishek Anand.

Manipur Police sets up special cell to tackle extortion

Imphal: Manipur Police on Saturday said the state government has set up a special cell to combat extortion by underground groups and gangs, which has reached unprecedented levels over the last 16 months. Briefing reporters, IGP (Intelligence) K. Kabib said numerous underground groups and gangs have escalated their extortion activities since the ethnic violence erupted in the state on May 3, 2023.

"Illegal taxes are being collected from trucks plying on highways. In the guise of donations, they are harassing businesses, educational institutions, and even common people, slowing down economic activities," Kabib said, adding, "Police are taking maximum preventive measures to tackle these extortionists." He also noted that these underground groups are sometimes involved in kidnapping, grenade attacks, and phone threats.

In response to these activities, police have formed an anti-extortion cell, led by the ADGP (Law and Or-

der), which includes all national IGP's as members. "This cell will focus on monitoring and supervising the anti-extortion drive across the state. District police, with assistance from other security agencies, have established 15 crack teams dedicated to combating extortion," he added. Over the past year, more than 121 extortionists have been arrested, along with over 215 members of underground groups and gangs.

Regarding movement of essential commodities along the highways, police, with the support of the CRPF, have deployed 16 dedicated companies for Road Opening Party on NH 2, with two additional companies for escorting trucks. Kabib mentioned that certain areas identified as extortion hotspots have mobile teams deployed for increased frisking and checking. Kabib emphasised that extortion has become a well-organised issue, impacting multiple districts and even crossing state lines, which could affect national security.



Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya pays tribute to the Agniveer Gohil Vishwraj Singh of Jam Kandorna in Rajkot. Pic: PTI

Nine dead as soil caves in at factory site

Mehsana: Nine labourers, including two women, were killed and one person was injured after soil caved in during construction of a stainless steel factory near Kadi town in Gujarat's Mehsana district on Saturday, police said.

The labourers had dug a 16-foot deep pit for a tank at the site in Jasalpur village when the incident took place, Kadi police station inspector Prahaladsinh Vaghela said.

"A rescue operation was

carried out for around two hours involving teams from the fire brigade, police as well as labourers. Nine bodies were brought out from the heap, while one person was rescued. Most of the deceased are from Dahod, while three are from Rajasthan. They are in the 20-30 age group," Vaghela said.

They were engaged in construction work at the site of Steelinox Stainless Private Limited.

A statement issued by the PMO on X quoted Prime

Minister Narendra Modi as saying the incident was "extremely sad".

"The accident caused by the wall collapse in Mehsana, Gujarat is extremely sad. My deepest condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in this. Along with this, I wish for the speedy recovery of the injured. Under the supervision of the state government, the local administration is engaged in providing all possible help to the victims," PM said.

Upper caste blocks 'baarat' over songs

Bareilly: A marriage procession was stopped from entering a village here by members of an upper-caste community who objected to certain songs being blasted out from loudspeakers, prompting police to intervene and help resolve the issue. The incident took place in Girdharpur village of Sirauli area when some people from the upper caste community were angered by the songs played in the groom's procession to the village. Upon receiving information, a police team reached the spot and ensured the safe passage of the procession, Sirauli Station House Officer (SHO) Prayagraj Singh said.

The police intervened and facilitated a compromise between the two groups, Singh said. "The upper-caste community members eventually bid farewell to the two daughters, offering them traditional gifts, and the issue was resolved without any untoward incident," he said. No FIR has been lodged regarding the matter, the SHO said.

Child rights body calls for stopping state funding to madrassas

New Delhi: The apex child rights body has raised serious concerns about the state of functioning in madrassas and called for stopping state funding to them unless they comply with the Right to Education Act.

In its latest report titled 'Guardians of Faith or Oppressors of Rights?', the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) said religious institutions operating outside the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 had a negative impact.

According to the report, the exemption of madrassas from the RTE Act has deprived children attending these institutions of quality education.

While Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution protect the rights of minorities to preserve their culture and establish educational institutions, NCPCR asserts that these provisions have inadvertently led to discrimination against children in madrassas, who miss out on formal education man-

dated by the RTE Act. The report pointed out that while the primary focus of madrassas is religious education, many do not provide the essential components of formal education such as adequate infrastructure, trained teachers, and proper academic curricula. This leaves students at a disadvantage compared to their peers in mainstream schools.

The report also noted instances where madrasa students have been denied basic entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms, and access to midday meal scheme.

The NCPCR said a large number of Muslim children out of school, with an estimated 1.2 crore Muslim children not receiving formal education, according to UDISE 2021-22 data.

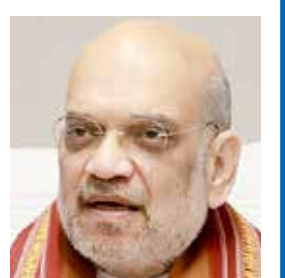
NCPCR has recommended a series of measures, including stopping state funding to madrassas and madrasa boards unless they comply with the RTE Act.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Heartiest greetings to all the volunteers of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh on its foundation day. @RSSorg, since its inception, has been doing a remarkable job of protecting Indian culture, organising youth and inculcating ideas of patriotism."

Amit Shah,
Union Home Minister



Pak-based BKi terrorist among chargesheeted by NIA

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday chargesheeted banned Babbar Khalsa International's (BKI) Pakistan-based chief Wadhawa Singh and five other terrorists in the murder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Vikas Prabhakar in Punjab in April this year.

Prabhakar, also known as Vikas Bagga, was shot dead by the terrorists belonging to a BKI module at his confectionary shop at Nangal in Punjab's Ropnagar district on April 13,

2024. The NIA chargesheet has named BKI chief Wadhawa Singh alias Babbar, along with two other absconding accused and three arrested accused, as the key perpetrators of the killing, according to a statement issued by the NIA. Two of the three arrested accused have been identified as shooters Mandeep Kumar alias Mangli and Surinder Kumar alias Rika, both residents of Punjab's Nawanshahr. The accused have been



charged under various sections of the UA(P) Act, IPC and Arms Act.

The third arrested accused chargesheeted by the NIA is Gurpreet Ram alias

Gora, who is also from Nawanshahr and charged under the Arms Act, the NIA said.

The three absconders were the handlers of the ar-

rested accused.

Babbar, currently based in Pakistan, along with Harjit Singh alias Laddi of Nawanshahr and Kulbeer Singh alias Sidhu of Yamunanagar, Haryana, had provided the arms, ammunition and funds to carry out the murder, the NIA said. The NIA, which took over the case from the state police on May 9, 2024, found a transnational conspiracy of the BKI behind the deadly terror attack.

Several members of the BKI module based in vari-

ous countries came together to carry out the targeted killing, as per the NIA investigations.

The investigation has further revealed that Wadhawa Singh from Pakistan directed Harjit Singh and Kulbeer Singh, who are currently in Germany, to carry out the murder.

The roles of Dubai-based logistics provider and India-based weapons suppliers have also figured in the investigation, which is continuing, the NIA said.

-PTI

Zoo's lone African elephant unchained



New Delhi: The Delhi zoo's lone African elephant, Shankar, walked freely in his enclosure after being released from chains on Friday, the Ministry of Environment said.

Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh had reviewed Shankar's health and habitat conditions on Wednesday with officials from the Environment Ministry and experts from Vantara, the Jannagar-based wildlife facility of the Reliance Group. The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) had suspended the membership of the Delhi zoo due to concerns over Shankar's welfare, as he had been living without a companion and "kept in chains."

The ministry said in a statement on Friday that Shankar was seen walking freely in his enclosure after being released from chains.

Singh shared a video on his official X account and said, "Following my visit to the zoo on October 9 and

meeting Shankar, the lone African elephant, we brought together the Ministry of Environment, Team Vantara from Jannagar, and expert veterinary doctors.

"I am happy to share that Shankar is finally free from chains. Thanks to the relentless efforts of the team -- including Neeraj, Yaduraj, Dr Adrian from South Africa, and Michael from the Philippines -- rehabilitation is progressing as per the action plan."

Shankar was freed from his chains without any medication. Experts will continue to observe his behaviour over the next few days to ensure smooth progress, while zoo staff and mahouts will receive special training to interact with him, it added.

A personalised diet and activity plan for Shankar will be created based on his behaviour and daily routine, the ministry said.

