

# THE PERFECT VOICE



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## Two Hezbollah commanders eliminated, seven so far

**Israel says it also struck dozens of Houthi targets including power plants and sea ports in Yemen**

**Jerusalem:** The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place.

Hezbollah has confirmed that one of its senior commanders, Ali Karaki, died

in the Israeli airstrike that killed its top leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday.

If confirmed, Kaouk would be the seventh senior Hezbollah leader slain in Israeli strikes in a little over a week, including founding members who had evaded death or detention for decades. The Israeli military said it carried out another targeted strike on Beirut later on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah confirmed that one of the seven, Ali Karaki, died in Friday's strike that killed Nasrallah.

Kaouk was a veteran member of Hezbollah going

back to the 1980s and served as Hezbollah's military commander during the 2006 war with Israel. He often appeared in local media, where he would comment on politics and security developments, and he gave eulogies at the funerals of senior militants. The United States had announced sanctions against him in 2020.

Hezbollah has also been targeted by a sophisticated attack on its pagers and walkie-talkies that was widely blamed on Israel. A wave of Israeli airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon has killed at least 1,030 people — including 156 women and 87 children — in less than two weeks.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes in Lebanon by the latest strikes. The government estimates that around 250,000 are in shelters, with three to four times as many staying with friends or relatives, or camping out on the streets.



Rescuers arrive at the scene of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut's suburb of Ghobeiri on Sunday. Pic: AP/PTI

**Modi should put pressure on Israel: Abdullah Srinagar:** National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the Union government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi should put pressure on Israel to end the "bloodshed" in Palestine and Lebanon. "What has happened yesterday (killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah), it looks like war is hovering around the region. The Government of India and the Prime Minister along with other international leaders should put pressure on Israel to stop the killings so that peace is established in the region," Abdullah told reporters on the last day of election campaign in Baramulla.

### Action against 4,500 sexual offenders

**Bhopal:** The Madhya Pradesh police have acted against about 4,500 sexual offenders across the state in the past 24 hours, an officer said on Sunday.

The police said they have also compiled data concerning 51,052 sexual offenders in the state.

"In the last 24 hours, preventive action was taken against 2,469 sexual offenders and 2,447 others were interrogated and warned. Thus, 4,916 sexual offenders have been interrogated by the police and given strict warnings," said an officer at the state police headquarters here.

On the directives of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav to ensure law and order and the safety of women and girls, a drive has been started against sexual offenders and people involved in gender crimes across the state, the officer said.

As part of the drive, all police stations in MP have started intensive investigation and monitoring of people involved in sexual crimes in MP in the past ten years, he said.

Information about such individuals, particularly repeat offenders and those found guilty of sexually assaulting girls, has been collected from various police databases, he said.



The members of Ghodbunder Ride Masters, a cycling club, took part in the third edition of the ride on Sunday.

### Terrorist killed in J&K's Kathua

**Jammu:** A terrorist, suspected to be affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, was killed in a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said on Sunday.

Also, a fresh encounter broke out in the Thanamandi area of Rajouri district on Sunday evening when security forces

launched a cordon and search operation after getting information about the presence of two terrorists.

"Based on specific intelligence about the presence of terrorists, a joint search operation was launched by security forces at Manial Gali in Thanamandi. Contact has been established and few rounds have been fired from both sides," a police official said.

Earlier in the day, a live hand grenade was found on the banks of a stream in the area and the device was later destroyed by experts in a controlled explosion.

In Kathua district, the body of an unidentified terrorist was recovered Sunday afternoon from the scene of the Saturday evening encounter.

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### In a first, TV recovered from Naxal dump

**Sukma:** In a possible first, police on Sunday recovered a television set from a Maoist dump in Sukma district in Chhattisgarh, a senior officer said.

The television, made by electronics firm BPL, was recovered in the morning in a forested hill near Danteshpuram village under Bheji police station limits when security forces were on an anti-Naxalite operation. Bastar Range Inspector General Sundarraj said.

