

THE PERFECT VOICE



Exodus from Mahayuti to MVA as polls approach
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We name our daughters Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati; we worship the divine feminine power in the temples but oppress, repress and even attack the feminine power amidst us. That is the irony in the way India sees its women. After the safety of the daylight fades, women are seen as easy prey by the predators of the night. We mark the nine nights of Navratri, the festival of the goddess, by celebrating the dedication and valour of nine real-life women who brave the challenges of the night to pursue their dreams.

PART - 3

Fearless Planner

The wedding concept designer advises learning to say no and being bold when interacting with people

By Aditi Pai

Wrapping up work at 3 A.M. and being back at the venue at 6 A.M. to ensure the set-up is in place before the wedding party arrives isn't an unusual workday for Richa Ahuja, 28, an interior designer who runs a wedding concept design firm called De:Tales in Nashik. "I sometimes get only two hours of sleep during the peak events period but I enjoy every bit of my work and independence," she says. She drives herself to work and back since Nashik doesn't have a very robust public transport system and travelling in one's own car is the safest option especially at night. "That way, I have never faced any trouble while commuting," she says. During the wedding 'season' which is for around five months in a year, Ahuja juggles her work and home and sails through high pressure times with ease. "I enjoy my work and the freedom it gives me," she says.



RICHA AHUJA, 28, wedding concept designer, Nashik

schedule. "I had to fight for my freedom to work; my in-laws weren't comfortable with my profession although my husband understands my passion," she says. On the other hand, her parents raised her to be independent. In keeping with her family's expectations, Ahuja starts work by noon after cooking and finishing her household duties when she doesn't have early morning events.

I hope my story encourages other women to embrace their power, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

Ahuja did her schooling in Valsad before moving to Baroda to study interior design. She soon returned home but realized that the city of her birth didn't have too many opportunities for her. Her next stop was Vapi where she joined a wedding planning firm and gained adequate experience in designing wedding sets and managing events. In 2022, she married and moved to Nashik and decided to collaborate with reputed wedding

planners to market and design the concept of a high-scale wedding. Her company does business with other planners, bringing in new concepts for luxury wedding functions.

"You have to be fearless," is the mantra Ahuja lives by, something that she learnt early on in life while growing up in a small town and moving cities to find work and realise her dream of being independent. While narrating her life's journey, she says: "I hope my story encourages other women to embrace their power, no matter how difficult the circumstances. We are capable of incredible things, even when the world doesn't provide us with the support we need. We can create, lead, and thrive, all while carrying the weight of our responsibilities with grace and determination," she says.

According to her, every woman must have a self-defense mechanism, which includes being bold and learning to say a firm no. "One of the biggest reasons why women face trouble is because they say yes even when they don't want to. Learn to say no and be bold while interacting with people," she says. Ahuja's life journey will resonate with several women who pursue their dreams while battling multiple challenges.

28 NAXALITES KILLED in Bastar

IN 2024, 185 MAOISTS ELIMINATED SO FAR

Dantewada: In one of the biggest operations against Maoists in Chhattisgarh, security personnel killed 28 Naxalites in a fierce encounter in the Bastar region on Friday, a senior police official said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hailed the security forces for their operation and said the 'double engine' government (BJP government in the state and at the Centre) is determined to eliminate the menace.

The gunfight broke out at around 1 pm in the forest between Thulthuli and Nendur villages in Abhujmaad on the Narayanpur-Dantewada inter-district border, when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P told PTI over the phone.

Personnel belonging to the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Special Task Force (STF) were involved in the operation, he said.

Sundarraj said that 28



Naxalites were gunned down in the encounter.

Along with the 28 bodies, a cache of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle and one SLR (self-loading rifle), were recovered from the encounter spot, he said.

Earlier, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai had said around 30 Naxalites were killed in the gun battle.

In a post on X, CM Sai said, "There is news of 28 Naxalites gunned down in an encounter with security forces in the border area of Narayanpur-Dantewada

districts. The great success achieved by the soldiers is commendable. I salute their courage and valour."

"Our fight to eliminate Naxalism will end only after reaching its conclusion. Our double engine government is determined for this. Eliminating Naxalism from the state is our aim," he added.

With this latest encounter, 185 Maoists have been gunned down by the security forces in separate gun battles in the Bastar region comprising seven districts, including Dantewada and

Narayanpur, so far this year, police said.

On April 16, as many as 29 Naxalites, including some higher-ranking cadres, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during his visit to Chhattisgarh in August had said India will be free from Left Wing Extremism (LWE) by March 2026, and a strong and ruthless strategy was required to launch the final assault against the menace.

-PTI

Man killed for blackmailing woman

By Correspondent

Thane: A 24-year-old man was attacked and killed allegedly by a woman and her friend in Thane on Friday after he blackmailed her with objectionable photos, police said.

The victim, Swayam Satish Paranjape, was attacked with a sickle in the Kopri area of the city in the morning, an officer said.

The police have arrested a 20-year-old woman and her friend, Mayuresh Nandkumar Dhupal (24), in connection with the attack, he said.

Paranjape met the accused woman at a wedding in April and convinced her to go for a drive with him. The woman claimed that he drugged her, took her to his house and clicked objectionable photos of her, he said.

The accused has alleged that Paranjape blackmailed her and sent her messages threatening her to meet him, the officer said.

He said the woman confided in Dhupal, and the duo confronted the victim, asking him to delete the photos.

Following an argument, Dhupal allegedly attacked the victim with a sickle and killed him, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

Three illegal call centres busted

Mumbai: The Police have busted three illegal call centres in Mumbai by arresting 36 persons, including women, who were involved in cheating people by promising loans and also selling prohibited medicines posing as foreign nationals, an official said on Friday.

The crime branch had received a specific information about a crime syndicate which was operating bogus call centres in Oshiwara and Aarey Colony in the western suburbs and duping people by promising them loans and also selling medicines that are banned in India, he said.

Crime branch units 10 and 12 formed multiple teams and conducted raids at Get Pharmacy and All Win Info Media situated at Behram Baugh in Jogeshwari (West).

Tirupati Laddu Adulteration

SC forms independent SIT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday set up a five-member "independent" SIT to probe into the allegations of use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus, while making it clear that it will not permit the court to be used as a "political battleground".

The development assumes significance as the top court appointed panel would replace the Andhra Pradesh government's special investigation team (SIT) constituted on September 26 to probe the politically sensitive row over alleged use of animal fat in making these laddus.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan said the independent SIT will comprise two offi-

cial each from the CBI and the Andhra Pradesh Police besides a senior Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) official.

"We clarify that we will not permit the court to be used as a political battleground. However, in order to assuage the feelings of crores of people, we find that the investigation should be conducted by an independent SIT consisting of representatives of the state police, the CBI and a representative of the FSSAI," the bench said. The bench directed it will be appropriate that the investigation is carried under the supervision of the Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"We don't want this to be

turned into a political drama. There are sentiments of crores of people throughout the world," the bench observed during the hearing.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that if there was any element of truth in the allegations, it was unacceptable. He suggested that the probe by the SIT can be supervised by some senior official of the central government.

The Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision. TDP spokesperson Pattabhiram Kommarreddy said the state government's intention is to bring out the truth and "punch" culprits who

played with the sentiments of crores of devotees of Lord Venkateswara Swamy.

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu should apologise for misleading people. "When the Supreme Court has passed such comments, if he (Naidu) has any devotion towards God, he should apologise to people. He should pray to Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy that he committed a mistake. He has not done any of it but on top of that they (TDP) are (spreading false information) releasing posts through their Twitter handle," Jagan said.

-PTI

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Exodus from Mahayuti to MVA as polls approach

AS MANY AS 50 LEADERS HAVE CHANGED SIDE IN COUPLE OF MONTHS



By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: Fearing that the tide is turning against the Mahayuti, that includes Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena and NCP, many leaders are deserting the ruling alliance.

ised that the BJP leadership was not giving a positive response he took the decision to join the NCP. Madhukar Pichad, a senior leader and former Minister is also seriously thinking to quit the BJP and join the Sharad Pawar's NCP fold, along with his son Vaibhav who is former MLA.

Mahayuti. Significantly, there was a flood of visitors at the Moti Baug residence of Sharad Pawar. At the beginning of this week many aspiring candidates for the upcoming assembly polls met the NCP boss.

The sources further added that Minister Dilip Walse-Patil's wife and daughter too met Pawar but no confirmation from either side over this meeting. This has sparked speculation that Walse-Patil may be considering returning to the Sharad Pawar side.

Harshvardhan Patil who left BJP on Friday was seeking a ticket from Indapur constituency in Pune district. When he realised that the seat was all set to go to Ajit Pawar's faction, he decided to quit BJP. Patil is a 'Aayaram Gayaram' type of leader.

In another major political development, 28 members from the Ajit Pawar faction of the NCP have switched allegiance to the NCP (Sharad Pawar) faction. Among the 28 leaders who have quit Ajit's NCP are Ajit Gavahane, president of the Pimpri-Chinchwad unit, student leader Yash Sane, and two former corporators, Pankaj Bhalekar and Rahul Bhosale.

Babandada Shinde, a six-time legislator, met Pawar, reportedly to seek an NCP (SP) ticket for his son, Ranjit Shinde. Recently, Babandada had urged Madha voters to elect his son. Former MLA Vilas Lande and Congress leader Aba Bagul were also among those who met Pawar the same day.

Senior NCP leader and Food and Civil Supply Minister Chhagan Bhujbal said, "When the elections are near, it is normal that people go from here to there or there to here. They think that they will not get the ticket so they want to contest from another party. This will keep on happening for the next 3-4 weeks."

Rijiju blames Congress for militancy

Nagpur: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday alleged that the Congress did not pay attention to Manipur and other north-eastern states during its rule, which led to the rise of many militant groups in the region.

The recent violence in Manipur was not the first such incident that happened in the state as 500 to 800 lives were lost in the ethnic clashes in the past, but the previous governments at the Centre never paid attention.

The Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Minister was talking to reporters here. When asked about violence-hit Manipur, Rijiju blamed the Congress for its "misgovernance" in the state.

"Congress people did not pay attention to Manipur and the entire north-east India, due to which many militant organisations cropped up there. Nowhere else in the world are there so many militant groups as there are in the north-east," he said.

But in the last 10 years, more than 10,000 militants surrendered by laying down their weapons, and came into the mainstream in the north-east, he claimed.

"The incidents that happened in Manipur were not against the Indian government. It is the result of a conflict between Meitei and Kuki communities. It is not the first incident in Manipur. Around 500 to 800 lives have been lost in the clashes between Naga and Meitei and Meitei and Kuki communities earlier and the past governments at the Centre never paid attention to it," he added.

"But when the incidents (of violence) took place this time, Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) stayed there."



Union Minister Kiren Rijiju pays obeisance at the Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur.

Pic: PTI

Woman gang-raped, male friend assaulted

By Correspondent

Pune: A 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three unidentified persons, who also tied her male friend to a tree and assaulted him at an isolated place on the outskirts of Pune city, police said on Friday.

The horrific incident took place in the Bopdev Ghar area at around 11 pm on Thursday and a day later police released sketches of two of the suspects as they intensified efforts to trace the culprits and sought help of citizens to nab them.

According to the Kondhwa police, under whose jurisdiction the crime occurred, the woman had gone to the locality with a male friend.

"As per preliminary details, the woman and her male friend had gone to the



Bopdev Ghar area on late Thursday night where three unidentified persons allegedly raped her," said Ranjan Kumar Sharma, additional commissioner of police.

He said the trio first tied the woman's male friend to a tree at the crime scene and then took turns to rape her. The police came to know about the incident at around 5 am on Friday after the woman along with her male friend approached Maharashtra government-run Sassoon General Hospital in Pune city, said

Sharma. Ten police teams have been formed to trace the accused, he informed.

Another official from the Kondhwa police station said the incident took place at an isolated place and the trio also assaulted the woman's male friend.

Meanwhile, the police sent a forensic team to the crime spot and deployed a dog squad as part of investigation to gather clues and trace the accused.

"We have prepared sketches of two of the suspects on the basis of description given by the male friend of the woman," said the official.

The police have provided three mobile phone numbers -- 8691999689, 8275200947, 9307545045 -- and appealed to citizens to contact them if they come across any information about the case.

CRIME WATCH

Two booked for sexual assault

Mumbai: A case has been registered against two men for allegedly sexually assaulting a 29-year-old woman, who has gone missing after reporting the crime, police said on Friday. The police have launched a search for the victim who went missing from a women's shelter where she was lodged after the assault, an official said.

Minister's car hits pickup van

Mumbai: Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra minister Sanjay Rathod's car crashed into a pickup van in the state's Yavatmal district in the early hours of Friday, injuring the driver of the second vehicle, an officer said. The minister escaped without injuries as the airbags of his car deployed during the accident around 2 am at Kopra village near Digras under the jurisdiction of the Arni police station, he said.

Twelve cops injured as van hits truck

Nashik: Twelve policemen were injured, one of them seriously, after their van collided with a truck in Maharashtra's Nashik district on Friday, an officer said. The incident took place at Rahud Ghat on Mumbai-Agra national highway in Chandwad taluka, he added. "Twelve Nashik Rural policemen were on their way to Malegaon for security duty at a programme in which Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were scheduled to attend. Their van hit a truck from behind. Twelve personnel were injured. The condition of one of them is serious," the officer said.

Pawar wants 50 pc cap on quota removed

By Correspondent

Sangli: NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar urged the BJP-led Centre on Friday to bring a constitutional amendment to increase reservation in education and government jobs beyond the existing cap of 50 per cent.

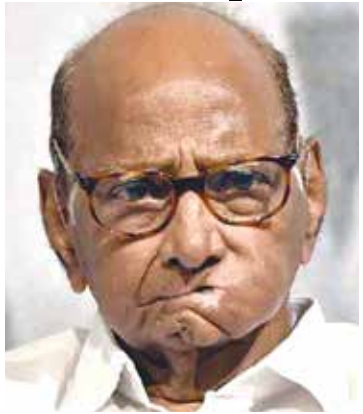
However, Shiv Sena questioned why Pawar was raising the issue just before the Maharashtra elections and demanded to know what he had done to get the matter resolved during his stints as the chief minister.