Singh also consulted with Michael, a mahout from the Philippines, via video con-

ference to check on Shankar's well-being.

On Friday, Shankar appeared more relaxed, indicating positive developments in his rehabilitation, according to the statement.

Zimbabwe had gifted the elephant to then President of India Shankar Dayal Sharma in 1996. Shankar was brought to India and has been housed at the Delhi zoo ever since.

Shankar has been alone since his companion, another African elephant named Bambai, died in 2005.

CZA Member Secretary Sanjay Shukla earlier told PTI that Botswana has agreed to provide an African female elephant to be paired with Shankar.

"Shankar and his companion will be kept at the Delhi zoo as per global standards," he had said.

According to zoo officials, Zimbabwe has also agreed to provide a female African elephant.

-PTI

US, China race for Space

Canberra: In recent years, a new "space race" has intensified between the United States and China. At a campaign rally last weekend, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump invoked this rivalry when declaring the US will "lead the world in space," echoing Democratic counterpart Vice President Kamala Harris. Meanwhile, the president of China, Xi Jinping, has said becoming "a space power is our eternal dream."

But what is this latest "race" about, and are there pathways to common ground? History suggests these do exist. Space governance specialists argue our future depends on it.

Lunar missions have become synonymous with a "space race." During the Cold War, the US and Soviet Union's competition to achieve that first "one small step" on the Moon was a symbolic and strategic quest for political, technological, military and ideological dominance on Earth.

Geopolitical tensions are again moving off-Earth. The US and China are leading separate missions which aim to return humans to the Moon. One goal is to further scientific research. But space mining and economic expansionism are also driving these efforts. This new "race" may give rise to new conflicts, especially over prime landing sites and valuable and scarce resources speculated to be located on the lunar south pole.

Mining water ice could produce oxygen, drinking water and rocket fuel -- all vital for sustaining lunar exploration and beyond.



Debris lies scattered on Manasota Key following the passage of Hurricane Milton on Friday.

Pic: AP/PTI

Wrinkles on trunk suggest elephants' lineage

New Delhi: Wrinkles on an elephant's trunk could reveal if it is right- or left-trunked -- indicating its preference for wrapping objects towards its right or left side, a study has found.

While the mammals are known to use the farthest portion of their trunks for wrapping food and other objects, researchers from the Humboldt-University of Berlin, Germany, observed that whiskers or hairs on the trunk are longer on the side towards which the elephants prefer wrapping objects.

This preference gives an elephant its "trunkedness" -- something that a baby elephant is not born with and develops with age and how it bends its trunk, the researchers said.

The repeated motion leads to wrinkle formation on the farthest portion of the trunk, they said.

"A 'left-trunker' would preferably wrap their trunk towards the left of their body and perform left-oriented behaviours with the trunk, thereby frequently compressing the left side of their distal trunk and stretching the right side at the same time," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

The team studied dead specimens of 10 Asian and five African elephants, along with photographs of footuses, and found that the side bearing longer whiskers or hairs also bore more wrinkles.

The opposite side was seen to have fewer whiskers as it was more in contact with the ground, they added. The authors also found about 1.5 times more wrinkles on the trunks of Asian elephants, compared to Af-

Elephant dies of starvation

Erode (Tamil Nadu): A 20-year-old male elephant died of starvation in Anthiyur forest area in the district, forest officials said on Friday. According to forest officials, based on information by the villagers of Vattakadu located in Chellampalayam Range in Anthiyur forest about an elephant lying dead on Thursday night, a team of forest personnel with a veterinary doctor rushed to the area. They found a big male elephant with two tusks lying dead. The officials removed the tusks and the veterinary doctor examined the elephant and declared it was about a 20-year-old male elephant and had died due to starvation and thirst. No foul play was suspected. Later, the carcass was buried.

rican elephants, with the trend beginning early in the womb.

They added that while behavioural preferences shape how the trunk develops physically, including its wrinkles, there could be partial genetic influences as well.

"The high density of wrinkles in the Asian elephants' 'trunk wrapping zone' shows how trunk wrinkles and their unique form in African and Asian elephants could contribute to the phenomenally flexible actuation of trunks."

-PTI



Activist Greta Thunberg (center) attends a Fridays for Future's Climate Strike march in Milan, Italy on Friday.

Pic: AP/PTI

RSS leader hails Bishnoi community

Sirsa: RSS leader Indresh Kumar on Saturday lauded the Bishnoi community's contribution to protecting the environment as he stressed on planting trees to keep the environment clean.

"Our aim is to keep the common people happy, healthy and to ensure that every citizen treats each other with respect and does not spread litter in the society and plant as many trees as possible," said Kumar while addressing a gathering at Lord Shiva College of Pharmacy in Sirsa.

Also make arrangements for their upkeep so that the environment remains clean, he said.

The RSS leader hailed Guru Jambheshwar, the founder of the Bishnoi Panth, and Amrita Devi, who was among 363 Bishnois who sacrificed their life to save trees.

Nuclear project in top tourist hub sparks protest

Kilifi (Kenya): Dozens rallied against a proposal to build Kenya's first nuclear power plant in one of the country's top coastal tourist hubs which also houses a forest on the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Kilifi County is renowned for its pristine sandy beaches where hotels and beach bars line the 165-mile-long coast and visitors boat and snorkel around coral reefs or bird watch in Arabuko Sokoke forest, a significant natural habitat for the conservation of rare and endangered species, according to the U.N. organization.

The project, proposed last year, is set to be built in the town of Kilifi -- about 522 kilometers (324 miles) southeast of the capital, Nairobi. Many residents have openly opposed the proposal, worried about what they say are the nega-



tive effects of the project on people and the environment, leading to a string of protesters which at times turned violent.

Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI) led the march Friday in Kilifi to the county governor's office where they handed him a petition opposing the construction of the plant.

Some chanted anti-nuclear slogans while others carried placards with "Sitaki nuclear", Swahili for "I don't want nuclear."

The construction of the 1,000MW nuclear plant is set

to begin in 2027 and be operational by 2034, with a cost of 500 billion Kenyan shillings (\$3.8 billion).

Francis Auma, a MUHURI activist, told the Associated Press that the negative effects of the nuclear plant outweigh its benefits.

"We say that this project has a lot of negative effects; there will be malformed children born out of this place, fish will die, and our forest Arabuko Sokoke, known to harbor the birds from abroad, will be lost," Auma said.

-AP

Climate emergencies threaten collective security

By James Dyke and Laurie Laybourn

Exeter: You probably missed it, but a few months ago a report was published that inspected how the UK government prepared for major emergencies. What it found has profound implications for the whole country.

The report was written by the UK's public inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic and explained how the pandemic was an example of what's called a "non-malicious threat". These are major threats to our collective security that arise not from hostile intent -- like terrorism or war -- but as a result of human error, structural failure, or natural disasters. In this instance it was a novel virus

that jumped from animals to humans and then rapidly spread.

The pandemic affected everything. Its impact was so severe that it created what the government calls a "whole-system civil emergency", a rapidly escalating crisis that significantly affected multiple dimensions of the UK's security, from the health system, through economic stability, to public trust. This was the UK's greatest security crisis since the second world war. Yet it had nothing to do with armed conflict.

The inquiry found that successive governments grossly underestimated pandemic threats. They were not given the same priority as security threats coming from hostile action, like Russian aggression or

terrorism. The subsequent tragedy proved how much of a mistake this was. When it came to planning and responding to whole-system civil emergencies, the UK government "failed their citizens", the inquiry said, before concluding that "fundamental reform" was needed.

We have worked on a new report that finds worrying similarities to another, even greater "non-malicious threat" to security: climate change.

Compounding climate risks

Two weeks ago Hurricane Helene crashed into Florida and proceeded to cut a chaotic swathe north. By the time it dissipated over Tennessee two days later, over 200 people were dead



and losses amounted to tens of billions of dollars.

Now Florida has been battered by Hurricane Milton too, which may prove to be more destructive in part because it came in the wake of Helene. Much of the region's road, rail, and power infrastructure was still damaged. Many of the buildings still standing had been seriously weakened. Piles of debris from the clean up quickly became dangerous projectiles in

Milton's powerful winds. Hurricanes such as Helene and Milton are now twice as likely given climate change.