A muzzle loading gun, one tiffin bomb, pressure IED switch, 49 syringes, firecrackers, mobile chargers, Maoist banners and literature as well as medicines were also found at the dump, the Inspector General said. "We have recovered laptops, printers and other electronic gadgets after anti-Naxal operations in the past. But a television has been found possibly for the first time. Naxalites may have got it for senior cadres who camp in core areas or it may have been looted from villagers."

### IT professional dies after cardiac arrest in office

**Nagpur:** An employee of HCLTech died after suffering a cardiac arrest in the firm's office in Nagpur city, with the IT major sharing that he was provided emergency care at the campus clinic before being rushed to the hospital.

According to the police, Nitin Edwin Michael (40), who worked as a senior analyst, was found unresponsive after he entered the washroom of the office of HCL Technologies Ltd. in the city's Mihan area around 7 pm on Friday.

His colleagues rushed him to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Nagpur where doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival, said the official from Sonagaon police station on Sunday.

**Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old chartered accountant at Ernst & Young (EY) in Pune, had passed away from a cardiac arrest this July reportedly because of work pressure.**



AIIMS students stage a protest to highlight their struggle for justice and resolution of strike-related concerns in New Delhi on Sunday. Pic: PTI

Police sent the body for post-mortem and registered a case of accidental death.

Initial autopsy findings indicated Michael died of cardiac arrest, the official

said, adding that they are probing the circumstances surrounding his death.

Michael is survived by his wife and a six-year-old son, according to police.

Calling Michael's death an unfortunate incident and tragic loss, HCLTech said he was provided emergency healthcare support at the campus clinic and rushed to the hospital.

"HCLTech is also extending all possible assistance to the family of the deceased employee. The wellbeing of our people is of utmost priority. HCLTech provides healthcare programs for its employees and their families including on-campus clinics and annual preventive health checks," said a company spokesperson in a statement on Sunday. -PTI

## Ashish Shelar in race to replace Jay Shah as BCCI Secretary

**Succession plan gains momentum with four probables**

By G Unnikrishnan

**Bengaluru:** The members who were present at the 93rd BCCI Annual General Meeting (AGM) here on Sunday requested incumbent secretary Jay Shah to speed up the process of finding his successor to keep the transition of power as smooth as possible.

Shah is expected to step down from his post in the last week of November and take over as the chairman of International Cricket Council (ICC) for a three-year period from December 1.

While selecting the new secretary was not on the

AGM agenda, it has been learnt that the attendees discussed the succession plan among themselves to keep the procedure open.

"It was a normal request to keep all due process in place at the earliest as there will be clarity for us. Also, we have some big events like the IPL auction coming up, so it should not be like we will be handling everything at one go," a state association representative who attended the AGM told PTI.

As things stand now, Rohan Jaitley, president of Delhi and District Cricket Association, BCCI treasurer Ashish Shelar, joint sec-

retary Devajit Saikia and Gujarat Cricket Association secretary Anil Patel are the candidates who are in the fray to succeed Shah, unless a dark horse emerges in the latter stages of the selection process.

With no secretary election on agenda, the primary focal point of the AGM was the nomination of two representatives of India to the ICC meetings.

Currently, Shah is BCCI's representative on the ICC Board and IPL chairman Arun Dhumal is the Chief Executives' Committee.

The AGM entrusted the general body members to



recommend two names soon for the posts — director and alternate director — as the ICC has also scheduled a conclave in Dubai right after the final of the upcoming women's T20 World Cup.

As PTI reported on Saturday, Arun Singh Dhumal and Avishek Dalmiya were elected to the IPL Govern-

ing Council as general body representatives with former all set to continue as the league's chairman at least till IPL 2025.

Former Andhra cricketer, V. Chamundeswarnath was nominated by the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) as a player representative and was inducted into the IPL GC.

"The members of the general body also appreciated the efforts of the office bearers for the work undertaken with respect to the new National Cricket Academy campus, dubbed as the Centre of Excellence near the Bengaluru International Airport," said the BCCI in a release.