Speaking to reporters here, Pawar said that while granting reservation to Marathas, who have been agitating for quota, care should be taken to ensure that such limits meant for other communities are not disturbed.

"Currently, the cap on reservation is 50 per cent. But if Tamil Nadu can have 78 per cent (quota for various communities), why can't Maharashtra have 75 per cent reservation," he asked.

The Centre should take the lead and bring a constitutional amendment to raise the quota cap. "We will support the amendment," he said.

Pawar said the seat-sharing talks among the leaders of the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will continue next week. "I would only advise the leaders to conclude the talks as early as possible so that we can go to the people, who are looking for a change," he said.



Pawar intellectually bankrupt: Ambedkar

Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi chief Prakash Ambedkar on Friday slammed NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar for seeking the raising of the quota cap in Maharashtra to 75 per cent.

He said the demand was a sign of Pawar's "intellectual bankruptcy" and asked when quota benefits will be extended to the cooperative sector, which is dominated by leaders from the undivided Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress.

"This is intellectual bankruptcy. Reservation is not a development issue. It is a representative one," Ambedkar told PTI Video.

MVA partners NCP (SP), Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress fought the recent Lok Sabha polls as one unit and performed impressively, winning 30 of the 48 seats in the state. The Maharashtra assembly polls are due in November.

Pawar said people are positive towards bringing a change in the government and the MVA should respect their sentiments. The NCP (SP) chief also wel-



Asked about Union minister Ni-

tin Gadkari's comment that the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme to provide financial assistance to women could affect the timely payment of subsidies in other sectors, Pawar said even Prime Minister Narendra Modi had termed such schemes 'revdi culture' which need to stop. "Gadkari has a constructive and non-political approach to development," he said, adding that roads have improved during the tenure of the BJP leader, who is also the Union minister of road transport and highways.

To a question about Gadkari's claim that he had been offered the PM's chair by the opposition multiple times, Pawar said, "We did not make any such offer. If we don't have the required number of MPs, how can we make such an offer."

Shirsat hits back Shiv Sena spokesperson and MLA Sanjay Shirsat asked why Pawar could not get the reservation issue resolved when he was in the government.

"Sharad Pawar was CM of Maharashtra four times and Congress had a full majority that time. Why did Sharad Pawar not remember this then? The issues were kept hanging and now, they are talking about it when elections are nearing," he said in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Had Pawar taken steps earlier, the quota issue would have been solved long ago. "The government is now doing whatever it can to arrive at a solution," he said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"They can either raise the reservation ceiling or include Marathas as Kunbis in the OBC category. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis must ensure that Maratha reservation is granted before the elections, or we will not spare them."



Manoj Jarange-Patil, Maratha quota activist

No privatisation of railways, says Vaishnaw

By Correspondent

Nashik: Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said there is no question of privatising the railways and asserted the national transporter's focus is on providing affordable service to all.

The aim is to ensure people can travel up to 1,000 kilometres in comfort in less than Rs 400, the railway minister said here.

"In the next five years, the railways will undergo a complete makeover. Trains like Vande Bharat, Namoo Bharat, deployment of Kavach train protection mechanism will lead this change. This is the era of transformation of railways," he said while



addressing the Railway Protection Force Raising Day event here.

"There is no question of privatisation of the railways. I urge those spreading such rumours to remember the railways and defence are two

backbones of India and must be spared all kinds of politics. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured the politicisation of the railways has stopped. The focus is on performance, safety, technology and providing affordable service to all," Vaishnaw said.

The railway budget currently stands at Rs 2.5 lakh crore and 31,000 kilometres of new tracks have been laid in the last 10 years, which is more than the network of France, he said.

Speaking about the RPF, he said Rs 35 crore has been earmarked for upgrading the force's zonal centres, while various demands pertaining to service rules and promotions are under consideration.

Advertisement for Jaheer Notary, featuring a portrait of the notary and contact information.

Mahayuti's 'please all' approach reflects in the cabinet decisions



By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Mahayuti government in the state appears to have taken a 'please all' approach and has opened the strings of its purse for the communities including Jains, Baudhs, Bari, Teli, Hindu Khatik, Lonari and Koli.

At the second cabinet meeting in the week, on Friday, several decisions were made aimed at these communities. Earlier this week similar decisions pertaining to some other communities too were made at the cabinet decision.

The state cabinet resolved to form a minority financial development corporation for the Jain community on Friday. Similar corporations are to be formed for Bari, Teli, Hindu Khatik and Lonari communities also. The cabinet also resolved to release a grant of up to Rs 10 lakh for the cultural and educational institutes of the Baudh community.

The cabinet also resolved to form welfare corporations for fish worker com-

munities working on seas as well as in inland freshwater bodies. In another decision, the cabinet also modified the demographic criteria earmarked for inclusion of nomadic tribes in the village panchayats. The decision shall help the Banjara and Laman communities in identifying their caravans with particular village panchayats.

In another decision aimed at SC and ST communities, the state cabinet on Friday increased the housing grants under the Ramai Awaj Yojana and the Shabari Awaj Yojana respectively for the two communities. In the last cabinet meeting the state cabinet had resolved to set up a corporation for Brahmin community in the state.

Apart from formation of financial development and welfare corporations for communities, the government is also trying to target various societal groups and address their issues.

Under this head the state cabinet on Friday resolved to raise the prize money for various awards and prizes

for sports persons in the state. With decision, now the gold medallists in Olympics and Para Olympics would get Rs 5 crore, Silver medallists would get Rs 3 crore and bronze medallists would get Rs 2 crore. Also, their trainers would get Rs 50 lakh, 30 lakh and 20 lakh respectively.

Similarly for medals in world championships, the players shall get Rs 3 crore, 2 crore and 1 crore and their trainers would get Rs 30, 20 and 10 lakh respectively. Similar prizes have been announced for players representing the state in Asian games, commonwealth games and Youth Olympics games as well as the players playing team games in all these categories.

The cabinet made a decision for the benefit of the sugarcane workers. Under this decision the state government will implement accidental insurance schemes for the sugarcane workers. Sugar mills set aside Rs 10 per tonne of Sugar produced in the mill for the welfare of these

workers. Insurance schemes of the New India Assurance would be purchased with this money, said a senior CMO officer.

The cabinet also made some very crucial decisions that would push the state on the development track faster. They include abolition of non-agricultural (NA) tax charged for the residential and commercial buildings on gaathan lands across the state.

The decision shall also be applicable for commercial and industrial buildings outside the gaathan lands. With this decision the cabinet has done away with restrictions on building houses and commercial buildings in and around villages and in farmlands, which is expected to give a major boost to the decision.

In another similar decision, the state cabinet has brought in new BOT policy for small hydro electric projects. The state currently has 42 private hydro electric projects in the state that produce a total of 163.65 MW electricity. But, the new policy was necessary for the 37 new projects that are being planned for production capacity of 101.39 MW.

Under this policy Rs 50 lakh per MW has been fixed as the threshold premium.

The state government appears to be hitting a balance between the politics and development through these decisions.



Girls playing garba during Navratri festival at Mahavir Nagar, Kandivall.

Pic: Bhushan Koyande

PM to inaugurate metro line, lay foundation of infra projects

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate an underground metro rail line, lay foundation stones of several key infrastructure projects and launch various initiatives related to the agriculture and animal husbandry sectors in Mumbai, Thane and Washim during his visit to Maharashtra on Saturday.

Modi will launch various initiatives related to the agricultural and animal husbandry sector worth around Rs 23,300 crore in Washim.

Celebrating the rich heritage of the Banjara community, the PM will also inaugurate 'Banjara Virasat Museum' after offering

The MMR projects

- BKC to Aarey JVLR section of Mumbai Metro Line - 3 costing around Rs 14,120 crore.
- Thane Integral Ring Metro Rail Project to be constructed at a cost of around Rs 12,200 crore.
- Elevated Eastern Freeway Extension from Chhedha Nagar in Mumbai to Anand Nagar in Thane. The project, entailing a cost of Rs 3,310 crore.
- Phase-1 of Navi Mumbai Airport Influence Notified Area (NAINA) project. The cost is Rs 2250 crore.
- Thane Municipal Corporation complex at a cost of around Rs 700 crore.

prayers at Jagdamba Mata Temple in Poharadevi and paying tribute at the 'samadhis' of Sant Sevalal Maharaj and Sant Ramraj Maharaj.

At around 4 pm, the PM will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for various development projects

costing more than Rs 32,800 crore in Thane.

At 6 pm, from BKC metro station, he will flag off a metro service scheduled to run from BKC to Aarey JVLR in the western part of the metropolis. He will also travel between BKC and Santacruz metro stations,

the release said.

In line with his commitment to empower farmers, Modi, during the event in Washim, will disburse the 18th instalment of the PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi worth about Rs 20,000 crore to around 9.4 crore farmers.

With this, the total funds released to farmers under PM-KISAN will be around Rs 3.45 lakh crore. He will also launch the 5th instalment of NaMo Shetkari Mahasnan Nidhi Yojana and disburse Rs 2,000 crore, the release said.

The PM will dedicate to the nation more than 7,500 projects, costing Rs 1,920 crore, under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).

Woman loses Rs 6 lakh to cyber fraudsters

Mumbai: A 31-year-old woman allegedly lost Rs 6 lakh to online scammers after dialling a number, which she had found following a Google search, believing it to be the helpline of a government body, police said on Friday.

The con came to light on Wednesday when the woman, who works in a private firm, approached the Ghatkopar police station with a complaint, an officer said.

The woman, a resident of Chirag Nagar locality in the eastern suburb of Ghatkopar West, on September 26 attempted to withdraw Rs 5,000 from an ATM using the cardless feature through her bank's mobile app, the official said citing the complaint.

However, possibly due to some error, she got a message that the money had been sent through the UPI (Unified Payments Interface) account 'kerlacmrf.covid@icici' to the 'Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund'.

The next day, the woman ran a Google search for the toll-free helpline of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which owns UPI. One of the search results showed '1800-41-

2222-32' as the number, she said in her police complaint.

Trusting the number to be genuine, she dialled it and a person, who identified himself as Suresh Sharma and an employee of NPCI's Bandra branch, told her that she would receive a call from another number.

Later, a man, who introduced himself as Amit Yadav, called the complainant and asked her to download an app and give access to her mobile screen for assistance. He persuaded the woman to share her bank account details, passwords and info about her PAN and UPI accounts, the officer said.

Immediately after sharing the details, Rs 93,062 was deducted from her account, the officer said. The amount was transferred to the account of one Virendra Raikwar.

Yadav told the woman that a new account had been created for her and she would get all the deducted amounts within 24 hours. On September 28, the woman contacted the NPCI 'toll-free' number and told Suresh Sharma that her money was not returned after 24 hours.



Maharashtra Navnirman Sena workers celebrate the status of classical language to Marathi in Navi Mumbai on Friday.

Pic: PTI

Revolver fell, went off: Govinda

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Actor Govinda was discharged from hospital on Friday, three days after he injured his leg when his revolver accidentally went off, and answered the top of mind question of what exactly happened. "Voh giri aur chhal padi," he chuckled.

The accident happened early on Tuesday morning

when he was about to leave for the airport and he underwent a surgery the same day. The 60-year-old actor came out of the Criticare hospital on a wheelchair and had a cast on his left leg.

The actor, a member of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, was accompanied by his wife Sunmita Ahuja and daughter Tina Ahuja. He greeted media

persons and fans with folded hands.

"I was about to leave for a show in Kolkata. It was about 5 in the morning. Aur uss time par vo giri aur chhal padi (and it just fell and went off). I was shocked by what happened and when I looked down, I saw a fountain of blood. Then I made a video and spoke to the doctor and got admitted," he said.

Shelar blasts Aadiya

Mumbai: Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar on Friday blamed Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray for water woes in the metropolis and alleged the latter scrapped several planned dam projects in favour of expensive desalination plants.

Thackeray was environment minister in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government headed by his father Uddhav Thackeray.

Shelar, who has corporator in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation for several terms before becoming an MLA, said many parts of the city face low water pressure.

"In the last 10 years no new dam was constructed by the civic body nor was any new arrangement made. On the contrary, the Gargai Dam project was scrapped and a plan to desalinate sea water was initiated. However, even the desalination project could not see completion," Shelar said.

Notably, the undivided Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray controlled the BMC for 25 consecutive years between 1997 to 2022. Shelar's BJP was also an alliance partner of the Sena for a significant period of time.

Mumbai Airport will be closed for six hours



By Correspondent

Mumbai: Flight operations at Mumbai Airport will be closed for six hours on October 17 for carrying out post-monsoon maintenance work on two cross runways at the facility, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) said on Friday.

This scheduled temporary closure is a part of Mumbai Airport's annual post-monsoon preventive maintenance plan and a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) has also been issued six months in advance in this regard, it said.

"As a part of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) comprehensive post-monsoon runway maintenance plan, the cross runways -- RWY 09/27 and RWY 14/32 -- will be temporarily non-

operational on October 17, 2024, from 11 am to 5 pm," MIAL said.

It said that flight schedules have been coordinated well in advance, in collaboration with key stakeholders, to ensure seamless operations and smooth execution of the post-monsoon runway maintenance. The primary objective of this planned closure is to carry out essential repair and maintenance activities to ensure that the airport's infrastructure meets global standards.

This annual practice of post-monsoon runway maintenance is part of the series of activities undertaken with precision and meticulous effort, ensuring operational continuity and passenger safety, thereby imbuing the safety first approach at the core of air-side operations.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The ideology of Congress has become corrupt. Therefore, their leaders are making such statements about Savarkar. It was expected that the Shiv Sena (UBT) would protest but nothing happened."

Naresh Mhaske, MP, Shiv Sena



'Stampede-like situation' on Metro Line 2A station

Mumbai: Passengers travelling on Mumbai Metro Line 2A between Dahisar and Andheri West on Friday claimed a "stampede-like situation" prevailed for some time at Andheri West station, though officials said it was "overcrowding" caused by two trains arriving at the same time.