From hurricanes to deadly heatwaves, crippling droughts to crop failures -- the consequences of climate change are potentially catastrophic. And while we have improved our resilience to individual extreme weather events, increasing climate change makes it more likely that

impacts will pile up with the sum of loss and damages being much higher than the parts. It is these cascading and compounding impacts that not only threaten local communities, but add up to destabilise the security of entire countries and the globalised systems that connect them.

Yet many governments do not routinely consider extreme climate scenarios in their security plans, and instead continue to assume that climate risks will gradually evolve over the long term.

This approach is proving to be grossly insufficient. Take food security for example. Cascading climate effects are estimated to have caused a third of UK food price inflation in re-

cent years, an impact compounded by rising energy prices. Spiking energy prices were the result of our reliance on fossil fuels, which became far more expensive after Russia invaded Ukraine.

These episodes show us how the causes and consequences of climate change supercharge the world's security problems.

Tipping towards catastrophe

These climate risks create the potential for further "whole-system civil emergencies." One example is tipping points. For instance, one of the Earth's key ocean current systems is the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC), which transports vast amounts of heat from

the tropics to the northern hemisphere. Yet climate change is weakening the AMOC, a process that could lead it to pass a tipping point and collapse at some point this century, though there is still much debate among climate scientists over exact dates and probabilities.

Collapse would effectively wipe out crop growing in the UK, and devastate food production over much of Europe and North America, while disrupting key weather patterns across the globe. This would be a planetary-scale cataclysm with unmanageable security outcomes. A collapse this century cannot be ruled out without urgent international action to reduce emissions.

-AP

As Hezbollah, Israel battle, Lebanon's army watches

Beirut: Since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon, Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants have clashed along the border while the Lebanese army has largely stood on the sidelines.

It's not the first time the national army has found itself watching war at home from the discomfiting position of bystander. Lebanon's widely beloved army is one of the few institutions that bridge the country's sectarian and political divides. Several army commanders have become president, and the current commander, Gen. Joseph Aoun, is widely regarded as one of the front-runners to step in when the deadlocked parliament fills a two-year vacuum and names a president.

The army is militarily overshadowed by Hezbollah. The Lebanese army has about 80,000 troops, with around 5,000 of them deployed in the south. Hezbollah has more than 100,000 fighters, according to the militant group's late leader, Hassan Nasrallah. Its arsenal — built with support from Iran — is also more advanced.

A cautious initial response

Israeli forces and Hezbollah fighters have been clashing since Oct. 8, 2023, when the Lebanese militant group began firing rockets over the border in support of its ally Hamas in Gaza. As Israeli troops made their first forays across the border and Hezbollah responded with rocket fire, Lebanese soldiers withdrew from obser-



Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf (left) waves to residents as he visits the site of Thursday's Israeli airstrike in Beirut, Lebanon on Saturday.

Pic: AP/PTI

vation posts along the frontier and repositioned about 5 kilometers (3 miles) back.

The direct clashes between the two national armies were on Oct. 3, when Israeli tank fire hit a Lebanese army position in the area of Bint Jbeil, killing a soldier, and on Friday, when two soldiers were killed in an airstrike in the same area. Lebanon's army declined to comment on how it will react if Israeli ground forces advance farther.

Israeli and Lebanese armies are a total overmatch

The current Israeli invasion of Lebanon is its

fourth into the neighboring country in the past 50 years and the internal situation in Lebanon — and the army's capabilities — deteriorated with the outbreak of a 15-year civil war in 1975, during which both Israeli and Syrian forces occupied parts of the country. Hezbollah was the only faction that was allowed to keep its weapons after the civil war, for the stated goal of resisting Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon — which ended in 2000.

International aid has been a mixed blessing

After the 2011 outbreak of civil war in neighboring

Syria and the rise of the Islamic State militant group there, the Lebanese army saw a new influx of military aid. It successfully battled against IS on Lebanon's border in 2017, although not alone — Hezbollah was simultaneously attacking the group on the other side of the border. When Lebanon's financial system and currency collapsed in 2019, the army took a hit. It had no budget to buy weapons and maintain its existing supplies, vehicles and aircraft. The U.S. had been a primary funder of the Lebanese army before the crisis. It has given some \$3 billion in

military aid since 2006, according to the State Department. But that support has limits. Aid to the Lebanese army has sometimes been politically controversial within the U.S., with some legislators arguing that it could fall into the hands of Hezbollah. In Lebanon, many believe that the U.S. has blocked the army from obtaining more advanced weaponry that might allow it to defend against Israel — America's strongest ally in the region and the recipient of at least \$17.9 billion in U.S. military aid in the year since the war in Gaza began. -AP

Rahman records performance for Kamala Harris

Washington: Legendary music composer A R Rahman has recorded a 30-minute performance video in support of Vice President Kamala Harris, which is expected to give a big boost to her presidential campaign ahead of the November 5 general elections.

Rahman, 57, is the first major international artist from S Asia to have endorsed Harris, who is of mixed Indian and African origin. "With this performance, A R Rahman has added his voice to a chorus of leaders and artists who are standing up for progress and representation in America," said Shekar Narasimhan, chairman of the AAPI Victory Fund.

"This is more than just a musical event, it's a call to action for our communities to engage and vote for the future we want to see," he said. This powerful endorsement by one of the most iconic voices in the South Asian community underscores the vital role of AAPI voters in this election and the growing momentum behind the Harris-Walz ticket, AAPI Victory Fund said.

The exclusive performance is set to be broadcast on AAPI Victory Fund's YouTube but also across major South Asian networks, including AVS and TV Asia, as part of a strategic push to galvanize support for Kamala Harris among South Asian voters worldwide.

It will be broadcast on AAPI Victory Fund's YouTube on October 13 at 8 pm ET. The 30-minute show will feature some of Rahman's most beloved songs, interspersed with messages highlighting Kamala Harris's historic candidacy and commitment to the AAPI community.

Police sergeant to be charged over Nazi salute

Melbourne: An Australian state police chief apologized to the Jewish community on Saturday after a police sergeant allegedly performed an outlawed Nazi salute.

The 65-year-old instructor on domestic violence policy and law at the Victoria state police academy in Melbourne is facing charges for the gesture and for praising Nazi leader Adolf Hitler with the words, "Heil Hitler" on Tuesday and Wednesday in front of academy staff and recruits, Police Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said.

"I want to express just here at the outset my disappointment, my disgust, my anger at this appalling conduct," Patton told a press conference. "There is simply no place for this type of conduct in our society, let alone in this police force. For that reason, I want to profoundly apologize to the Jewish community but also to the community as whole," Patton added.

Patton said the alleged behavior would exacerbate the grief and pain the Jewish community felt following the October 7 anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel.

The police officer, whose name has not been released, has more than 40 years service. She was suspended from duty on Friday and was interviewed by professional standards internal investigators on Saturday. She will likely be charged by summons, a police statement said after Patton's news conference. The offence carries a potential maximum penalty of 12 months in prison and a fine



of up to 23,000 Australian dollars (\$16,000).

Performing Nazi gestures and displaying Nazi symbols such as the swastika have been banned by various state and federal laws since 2022. The scandal comes in a week a Melbourne judge told self-described Nazi Jacob Hersant that he will become the first person in Australia to be sentenced to prison for performing the same banned gesture when the 25-year-old appears in court next month.

In June, three soccer fans were fined for performing the salute during a Sydney match. The men were the first convicted in Australia for such offences and have lodged appeals.

The Police Association of Victoria, a police union, described the allegations as serious and said officers should be held to the same standards as the rest of the community.

Anti-Defamation Commission chair Dvir Abramovich, a leading opponent of antisemitism in Australia, praised the police force's swift response to the officer's alleged actions. -AP

Threat: Trump's campaign requests armoured vehicles

New York: Donald Trump's aides have requested a slew of stepped-up security measures, including military aircraft capable of shooting down surface-to-air missiles to transport the former president in the race's final stretch, amid growing concerns over threats from Iran in a campaign already shaken by violence.

The campaign's highly unusual request comes as the Republican candidate faces death threats from Iran, which has also targeted other former Trump administration officials and has also been blamed for a widespread hack of top campaign officials. Trump narrowly survived one assassination attempt and U.S. Secret Service agents foiled a second, though neither case has been publicly linked to Iranian actors.