In that context, the AGM

also featured the screening of a 17-minute-long tribute video to Shah, highlighting the strong services he rendered to Indian cricket in his role as the board's secretary.

VVS Laxman, head of the Centre of Excellence, also lavished praise on Shah for his visionary effort to turn the project a reality.

"One person I would definitely want to single out is Jay because I have seen and I have been part of various meetings when he came here, interacted with the L&T (construction) team.

"The kind of timelines, the kind of deadlines he has put on them, and almost while empowering them, he

made sure that all of them followed the timelines," Laxman told a select gathering here on Sunday at the Centre of Excellence, which was inaugurated on Saturday in a closed-door ceremony.

Other than that the AGM ratified the annual budget for the 2024-25 season and the members unanimously resolved to maintain BCCI's legal status as a society, an item which was originally not in the agenda of the meeting.

"The members further resolved that the tournaments of the BCCI, including the IPL, shall not be converted into a company," the statement added.

-PTI



# Modi praises Shinde for removing hurdles in infra projects

THE PM INAUGURATES THE PUNE METRO AND SOLAPUR AIRPORT

By Correspondent

**Pune:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday slammed previous governments for "lacking planning and vision for urban development", and said the Pune Metro project wouldn't have moved ahead in the "old work culture" which he has done away with.

Inaugurating and laying foundation stone of Rs 11,200 crore projects via video conferencing, Modi said the completion of phase 1 of Pune Metro would improve the ease of living in the city.

Modi said if the old work culture and approach of previous governments had prevailed, the Pune Metro project would have never taken off.

Maharashtra needs new resolutions and big targets, he said, adding Pune needs to be transformed into a centre for urban development.

"Due to the booming population, the speed of the city shouldn't slow down but boost its capacity. This can happen only if the public transport is made modern and connectivity is improved. This is the approach



of the Mahayuti government (in Maharashtra), he said.

Modi said the work of catering to the modern needs of Pune should have started much earlier.

"Unfortunately, previously there was lack of vision and planning for urban development. Due to the old work culture of delays, the country and the state had to suffer. The Pune Metro project was conceived in 2008 but the foundation was laid by us in 2016 and now it is expanding," he said.

The previous government couldn't even set up one pillar of metro project in eight years, he said. Development needs to be prioritized and when there is a break, Maharashtra suffers, he added.

Modi said the state gov-

ernment under Eknath Shinde's leadership as CM has removed all hurdles in way of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project.

Modern infrastructure should be based on needs and priorities and when future ready infrastructure is ready, it should benefit every section of the society, he said.

Modi, who laid the foundation stone for the memorial for Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule's first girls' school at Bhidewada in Pune, said modern infrastructure should be accompanied by preserving legacy.

India should be modernized but it should be based on our fundamental values, he said.

Referring to the school started by Savitribai Phule,

Modi said the country has seen what happens when women take up the responsibility of social change. If Maharashtra develops, the country will follow, he said.

"We have changed old work culture of previous governments. We have brought stricter laws for women's security, women's reservation bill, opened doors for women defence forces and under Swachh Bharat programme, toilets for women were made," he said.

Modi also flagged off the inaugural train on Pune Metro underground section from Swargate to District Court via video conferencing.

"We have to cross many stages for achieving the 'peak' of Viksit Bharat," he said.

Modi also laid the foun-

ation stone for Swargate-Katraj Extension of Pune Metro Phase-1 to be developed at the cost of around Rs 2,955 crore.

This southern extension of around 5.46 km is completely underground with three stations namely Market Yard, Padmavati and Katraj.

The PM also inaugurated Bidkin Industrial Area, a transformative project covering 7,855 acres under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme. It is located 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

The project, developed under Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, holds immense potential as a vibrant economic hub in the Marathwada region. Central Government has approved this Rs 6,400 crore project for development in three phases.