Social media users shared videos of the crowding and also claimed lack of metro rail staff to control the situation. Passengers claimed the common access between Metro Line 2A and

Line 1 (Ghatkopar-Andheri-Versova) was closed due to overcrowding, which they said worsened the situation.

"Stampede situation due to sudden shutdown of access between Andheri West Metro station and DN Nagar Metro station. There was no staff for crowd control and no planning," Prasad Patil, a user on X said while sharing a video.

The video showed a crowded station concourse with passengers struggling to enter and exit.



"I think the crowding was due to the closure of direct transit from Andheri West Metro Station to DN Nagar station. If you must close the transit, please

plan for crowd management and control," Patil added.

"It is not a good day to travel by Metro," wrote user Preeti, while another

user, Twinkle, asked "Why is #MumbaiMetro acting like a #LocalTrain today?" Mumbai Metro One, which operates the Ghatkopar-Andheri-Versova line, said a technical fault on Line 2A caused a surge of commuters at DN Nagar station.

Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited (MMMOCL) officials said services were disrupted due to a signalling issue, but the incident occurred when services resumed.

MMMOCL operates metro services on Line 2A between Andheri West and Dahisar, as well as Line 7 between Dahisar and Andheri East (Gundavali).

"Due to an issue in signalling, a metro train was briefly halted between Gundavali and Mogra for 4-5 minutes. Once resolved, two metro trains arrived at Gundavali within a minute, leading to crowding in the holding area. However, we managed to clear the rush swiftly," a MMOCL official said.

-PTI

PM to release instalment of Rs 20,000 cr

MAHARASHTRA FARMERS TO GET ADDITIONAL RS 2,000 CR



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release Rs 20,000 crore as the 18th instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme on Saturday, benefiting over 9.4 crore farmers across the country. Disbursements will be through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) during an event in Washim, Maharashtra, an official statement said. Maharashtra farmers will receive an additional Rs 2,000 crore under the state's Namo Shetkari Mahasanna Nidhi Yojana. With the 18th instalment, the total amount disbursed under PM-KISAN will exceed Rs 3.45 lakh crore, supporting more than 11 crore farmers nationwide. The PM-KISAN scheme, launched on February 24,

provides Rs 6,000 annually to landholding farmers in three equal instalments. Maharashtra has received about Rs 32,000 crore in 17 instalments, benefiting around 1.20 crore farmers, the second highest among all states. Around 91.51 lakh farmers in Maharashtra will receive over Rs 1,900 crore in the 18th instalment. Modi will also launch an indigenous sex-sorted semen production technology, aimed at reducing costs by approximately Rs 200 per dose. The Prime Minister will introduce a Unified Genomic Chip for cattle and buffalo, developed by the Animal Husbandry Department. Five solar parks with 19

MW capacity will be dedicated under the MSKVY 2.0 scheme, providing farmers daytime electricity and additional income through land leasing. The event will see the dedication of 9,200 Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs) and e-distribution of awards for 3,000 MW under the KUSUM-C scheme. Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan, Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and Deputy Chief Ministers Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnis will attend the event. Around 2.5 crore farmers will participate through webcasts at various centres nationwide. States and UTs will celebrate the day as PM-KISAN Utsav Divas. -PTI

SC upholds validity of IT notices

New Delhi: In a relief to the Income Tax Department, the Supreme Court has upheld the validity of nearly 90,000 reassessment notices issued by the revenue department after April 1, 2021, under old provisions. The top court on Thursday set aside the verdicts of several high courts that had held that the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Act (TOLA) of 2021 will not extend the time limit for issuing reassessment notices under the Income Tax Act. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra dealt with two legal questions related to the interplay of three Parliamentary statutes, the Income Tax Act, the TOLA and the Finance Act. The issues, adjudicated upon by the top court, read: "Whether TOLA and notifications issued under it will also apply to reassessment notices issued after April 1, 2021 and whether the reassessment notices issued under Section 148 of the new regime between July and September 2022 are valid." The CJI, writing the 112-page judgement, held, "We conclude that: a. After April 1, 2021, the Income Tax Act has to be read along with the substituted provisions and TOLA will continue to apply to the Income Tax Act after April 1, 2021 if any action or proceeding initiated under the substituted provisions of the Income Tax Act falls for completion between March 20, 2020 and March 31, 2021." -PTI

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Decoding India's New 'Jam Trinity' in Digital Finance



By Rishabh Goel

India's digital finance landscape is rapidly evolving, and the latest addition to this transformation is the Unified Lending Interface (ULI). After the overwhelming success of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced ULI as a groundbreaking platform to streamline and rapidly scale the digital lending process. Currently, in its pilot stage, ULI is poised to revolutionize how credit is accessed, particularly by New-to-credit, agricultural borrowers and medium, small, and micro enterprises (MSMEs). The Need for a Unified Lending Interface Access to credit has long been a challenge for many sectors in India, especially in the unbanked, rural, agriculture and MSMEs sectors. Despite the rapid expansion of credit coverage and increasing digitization of financial services, there is a significant unmet demand for credit. Traditional lending processes often involve complex paperwork, multiple intermediaries, and lengthy approval times, making it difficult for small borrowers and people in remote areas to access loans easily. The ULI addresses these issues by digitizing and expediting the loan application and approval process. By doing so, it aims to create a more efficient and accessible credit system for sectors that are crucial to India's economic growth. The introduction of ULI marks a significant step towards bridging the credit gap and ensuring that financial resources are readily available where they are most needed.

Breaking Down the ULI

The Unified Lending Interface is designed to reduce the turnaround time (TAT) for credit assessment, loan processing and approval. It does this by facilitating a seamless exchange of digital information between lenders and borrowers. One of the key features of ULI is its ability to integrate financial data from various sources, including Aadhaar, e-KYC, PAN databases, land title records, cattle ownership, milk production, credit scores, bank accounts, and loan payment information of borrowers. This unified access ensures easy and comprehensive access to borrower information, leading to faster and more informed loan approvals. With its plug-and-play architecture, ULI allows lenders to quickly access the information they need, reducing the time spent on due diligence and facilitating informed credit decisions. The platform features standardized application programming interfaces (APIs), ensuring smooth data integration and retrieval from multiple channels. This comprehensive approach simplifies the lending process, making it easier for rural and smaller borrowers to secure loans.



ized payments, making digital transactions seamless and accessible to all. Now, with the introduction of ULI, the focus is on credit access, completing the cycle of financial inclusion and empowerment. **Shaping the future** Currently, ULI is in the pilot stage, with plans for a nationwide rollout in the near future. During this phase, the platform is being tested to ensure that it meets the needs of both lenders and borrowers. With seamless and comprehensive access to broader data points on borrowers, it will democratize credit reach by speeding up approvals and enhancing credit access to the unbanked and NTC segment. The concept of aggregating the insights that are currently spread across different entities could well be a game changer for credit expansion in the MSME and rural segments. By enhancing transparency, reducing frictional inefficiencies, and promoting financial inclusion, the ULI will create the foundation for a more resilient and inclusive credit landscape in India. As India continues its journey towards a fully digital economy, the Unified Lending Interface stands out as a pivotal development. Once fully implemented, as part of the new 'Jam Trinity', ULI is set to play a critical role in shaping the future of digital finance in India and drive the growth agenda for a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. (The writer is Co-founder and CEO of Credgenics. Views personal.)

NSE settles TAP system case with SEBI

AT RS 643 CRORE IT IS THE HIGHEST SETTLEMENT AMOUNT



Vikram Limaye
New Delhi: The National Stock Exchange (NSE), its former chief Vikram Limaye and eight others on Friday settled with markets regulator SEBI a case, pertaining to alleged failure to address the bourse's TAP (trading access point) system deficiencies, after paying Rs 643 crore. This will be one of the highest settlement amounts

and will pave the way for NSE's much-awaited initial public offering (IPO), which was delayed following the co-location issue. The matter was settled "without admitting or denying the findings of facts and conclusions of law, through a settlement order". Apart from NSE and Limaye, those who settled the case are Umesh Jain G.

M. Shenoy, Narayan Neelakantan, V.R. Narasimhan, Kamala K, Nilesh Tinakar, R Nandakumar and Mayur Sindhwad. TAP was introduced in 2008 to manage communication between trading members and NSE's trading system, but it had several issues, including security lapses, delays in improvements, and inadequate action on complaints. Despite introducing alternative systems, TAP continued to be used until 2019 for equities and 2020 for other segments. In its settlement order, SEBI said that NSE, on behalf of itself and other applicants, has remitted the settlement amount of Rs 643 crore on September 25, the receipt of which is confirmed. Accordingly, "the proceedings initiated against the applicants vide the SCN (show cause notice) dated February 28, 2023, are hereby disposed of," the regulator said.



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo during the signing of an MoU at the 6th India-US Commercial Dialogue in Washington DC, USA. Pic: PTI

MoU on critical minerals

Washington: Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo held the 6th Commercial Dialogue here on Thursday during which they reviewed the progress made in semiconductor supply chains, innovation handshake, energy-industry network and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. A day earlier, the two leaders signed a new memorandum of understanding

(MoU) to expand and diversify critical minerals supply chains, with the aim of leveraging the two countries' complementary strengths to ensure greater resilience in the critical minerals sector. Priority areas of focus include identifying equipment, services, policies and best practices to facilitate the mutually-beneficial commercial development of the US and Indian critical minerals exploration, extraction, processing and re-

fining, recycling and recovery, a media release said. During the commercial dialogue, Goyal and Raimondo praised the two sides' continuing efforts to facilitate resilient, secure and sustainable semiconductor supply chains. Goyal and Raimondo pledged to continue working under the MoU to facilitate collaboration between US and Indian companies towards mutually-beneficial business opportunities.

India to see steepest rise in living standard: FM

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said India would achieve near doubling of per capita income in the next five years and witness the steepest rise in living standard of the common man in coming decades aided by structural reforms undertaken by the government in the last 10 years. Addressing the third edition of Kautiliya Economic Conclave here, the minister said, India's critical economic performance in the recent decade was underscored by its leapfrog from the 10th to the fifth largest economy in a matter of five years. "While it took us 75 years to reach a per capita income of USD 2,730, as per IMF projections, it will take only five years to add another USD 2,000. The upcoming decades will see the steepest rise in living standards for the common man, truly making it a period-defining era for an Indian to live in," she said. She further said India seeks to double its per capita income in a matter of a few years for its 1.4 billion strong population (which makes up 18 per cent of the global total) in a fragmented and fractured world



where several persistent conflicts may worsen, posing a threat to global peace that is the bedrock of prosperity. This is being achieved with declining inequality, as the Gini coefficient (income inequality benchmark) for rural India declined from 0.283 to 0.266, and for urban areas it declined from 0.363 to 0.314, she said. "I expect these improvements to continue as the effects of the last ten years of economic and structural reforms manifest more thoroughly in the data in the coming years as the Covid shock fades from the economy," she said. By 2047, as India crosses the 100-year mark of independence, she said, the new Indian era will have core characteristics similar to developed countries." -PTI

In NZ, Google to stop news if content is charged

Wellington: Google said Friday it will stop linking to New Zealand news content and will reverse its support of local media outlets if the government passes a law forcing tech companies to pay for articles displayed on their platforms. The vow to sever Google traffic to New Zealand news sites — made in a blog post by the search giant on Friday — echoes strategies the firm deployed as Australia and Canada prepared to enact similar laws in recent years.

It followed a surprise announcement by New Zealand's government in July that lawmakers would advance a bill forcing tech platforms to strike deals for sharing revenue generated from news content with the media outlets producing it. The government, led by centre-right National, had opposed the law in 2023 when introduced by the previous administration. But the loss of more than 200 newsroom jobs earlier this year — in a national media industry that tot-

alled 1,600 reporters at the 2018 census and has likely shrunk since — prompted the current government to reconsider forcing tech companies to pay publishers for displaying content. The law aims to stanch the flow offshore of advertising revenue derived from New Zealand news products. Google New Zealand Country Director Caroline Rainsford wrote Friday that the firm would change its involvement in the country's media landscape if it

passed. "Specifically, we'd be forced to stop linking to news content on Google Search, Google News, or Discover surfaces in New Zealand and discontinue our current commercial agreements and ecosystem support with New Zealand news publishers," she wrote. Google's licensing program in New Zealand contributed "millions of dollars per year to almost 50 local publications," she added.

The News Publishers' Association, a New Zealand sector group, said in a written statement Friday that Google's pledge amounted to "threats" and reflected "the kind of pressure that it has been applying" to the government and news outlets, Public Affairs Director Andrew Holden said. The government "should be able to make laws to strengthen democracy in this country without being subjected to this kind of corporate bullying," he said.

Australia was the first country to attempt to force tech firms — including Google and Meta — to the bargaining table with news outlets through a law passed in 2021. At first, the tech giants imposed news blackouts for Australians on their platforms, but both eventually somewhat relented, striking deals reportedly worth 200 million Australian dollars (\$137 million) a year, paid to Australian outlets for use of their content. -AP

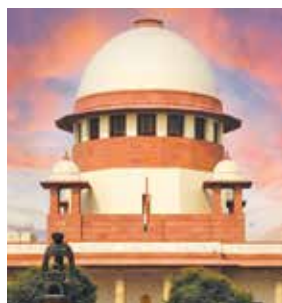
QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In the midst of these big global uncertainties, we are all here witnessing the Indian era, we are discussing India. This shows the confidence in India. Whether it is science, technology or innovation, India clearly is at a sweet spot. Reform, perform and transform motto we are taking decision to take India forward." Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



Sub-classification of SC for Quota SC dismisses pleas seeking review of judgment

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its judgment which held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes for granting reservation.



which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward.

A seven-judge Constitution bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices B.R. Gavai, Vikram Nath, Bela Trivedi, Pankaj Mithal, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma said there is no error apparent on the face of the record.

The top court also rejected applications for listing the review petitions in open court.