Beyond a military plane, the campaign has asked for special armored vehicles typically reserved for sitting presidents, expanded temporary flight restrictions over his rallies and his residences, reimbursements for



decoy aircraft, and more money for the U.S. Secret Service and local law enforcement agencies that assist in Trump's protection.

Both Trump and his staff have complained that he is being restricted from campaigning the way he wants to because the agency lacks the resources to keep him safe.

The Secret Service insisted Friday that Trump is already "receiving the highest levels of protection." And President Joe Biden told reporters that he would be happy to approve Trump's request to use military aircraft in the final stages of the campaign, as long as "he doesn't ask for F-15s."

"Look, what I've told the department is to give him every single thing he needs for his — as if he were a sitting president," he said.

Global Hunger Index 2024

India under 'serious' category

London: The Global Hunger Index (GHI), a tool used by international humanitarian agencies to measure and track hunger levels with GHI scores based on under-nourishment and child mortality indicators across 127 countries, has ranked India 105th, which places it under the "serious" category of the analysis. The 2024 report, now in its 19th edition, is published this week by Irish humanitarian organisation Concern Worldwide and German aid agency Welthungerhilfe to highlight that hunger levels will remain high in many of the world's poorest countries for several decades in the absence of more progress in measures to tackle the issue.

India is among 42 countries that fall within the "serious" category, alongside Pakistan and Afghanistan, with other South Asian neighbours such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka showing better GHI scores to be listed under the "moderate" category. -PTI

In Bangladesh, 35 untoward incidents related to Durga Puja

Dhaka: Seventeen persons have been arrested and about a dozen cases registered after Bangladesh witnessed about 35 untoward incidents related to the ongoing Durga Puja celebrations across the country this month, police said here.

The development comes a day after it was discovered that a hand-crafted golden mukut (crown) gifted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was stolen from a Hindu temple in Bangladesh's southwestern Satkhira district amid Durga Puja celebrations, a theft over which India expressed concern.

The five-day Hindu religious festival began with an invocation of Goddess Durga, an occasion called Maha Shasthi on Wednesday. The celebrations would conclude with the immersion of Goddess Durga murtis on Sunday. The minority Hindu population — Hindus constitute just about 8 per cent of the 170 million Bangladesh population — faced vandalism of their businesses, and properties and destruction of temples



during the student-led violence that erupted following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

"Since October 1, 35 incidents related to the ongoing Durga Puja celebrations have occurred across the country, leading to 11 cases being filed, 24 general diaries (GD) registered, and 17 individuals arrested," newspaper The Dhaka Tribune said quoting Inspector General of Police (IGP) Md Moinul Islam.

Durga Puja was being celebrated at over 32,000 mandaps nationwide and the IGP's visit was prompted after Hindus in Bangladesh woke up to a shock on Friday when news broke about the theft of a

hand-crafted golden mukut (crown) on Thursday at the Jeshoreshwari Kali temple in Satkhira during his visit to Bangladesh in 2021.

The incident prompted the Indian High Commission here to urge the Bangladesh government to investigate the theft and recover the crown apart from taking action against the perpetrators.

Earlier on Thursday, half a dozen men sang a song calling for Islamic revolution on the stage of a Durga puja mandap at Jatra Mohan Sen Hall in Chattogram, about 250 km southeast of Dhaka, causing widespread outrage. The Chattogram Metropolitan Police arrested two people over singing the

Deplorable: India on attack on pandal

New Delhi: India on Saturday said it has noted with "serious concern" the reported attack on a Durga Puja pandal and theft at a revered Kali temple in Bangladesh, as it requested Dhaka to ensure the safety and security of Hindus, all other minorities and their places of worship in the neighbouring country.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) described the incidents as "deplorable events" and flagged that these follow a "systematic pattern of desecration" of temples and deities in Bangladesh.

"We have noted with serious concern the attack on a Puja mandap in Tantibazar, Dhaka and the theft at the revered Jeshoreshwari Kali temple at Satkhira," the MEA said.

Bangladeshi daily "Prothom Alo" has reported an incident of a "crude bomb" allegedly thrown at a Durga Puja pandal in the Tantibazar area of Old Dhaka. Though the bomb caught fire, nobody was injured, the report said, adding that the incident took place on Friday night.

song calling for Islamic revolution and a case was filed against seven people, including the Puja committee's joint general secretary Sajal Dutta, in connection with the Chattogram incident.

Earlier on Friday, Bangladesh police said they have identified a man in connection with the theft of the golden crown, and launched a massive manhunt to recover it. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The new sanctions will help further deny Iran financial resources used to support its missile programmes and provide support for terrorist groups that threaten the United States, its allies, and partners."



Jake Sullivan, NSA, US

Bomb survivors to share anti-nuke message with Gen Z

Tokyo: The recipient of this year's Nobel Peace Prize is a fast-dwindling group of atomic bomb survivors who are facing down the shrinking time they have left to convey the firsthand horror they witnessed 79 years ago.

Nihon Hidankyo, the Japanese organisation of survivors of the US atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was awarded for its decades-long activism against nuclear weapons. The survivors, known as hibakusha, see

the prize and the international attention as their last chance to get their message out to younger generations.

"We must seriously think about the succession of our messages. We must thoroughly hand over from our generation to the future generations," Toshiyuki Mimaki, senior member of the Hiroshima branch of Hidankyo, told reporters Friday night.

"With the honour of the Nobel Peace Prize, we now have a responsibility to get



Terumi Tanaka, co-chairperson of Nihon Hidankyo smiles, combing his hair, ahead of a press conference in Tokyo on Saturday.

Pic: AP/PTI

our messages handed down not only in Japan but also across the world."

Now, with their average age at 85.6, the hibakusha are increasingly frustrated

that their fear of a growing nuclear threat and push to eliminate nuclear weapons are not fully understood by younger generations. The number of prefectural hibakusha groups decreased from 47 to 36. And the Japanese government, under the US nuclear umbrella for protection, has refused to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon.

But there is hope, and a youth movement seems to be starting, the Nobel committee noted.

Three high school students accompanied Mimaki at the city hall, stood by him as the prize winner was announced, and promised to keep their activism alive.

"I had goose bumps when I heard the announcement," said a beaming Wakana Tsukuda. "I have felt discouraged by negative views about nuclear disarmament, but the Nobel Peace Prize made me renew my commitment to work toward abolishing nuclear weapons." -AP

MY CORNER

A ray of hope for TAIT aspirants



By
Vinod Chavan

After several years of long waiting, the Maharashtra government initiated teachers' recruitment through the Pavitra Portal. In 2022, Teacher Aptitude and Intelligence Tests (TAIT) was conducted, clearing the path for teachers recruitment. Despite the TAIT results being announced, eligible teachers had to wait nearly two years for their appointments. Finally, in 2024, many teachers were appointed to Zilla Parishad, Municipal Corporations, and Municipal Council schools without interviews, while others were appointed through the converted round and interviews via the Pavitra Portal. These teachers are now working, and their salaries have started regularly.

However, for those teachers who prioritized applying to the prestigious Rayat Shikshan Sanstha in the first round without an interview, the wait continues. Six months have passed, and despite being selected on merit, they have not yet received their appointments.

The Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, founded by Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil to uplift underprivileged students, became the institution of choice for many aspiring teachers, inspired by its noble mission. These teachers, having passed the TAIT with flying colors, hoped to carry forward Bhaurao Patil's legacy. Yet, their dream has turned into frustration as, despite being selected, they remain unappointed.

For the past six months, these teachers have been running from pillar to post, visiting the Education Commissioner and Rayat Shikshan Sanstha Office, seeking appointments. Their pleas have been met with silence. Even when they approached prominent leaders like MP Supriya Sule and MLA Rohit Pawar, hoping for

intervention, nothing substantial materialized.

The delay stems from a legal stay on appointments following a petition filed by temporary teachers of the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha. But why should the TAIT-qualified teachers, who have passed exams after intense preparation, suffer for no fault of their own? Repeated assurances to 'remain patience' have done little to ease their frustration. Despite meeting legislators, Members of Parliament, and various district leaders, no concrete action has been taken to address their plight.