Modi inaugurated the Solapur Airport which would significantly improve connectivity, making Solapur more accessible to tourists, business travellers and investors. The existing terminal building of Solapur has been revamped to serve around 4.1 lakh passengers annually.



Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray acknowledges party workers upon his arrival at the Airport in Nagpur on Sunday. Pic: PTI

## Raid at gambling den, 12 held

**Nagpur:** Police have raided a gambling den in Maharashtra's Nagpur district and arrested 12 persons besides seizing Rs 3.6 lakh cash and other items, officials said on Sunday.

Following the raid, two police personnel were suspended while another cop was transferred for failing to take appropriate action against the illegal activity in their area, they said.

Based on credible information, Assistant Superintendent of Police Anil Mhaske and his team raided the gambling den in Amgaon area on Thursday, which was apparently running for weeks, a Nagpur rural police official said.

The police arrested 12 persons involved in gambling activities. They also seized more than Rs 3.62 lakh in cash, three cars, five two-wheelers, several cell-phones, and other items collectively valued at Rs 17.89 lakh. Superintendent of Police Dr Harsh Poddar launched an internal inquiry to ascertain the extent of police negligence.

## CCTVs mandatory in state schools

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Maharashtra government on Saturday made it mandatory for all schools to install CCTV cameras and directed principals to review the footage three times a week. The directive came more than a month after two four-year-old girls were allegedly sexually assaulted in the washroom of a school in Badlapur, triggering widespread protests in the state.

The state government issued a new government resolution (GR) regarding student safety on school premises on Friday, based on the suggestions of a committee it appointed following the incident. The government has issued several guidelines regarding student safety in schools in the past month.

As per the new GR, all private schools will now be required to install sufficient CCTV cameras at strategic locations. Government and local body schools that have not yet installed cameras have been in-

structed to prioritise their installation. For government schools, the GR stated that 5% of the District Planning Committee's (DPC) funds will be reserved for this purpose. Failure to install CCTV cameras will result in strict consequences, the government warned, including the potential derecognition of the school.

Schools have been directed to rigorously verify the background of all non-teaching staff, including those hired through external sources or on a contractual basis. The GR also suggested appointing female staff to handle students from pre-primary to class 6. It added that Sakhi Savitri Committees, responsible for ensuring the safety and security of school children, will continue their work.

The GR also suggested appointing school-level committees for students' safety, comprising parents, teachers, and the school management. This committee must meet monthly to review the safety status of the school's students.

## CRIME WATCH

### Two held with Rs 14.26 lakh drugs

**Thane:** Police have arrested a food delivery person and a farmhouse operator after seizing mephedrone drug valued at Rs 14.26 lakh from them in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai township, an official said on Sunday. Based on a tip, the police laid a trap on a road in Ulwe area on Friday evening and nabbed the duo, aged 39 and 45, he said. The police seized from their possession 71.3 gm of mephedrone packed in two plastic covers, the official from Panvel Town police station said.

### Man held for accidental firing

**Thane:** An 18-year-old man was injured when his brother shot at him accidentally from a firearm in Thane district, police said on Sunday. The victim's brother has been arrested in connection with the incident which took place near a petrol pump on Mumbai-Mahape Road on Saturday morning, they said. The accused was allegedly handling an illegal firearm when it went off, injuring his brother, an official said. The victim was rushed to a hospital where he underwent a surgery. He is currently in stable condition, the police said.

### Three held for cash theft

**Thane:** Police have arrested two former employees of a private hospital and another person for allegedly stealing Rs 21 lakh cash from a doctor's cabin at the medical facility in Thane district of Maharashtra, an official said on Sunday. On September 21, when the doctor went to his cabin in the hospital located at Vinay Nagar in Kashigaon, he found the room had been burgled and the cash stolen, he said. Upon checking the CCTV footage, it was found that an unidentified masked person had entered the cabin and stolen the money, Kashigaon police station's senior inspector Rahul Kumar Patil said in a release.