Justice Trivedi, who had written a separate dissenting judgment in the case, was also part of seven-judge bench which dismissed the pleas seeking review of the majority verdict.

"Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013 has been established. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed," the order dated September 24, which was uploaded today, said.

On August 1, the top court had held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes (SCs),

The apex court, however, made it clear that states have to make sub-classification on the basis of "quantifiable and demonstrable data" of backwardness and representation in government jobs and not on "whims" and as a matter of "political expediency".

A seven-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Chandrachud, by a majority of 6:1, set aside the apex court's five-judge bench verdict of 2004 in the EV Chinnaiiah vs State of Andhra Pradesh case which had held that no sub-classification of SCs can be allowed as they are a homogeneous class in themselves.

Except for Justice Trivedi, the other six judges concurred with the findings of the CJJ.

Justice Trivedi, in her 85-page dissenting judgment, said it is only Parliament which can include a caste in the SC list or exclude it,

and states are not empowered to tinker with it. The SCs, she ruled, are a "homogeneous class" incapable of being sub-classified further.

Overruling the Chinnaiiah verdict, the CJJ dealt with the scope of sub-classification of SCs and said the objective of any form of affirmative action, including the sub-classification, is to provide "substantive equality of opportunity for the backward classes".

"The state can sub-classify, inter alia, based on inadequate representation of certain castes. However, the state must establish that the inadequacy of representation of a caste/group is because of its backwardness," it said.

The state will have to collect data on the inadequacy of representation in government jobs because it is used as an indicator of backwardness, it said.

A dispute over sub-classification arose after certain states, including Punjab, made laws to sub-classify SCs to grant more quota benefits to certain castes.

The top court had reserved the verdict on February 8 on pleas seeking review of the Chinnaiiah judgment, which had ruled all SCs which suffered ostracism, discrimination and humiliation for centuries represented a homogeneous class incapable of being sub-categorised.

-PTI

No response from govt: Wangchuk

New Delhi: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk said he and other protesters from Ladakh would sit on an indefinite fast from Saturday since they have not received any response from the government over their demand of meeting the President, prime minister or the Union home minister.

Wangchuk was leading the 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began from Leh a month ago. The 'padyatra' was organised by the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has been spearheading an agitation for the last four years for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

At a press conference here, the climate activist said they had written to the office of the President, Prime Minister and Home Minister seeking an appointment and were assured that they would be informed about the meeting by Friday 5 pm.

"We have not received any response from the government. So we will sit on an indefinite fast from tomorrow," Wangchuk said.

Ladakh MP Mohamad Haneefa and other members of the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance were present at the press conference.

Wangchuk said they have requested the authorities to provide them space in Jantar Mantar for holding the fast. He said they have not received any confirmation yet and appealed to all political parties and organisations to provide them with a venue for the protest.



Scion of the Mysore royal family Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar holds a private durbar on the first day of 'Navratri' celebrations at Mysuru Palace on Thursday.
Pic: PTI

Laddu adulteration tip of iceberg: Pawan

Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has said that the laddu adulteration issue is just a tip of the iceberg and there are many more decisions taken during the previous regime that have to be investigated.

Addressing a rally here on Thursday, he said he was not blaming the YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy personally for the laddu adulteration, but the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) board, which was constituted during the previous regime.

A day before the Supreme Court is expected to hear the case on the allega-

tion of using animal fat in making Tirupati laddu, Kalyan said he wanted to communicate to the judiciary that Jagan was facing several charges including corruption allegations and it has to consider before giving a decision (in laddu adulteration case).

"Laddu prasadam adulteration is a tip of the iceberg. We don't know how many crores of rupees they collected during the tenure of (the last) five years. That has to be investigated," the Deputy CM said.

"Eminent people of this nation, let me tell you what exactly the previous government and the leader was. The previous chief minister is trying to act in-

nocent," he added.

On CM Chandrababu Naidu's allegation that laddu was made using adulterated ghee, the Deputy CM said the TDP chief was sharing with MLAs and MPs what exactly had happened, citing a "fact".

He described the laddu adulteration issue as an attack on "Sanatana Dharma" for the past five years.

Referring to the recent comments made by Tamil Nadu Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin, Kalyan in Tamil said, "Don't say that Sanatana Dharma is like a virus, and it will destroy."

"Whoever said this let me tell you sir. You can not wipe out Sanatana Dharma. If anyone tries to wipe

out Sanatana Dharma let me tell you from the feet of Lord Balaji you will be wiped out."

Kalyan also stressed the need to bring in legislation at the national level to protect Sanatana Dharma and establish Sanatana Dharma protection boards with adequate funds at national and state levels.

"I am an unapologetic Sanatani Hindu. Let me be very clear," he said, and vowed to safeguard it with his life. The Deputy CM further said Sanatana Dharma is going to stay here.

"People like you might come and go, but Sanatana Dharma goes on forever. It would not stop. It is beyond," he said.

Right to live with dignity extends even to incarcerated, says SC

New Delhi: "Right to live with dignity extends even to incarcerated" and its denial to the prisoners is a "relic of the colonizers and pre-colonial mechanisms," the Supreme Court has said.

The observations were made by a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra in a landmark judgement delivered on Thursday by which it banned caste-based discrimination like division of manual labour, segregation of barracks, and bias against prisoners of denotified tribes and habitual offenders.

It held as unconstitutional the certain objectionable prison manual rules of 10 states including Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh.

The CJJ, penning the 148-page judgement for the bench, dealt with fundamental rights under Articles 14 (equality), 15 (prohibition of discrimi-

nation), 17 (abolition of untouchability), 21 (right to life and personal liberty), and 23 (right against forced labour) of the Constitution.

Dealing with Article under 21, it said, "The right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated. Not providing dignity to prisoners is a relic of the colonizers and pre-colonial mechanisms, where oppressive systems were designed to dehumanize and degrade those under the control of the State.

"Authoritarian regimes of the pre-constitutional era saw prisons not only as places of confinement but as tools of domination. This Court, focusing on the changed legal framework brought out by the Constitution, has recognized that even prisoners are entitled to the right to dignity."

On Article 14, it said the state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India and equality is a crucial aspect of the constitutional vision.

-PTI



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita during leaving CM residence in New Delhi.
Pic: PTI

Demolitions in Gujarat If contempt, will ask to restore structures, says SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said if it finds that authorities in Gujarat acted in contempt of its order on demolition of properties, it will ask them to restore the structures.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan was hearing a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings for alleged violation of the apex

court's September 17 order which had said that there shall be no demolition of properties, including those accused of crimes, across the country without its permission.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for petitioner Summat Patni Muslim Jamat, said that despite the top court's order, the authorities in Gujarat have

demolished structures.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Gujarat authorities, said the structures were abutting the sea and were around 340 metres away from the Somnath temple.

"This falls within the exception carved out by your lordships," the top law officer said.

-PTI

BJP leader's office attacked

Kolkata: Former Lok Sabha MP and BJP leader Arjun Singh alleged that a group of people threw stones, hurled bombs and fired multiple gunshots at his office-cum-residence Meghna More in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas around 8.30 am on Friday.

Singh claimed that he sustained a splinter wound during the incident.

He claimed that police were mere spectators as the assailants brandished firearms openly.

HC refuses Sukesh's plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has refused to allow a plea by alleged common Sukesh Chandrashekar, facing prosecution in several criminal cases, seeking direction to jail authorities not to transfer him from Mandoli jail to any other prison here.

The accused submitted that he was suffering from various ailments and had been taken to Safdarjung and RML hospitals for treatment and the transfer would interfere with his medical treatment.

The high court considered that the treatment he was undergoing could easily be made available to him at other jail complexes.

"Therefore, considering that the treatment which the petitioner is undergoing can easily be made available to him at other jail complexes, this court does not find any necessity for issuing directions for not transferring the petitioner to other jails, if so necessitated for the administrative reasons," Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"IUML, SDPI, and Jamaat-e-Islami have been working toward communal polarization. Through such moves, they are preparing the ground in Kerala for the BJP's growth."



M.V. Govindan, State Secretary, CPI (M), Kerala

China ahead of India in technology: IAF Chief

New Delhi: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Friday said the IAF is aiming to have its entire inventory produced in India by 2047 under the indigenisation programme even as he asserted that Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd must produce 24 Tejas light combat jets annually as promised to offset the delays in supplies.

At a press conference ahead of Air Force Day on October 8, the Chief of Air Staff also said India needs to catch up with China on technology and speed in production of military equipment, holding that "we are way behind" the neighbour.

He, at the same time, said the

Indian military is way ahead in terms of personnel including those operating various machines and platforms.

On the eastern Ladakh standoff between India and China, the IAF Chief said the situation remains same as it has been for the last one-year-plus, but noted that the development of infrastructure "on the other side has been very rapid."

"We are trying to match up with it. We are upgrading our airfields. There are new airfields coming up," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff underlined the importance of India becoming self-reliant in weapons



and other systems and said it is important to face future security challenges.

"On the whole, IAF has got a vision. By 2047, we should have the entire inventory being either produced in India or developed and produced in India," he said.

"In a conflict situation when 200 to 300 missiles are fired in one day, then you have to have manufactured them in India. You cannot afford to have them procured from outside," he said.

His comments came when asked about Iran firing over 200 missiles into Israel a few days back. The IAF Chief said his force also has issues of supply chain breaking down because of the ongoing wars.

"We have components which come from these regions. So maintaining those equipment is a challenge," he said, in an apparent reference to the Russia-Ukraine war.

On the Tejas programme, the IAF Chief said the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) must produce 24 aircraft as promised.

"The HAL has to keep the promise of building 24 aircraft per year. If that promise is kept, I think the delays can be caught up with," he said. The IAF has placed an order with HAL for 83 Tejas Mark-1A aircraft. The deliveries were to begin in March. However, not a single aircraft has been delivered yet. To a question, Air Chief Marshal Singh said three units of S-400 missile systems were delivered by Russia and it promised to deliver the remaining two units by next year.

Pumped Storage Projects in Western Ghats

Site visits required before environment clearance

New Delhi: A panel of the Union Environment Ministry has said that site visits should be conducted "in toto" before granting environmental clearances to pumped storage projects (PSPs) in the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats.

During a meeting of the ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) on September 27, the member secretary stated that the ministry had granted Terms of Reference (ToR) -- which outlines the environmental studies a project must complete before applying for clearance -- to approximately 15 projects in the Western Ghats. "The EAC reviewed the Terms of Reference recommended to the PSPs proposed to be located in Western Ghats... Given the region's high environmental sensitivity, the EAC, in previous meetings, recommended site visits by sub-committee members to several pumped storage projects.

"These projects are located in the ecologically fragile Western Ghats and

UNESCO declared the Western Ghats a World Heritage Site in July 2012 and in 2013, the Centre formed a High-Level Working Group led by rocket scientist K Kasturirangan to propose measures for the ecological protection and sustainable development of the region.



a huge forest area is also involved. The EAC emphasised that, prior to granting environmental clearance or making any recommendations, all pumped storage projects in Western Ghats that have been granted ToR by the ministry, a site visit shall be carried in toto wherever possible," read the minutes published on Thursday.

The Western Ghats, like the Himalayas, are among the most fragile regions in the country and are prone to illegal mining, unregulated construction, and uncontrolled commercial activities.

A pumped-storage project involves two reservoirs, one on top of a hill and another at the bottom. Excess electricity is used to pump water uphill to the upper reservoir. When electricity demand spikes, the water is released to the lower reservoir through a turbine, generating power. This system is particularly significant given the unpredictable nature of solar and wind energy.

In 2010, the Centre formed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel un-

der ecologist Madhav Gadgil to study the impact of population pressure, climate change, and development activities on the Western Ghats.

The panel recommended in 2011 that the entire hill range be declared an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) and divided into three Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ 1, 2, and 3) based on their environmental sensitivity. It also recommended a ban on mining, quarrying, new thermal power plants, hydropower projects, and large-scale wind energy projects in ESZ 1.

However, these recommendations faced opposition from state governments, industries, and local communities.

Since March 2014, the Union Environment Ministry has issued six draft notifications to declare the Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive, but the final notification is still pending due to objections from the states.

An expert panel, established in April 2022 under former Director General of Forests Sanjay Kumar, is

15
No of projects waiting for clearance in Western Ghat

37 per cent
Area of Western Ghats declared as eco sensitive

59,940 sq km
Area of eco sensitive zone

14
No of notifications issued in last three years for 23 protected areas

17
No of draft notifications for 32 protected areas

now working closely with the states to resolve the issue. Following the recent devastating landslides in Kerala's Wayanad, sources in the environment ministry said that the Centre might notify eco-sensitive areas of the Western Ghats state by state.

After discussions with stakeholders, the panel realised that declaring the entire region as an eco-sensitive area at once may not be feasible. It would be more effective to notify the areas separately for each state, they said.

-PTI

WASTE TO BEST

How do I manage my household waste?



By
Dr. Sanjay Joshi

So friends, in my last week's article, I wrote about the suffering of poor cows when they innocently and unknowingly consume plastic bags with left over food inside. These plastic bags are unwanted materials in their stomachs. Cows and all such animals have a stomach made up of four chambers. It is equipped to digest only the grasses and other vegetation or similar type of nutritious food meant for them.

Obviously, plastic is not their food. The poor cows then fall sick and are unable to carry on with their lives unless some good souls, notice the bulging bellies of these animals and take them to a veterinary surgeon to perform a surgery and take out all that plastic stuff out of their stomachs. There are such groups spread across who take care of such sick cows. There are records indicating that the vets have removed anywhere between 20 kilograms to 80 kilograms of plastic bags from cow's stomachs. And we are responsible for this.

Another issue with plastic material lying in the garbage heap is that, this plastic does not remain contained within that heap. Being much lighter in weight, it gets carried away due to wind or rainwater. It will eventually settle in the nallahs and gutters and will flow into smaller and then larger waterbodies like rivers, creeks and estuaries, only to find its way into our oceans and seas.



Lot more about plastic waste will eventually appear in this column. Furthermore, different types of flies, including the houseflies also get attracted to this garbage.