Currently, 801 teachers who preferred Rayat Shikshan Sanstha through the Pavitra Portal are still awaiting appointments. Even though the institution is led by Sharad Pawar, a leader known for resolving complex issues, these teachers have been unable to meet him despite several attempts. Many of them have expressed their disappointment, stating that even though the government's decision to recruit teachers through the Pavitra Portal brought them joy, the prolonged delay in appointments has caused them much headache.

The legal battle continues, and the teachers are caught in the dilemma. They question why the Education Commissioner's office listed vacancies in Rayat Shikshan Sanstha on the Pavitra Portal if the institution was already embroiled in legal issues. If these vacancies hadn't been listed, the teachers might have opted for other institutions.

In a final act of desperation, these teachers had resorted to staging a hunger strike outside the Education Commissioner's office, demanding swift action. While the police tried to suppress the protest, the teachers stood firm, vowing not to relent until their demands were met. In response, the Education Commissioner issued a letter promising that the unappointed Rayat teachers would be adjusted into other institutions by the end of October. Now, these teachers wait with bated breath, hoping that the promise is kept.

(The author is a teacher based in Latur. Views personal.)

AROUND THE WORLD

Durability of Peace



By
Priya Samant

On Monday, the world leaders marked the first commemoration of the October 7 attack on Israel. The United Nations Secretary-General, banned by Israel for his biased approach, has finally condemned Iran's assault on Jewish land. While the US president called the Iranian aggression "unspeakable brutality" and his next in line planted a pomegranate tree, Israel expanded its military operation against Iran's antisemitism. And now Israel is grinding the militants down to dust to prepare the ground for perpetual peace or what they call "the total victory".

A year has also passed since Israel and Arabs were to seek peace by the best means. The young reformist leadership of Saudi Arabia was about to sign a deal to finally accept Israel as a valuable strategic partner in shaping the future of the new Middle East. But then the Iran-backed proxies attacked Israel and boiled up the old Arab-Jew conflict. Initially, Iran denied any involvement in or foreknowledge of Hamas's attacks. But weeks later it joined the aggression as its "Axis of Resistance" started tumbling. When the Hamas chief was spotted and killed in Iran and the Hezbollah leadership too collapsed, Iran itself launched a barrage of missiles at Israel. "From The River To The Sea, Palestine Will Be Free" the old rallying cry started spreading hatred again. It is a call for wiping out Israel and establishing the Palestinian state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. There is nothing

wrong in demanding statehood for Palestine; but for that, would you justify the destruction of a legitimate Jewish land?

While facing Biden's anger behind the scenes, Israel has intensified its operation to guard its existence. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are destroying the tunnels connecting Iraq to Syria and Syria to Lebanon that are used to smuggle Iranian weapons and transport the terrorists. IDF are targeting the secret passages built down below the UN's 'Blue Line' to end the constant threat of cross-border attacks on Israeli civilians. IDF's 'limited, localised and targeted raids' in Lebanon are reported to have eliminated over 250 Hezbollah militants in a mere two weeks and seized a large count of weaponries kept hidden under Lebanon cities. Israel's PM is trying to reach out to the Iranian opposition. He also released a video message for Iranians, promising them a better future, prosperity and peace. And also hinting the change in regime.

A year has passed since the Israel-Gaza conflict, and the so-called superpower under Biden's presidency could not find any solution around the negotiation table. Now, as the election nears, the US seems more desperate for a ceasefire than the Middle East. The US claims that the mastermind of the October 7 attack, Yahya Sinwar who was presumed to be killed, is alive and hiding in a tunnel underneath Gaza, holding Israeli hostages in the same vicinity. Yahya Sinwar is the new chief of Hamas, to whom Israel had proposed a safe passage out of Gaza in exchange for the immediate release of all the hostages and the demilitarisation of the region. Hamas has rejected the offer. Qatar and Egypt have accused the Israeli PM of impeding the peace process. But Israel's war aims have been clear since the first day - the release of Israeli hostages and a permanent end to war. Israel is known for its intelligence-backed target elimina-



tion of terrorists instead of negotiation that would in turn legitimize the terrorist outfit. The controversial book "WAR" quotes Netanyahu "The harder you hit, the more successful you're going to be in the negotiation." This reaffirms that Israel is going to fight and fight hard for its people.

The Middle East escalation has divided US Democrats and young US voters deeply. De-risking the region could have been a key achievement for Biden's party to lead the 2024 elections, but, alas! The Biden Administration has failed to enforce economic sanctions on Iran. The Iranian oil-export that had reduced to 70000 barrels a day during Trump's regime increased to nearly 2 million bpd this year. In the past year, Biden's inability to intensify the financial pressure on the regime secured a \$100 billion revenue increase for Iran that jeopardized the new Middle Eastern dream. Now that the 5th of November is just a month away, the Biden government has decided to 'expand' the oil sanctions on Iran.

Israel's state-owned media house has reported that Iran has depleted almost one-third of its high-grade missiles in its attacks on Israel. Recently, the former Iranian President revealed that the head of Iran's special intelligence unit assigned to spy on Israeli intelligence was himself a

Mossad agent. Not just the unit head but all the 20 agents in his team were Israeli spies! The unit provided Israel with Iran's defence information including Iran's nuclear program for years. The alleged Israeli team were reportedly able to flee Iran following their operations! Internal instability, socio-economic erosion, collapsed resistance forces, extended US sanctions and a constant threat to the country's energy infrastructure have made the Iranian regime vulnerable.

So now Iran is threatening reformist Arab countries who have assured Iran of their neutrality. China, Russia and the United States, the mighty triangle of influence that largely determines the course of world events, have invested heavily in these Middle Eastern countries. And so the Middle East escalation will soon be curtailed as economic interdependence is the new driving force for peace. The global power dynamics can assure "victory" to Israel. But will this assure a durable peace? Golda Meir, the former Prime Minister of Israel once said "If the Arabs lay down their arms, there will be no more war. If Israel lays down its arms, there will be no more State of Israel." The struggle for existence is the only perpetual thing.

(The writer is a foreign affairs expert. Views personal.)

NEWSMAKER OF THE WEEK

Geoffrey Hinton: AI's Quiet Pioneer



By
Shoumojit Banerjee

Geoffrey Hinton, tall, soft-spoken, with an almost monk-like reverence for the unseen mechanics of the mind, has long been known by the media moniker of the 'Godfather of Artificial Intelligence.' The rest of the world is only just beginning to catch up to his trailblazing work in machine learning. Hinton's Nobel Prize for Physics, awarded this week (alongside another AI pioneer John Hopfield) after decades of foundational work in neural networks, marks a pivotal moment not just for his career but for the sprawling, rapidly accelerating world of artificial intelligence.

Born in London in 1947, Hinton's intellectual roots run deep and illustrious. His great-great-grandfather, George Boole, pioneered Boolean logic - a mathematical framework essential to the design of modern computers. Yet, Hinton's initial interest was not in machines but in understanding the intricacies of the human brain. He pursued a degree in psychology and later a PhD in artificial intelligence at the University of Edinburgh, where his fascination with how the human brain processes information collided with his growing curiosity about machines that could mimic it.

In the 1980s, when artificial intel-

The Nobel Committee's recognition of Hinton honours his pivotal role in computer science and signals that the future of AI is upon us.



Geoffrey Hinton

To understand the significance of Hinton's contribution, one must travel back to the mid-20th century, when AI was still in its infancy. Visionaries like Marvin Minsky and John McCarthy were conceptualizing machines that could 'think' in the way humans did. The 1956 Dartmouth Conference, considered the birth of AI, united experts to explore intelligent machines. However, Minsky's vision of machines rivalling human intelligence soon hit the limits of computation and algorithms. By the 1970s, AI's unfulfilled promises led to widespread disillusionment.

But in the mid-1980s, Hinton was already working against the tide. As others dismissed the notion that machines could truly learn, Hinton dug into the mechanics of the brain - its neurons, synapses, and intricate processes of pattern recognition

and began to replicate these systems in code. His method of using layered, interconnected nodes, later known as artificial neural networks, sought to mirror the complexity of the human brain. For decades, his work existed in the periphery of mainstream computer science, appreciated by few but misunderstood by many.

Alongside him were contemporaries like Yann LeCun, who applied neural networks to the field of computer vision, and Yoshua Bengio, whose work in natural language processing gave machines the ability to understand and generate human speech. Together, these three have often been referred to as the 'Trinity' of deep learning, their contributions laying the groundwork for the explosion of AI applications in the 21st century.