### Tigress that killed 11 caged

**Chandrapur:** A tigress that killed 11 persons over the last three years has been successfully caged under Chichpalli forest range in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, an official said. The tigress, T-83, that roamed under the buffer and protected areas under Mul tehsil, was tranquilised by a sharp shooter at compartment no. 717 in Janala area on Saturday morning, the forest official said.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Once we get a solid majority, we will unanimously decide on the CM candidate. Mahayuti parties - BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP - should start finalising who will be the LoP."



Balasaheb Thorat, Leader, Congress

# Have to form govt at any cost, says Pawar

By Correspondent

**Baramati:** NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will conclude its seat-sharing talks in 8 to 10 days for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly polls and asserted the opposition alliance has to strive to come to power in the state "at any cost".

Targeting those who left his party, Pawar claimed not even a handful of them will win the state polls.

Elections to the 288-member state assembly are likely to be

held in mid-November, the NCP (SP) chief said addressing his party workers in Pune's Baramati town.

Winnability will be the only merit for the selection of candidates, the former Union minister said, adding that in a coalition, adjustments and flexible approach are a must.

The MVA comprises the NCP (SP), Congress and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT).

"You can't contest all the seats and have to allow the other two partners to field candidates and you have to work for them as well.

## MVA to meet on Sep 30-Oct 1

The MVA will conclude its seat sharing talks for the assembly polls by early next week, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole said on Sunday. Leaders of the MVA, which comprises the Shiv Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) and the Congress, will meet on September 30 and October 1 to finalise the seat sharing formula, Patole informed reporters. "We are going to fight the polls as MVA. There is no difference of opinion on this issue. Our talks are on," he said.

We have to get our own government at any cost," Pawar asserted.

The three MVA allies will be seeking views of the party workers on the "original aspirant" for a particular seat, he said.

Survey in each taluka is being done, the former state chief minister mentioned.

Pawar said political party leaders may take their own decision, but the workers are directly connected to the people.

"Those who left us, not even a handful of them will get re-elected," he said.

## Bidkin industrial area leads transformation

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated the Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA) in Maharashtra to the nation with a view to boost domestic manufacturing.

The Prime Minister joined the event virtually, while the ceremony in Pune was attended by Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan and chief minister Eknath Shinde, among others.

The Bidkin Industrial Area, a project spanning 7,855 acres, has been developed under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme as part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

"Situated 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra, this industrial hub holds immense potential to catalyse economic growth in the Marathwada region," the commerce and industry ministry said.

The Union government approved the project with a total cost of Rs 6,414 crore, to be developed in three phases.

"Phase A, covering 2,511 acres, has been prioritised



with an investment of Rs 2,427 crore," it said.

The Maharashtra Industrial Township Limited (MITL), a special purpose vehicle formed with a 51:49 partnership between Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT), has driven this project.

According to the government, Bidkin Industrial Area is now equipped with wide roads, quality water and power supply, and advanced sewage and common effluent treatment plants.

"Bidkin has already attracted significant investment interest, with notable companies like Ather Energy (100 acres), Lubrizol (120 acres), Toyota-Kirloskar (MoU for 850 acres),

and JSW Green Mobility (500 acres) committing to the area," it said.

Together, these four projects alone represent a total investment of Rs 56,200 crore, with an employment potential of over 30,000 jobs, the ministry said.

In just three years since construction, a total of 1,822 acres (38 plots) have been allotted across industrial and mixed-use zones.

The development of the industrial area is expected to have a domino effect on the socioeconomic growth of the region, drawing skilled human resources and spurring rapid industrialization, it added.

The PM emphasised that Bidkin will become a beacon of industrial excellence, generating employment, boosting exports, and contributing to the region's overall development.

## Adani Foundation to take over pvt school

**Mumbai:** The Adani Foundation will take over the management of a private school in Ghugus, located in the Chandrapur district through the.

A Government Resolution (GR) for the transfer of management of around nine schools in the state. One of the important decisions was to hand over the management of Mount Carmel Convent School at Ghugus in Chandrapur district to Adani Foundation, Ahmedabad.