The flies that visit the garbage are also the same flies that roam around your lunch buffet and drop their offsprings on your plate. By doing so, they increase the risk of you contracting with salmonella, which causes typhoid fever, food poisoning, enteric fever, gastroenteritis, and other major illnesses. Besides flies, other animals that thrive from the garbage in and around the containers include rats and stray dogs. They have tremendous potential to spread the germs of many dreadful diseases in human population.

Apart from these animals, the rag pickers keep on visiting such garbage heaps frequently to retrieve the useful and saleable materials, article from it so that they can earn their daily bread and butter. These rag

pickers are at very high risk of getting infected, and injured while handling sharp objects like broken glass bottle or sharp metallic objects. Such heaps of garbage are major sources of air pollution, which causes various respiratory diseases and other adverse health effects as contaminants are absorbed from lungs into other parts of the body.

The toxic substances in air contaminated by waste include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. In everyday life we identify the polluted air especially through bad odors, which are usually caused by decomposing and liquid waste items that are part of such garbage heaps.

All in all, such heaps of garbage strewn on the roadside in various parts of the city has become an eyesore for the passersby and people living in the area.

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

Russian 'spy whale' likely died of bacterial infection

Oslo (Norway): A beluga whale that lived off Norway's coast and whose harness ignited speculation that it was a Russian spy, was not shot to death as claimed by animal rights groups but died of a bacterial infection, Norwegian police said Friday.

A final autopsy by Norway's Veterinary Institute "concludes that the probable cause of death was bacterial infection -- possibly as a result of a wound in the mouth from a stuck stick," Amund Preede Revheim, head of the North Sea and Environment section of the police in south-western Norway said.

"There have been no findings from the autopsy that indicate that the whale has been shot," he stressed, adding that the autopsy had been "made difficult by the fact that many of the whale's organs were very rotten." As there was no



indication of foul play, there was no reason to start a criminal investigation into its death, Preede Revheim said.

The tame beluga, which was first spotted in 2019 not far from Russian waters with a harness reading "Equipment St. Petersburg," had been nicknamed "Hvaldimir," combining the Norwegian word for whale -- hval -- and the first name of Russian President Vladimir Putin. It was found floating in a southern Norway bay on August 31.

In September, animal advocate groups OneWhale and NOAH filed a police report saying that the ani-

mal's wounds suggested it was intentionally killed.

They pointed at several wounds found on the animal's skin, including what was interpreted as a bullet hole. "Assessments made by the Veterinary Institute and the police's forensic technicians are that these are not gunshot wounds. X-rays of the chest and head were carried out without any projectiles or other metal fragments being detected," police said.

Earlier, police had described a stick about 35 centimeters long and 3 centimeters wide which was found wedged in the animal's mouth, its stomach was empty and its organs had broken down, police said. No further details were given. The 4.2-meter (14-foot) long and 1,225-kilogram whale was first spotted by fishermen not far from the Arctic town of Hammerfest.

-AP



An aerial view of houses at a flood-affected area in Darbhanga district, Bihar on Friday.

Pic: PTI

Dunedin, NZ, records wettest day in century

Wellington: The New Zealand city of Dunedin was cut off by road due to flooding Friday after recording its wettest day in more than a century.

Local authorities in the South Island city said more than 80 people who lived in low-lying areas spent the night in emergency shelters after the rain began Thursday. There have been no deaths and no one is unaccounted for.

But the city of 135,000 people was effectively cut off when the main highways leading into and out of Dunedin were closed due to flooding. They were expected to remain closed until Saturday, the City Council said on its website.

Other roads were closed due to landslides. Conditions were unpredictable said local government spokesperson, who urged residents not to drive unless it was "extremely essential."

Dozens of zoo tigers die after contracting bird flu



Hanoi (Vietnam): More than a dozen tigers were incinerated after the animals contracted bird flu at a zoo in southern Vietnam, officials said.

State media VNEExpress cited a caretaker at Vuon Xoai zoo in Bien Hoa city saying the animals were fed with raw chicken bought from nearby farms. The panther and 20 tigers, including several cubs, weighed between 10 and 120 kilograms (20 and 265 pounds) when they died. The bodies were incinerated and buried on the premises.

"The tigers died so fast. They looked weak, refused to eat and died after two days of falling sick," said zoo manager Nguyen Ba Phuc.

Samples taken from the tigers tested positive for H5N1, the virus that causes bird flu.

The virus was first identified in 1959 and grew into a widespread and highly lethal menace to migratory birds and domesticated poultry. It has since evolved, and in recent years H5N1 was detected in a growing number of animals ranging from dogs and cats to sea lions and polar bears.

In cats, scientists have found the virus attacking the brain, damaging and clotting blood vessels and causing seizures and death. The 30 staff members who were taking care of the tigers tested negative for bird flu and were in normal health condition, VNE-

More than 20 other tigers were isolated for monitoring. The zoo houses some 3,000 other animals including lions, bears, rhinos, hippos and giraffes.

press reported. Another outbreak also occurred at a zoo in nearby Long An province, where 27 tigers and 3 lions died within a week in September, the newspaper said.

Unusual flu strains that come from animals are occasionally found in people. Health officials in the United States said Thursday that two dairy workers in California were infected -- making 16 total cases de-

tected in the country in 2024.

"The deaths of 47 tigers, three lions, and a panther at My Quynh Safari and Vuon Xoai Zoo amid Vietnam's bird flu outbreak are tragic and highlight the risks of keeping wild animals in captivity," PETA Senior Vice President Jason Baker said in a statement sent to The Associated Press.

"The exploitation of wild animals also puts global human health at risk by increasing the likelihood of another pandemic," Baker said.

Bird flu has caused hundreds of deaths around the world, the vast majority of them involving direct contact between people and infected birds.

-AP

UK extends humanitarian support for Lebanon

By Aditi Khanna

London: The UK on Friday said it is boosting its humanitarian support for Lebanon with a further GBP 10 million of "lifesaving aid" to respond to the mass displacement of people and a growing number of civilian casualties amid the ongoing conflict in the region.

The funding comes as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) continues to urge all British nationals to leave the country as soon as possible, while calling for an immediate ceasefire between Lebanese Hezbollah and Israel. The aid package, to be delivered through "trusted" humanitarian organisations who have a long-established presence delivering aid within Lebanon, is in response to serious concerns over a widespread lack of shelter and reduced access to clean water, hygiene and healthcare.

"The human cost of the conflict in Lebanon is clear for all to see. This additional funding from the UK will help to address the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, providing relief for people displaced by the continuing violence," said Anneliese Dodds, UK Minister of State for Development and Minister of State for Women and Equalities.

"This lifesaving aid is vital, but not a long-term solution. The only way to truly address the growing humanitarian crisis is an immediate ceasefire adhered to by both sides. We



Relatives say whole family killed

Tulkarem (West Bank): An Israeli airstrike on a West Bank cafe that the military said targeted Palestinian militants also killed a family of four, including two young children, relatives told The Associated Press on Friday. The strike slammed into a three-story building in the Tulkarem refugee camp late Thursday, setting it on fire, destroying a popular cafe and killing at least 18 Palestinians, according to the territory's Health Ministry. It was the deadliest strike in the West Bank since the start of the Israel-Hamas war nearly a year ago. On Friday, paramedics searched the rubble inside the blasted-out coffee shop, gathering human remains into small boxes. Young boys and men walked among the ruins of the shop, with holes in the ceiling and debris blanketing the ground, digging past bloodstained furniture and dislodged iron beams for anything to salvage.

continue to urge British nationals in Lebanon to leave immediately," she said.

Friday's announcement follows a GBP 5 million humanitarian package delivered through UNICEF to support access to clean water and sanitation,

health, and nutrition supplies. The UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), for which the UK is the largest donor, also allocated GBP 7.6 million this week to respond to the urgent conflict-related needs and displacement in Lebanon.

Israeli airstrikes rock southern suburbs of Beirut

Beirut: Israel carried out a series of massive airstrikes overnight in southern suburbs of Beirut and another that cut off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria. The new wave of strikes came after Israel warned people to evacuate communities in southern Lebanon that are outside a United Nations-declared buffer zone, as the yearlong conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah escalates. Israel launched a ground incursion into Lebanon on Tuesday and its forces have been clashing with Hezbollah militants in a narrow strip along the border.

India condemns Zakir Naik's Pak visit

New Delhi: India on Friday described as "condemnable" the way Pakistan feted controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik but added that it was not "surprising".

Naik, who is living in Malaysia, began a nearly month-long visit to Pakistan on Tuesday.

"We have seen reports that he (Zakir Naik) has been feted in Pakistan. He has been warmly welcomed there," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

"It is not surprising for us that an Indian fugitive has received a high-level welcome in Pakistan. It is something which is disappointing and condemnable but at the same time it is not surprising," he said.

Jaiswal was replying to a question on Naik's visit to Pakistan.

Naik is wanted by the Indian authorities for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches. He left India in 2016. The Islamic preacher was granted permanent residency in Malaysia by the previous government led by Mahathir Mohamad. Jaiswal said India's extradition request to the Malaysian government is pending.

"We are pursuing the extradition with the Malaysian government," he said.

India is understood to have raised the issue during Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's visit to New Delhi in August.

To a question, Jaiswal said India was not clear on what passport Naik travelled to Pakistan.

S Jaishankar to travel to Pakistan



Sri Lankan foreign minister Vijitha Herath (left) shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar during their meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Friday. Pic: PTI

New Delhi: India on Friday announced that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will travel to Pakistan to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in mid-October.

The announcement was made by external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

The last Indian external affairs minister to visit Pakistan was Sushma Swaraj. She had travelled to Islamabad in December 2015 to attend a conference on Afghanistan.

Pakistan is hosting the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting on October 15 and 16. "The external affairs

minister will lead our delegation to Pakistan to participate in the SCO summit which will be held in Islamabad on October 15 and 16," Jaiswal said.

The spokesperson clarified that the external affairs minister is travelling to Pakistan only to attend the SCO summit.

In August, Pakistan invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the SCO's summit. Jaishankar's visit to Pakistan assumes significance as it is seen as a major decision on New Delhi's part. The decision to send the senior minister is seen as a display of India's commitment to the SCO which has been playing a key role in boosting regional security cooperation.

The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019.

Support in Sri Lanka's economic rebuilding

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday met Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed "ways to deepen ongoing cooperation and strengthen India-Sri Lanka ties," and assured India's continued support to the island nation's economic rebuilding.

Jaishankar arrived here in the morning on a day-long visit, less than a fortnight after President Dissanayake was sworn in.

Jaishankar is the first foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka since the National People's Power (NPP) government led by Dissanayake came to power on September 23.

He was received at the airport by Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardena and the Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha.

Japan's new PM regrets for slush fund scandal

Tokyo: New Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba opened his first policy speech in office Friday by expressing deep regrets over the governing party's slush funds scandal that dogged his predecessor.

Ishiba replaced Fumio Kishida on Tuesday with the paramount mission of quickly pacifying public anger over financial misconduct in the Liberal Democratic Party and regaining support ahead of an Oct 27 parliamentary election.

"I will achieve politics that is not for politicians but for the people," Ishiba said, pledging to provide sincere explanations and ensure that lawmakers abide by the rules.

He set five policy pillars to uphold, including security, economy and disaster resilience. Ishiba said he will bolster Japan's military capability to defend itself from threats from China, Russia and North Korea under the framework of the Japan-US security alliance. He did not mention two



goals he advocated before taking office — making the Japan-US security alliance more equitable and establishing a NATO-like collective defense system in Asia — apparently to avoid controversy ahead of the election that the LDP must win.

Omitting those goals also saves him from possibly irking Washington, but may disappoint those who saw him as willing to speak up even when he risked disagreement with his own party. Ishiba noted violations of Japanese airspace last month by Chinese and Russian warplanes and North Korea's advancing missile technology and testing as examples of the worsening security environment that Japan faces.



Smoke rises following Israeli bombardment in southern Lebanon as seen from northern Israel on Thursday. Pic: PTI

Malaysia seeks enhanced defence ties with Pak

Islamabad: Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has evinced his interest in enhancing defence cooperation with Pakistan, the army said on Friday.

According to a statement by the army, the Malaysian leader met Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and discussed bilateral strategic interests, regional security, and defence

cooperation.

Prime Minister Ibrahim praised Pakistan Armed Forces' role in regional peace and stability, acknowledging their professionalism and sacrifices in combating terrorism.

"He emphasised on the need for increasing bilateral ties particularly military relations amongst the two brotherly countries," the

army said.

The Malaysian prime minister also extended an invitation to the COAS to visit Malaysia in the same context. Munir thanked the prime minister for the invitation and appreciated the successful visit to Pakistan, which will help further improve the enduring and historic ties between the two countries and the militaries. -PTI

Ibrahim wrapped his three-day visit to Pakistan on Friday which aimed to promote bilateral political and economic ties. He also met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and called on President Asif Ali Zardari who conferred Nishan-e-Pakistan award on him at a special investiture ceremony on Thursday evening.

Kim threatens to destroy S Korea

By Hyung-Jin Kim and Kim Tong-Hyung

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to use nuclear weapons and destroy South Korea permanently if provoked, state media reported on Friday, after the South's leader warned that Kim's regime would collapse if he attempts to use nuclear arms.

The exchange of such rhetoric between the rival Koreas is nothing new, but the latest comments come during heightened animosities over the North's recent disclosure of a nuclear facility and the continuation of missile tests. Next week, observers say North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament is expected to constitutionally declare a hostile "two-state" system on the Korean Peninsula to formally reject reconciliation with South Korea and codify new national borders.

During a visit to a special operation forces unit on Wednesday, Kim said his military "would use without hesitation all the offensive forces it possesses, including nuclear weapons", if South Korea attempts to use armed forces encroaching upon the sovereignty of North Korea, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.