By the 2010s, their patience had paid off. With the advent of big data and exponential increases in computing power, Hinton's neural networks began to outperform traditional machine learning methods. In 2012, Hinton and his students at the University of Toronto stunned the world by winning the ImageNet competition, a milestone that demonstrated the practical viability of deep learning algorithms. Suddenly, Hinton's work was no longer a niche academic pursuit but a cornerstone of Silicon Valley's tech revolution.

The implications of Hinton's work now permeate nearly every facet of life. Algorithms based on neural networks assist radiologists in detecting early signs of cancer, predict stock market trends with uncanny accuracy, and power the virtual assistants we speak to every day.

Hinton's Nobel Prize marks both a scientific triumph and a moment of reflection. When Marvin Minsky co-founded the MIT AI lab in the 1950s, the vision of intelligent machines was linked to utopian ideals. Now, as AI integrates into key areas like healthcare and criminal justice, the question shifts from "can machines think?" to "should they?" Once optimistic, Hinton, at 76, now calls for caution in a world increasingly shaped by AI.

LEADER SPEAKS

The Power of Self-Esteem Produces the Behaviour that Leads to Progress



By
Mohan Bhagwat

The inspiration required to ensure that all these things are followed uninterrupted is the inspiration of 'self-esteem'. Who are we? What is our tradition and our purpose? Is the idea clear and exact in our minds about the nature of a larger, all-inclusive, humane identity that has been passed down since ancient times to us Bharatiyas? It is necessary for everyone to know this.

By adopting the shining qualities of that identity, its pride is established in the mind and intellect, and on its basis, self-respect is achieved. The power of the inspiration of self-esteem produces the behaviour that becomes the reason for our progress and self-reliance in the world. Its expression in the national policy depends to a great extent on the Swadeshi behaviour of the people in the society in their daily lives. That is called the conduct of Swadeshi.

Do not import from outside what can be made at home. Bring in as much employment as possible in the country. Do not import from outside what is made in the country. Manage without what is not made in the country. Only essential life items that do not have substitutes should be bought from abroad. Keep in mind that the language, attire, worship, and food inside our home and keep up of our home and our tours should be our own tradition. This in short is Swadeshi behaviour.

When the country becomes self-reliant in all fields, it becomes easy to adopt Swadeshi behaviour. Therefore, the policy of an independent country should include a policy that can achieve the result of becoming



self-reliant. Along with this, the society should make efforts to make Swadeshi behaviour a part of its life and nature.

Restraint and Discretion in thought, speech and action

Another important aspect of the behaviour of national character is to keep oneself away from any kind of extremism and illegal practices. Our country is full of diversities. We do not consider them as differences, nor should we consider them so. Our diversity is the natural uniqueness of the universe. In a country with such an ancient history, vast area and huge population, all these specialties are natural. Pride in one's own distinctiveness and sensitivity towards them is also natural. Due to this diversity, it is not always the case that everything happening in social life and in the functioning of the country will always be favourable or pleasing to everyone. It is not that all these things are done by a single community.

In response to these, defying the law and order and creating disturbances through illegal or violent means, holding an entire section of the society responsible for them, violating decorum in thought, word and deed, these are neither prescribed nor beneficial for the country or for anyone in the country. Tolerance and harmony are Bharatiya traditions. Intolerance and malice are anti-Bharatiya and anti-human vices. Therefore, no matter how much anger there is, we should avoid such unrestrained behaviour and prevent

our people from doing so. One should be alert in one's own conduct that one's thoughts, words or deeds do not insult anyone's faith, revered places, great personalities, books, incarnations, saints etc.

Even if unfortunately, someone else does something like this, we should control ourselves. Above and beyond all things, unity, harmony and decent behaviour of the society is important. This is the ultimate truth for any nation, in any time, and is the only way for the blissful life and co-existence of human beings.

Organised strength and spotless character as the basis of peace and progress

World worships the strong, weak person is ignored. This is the way of today's world. Therefore, to establish the above-mentioned environment of harmony and restraint, good people will have to be strong. When strength comes with good conduct, it forms the basis of peace. Evil forces gang up together for selfish reasons and stay alert. Only the strong can control them. Good people have good conduct towards everyone but do not know how to unite. That is why they appear weak. They will have to learn the art of building this organized strength. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh signifies this creation of peerless, character-based strength of Hindu society.

(Excerpts from the speech the RSS chief delivered in Nagpur on Saturday.)



KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Devotees immerse an idol of Goddess Durga on the occasion of Vijayadashami in Nadia, West Bengal on Saturday.
2. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers at Gorakhnath Temple on the occasion of 'Vijayadashami' in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.
3. CEO of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Trust Vishwa Bhushan offers prayers during the worship ceremony of a grand weapon on the occasion of 'Vijayadashami' (Dussehra) in Varanasi on Saturday.
4. Women dance as they participate in 'Sindoor Khela' on the occasion of 'Vijayadashami', the last day of Durga Puja festival celebrations in Patna on Saturday.
5. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh performs 'Shastra Puja' on the occasion of 'Vijayadashami' during a function at the Sukna Military Station in Darjeeling on Saturday.



All Pictures PTI, AP

LETTER FROM PAKISTAN

Can Pakistan Protect Its People and Foreign Workers?



By Kaswar Klasra

The Duki massacre shocked the country with its brutality. The miners from the Pakhtun ethnic community and Afghan nationals were reportedly killed when terrorists launched rockets and grenades into the mine. This kind of ethnic dimension further complicates the security situation in Balochistan, a province already grappling with separatist insurgency and religious militancy. While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, the tragedy highlights the vulnerability of labourers working in one of Pakistan's most dangerous regions.

Earlier in the week, the killing of Chinese nationals who were working on infrastructure projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) frustrated Beijing, which is growing increasingly concerned over the safety of its citizens. Initial investigations suggest that this attack might have involved the assistance of a foreign intelligence agency, potentially to destabilise Pakistan's relationship with China. For Pakistan, China is not just a key economic partner but also a critical player in its strategic and diplomatic landscape. These attacks have raised questions about whether the country can protect its citizens and foreign nationals.

Balochistan has long been a battleground for Baloch separatists and religious extremists. The province's porous borders with Afghanistan and Iran make it difficult for security forces to control the movement of militants. Separatist insurgents in the region have historically targeted migrant labourers from Punjab, but the attack on the miners in Duki indicates that the province's

security situation is deteriorating. The timing of these attacks is particularly concerning. Pakistan is on the verge of hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, a major diplomatic event that will bring together regional dignitaries in Islamabad. The attacks seem deliberately timed to project an image of instability and insecurity, potentially discouraging foreign dignitaries and investors from attending the summit or making investments in Pakistan. Given that Pakistan is facing a significant economic crisis with soaring inflation and a growing balance-of-payments issue, attracting foreign investment is critical to stabilising the economy.

Hostile foreign actors may be involved in these attacks. Pakistan has often accused India of supporting Baloch separatists to destabilise the country, particularly in Balochistan. Though unproven, covert operations between the two nations have a long history, and the timing of the Duki massacre and the attack on Chinese engineers hints at external involvement. Whether these attacks are coordinated by foreign forces or driven by local militancy, the impact on Pakistan's international standing is significant.

While it is important to bring the perpetrators of these attacks to justice, this alone will not be enough to address the broader security crisis facing the country. Pakistan needs a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that addresses the root causes of violence and dismantles the networks that enable terrorists to operate. The state's Azm-i-Istehkam campaign aims to restore stability by targeting terrorists, though its steps remain unclear. The government must provide more transparency and regular updates on progress being made if it hopes to build public confidence in its counterterrorism efforts.

In recent years, the country has seen a resurgence of terrorism, with both religious extremists and separatist insurgents carrying out attacks. While the state has made significant strides in reducing ter-

rorism since the height of the insurgency in the mid-2010s, the recent wave of attacks suggests that the problem is far from solved. There are deep-rooted issues that need to be addressed, including poverty, ethnic tensions, and political disenfranchisement, all of which contribute to the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive.

The country's strategic relationship with China is crucial for its economic future, but that relationship is under threat from both internal and external forces. For Beijing, the safety of its nationals is a top priority, and if Pakistan cannot guarantee that safety, it risks losing not only Chinese investment but also the broader strategic partnership that has been the cornerstone of its foreign policy.