This school is self-financed and provides education from class 1 to class 12. In the next 15 days, the school management will be transferred to the Adani Foundation.

As per the condition, the Adani Foundation cannot change the minimum student strength limit and it will have to take full responsibility of the teaching and non-teaching staff. There would not be any change in the conditions of approval for the school. The order also states that Adani Foundation will have to follow the rules-orders regarding the school, teachers, non-teaching staff and their salaries, students, etc.



Director and actor Ashutosh Gowariker and actor Sai Tamhankar pose for photos during the promotion of their upcoming series 'Manvat Murders' in Mumbai on Sunday. Pic: PTI



# No takers for Ajit's idea on CM post

By Suyash Padate

**Mumbai:** There are no takers for the Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's idea of rotating Chief Minister's chair in the state. Both the Shiv Sena and BJP have given the cold shoulder to this surprising demand by its alliance partner.

Pawar recently urged the BJP leadership and said that the post of Chief Minister should be kept rotating among the alliance partners. During the close door meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Pawar made this demand.

While speaking on this move, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Shirsat said, "I am not



aware what exactly Ajit Pawar wants. We are also constituents of Mahayuti and before taking any decision regarding the Chief Ministerial post, the BJP have to consider us. So let this proposal come to us we will revert back. See, we have our own reservations on any

such demand because Eknath Shinde is the CM. We are contesting the Assembly election under his leadership, naturally he will continue as a leader of Mahayuti even after the elections".

"The Chief Minister is a crucial political position who is responsible for the administration and governance of the state. The Chief Minister is the head of the elected government in the state and holds significant power and responsibilities. What is the point in changing the person after assuming the command of this coveted post," Shirsat said.

State BJP president Chandrashekhra Bawalkule

said, "I am not aware of this particular issue. The party bigwigs will take the decision on this. But if you ask my personal opinion, this is not practical. Changing a person sitting on the Chief Minister's post every now and then will affect the entire administration and governance". Speaking about the Ajit Pawar's demand, Bachchu Kadu of Prahar Janshakti Party said, forget about rotating CM's post, Ajitdada will quit the Mahayuti before the election. There are strong undercurrents in the corridor of power that the Mahayuti will vertically split before announcement of the elections".



Ahead of the 300th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Ahilyabai Holkar, women workers of RSS Sangh performed yoga in the form of dance to create awareness about the sacrifice of Ahilyabai Holkar at Girgaum on Sunday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

## Akshay Shinde buried in Ulhasnagar

By Correspondent

**Thane:** The body of Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde was buried in a crematorium in Thane district on Sunday, a police officer said.

The burial took place at Shantinagar crematorium at around 6 pm amid heavy police bandobast as the site had seen protests from some local residents and outfits who were opposing the move, the officer added.

Shinde was shot dead at around 6:15 pm on September 23 at Mumbra Bypass while being taken to Badlapur from Taloja Jail in

connection with the probe into a case filed on the complaint of his former wife.

As per police, he snatched the pistol of an API and fired, leaving the latter injured, following which he was gunned down by an officer leading the escort team.

His body was lying in Kalwa civil hospital morgue since then, with efforts by police and kin to find a burial place facing hurdles, including protests from residents and outfits like the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Shiv Sena.

Shinde was arrested on August 17 for sexually assaulting two minor girls in a school in Badlapur.

## Atal Setu cameras incapable

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Maharashtra transport department has recently found that the cameras that are part of the intelligent traffic management system (ITMS) on the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), also known as Atal Setu, are incapable of detecting violations, such as speeding.

The department has now requested Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to upgrade the system to match the standards of ITMS installed on Mumbai-Pune Expressway so that the regional transport office would be able to penalise offenders, said a senior Officer.