Since adopting an escalatory nuclear doctrine in 2022, Kim has repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons preemptively. But many foreign experts say it is still unlikely that he uses nukes first because his military is outmatched by the US and its allied forces. In July, South Korea and the US signed a defence guideline on integrating South Korea's conventional capabilities with the US nuclear forces to better deal with North Korea's advancing nuclear programme. South Korea has no nuclear weapons.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Why should anyone other than the woman herself have the power to determine what she does with her own body? A woman's fundamental right of individual liberty, to her own life, grants her the authority to terminate her pregnancy if she wishes."

Melania Trump, Former First Lady, US



Anoushka's luggage lost, friends found

New Delhi: Sitarist Anoushka Shankar's cry for help in Berlin after she lost her luggage in transit caught the attention of many social media users who helped her source a "mizrab, makeup and more" -- and saved her sold out concert at the Berlin Philharmonic.

It all started when Shankar, who was in Berlin on Wednesday for the last performance on her Europe tour, lost her luggage that included all her clothes other than her "super casu-

al travel gear", but more importantly her "mizrabs" - a custom-fitted finger pick or plectrum.

"Help!!! Anyone in Berlin play sitar and have mizrabs I can borrow for my show TONIGHT?! And any clothes smarter than my super casual travel gear?! Lost baggage strikes again!" Shankar wrote on X, tagging KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

The 43-year-old musician and daughter of sitar legend Pandit Ravi Shankar was on a tour of Germany, Nether-



lands, and Belgium, according to her website.

Social media networks got into action. Some offered help by reaching out to

contacts in Berlin and there were others who suggested stores in Berlin selling Indian clothes. However, there was no

further communication from Shankar till Thursday midnight when she put out a post on Instagram.

The concert happened, and was clearly a success.

Shankar posted a photograph of herself, wearing an elegant black dress and holding the sitar, thanking a Saurabh Shekhar Verma for the borrowed mizrab and social media at large for spreading her request across different platforms.

"What a whirlwind our final date of tour was, from the moment we touched

down in Berlin! Yesterday's airline-displaced suitcase with my sitar kit including mizrab (custom-fitted finger pick), in-ear monitors, plus all of my show outfits and makeup, was a pretty gnarly start to the day!

"No matter though, because in true chaotic by-hook-or-by-crook tour fashion we sourced a locally-owned mizrab, makeup and more just in time for us to take to the stage for our sold out show at @berlinphil," the London-based musician said.

EDITORIAL

Linguistic Cornerstone

The Union Cabinet made a notable decision by awarding classical language status to Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit. Marathi's elevation comes just ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections, a politically savvy gesture, while the timing of Bengali's recognition coincides with Durga Puja, West Bengal's biggest festival.

While this step in acknowledging the rich literary traditions that have flourished in the subcontinent is commendable, the significance of Sanskrit as the bedrock of Indian classical languages must not be overlooked, nor should it be relegated in this race to recognise regional pride. India has now officially recognized eleven classical languages, but while each of these has its own literary and cultural importance, Sanskrit remains unparalleled in its historical, intellectual and unifying influence.

The indiscriminate elevation of regional languages to 'classical' status risks diminishing Sanskrit's unique role as their source. This could even fuel an anti-Sanskrit sentiment, as seen in Tamil Nadu, where promotion of regional languages has sidelined Sanskrit.

To appreciate Sanskrit's vital place in not just India's cultural heritage but the world's, one must look back to the 18th century when British philologist Sir William Jones discovered the startling resemblance between Sanskrit and classical European languages like Greek and Latin. His declaration in 1786 that Sanskrit was a common root of many Indo-European languages forever altered the study of India's antiquity.

Sanskrit has long been a vehicle of civilisational discourse, being the language in which the Vedas were composed. It is the scriptural language of Buddhism and Jainism, whose texts travelled as far as Southeast Asia and Central Asia, shaping cultures beyond India's borders. From Panini to Kalidas, Indian litterateurs have considered Sanskrit the crown jewel of their intellectual tradition.

It is undeniable that languages like Marathi, Bengali, and Odia have their own rich histories, producing luminaries like Tukaram, Tagore, and Sarala Das. But to elevate these languages without reaffirming the primacy of Sanskrit risks losing sight of the broader legacy that binds them together. Sanskrit is the foundational language from which many of these languages borrow not only words but entire conceptual frameworks.

While the Modi government has introduced measures to integrate Sanskrit into education, these lack a comprehensive strategy to restore the language's prominence. Political sensitivities may play a role, as Sanskrit is often, though mistakenly, viewed as a Brahminical language, entangled in caste dynamics.

At a time when India's cultural politics are more inward-looking than ever, with an emphasis on vernacular pride, Sanskrit's universality must be upheld. It is, after all, the thread that runs through the fabric of India's civilisational history, connecting north and south, past and present, regional and national.



By
Shoumojit Banerjee

Recently, conservative political commentator Tucker Carlson's show with a podcaster Darryl Cooper stirred huge controversy. Cooper, a podcaster with no formal historical credentials, echoed revisionist views pinning the blame for starting World War II squarely on Winston Churchill's shoulders, rather than on German dictator Adolf Hitler's aggressive ambitions.

Carlson and Cooper, neither of whom are professional historians, framed Winston Churchill as the real "villain" of World War II.

Their argument criticized Churchill's role in British diplomacy, echoing revisionist claims that he exacerbated the war, leading to Britain's decline and the weakening of Western power.

Within days, the Carlson-Cooper show gained over 34 million views on X alone, making it necessary for historians from Niall Ferguson to Churchill's biographer, Andrew Roberts, to strongly debunk

In an era where podcasts and social media are reshaping historical narratives, it is crucial to distinguish between informed analysis and reckless revisionism.

AGE OF EXTREMES

Podcast Pundits and the Rewriting of History

Cooper. Roberts (like others before him) has argued that Churchill's refusal to negotiate with Hitler allowed Britain to serve as a crucial bulwark against Nazi expansion. For all of Churchill's flaws (many Indians still continue to pin the blame on him for the Bengal Famine), it was his determination and moral resolve that played a significant role in defeating Nazi Germany.

Ferguson observed that Cooper, who has never published a history book, made remarks calling Churchill "the warmonger who had Jewish financial backing" - a statement straight out of the playbook of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister.

Cooper's remarks not only starkly underlined the dangers of self-proclaimed 'historians' holding forth on podcasts, but also the enduring complexity of the origins of World War II as it enters its 85th anniversary this year.

In his 1961 book 'The Origins of the Second World War,' British historian A.J.P. Taylor controversially argued that Hitler's foreign policy was more opportunistic than systematically planned. Taylor suggested that World War II resulted from diplomatic missteps, particularly from Britain and France, rather than a deliberate strategy by Hitler to conquer Europe. He portrayed Hitler as an astute politician who capitalized on weaknesses in the Versailles Treaty and the reluctance of European powers to confront Germany until it was too late.

Taylor's thesis was both provocative and unorthodox: rather than painting Hitler as a singularly malevolent and deliberate architect of war, Taylor argued that the conflict emerged largely due to diplomatic failures and misunderstandings among European powers, particularly Britain and France. According to him, Hitler was an opportunist, seizing on blunders and vacillation in Western diplomacy rather than executing a master plan for conquest. He claimed that Hitler was not the sole instigator of the



Adolf Hitler

war, but rather an ordinary statesman whose ambitions were in line with previous German leaders.

The work did not exonerate Hitler, but it downplayed his personal responsibility for the war's outbreak, arguing that his foreign policy, up until 1939, was no more aggressive than those of other European leaders in earlier times.

Unsurprisingly, it met with fierce criticism. Alan Bullock, who authored a classic biography of Hitler, dismissed Taylor's interpretation as a gross distortion, accusing him of trivializing Hitler's ideological fanaticism while Hugh Trevor-Roper charged that Taylor's arguments verged on excusing Hitler's behaviour and the violent dynamism of the Nazis.

Yet, Taylor's book still holds the field in provocative thinking based on historical evidence.

In 2008, failed Presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan (no historian like Taylor) extended this line of thinking further in his book 'Hitler, Churchill and the Unnecessary War.' According to Buchanan, Britain's "unnecessary" guarantees to Poland emboldened Hitler to invade, leading to a global conflict that ultimately destroyed Europe and weakened the West. Buchanan viewed Churchill's defiance of Hitler as both morally commendable but strategically ruinous, accelerating the decline of the British Empire and contributing to the rise of Soviet and American dominance in the postwar world.

Buchanan suggested that had Britain and France allowed Germany's expansion to be limited to Eastern Europe, the



Winston Churchill

Soviet Union and Nazi Germany might have been left to clash without Western intervention. However, learned historians debunked Buchanan's arguments and Spenglerian lamentations about the 'decline of the West.'

Though an imperialist with his own political and moral shortcomings, Churchill recognized the existential threat posed by Nazi Germany. His warnings about the dangers of appeasement, and his eventual leadership during the war, were instrumental in halting Hitler's expansionist ambitions.

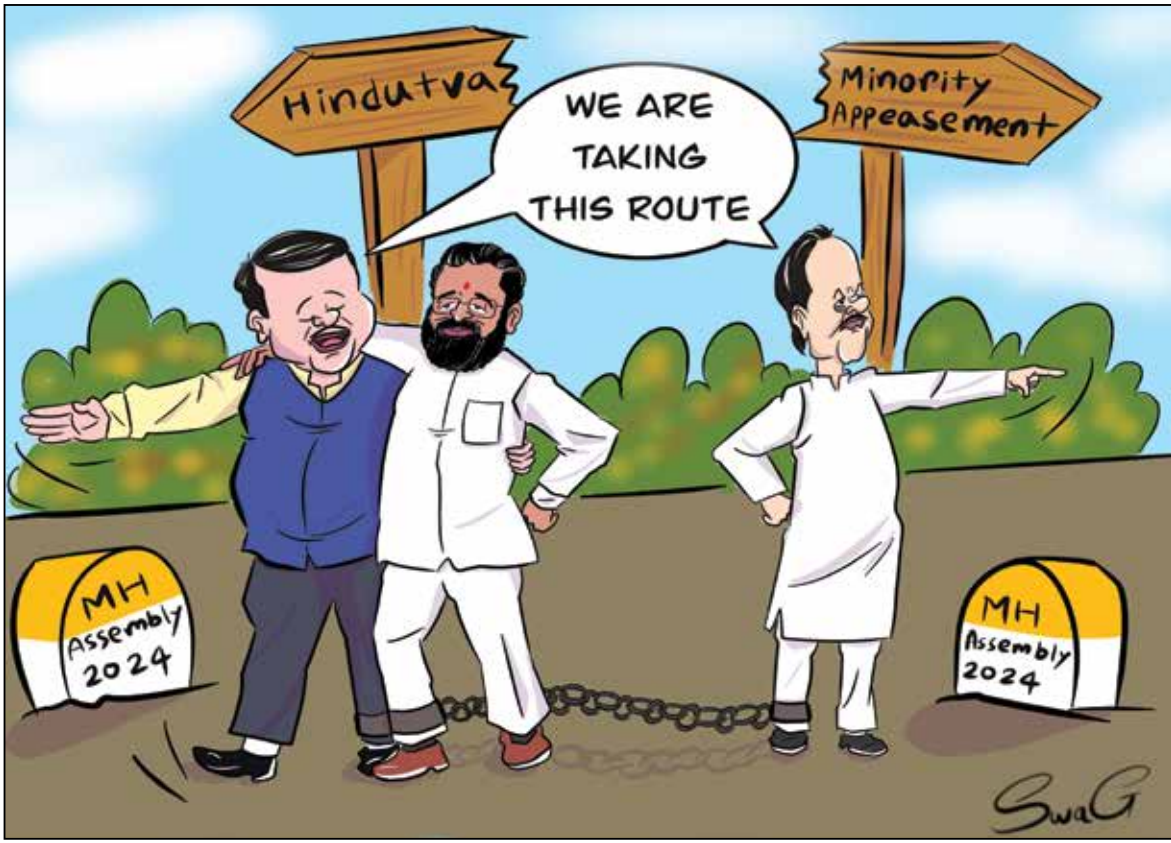
The point here is that sensationalist amateurs like Cooper, whose views are unburdened by rigorous historical training, are increasingly shaping public discourse with oversimplified or revisionist narratives. As podcast 'historians' gain influence, the danger of history being reduced to sensationalism and provocative, but grossly ahistorical statements, is a clear and present one.

Legacies, be they of Chhatrapati Shivaji or Aurangzeb, Churchill or Savarkar or Gandhi, cannot, and must not be reduced to caricatures.

Leopold von Ranke's famous dictum 'Wie es eigentlich gewesen' ('how it actually was') is generally viewed as a clarion call for objective, fact-based history. It emphasizes that historians should accurately reconstruct the past by utilizing primary sources.

It is now up to the public to read more than one history book written by such historians rather than sacrifice their intellect on the altar of podcasts.

SATTIRE WITH SWAG



No criminal cases for writings perceived as govt criticism, says SC

Criminal cases should not be slapped against journalists merely because their writings are perceived as criticism of the government, the Supreme Court said on Friday.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and S.V.N Bhatti said in democratic nations, the freedom to express one's views is respected and the rights of journalists are protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

The bench was hearing a plea filed by journalist Abhishek Upadhyay, who has sought quashing of an FIR lodged against him in Uttar Pradesh for publishing a news report on the "caste dynamics of the general administration" in the state.

"Merely because writings of a journalist are perceived as criticism

of the government, criminal cases should not be slapped against the writer," the bench said.

While issuing a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government seeking its response on the plea, it said, "In the meantime, coercive steps should not be taken against the petitioner in connection with the subject article."

The bench noted in its order that the petitioner is a journalist and he published an article with a "casteist tilt" on officers deployed in responsible positions in the state.

It further noted that following the article, an FIR was registered against him.

"The counsel for the petitioner would read the contents of the FIR to say that no offence can be said to be made out by the said FIR. Yet the pe-

tioner is being targeted and since the story was posted on X (earlier Twitter), it might result in multiple other FIRs," the bench noted in its order.