At the same time, Pakistan is grappling with record-level inflation and faces a balance-of-payments crisis, and attracting foreign investment is crucial for stabilising the economy. The perception that Pakistan is a dangerous place for foreign nationals will only make it harder to secure the kind of investments the country needs to pull itself out of this economic quagmire.

The country stands at a critical juncture. If it can restore order and security, it has the potential to attract foreign investment and improve its standing on the global stage. However, if the state fails to act decisively, the consequences will be dire—not only for the victims of terrorism but also for the country's economic future and international reputation.

Without urgent action, Pakistan risks slipping further into chaos, and the recent attacks could become the beginning of a new and even more dangerous phase of terrorism in the country. The government must act now to protect its citizens, secure its foreign partnerships, and restore confidence in its ability to maintain law and order.

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

DEEP DIVE

Confused Maharashtra Voters Amidst Political Chaos



By Ruddhi Phadke



In the 2019 assembly elections, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and the Shiv Sena formed a pre-poll alliance, with Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis as its key figure. However, despite the alliance securing a clear mandate, the situation changed dramatically after the results were announced. Despite its excellent performance, the BJP had to concede to the frustration of being relegated as an opposition party.

The two-and-a-half-year tenure of the Uddhav Thackeray government was significantly impacted by the pandemic and faced substantial criticism for various reasons. His minimal attendance—less than three days at the Chief Minister's office—drew sharp criticism from his mentor, Sharad Pawar. The aggressive handling of Arnab Goswami's arrest, which resulted in a humiliating court defeat, further fuelled discontent. Additionally, Thackeray's departure from Hindutva ideals championed by his father, Balasaheb Thackeray, garnered a strong backlash. Other points of contention included the mishandling of the Antilia case and the wrongful reinstatement of police officer Sachin Vaze, who was later arrested along with two cabinet min-

isters. Furthermore, Thackeray's failure to respond to Rahul Gandhi's repeated attacks on Veer Savarkar, who was derogatorily referred to as 'Mafiveer,' added to the growing criticism.

All this was compounded by the fact that Sena MLAs were not receiving development funds, and Uddhav Thackeray remained largely unapproachable, making it difficult for them to voice their concerns. This left many MLAs feeling restless and suffocated. Seizing the right opportunity after the BJP's favourable results in the upper house and legislative council, they made a decisive move and crossed over, leading to the formation of the current government. In the last two and a half years of the current government's tenure, many unexpected events occurred. Narratives played a key role in distorting logical outcomes on several fronts.

One of these unexpected developments was a sympathy wave for Uddhav Thackeray. Many argue that sympathy should have been directed towards Devendra Fadnis, who was sidelined by his alliance partner and took on the Deputy Chief Minister's role, despite leading the largest group of BJP MLAs. Ajit Pawar changed sides with 40 MLAs of the NCP.

Did it go down well with the masses? And the big question then arises: Was this required for the sake of stability? Or was this solely to terminate NCP convener Sharad Pawar's political career?

The Lok Sabha 2024 battle came as another shock, with the BJP performing poorly compared to previous elections. Despite losing the party's name, symbol, and many of its MLAs, Sharad Pawar emerged resilient, like

a Papillon, achieving significant success. Meanwhile, the Congress party secured the most victories among the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition. The BJP, driven by the complacency of the slogan "Abki Bar Charso Par," relied on paid campaigners rather than dedicated party workers, resulting in poor performance.

Although they have taken corrective measures by mobilising party workers at the booth level, the overall situation remains quite confusing for voters. Freebies offered like *ladki bahin* and *ladka bhau* have garnered mixed reactions. Ajit Pawar has been expressing regret about challenging his uncle and causing a rift within the family. He seems inclined to leave the alliance, but whether this will happen before or after the polls remains to be seen. By taking stock of multiple controversial situations, from the *Maratha Arakshan* to the Badlapur accused getting killed in a so-called disputable encounter, the criminal cases against Sachin Waze, Disha Saliyan, and Sushant Singh Rajput's mysterious deaths—people are still wondering why not a single case has reached a logical conclusion.

Additionally, the frequent threats from Jarange Patil's hunger strikes, jumping in the net by Narahari Zirval, and others, followed by the emergence of new protesting groups, combined with daily announcements of schemes that will overburden the state's budget, are the factors that are causing widespread discomfort. This is overshadowing all the good work that this government has been doing. As a result, voters are generally confused and demotivated, with a common question on many minds: whom should they vote for, and, more fundamentally, why should they vote at all?

The chaotic alliance shifts, unfulfilled promises, and controversies have left voters questioning whom to trust and why to vote.



AJAY JADEJA DECLARED HEIR TO JAMNAGAR ROYAL THRONE

Jamnagar: The maharaja of the erstwhile princely state of Nawanagar, known as Jamnagar, in Gujarat, has declared his nephew and former cricketer Ajay Jadeja as his heir to the throne on the auspicious day of Dussehra on Saturday.

The 53-year-old cricketer, who played 196 ODIs and 15 test matches for India between 1992 and 2000, is a descendant of the Jam-

nagar royal family.

Maharaja of Jamnagar Shatrusalyasinh Jadeja is the cousin of Daulatsinghji Jadeja, the cricketer's father, a three-time Member of Parliament from Jamnagar from 1971 to 1984.

"The festival of Dussehra is believed to mark the day the Pandavas emerged victorious from exile. Today, on Dussehra, I am equally happy, as I have found a resolution to one

of my dilemmas thanks to Ajay Jadeja, who has accepted to be my heir," Maharaja Jamsaheb, as he is popularly called, declared in a statement.

"Ajay Jadeja taking up the responsibility of serving the people of Jamnagar is truly a boon for its people. I express my sincere gratitude to him," he said.

Maharaja Shatrusalyasinhji was also a cricketer who captained Saurashtra

in the Ranji Trophy in 1966-67 and served as the head of the Saurashtra Cricket Association. He was made the titular head of Nawanagar on February 3, 1966, after his father's death, and was married to a member of the Nepal royal family whom he later divorced.

The family are descendants of legendary cricketer Ranjitsinh Jadeja, who ruled Nawanagar from 1907 to 1933. **-PTI**

Surya Aditya shines as India bags silver

Bengaluru: An excellent effort by Surya Aditya helped India secure a silver medal in Round 1 of the Asian Equestrian Federation Cup - Youth (AEF Cup CSIY-B) here on Saturday.

The 18-year-old Chennai rider delivered an outstanding performance, while completing the 11-obstacle, 1.15m show jumping course in a remarkable 71.42 seconds, without incurring any penalty points. He finished 6.22 seconds behind Iran's Mollaafzal, who took the gold medal. Fabiola Chong claimed the bronze, clocking a time of 79.99 seconds. Eight of a total 12 riders completed the demanding Surge Stable course here.

Myanmar's Kyaw Uwna Aung secured fourth place with a faultless round, finishing in 89.66 seconds. He was followed by Thailand's Papungkorn Pabbaman, who clocked 92.50 seconds.

Cambodia's Menglong Rinda posted a fast time of 70.77 seconds but incurred 4 penalty points, placing him lower in the rankings. Malaysia's Muhammad Nazirul Amsyar completed the course in 88.96 seconds, also with 4 penalty points, while India's Avik Bhatia finished in 74.40 seconds with 8 penalty points. Meanwhile, three riders — Taisiya Lokteva from Uzbekistan, Asato Amami of Chinese Taipei, and Pakistan's Muhammad Khan Niazi were eliminated due to refusals and falls.

"We are incredibly proud of Surya Aditya and all the participants for their excellent display of skill and determination," said EFI Secretary General Col. Jaiveer Singh.



Cricketer Yusuf Pathan plays a shot during a Legends League cricket match between Konark Suryas and Southern Super Stars, in Srinagar on Saturday. Pic:PTI

Uthappa to lead India in HK Cricket Sixes



New Delhi: World Cup-winning keeper-batter Robin Uthappa will lead India in the Hong Kong Cricket Sixes tournament next month, the organisers announced on Saturday.

The Indian team also includes the likes of Kedar Jadhav, Stuart Binny,

Manoj Tiwary and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem. Batters Bharat Chapli and wicketkeeper Shreevats Goswami will also play for India, who were crowned champions in 2005.