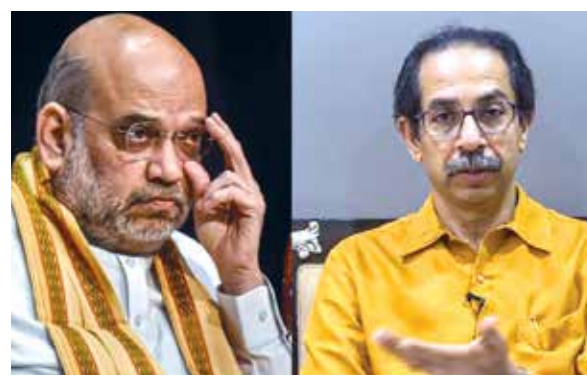
## Shah director of opposition split, says Uddhav

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday claimed that BJP leaders had been directed in a closed-door meeting to break the Opposition ranks and target himself and NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar.

Thackeray said a Ramtek near Nagpur that the people will decide his political future and not the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. He alleged Union Home Minister Amit Shah had directed BJP leaders in a "closed-door" meeting to "stop" him (Uddhav) and Sharad Pawar politically.

"During his recent visit to Nagpur, Amit Shah held a closed-door meeting of



BJP leaders where he asked them to split the Opposition ranks and politically stop me and Sharad Pawar. Why speak behind closed doors? He should say this before people," Thackeray said after inaugurating a life-size statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Ramtek city in east Maharashtra.

Why does Shah want to finish Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar politically...so that the BJP can loot Maharashtra, he alleged.

Thackeray said the BJP snapped its three-decade-old alliance with (undivided) Shiv Sena in 2014 (before assembly elections).

"However, Sena managed to win 63 seats," he added.

Thackeray wondered if RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat agreed with BJP's "Hindutva" involving breaking other parties and poaching (opposition leaders).

"The upcoming elections are not about power but they are crucial to prevent Maharashtra from getting looted," the former chief minister said and appealed to people to ensure a massive victory for Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi and deliver all six assembly segments in Ramtek Lok Sabha constituency.

Congress and NCP (SP) leaders Sunil Kedar and Anil Deshmukh shared the dais with Thackeray.

## Amit Shah in Mumbai tomorrow

**Mumbai:** In his second visit in two weeks, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Maharashtra on Tuesday for a pre-election meeting.

According to state BJP chief Chandrashekhra Bawalkule Shah will hold a meeting to review poll preparation in Mumbai, Thane and Konkan region." Earlier, he had held meetings with party workers across Vidarbha, Marathwada, North and Western Maharashtra.

Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis said that the seat-sharing talks between the Mahayuti was progressing well.

## Tuition teacher held in rape case

**Mumbai:** A private coaching class teacher and his two brothers were arrested in connection with the alleged rape and molestation of a 16-year-old girl student in Mumbai, police said on Sunday.

An FIR was registered recently after the girl confided in her family members, who approached the police.

The main accused allegedly sexually assaulted the girl, a class 9 student, on two occasions between July and December 2023, a police officer said.

The complainant stated that two brothers of the accused, all in their late 20s, molested her separately in a movie theatre and in a classroom of the institute between 2022 and December 2023.

Police registered an FIR and arrested the three brothers under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for rape and molestation and under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). Further investigation is underway, the officer added.



Devotees carry Goddess Durga idol to the pandal ahead of Navratri festival, in Mumbai. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

## Man accused of wife's murder acquitted

**Thane:** A court in Maharashtra's Thane district acquitted a man accused of setting his wife ablaze, citing that the prosecution had failed to establish the chain of circumstances linking him to the crime.

Principal District and Sessions Judge S B Agrawal acquitted Nasir Yasin

Shaikh (38), a labourer, of charges under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code.

A copy of the order passed on September 20 was made available on Saturday.

According to the prosecution, on April 7, 2021, Nasir set his wife, Farida,

ablaze after a dispute over money.

Nasir demanded money from Farida to buy clothes and a mobile phone, and when she refused, he allegedly poured kerosene over her and set her on fire, they said. Farida was rushed to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Hospital, where her dy-

ing declaration was recorded and subsequently treated as the basis for the FIR.