The top court posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

In his plea, Upadhyay has alleged that registration of the FIR against him was a clear attempt to "misuse" the law enforcement machinery of the state to "silence his voice" and it should be quashed to prevent any further harassment.

The plea, filed through advocate Anoop Prakash Awasthi, claimed that after his client did a story titled 'Yadav Raj versus Thakur Raj', he was named in the FIR registered at Hazratganj police station in Lucknow on September 20.

-PTI

TURNING POINT

A Terror Attack Totally Changed Me



By
Aditi Pai

The dreaded terror attack on 9/11 wrecked several lives and changed the world order in several ways, but for some, it was a turning point in their lives as they changed courses and their outlook towards life. For Sujo John, the event saw him trade his corporate job for a career in motivational speaking and philanthropy. As he was rescued from the debris, he realized that he had to work in a field where his true passion lay. Kolkata-bred John had moved to the US from India in February 2001, barely seven months before his life was to change course.

How did 9/11 change your world?

September 11, 2001 was a day that changed America and the world forever. I used to work on the 81st floor of the North Tower and that day started off as a beautiful clear day on the east coast. But at 8:48 am as I stood by my fax machine on the 81st floor I heard this incredible explosion, this was American Flight #11 that had crashed into the building and part of the wing of the plane tore through my floor and it dumped 10,000 gallons of jet fuel. Fire broke out all around me and we started crawling our way to the nearest stairway. It took me more than 90 minutes to get to the concourse level from the 81st floor and then as I was making my way towards the South Tower it began to implode and collapse. I thought I faced a sure death as I was buried in the debris, only to be pulled out by an active FBI agent. This life experience totally changed me, I realized life can be so short and what truly matters is how

you can leave the world a better way than how I found it.

The impact of American Flight #11 was not just physical but also deeply emotional, prompting a renewed appreciation for life's fragility. Media from all over the world took interest in my survival story and I started getting calls to come and speak. I started this unsure of what lay ahead, but as I started speaking and travelling, I started seeing how broken the world was and how for many who are hurting and struggling just mere words of hope was not enough. It was important to do something tangible, to give them a helping hand on their road to healing and hope. Then my love for my country of birth India, leaving India I pledged I will do something for my motherland so when I started my foundation it was only obvious that I wanted to do something in India my karma bhumi.

Why did you take to motivational speaking? Have you seen the impact of your courses and talks on people?

Soon I realized that every human has a story. Everyone needs a comeback story, a story of resilience and of triumph over tragedy. Every human breathing has suffered loss, pain, disappointment and felt giving up on life. I think people started connecting with me and my life lessons and what I had to share. Now it's been 23 years and I have had the privilege to share my story to millions in live audiences around the world.

How many such lectures have you delivered over the years? Where was your first?

I honestly cannot remember, the first 15 years or so each week I would be in at least two cities each week. One event could be in North America and the other in Europe. I look back and I honestly wished I had not travelled that hard, so these days I intentionally travel less but my priority is also being back on Indian soil, which I make at least five times a year.



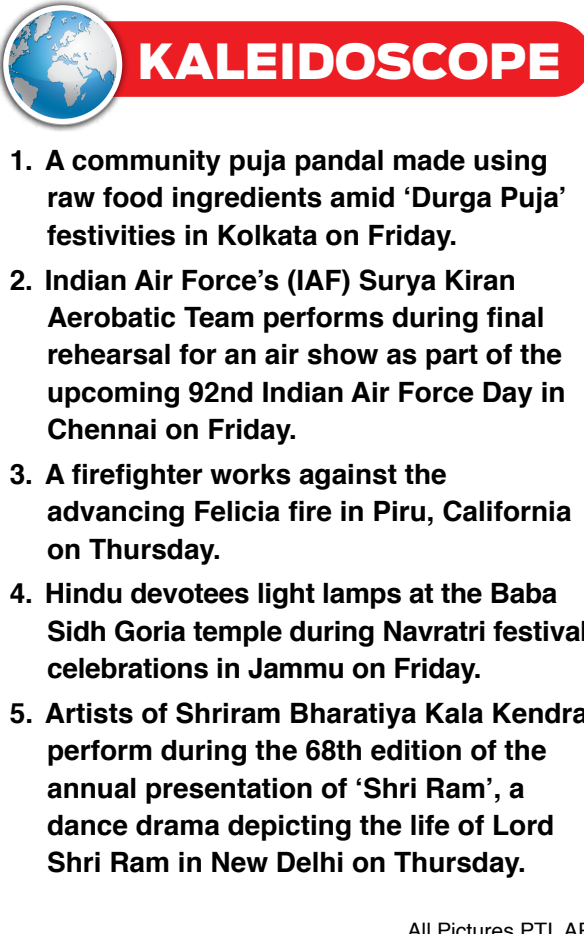
Sujo John, motivational speaker and philanthropist

Can you tell us in brief about your work in Ukraine?

When the war broke out in Ukraine, I was convinced we had to do something. I had been in that country before on speaking engagements. So, two weeks after the war started, I reached the region. We mapped out what we should be doing, the regions and who we could help. We started distributing medicines, generators and food supplies to refugees of the war in Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. We have also bought apartments and cars for the young widows of war. It is sad that in this day and age there are these needless wars. But when there is suffering, we have a collective responsibility to bring hope.

What are the activities of your charitable organisations?

At YouCanFreeUs.Org we are focused on the fight against modern slavery, rescuing women and children from human trafficking and rehabilitating them. We also operate Child Development Centers to help children at risk. We have also been involved in war relief operations most recently in Ukraine and Israel.



KALEIDOSCOPE

1. A community puja pandal made using raw food ingredients amid 'Durga Puja' festivities in Kolkata on Friday.
2. Indian Air Force's (IAF) Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team performs during final rehearsal for an air show as part of the upcoming 92nd Indian Air Force Day in Chennai on Friday.
3. A firefighter works against the advancing Felicia fire in Piru, California on Thursday.
4. Hindu devotees light lamps at the Baba Sidh Gorla temple during Navratri festival celebrations in Jammu on Friday.
5. Artists of Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra perform during the 68th edition of the annual presentation of 'Shri Ram', a dance drama depicting the life of Lord Shri Ram in New Delhi on Thursday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

FORENSIC MATTERS

The Art of Justice: Drawn to Solve



By
Dr. Keshav Kumar and
Madhubanti Das

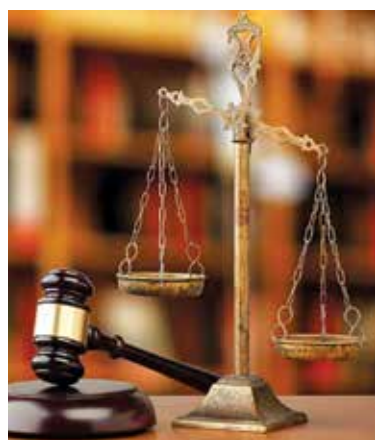
Forensic sketches, the hand-drawn portraits crafted by skilled artists, have been an invaluable tool in criminal investigations for decades. These simple pencil-paper illustrations remain a cornerstone of criminal justice, bridging the gap between eyewitness accounts and the pursuit of justice.

Forensic artists take scattered fragments and turn them into vivid portraits that can catch a criminal. These sketches are a psychological bridge between memory and reality. When witnesses are unable to recall specific details, forensic artists use interview techniques to draw out hidden memories. But it's not just about art; it's about the science behind it. Cognitive psychology plays a crucial role in sketch creation, as artists must understand how memory works under stress.

Forensic sketching originated in the late 19th and early 20th centu-

ries, with the early artists who were often police officers with an innate talent for drawing. These officers would sketch suspects based on witness descriptions, and these images were then distributed in the form of "wanted" posters. In India, it gained prominence in the mid-20th century. The use of software like FACES and E-FIT in the late 20th century improved the accuracy and reach of forensic sketches, allowing for quicker and more widespread distribution.

One of the most significant cases in India where forensic sketches played a crucial role was the investigation into the Nithari killings in 2006. The case involved gruesome murders in Nithari, Uttar Pradesh, involving abduction, murder, and mutilation. Forensic artists created sketches based on witness descriptions, apprehending suspects Moninder Singh Pandher and his domestic helper Surinder Koli, narrowing down the search and leading to their conviction.



The notorious "Black Widow" killer involving Jolly Joseph in Kerala is drawn from a witness's brief encounter, circulated widely, and eventually led to her capture. She is accused of poisoning six members of her family with cyanide-laced food between 2002 and 2016. Without a single photograph or fingerprint, the sketch became the face of the investigation.

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh police released a sketch of the accused man

and showed the sketch to the villagers and most of them pointed to the sketch of a man called Kuldeep Gangwar. Eventually, the police arrested the suspected serial killer in August 2024.

The Supreme Court of India has recognized the value of forensic sketches in criminal investigations. In the case of "State of Rajasthan v. Mahesh Kumar" (1986), the Court upheld the accused's conviction based on a forensic sketch that matched multiple witnesses' descriptions. The court emphasized the importance of forensic sketches as valuable tools when corroborated with other evidence. It also stressed the need for trained professionals to maintain accuracy and avoid wrongful convictions, underscoring the judiciary's recognition of their crucial role in identifying suspects.

While the rise of AI and facial recognition software might seem like a death knell for traditional forensic sketches, the truth is that these two worlds are merging. Cognitive interviewing techniques and AI integration are being used to enhance memory recall and identify suspects. AI-powered software can analyse multiple sketches and compare them with existing databases, while virtual reality is being explored for aiding in the recall by immersing witnesses in a crime scene-like environment.

Forensic sketching remains an essential tool in the justice system, complementing modern technologies by capturing the essence of a suspect's identity with a human touch. Its relevance in criminal investigations is evident in India's history. The Supreme Court's recognition ensures that this artistic discipline continues to play a vital role in the pursuit of justice. As technology advances, forensic sketching is expected to become even more effective in helping law enforcement bring criminals to justice.

(Dr. Kumar is a retired IPS officer and forensic advisor to the Assam Government. Das is a researcher with NFSU, Guwahati)

EXPLAINER

Why transgender candidates in Brazil risk their lives?

Benny Briolly beamed as she strode through the concrete favela alleyway in a snow-white dress, volunteers proudly waving campaign flags emblazoned with her face.

The city councilwoman and nearly 1,000 other transgender politicians are running Sunday in every one of Brazil's 26 states, according to the nation's electoral court, which is tracking them for the first time. The number of candidacies has tripled since the last local elections four years ago, when trans rights group Antra mapped them.

As trans people have set their sights on political office, many have been met with intimidation efforts bent on turning them away, including a candidate in Brazil's biggest city who survived an assassination attempt last week.

Trans advocates report record deaths

More trans people — 100 — were murdered in Brazil last year than in any other country, according to Transgender Europe, a network of global non-profits that tracks the data. Those precise statistics are almost certainly driven by a combination of poor reporting elsewhere and Brazil's active network of advocates, but experts agree that transphobia is ubiquitous.

On International Women's Day last year, Nikolas Ferreira — the federal lawmaker who received more votes than any other — donned a blond wig in Congress' lower house. He said it allowed him to speak as a woman and denounce trans people.

In 2022 Rio state lawmaker Rodrigo Amorim called Briolly "an aberration of nature" in the state's legislature.

Such tactics rally voters by portraying trans people as a menace to be courageously fought, according to Ligia Fabris, a gender and law specialist and a visiting professor at Yale University.

Legacy of a far-right president for trans politicians
Both Amorim and Ferreira were



Benny Briolly

staunch allies of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Transgender politician Leonora Áquilla, a candidate for city council in Sao Paulo this year, said that Bolsonaro had inflamed transphobia and that she has had to stare down people shouting death threats to her face.

Bolsonaro lost his re-election bid to leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2022 but transphobia has far from retreated.

Since entering the public eye, Briolly has received over 700 death threats. Some have included the address of her home in Rio de Janeiro's metro area and warnings that she would suffer the same fate as city councilwoman Marielle Franco, a champion for LGBTQ+ rights who was gunned down in 2018. That threat prompted the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to demand that Brazil provide Briolly protection.

She won't be scared off her reelection bid even though some may want her dead.

"When we get into politics, our bodies become threats and we become constant targets," Briolly told the Associated Press, with the city of Niteroi — across the bay from Rio

— stretching out behind her. "Our bodies are revolutionary, are daring ... they are bodies that emanate hope to all those who were left behind."

An armed escort and a bulletproof vest

Áquilla narrowly escaped an assassination attempt on Sept. 26. She was in northern Sao Paulo on her way to look into reports of transphobia when a motorcycle deliberately slammed into her car. When she got out, the driver revved his engine, and instinctively she ducked. The bullet from his gun missed her, and he fired more shots as she lay there, pretending to be dead. He escaped and Áquilla has ceased in-person campaigning.

"There have been so many threats they became banal; we never thought it would happen. I'm completely in shock. I'm taking a sedative, because I can't control my nervousness, my anxiety," she said in a video call. "Right on the eve of the election, the moment when I most need to be on the streets, they're trying to silence me."

Duda Salabert, who is running for mayor in Brazil's sixth biggest city, Belo Horizonte, made history in 2022 when elected alongside another trans woman to Brazil's lower house of Congress. Their victories were widely regarded as a breakthrough for trans representation, but Salabert said that during that campaign she received death threats daily.

"I had to walk with an armed escort ... I had to vote with a bulletproof vest, according to police instructions, and I couldn't go into large crowds because I risked being attacked," she said.

This year, Salabert said she is seeking to become the first trans mayor of a major city in Latin America.

"It's a joy, because we're making history, but it's sad because our candidacy highlights the entire history of exclusion, violence and alienation of the transvestite and transgender community from electoral processes in Brazil and Latin America," she said in a video call.