The six-a-side international cricket tournament, is slated to be played at Mis-

sion Road Ground in Mong Kok from November 1 to 3.

The Hong Kong Cricket Sixes returns after a seven-year hiatus. The 2024 edition will feature 12 nations, including Australia, Pakistan, England and New Zealand. South Africa are the defending champions.

The tournament known for its fast-paced, entertaining format, featured many prominent cricketers from around the world, including Sachin Tendulkar. India will open their campaign against Pakistan on November 1, followed by a clash against UAE a day later.

India squad: Robin Uthappa (Captain), Kedar Jadhav, Stuart Binny, Manoj Tiwary, Shahbaz Nadeem, Bharat Chipli, Shreevats Goswami (wicket-keeper). **-PTI**

Baroda take first innings lead against Mumbai



Vadodara: A relentless bowling effort from Baroda helped them take a 76-run first innings lead against defending champions Mumbai on day two of their Ranji Trophy opener here on Saturday.

Resuming their innings at 241 for six, Baroda were able to stretch their total to 290, a remarkable recovery from 90 for five. Off-spinner Tanush Kotian took four wickets for Mumbai.

The title holders lost Prithiv Shaw early but Ayush Mathre (52 off 71) and Hardik Tamore (40 off 60) forged a 63-run stand for the second wicket.

At that time, Mumbai seemed to be in control but a combination of ordinary shot selection and misfortune saw them lose three quick wickets of Tamore, skipper Ajinkya Rahane (29 off 52) and Shreyas Iyer (0).

Mumbai were all out for 214 in 62.2 overs close to

stumps. Left-arm spinner Bhargav Bhatt (4/53), off-spinner Mahesh Pithiya (2/55) and left-arm pacer Akash Singh (3/19) landed the timely blows to give Baroda an upper hand in the contest.

Opener Mhatre was Bhatt's first wicket as the batter was caught and bowled after mistiming a cross batted stroke.

Tamore was caught at short leg by Jyotsnil Singh off Pithiya for a regulation bat and pad dismissal.

Rahane looked good in the middle until a freak catch from Jyotsnil at silly point sent him back to the dressing room. Rahane firmly hit the ball towards the silly point field and the ball got stuck between the thighs of the fielder.

Iyer then failed to trouble the scorers as a faint outside edge of an away turning ball from Bhatt was pounced by the wicket-keeper. **-PTI**

Rashmikkaa to meet Aney in final

Mysuru: Top seeded Indian Shrivalli Rashmikkaa Bhamidipaty registered a comfortable win over compatriot and fourth seed Riya Bhatia to enter the final of the ITF Mysore Open here on Saturday.

Rashmikkaa, a world No. 316, scored a facile 6-3, 6-2 victory over Riya in the semifinals and will face second seeded American Jessie Aney in the title round. In the other semifinals, Aney outclassed qualifier Lakshmi Prabha Arunkumar 6-1, 6-0, and she made the day better by annexing the doubles title later with Riya.

Aney-Riya win title

Aney and Bhatia, the top-seeded pair, halted Indian pair Soha Sadiq and Akanksha Nitte's splendid run with a crushing 6-1, 6-1 win. Aney and Riya showed no signs of fatigue when they took the court after their semifinal wins. In fact, the duo was on a roll from the get-go, hitting winners at will.

Bengaluru's Soha and Akanksha, who won the national title a week ago, failed to fire on the day.

The top seeds were off to a flier with breaks in the first and third games.



Maha Pradash Chief Minister Mohan Yadav during 'Ashwa Puja' on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami festival in Indore on Saturday. Pic: PTI

WCG Rink football

Dominic's brace in St. Joseph's victory

By correspondent

Mumbai: St Joseph's (Umerkhandi) showed good understanding and team as they outplayed posting a 5-1 win over St Anne's, Mahim in a Men's Open match of the 44th Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana Annual Rink Football Tournament 2024, played under floodlights at the WCG courts.

The hero of St. Joseph's win was Dominic Alphonso who hit the target twice

while teammates Benjamin Rodrigues, Joseph Cardoz, and Bonnie Fernandes chipped in with one goal each to complete the winning tally, while Valerian Fernandes struck St Anne's lone goal.

In another match, St Anthony's, Dadar defeated Spartans FC 3-1. Revilino Fernandes, Agnelo Lobo and Godfrey D'Souza scored a goal each for the winners. Ram Sharma found the net for Spartans.

Results - Men's 40+: St. Joseph's, Umerkhandi 5 (Dominic Alphonso 2, Benjamin Rodrigues, Joseph Cardoz, Bonnie Fernandes) beat St Anne's, Mahim 1 (Valerian Fernandes); St Anthony's, Dadar 3 (Revilino Fernando, Agnelo Lobo, Godfrey D'Souza) beat Spartans FC 1 (Ram Sharma).

Men Open: St. Blaise, Amboli 3 (Alister D'Souza 2, Shreya Zele) beat St. Joseph's, Juhu 0.

All India FIDE Open Chess Kirti Patel records second win

By correspondent

Mumbai: WCM Kriti Patel (2 points) of Mumbai played a good tactical game to record her second win defeating citymate Devansh Nisar (1 point) in a second-round match of the 1st All India FIDE Rating Open Chess Tournament 2024, hosted by South Mumbai Chess School and played at the Russian House, Peddar Road, Mumbai, on Saturday.



The 18-year-old Kirti, a student of SIES College, playing with white pieces started with the Albin Counter Gambit opening and won an early pawn. She maintained the advantage and exploited the situation and even though Devansh defended well she was in control. She finally went for the kill and checkmated Devansh on the 54th move to seal the win.

IM Vikramaditya Kulkarni (2 points) of Kol-

hapur, playing with white scored another impressive win defeating Kirti Suryarao (1 point) of Thane in another second round match on the top board.

AIM Saikat Nath (2 points) also tasted victory defeating Pragmay Singh (1 point) on the eighth board with black pieces.

Results - Top 10: IM Vikramaditya Kulkarni (2) beat Kirti Suryarao (1) 1-0; Karan Dassani (1) lost Atharv Soni (2) 0-1; Yash Watarkar (2) beat Medhansh Poojary (1) 1-0; Naval Vora (1) lost Sanjeev Mishra (2) 0-1; Arnav Kherdekar (2) beat Vihan Pandey (1) 1-0; AIM Samarth Patodekar (2) beat Saurabh Kulkarni (1) 1-0; WCM Kriti Patel (2) beat Devansh Nisar (1) 1-0; Pragmay Singh (1) lost AIM Saikat Nath (2) 1-0; Yash Kapadi (2) beat Mukul Rane (1) 1-0; Neev Bafna (1) lost Om Gada (2) 0-1.

Ross Branch World Rally-Raid champion

New Delhi: Hero MotoSports Team Rally's Ross Branch was crowned the new FIM World Rally-Raid Champion, becoming the first African rider to achieve the feat after successfully completing the final round of the Rallye Du Maroc. The race marked the fifth and final round of the 2024 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC).

The achievement also marks a milestone for Hero MotoSports, which, in its eighth year of racing, has clinched its first-ever FIM World Championship title,

stated a release.

The Indian manufacturer becomes only the sixth team in history to win this prestigious title, breaking the dominance of the KTM group (comprising KTM, GasGas, and Husqvarna) that had held the championship streak since 2014.

Ross delivered some of his career-best performances throughout the season, securing the highest points in the Championship standings.

In January, Ross earned Hero MotoSports their first-ever Dakar podium by finish-

ing second overall at Dakar 2024, which was also the opening round of the W2RC. He maintained his form with fifth-place finishes at both Rally Raid Portugal (April) and Desafio Ruta 40 in Argentina (June) that helped him hold onto his lead until the final round in Morocco, ultimately securing the coveted World Championship title.

Since its inception in 2003, only 10 riders have managed to achieve this feat, and Ross became the 11th rider to do so. Hero MotoSports fielded three riders -- Ross, Nacho

Cornejo, and Sebastian Buhler.

After a relatively smooth prologue in Marrakech, the rally quickly escalated in difficulty due to unexpected rains and floods, which turned the terrain treacherous and caused several competitors to withdraw due to crashes or injuries.

The rally, which spanned nearly 2,500 kilometers across the Sahara Desert, culminated in Mengoubouarf, near the Algerian border.

-PTI