HIL to return after seven years

WOMEN'S EVENT ADDED FOR FIRST TIME



New Delhi: The much-awaited Hockey India League (HIL) will return after seven long years in a new avatar, where both the men's and women's teams will participate in the event beginning December 28. While the men's competition will have eight teams, six sides will feature in women's event which is being held for the first time. The league will be played in two venues -- Rourkela for men and Ranchi for women -- from December 28 to February 1. The players auction for the league will be held here from October 13 to 15. A total of 10 franchise owners have come on board. Players will be auctioned in three categories: Rs 2 lakh, Rs 5 lakh, and Rs 10 lakh. The return of the HIL is not only a significant moment in the history of the sport but also a major step forward in promoting women's hockey. The introduction of an exclusive women's league within the HIL framework is being seen as providing a

platform for female athletes to demonstrate their prowess, paving the way for a more inclusive and competitive future for Indian hockey. The franchise owners of the men's event are Chennai -- Charles Group, Lucknow -- Yadu Sports, Punjab -- JSW Sports, West Bengal -- Shracchi Sports, Delhi -- SG Sports and Entertainment, owned by tennis legend Mahesh Bhupathi, Odisha -- Vedanta Limited, Hyderabad -- Resolute Sports and Ranchi -- Navoyam Sports Ventures Private Limited. The women team owners are Haryana -- JSW Sports, West Bengal -- Shracchi Sports, Delhi -- SG Sports and Entertainment and Odisha -- Navoyam Sports Ventures Private Limited. The remaining two franchise owners of the women's league will be announced later. Each franchise will have a 24-player squad, consisting of at least 16 Indian players (with a mandatory inclusion of four junior players) and eight international stars.

The final of the women's league is scheduled for January 26 next year in Ranchi while the men's summit clash will be held on February 1 in Rourkela. Hockey India president and chairman of HIL, Dilip Tirkey said it was his dream to revive the league since taking over the charge of the federation. "Premier Hockey League started the culture of league in the world. Since the day we were elected it was our dream to revive the league and today the dream has been fulfilled," Tirkey said during the launch of the event here on Friday. "HIL has been and will be a supply chain for the national teams. HIL is going to create a history for the sport. HIL is very important for world hockey. We are thankful to International Hockey Federation (FIH) for giving us 35 days window," he said. HI secretary general Bhola Nath Singh agreed with Tirkey, saying starting the HIL was their aim from day one after taking charge of the federation. **-PTI**

FIFA not to suspend Israel

Dubai: A stellar effort by senior stars would be mandatory when India take on New Zealand in their opening Group A match of the women's T20 World Cup here on Friday, aiming for a strong start in their quest to wipe off the memories of past near-misses. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who in all likelihood, will be appearing in her last T20 World Cup, has been witness to several near misses and disappointing moments from close quarters, including India's capitulation to Australia in the final at Melbourne in 2020. As a has been in the past, this Indian line-up is rich in talent and, arguably, only Australia have a similarly well-oiled **Zurich:** FIFA stopped short of suspending the Israeli soccer federation on Thursday, but asked for a disciplinary investigation of possible discrimination alleged by Palestinian soccer officials. A senior FIFA panel overseeing governance will separately investigate "the participation in Israeli competitions of Israeli football teams allegedly based in the territory of Palestine," soccer's governing body said after a meeting of its ruling Council. The Palestinian soccer federation has consistently asked FIFA for more than a decade to take action against the Israeli soccer body for incorporating teams from West Bank settlements in its leagues. The compromise decisions came more than four months after Palestinian officials had urged FIFA to suspend Israel's membership at a meeting in May.



India's wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh (right) unsuccessfully tries to run out New Zealand's Amelia Kerr during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between India and New Zealand at Dubai International Stadium, UAE on Friday.

Mumbai Masters Squash Chavan fights back to book last eight berths

By correspondent

Mumbai: Manish Chavan, the joint third-fourth seed, dropped the first game against Amol Kalra, but showed solid resilience and bounced back to win the next three to carve out a satisfying 10-12, 11-6, 11-8 and 11-9 victory in the MO40 pre-quarter-finals of the third Mumbai Masters Squash Championship 2024, organized under the auspices of the Squash Rackets Federation of India and played at the Cricket Club of India courts on Friday. In other matches, top seed Paul Ipe eased past Animesh Kejriwal 11-2, 11-8, 11-4, while the number two seed

Sanjay Pawar overcame the spirited Santosh Kharat posting an 11-8, 11-6, 11-8 win progress to the quarter-finals. In MO35 last 16 encounters, the top two seeds recorded comfortable victories. Arjun Agnihotri the number one seed brushed aside Huzefa Khorakiwala winning at 11-3, 11-5, 11-1; while second seed Prateek Chalia defeated Jehangir Aibara 11-5, 11-2, 11-9. Results: MO35 (pre-quarters): 1-Arjun Agnihotri bt Huzefa Khorakiwala 11-3, 11-5, 11-1; Virendra Pawar bt Vaibhav Rao 11-2, 11-3, 13-11; Rushabh Vora bt Gaurav Samtani (UAE) 11-2, 11-8, 11-6; Akhil Daswani bt Zarir

Aibara 11-8, 11-9, 12-10; Mahesh Kadam bt Rupesh Gurav 7-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-7; 2-Prateek Chalia bt Jehangir Aibara 11-5, 11-2, 11-9; MO40 (pre-quarters): 1-Paul Ipe bt Animesh Kejriwal 11-2, 11-8, 11-4; Apachu Sk bt Tushar Kundekar 11-4, 11-4, 11-2; Aditya Maheshwari bt Chirraag Khemani 11-7, 12-10, 4-11, 11-7; 3-4-Manish Chavan bt Amol Kalra 10-12, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9; 3-4-Abhishek Laxminarayan bt Sunil Rao 11-9, 11-4, 11-5; Saurabh Sinha bt Yogesh Thube 11-5, 5-11, 11-4, 11-5; Amitpal Kohli bt Rahul Arora 11-1, 11-7, 11-0; 2-Sanjay Pawar bt Santosh Kharat 11-8, 11-6, 11-8.

Devine half-century powers NZ

Dubai: Legendary skipper Sophie Devine's years of experience came in handy as her power-packed half-century was the most significant contribution in New Zealand's challenging 160 for 4 against India in the Women's T20 World Cup here on Friday. On a sticky track where stroke-making was difficult, Devine (57 not out off 36 balls) muscled her way with seven boundaries as most Indian bowlers sans Deepti Sharma (0/45 in 4 overs) used the tackiness of the track to good effect for the better part of the innings. The Devine-Brooke Halliday (16 off 12 balls) stand of 46 runs in just 4.2 overs took the White Ferns to an above-par score if pitch is considered.

Global Chess League UpGrad Mumbai Masters bounce back

London: Five-time world champion Vishwanathan Anand went down to former world blitz champion Maxime Vachier-Lagrave as up-Grad Mumbai Masters registered a 14-5 win over Ganges Grandmasters on day two of the ongoing Global Chess League here on Friday. Both teams came into this match seeking their first win, having lost their opening games by identical scores. The headline icon matchup on board one pitted the Anand against Vachier-Lagrave. Despite holding a better position, Anand blundered a tactical sacrifice, allowing Vachier-Lagrave to turn the tables. Although facing time pressure, the French star tapped into his blitz champion instincts, tightening his control over the game and ultimately clinching a vital victory. UpGrad Mumbai Masters, who played the match as

Black - took control from there, with a win on the youngsters' board and a draw on the second women's board, pushing them into the lead. Ganges Grandmasters couldn't catch a break, and despite world number three Arjun Erigaisi's best efforts, he could only manage a draw against Vidit Gujrathi, despite being ahead on the clock. The situation worsened when Koneru Humpy overcame Vaishali R, clinching the match for the up-Grad Mumbai Masters. While Parham Maghsoodloo secured a hard-fought victory against Peter Svidler to salvage some pride for the Ganges, it wasn't enough to save them from a 14-5 defeat. With the upGrad Mumbai Masters claiming their first points, Ganges Grandmasters face an uphill battle after back-to-back losses. **-PTI**



Potawad defends chess title

By correspondent

Mumbai: Aniruddha Potawad successfully defended his title by winning the second edition of All India FIDE Rapid Rating Open Chess Tournament held at Chembur Gymkhana. Potawad emerged the winner with a score of 8.5 out of 9 points. Paras

Bhoir and Arnav Koli came second and third respectively, followed by IM Sameer Khatmale and IM Soumya Swaminathan. The event was conducted under the aegis of All India Chess Federation, Maharashtra Chess Association and Mumbai Suburban District Chess Association. A total of 609 players from all over India participated

in the tournament. A total prize fund of Rs. 200,000 was distributed across various age categories and ELO rating. Balkrishna Parab, Convener for the Tournament and CG Chess Section Secretary, expressed gratitude towards the players and concerned authorities for making the tournament successful.

Bopanna-Dodig pair advances

Shanghai: India's Rohan Bopanna and his Croatian partner Ivan Dodig cherished their first win after joining forces, moving to the second round of the ATP Shanghai Masters with a straight-set victory over Pablo Carreno Busta and Pedro Martinez, here Friday. The fifth-seed Indo-Croatian pair won 6-4 6-3 in the opening round match that lasted 63 minutes. Bopanna and Dodig fired five aces to none of their rivals, and converted three of the eight break points they faced. They also saved four break chances on their service games, dropping serve only once in the match. India's singles challenge has already ended with both Sumit Nagal and Ramkumar Ramanathan making first round exits. Ramkumar had made it to the main draw through qualifying round while Nagal had earned a direct entry. **-PTI**

Nandu Natekar Badminton Championship Darshan, Siya's dream run continues

By correspondent

Mumbai: Unseeded shuttlers Darshan Pujari (Pune) and Siya Singh (Thane) continued their dream run by knocking out the men's and women's second seeds respectively in the quarter-finals of the Yonex Sunrise Shri Nandu Natekar Memorial Maharashtra State Senior Inter District (Team) and State Badminton Championship 2024 played at the Goregaon Sports Club courts on Friday. Playing aggressively, Pujari dominated the rallies and outplayed his compatriot Yash Shah (Pune) charging to a straight games 21-16 and 21-18 win to advance to the semi-finals. Siya played with plenty of grit and determination and did well to knock out Shruti Mundada (Pune) coasting to a 17-21, 21-17 and 21-11 victory and for a place in the last four.

Men's top seed Varun Kapur (Pune) survived a scare from Nagesh Chamle (Latur) before clinching a 15-21, 21-14, 21-14 win to take his place in the semis. Results: Women's singles (quarter-finals): 1-Saad Dharmadhikari (Pune) bt Mrunmayee Deshpande (Thane) 21-17, 21-17; Purva Barve (Pune) bt Ananya Gadgil (Pune) 21-14, 21-18; Aarya Korgaonkar (Thane) bt Isha Patil (Thane) 21-12, 21-15; Siya Singh (Thane) bt 2-Shruti Mundada (Pune) 17-21, 21-17, 21-11. Men's singles (quarter-finals): 1-Varun Kapur (Pune) bt Nagesh Chamle (Latur) 15-21, 21-14, 21-14; Rishabh Deshpande (Pune) bt Malhar Ghadi (Palghar) 21-10, 21-9; Aditya Tripathi (Pune) bt Atharva Joshi (Thane) 21-18, 13-21, 21-12; Darshan Pujari (Pune) bt 2-Yash Shah (Pune) 21-16, 21-18.

IOC vs IBA over boxing bodies

New Delhi: The IOC has escalated its feud with the International Boxing Association by effectively asking member countries to derecognise national federations that remain aligned to the suspended body, a directive that the IBA lambasted as "unacceptable gaslighting". In a letter sent to National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on September 30, the IOC reiterated that boxing federations that do not end ties with IBA will be barred from the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. "NOCs shall no longer affiliate or maintain institutional relations with national boxing federations that are still affiliated to the IBA", the IOC stated in its letter. "Any boxer whose national federation adheres to the IBA will not be able to participate in the LA28 Olympic Games. The NOC concerned must exclude such a national boxing federation from its members," it warned. The IOC had issued a similar directive in May, asking NOC's to exclude National Boxing Federations from its membership if they continue to align with the IBA. The latest development comes a few weeks after the Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) voted against breaking away



from the IBA to join World Boxing, which has the IOC's backing. India also joined World Boxing earlier this year but also stated that it was doing so without giving up its IBA membership. The move was criticised by the IBA which warned the

country that it cannot expect to sail in two boats. There hasn't been any clarity on the matter after that. The IBA, which has been suspended for governance related issues and corruption, was expectedly furious with the IOC's latest

missive to NOCs and called it an attempt to violate the independence of federations. "The letter sent to all National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on 30 September is a testament to the IOC's outrageous political games," the IBA stated a

media release. The body called the letter "deeply disappointing, and on the verge of sporting blackmail." IBA Secretary General and CEO Chris Roberts has written to the NOCs to explain its position on the matter. "The unprecedented pressure from the IOC towards those NOCs is classed as 'direct interference' to independent IBA members' agendas, who expressed their democratic will to be part of the IBA and a democratically elected President that they trust," it said. "We urge our National Federations to remain calm, and not to follow

these 'gaslighting' intentions of the IOC, who wants to damage boxing. With an attempt to influence members behind the scenes, is not the way we would expect this organisation to operation," it added. The IBA has not conducted the Olympic boxing competition for the past two editions due to its suspension. Boxing is currently not a part of the 2028 LA Olympic program. According to the IOC, a recognised International Federation needs to be formed by early 2025, as the IBA is no longer seen as a viable choice, to guarantee boxing's inclusion in the LA Games.

Haryana, Odisha, Chhattisgarh win **Ranchi:** Haryana, Chhattisgarh Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka won their respective matches on the fifth day of the 14th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship here on Friday. The first match of the day saw Haryana defeat Assam Hockey 11-0 in Pool C. The goalscorers for Hockey Haryana were Kajal (3'), Bhteri (7', 16'), Saavi (13', 15', 22'), Khasa Shashi (18', 28'), Sejal (27', 50'), and Mann Ritika (30'). Chhattisgarh beat Delhi Hockey 6-1 in their Pool D clash. Janvee Yadav (4', 33', 55'), Molisha Verma (44'), Yadav Sheetal (51') and Rukhmani (59') got on the scoresheet for Chhattisgarh. Meanwhile, Anshika (36') scored the only goal for Delhi. **-PTI**