Defence counsel Sagar Kolhe argued that the evidence presented by the prosecution was insufficient and raised questions about the reliability of the dying declaration.

## Insurance firms expediting claims

**Thane:** A competition has emerged between insurance companies to expedite settlements in accident cases in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) said on Sunday.

The trend has given relief to victims' families and reduced the burden on the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT), the official said.

Ishwar Suryavanshi, DLSA secretary, described the competition as a positive trend that benefits claimants and insurers and reduces court backlogs, allowing better management of other legal matters.

Record settlements were achieved, including a claim of Rs 4.50 crore and another for Rs 1.33 crore, surpassing the previous record of Rs 2.80 crore set during the last Lokadalat. As many as 217 MACT claims, involving more than Rs 26.80 crore, were settled in the district during the Lok Adalat on Saturday. Suryavanshi commended efforts taken by the insurance companies and their counsels and expressed confidence that this healthy competition will lead to more settlements.

## Raju Shetti applied for MHADA house

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Raju Shetti, a prominent farm leader and former Member of Parliament from Hatkanangale, has applied for a home through the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) lottery, which is scheduled to take place on October 8.

Shetti, who is the President of Swabhimani Paksha and contested the Lok Sabha election earlier this year without success, has submitted a single application for a flat located on Adi Shankaracharya Marg in Powai, according to a Hindustan Times report.

The apartment that Shetti has applied for falls under the middle-income group category and offers a carpet area of 706 square feet. The price of the flat is Rs 1,20,13,323. Of the 112 flats available in this MHADA lottery, three are specifically reserved for Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), and Members of Legislative Council (MLCs).

Shetti has applied under

the reserved category for serving or former elected representatives and is the only applicant from this pool of individuals. His decision to apply in this category has attracted attention due to his stature as a farm leader and former MP, highlighting the diverse applicants in this year's MHADA draw.

The 2023 MHADA lottery has offered a total of 2,030 homes across Mumbai, and it has generated significant interest, with 134,000 applications received. This means that there are 56 applicants competing for each available flat, making the

lottery highly competitive. The homes, which range in size and price, cater to various income groups, offering a rare opportunity for residents of Mumbai to purchase homes in the city at more affordable rates than market prices.

The lottery draw will be held at the Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Nariman Point on 8 October. With such a high number of applicants, the competition for securing a flat through MHADA's lottery system is intense.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"One Jitu Navlani, who was employed as an agent of the ED, was involved in extorting money. Our MVA government pursued legal action against him. It is believed he had the support of both the ED and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis."



Sanjay Raut, MP, Shiv Sena (UBT)

## Don't take your age seriously, Pawar advises Shinde

By Correspondent

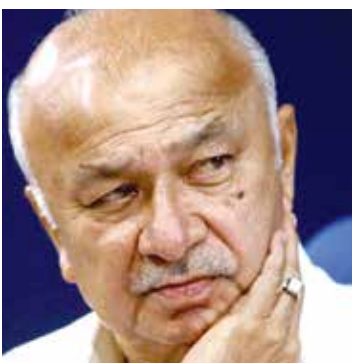
**Mumbai:** Suggesting that age is just a number, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday appealed to Congress veteran Sushilkumar Shinde to remain active in social life to make Maharashtra an important state in the country.

Pawar attended a function to mark the 84th birthday of Shinde, a former Union Home Minister, where key political figures had gathered.

"Shinde should not take his age too seriously even though he turned 84. I am eight months old-



er than him. We still have a lot of work to do to make Maharashtra an important state in the country. We should remain active (in social



life) to guide the new generation," he said.

When he was Union Home Minister, Shinde, in 2014, had de-

scribed Sharad Pawar as his "political guru", saying he would be happy to see the NCP founder become the Prime Minister.

Shinde's personal and political life is marked by unexpected turns. Born in a Scheduled Caste community in Solapur, Shinde became a lower-rank police official. He gradually climbed up the Congress ladder to become the chief minister of Maharashtra from January 2003 to November 2004.

Shinde joined the Congress party in 1971. He was elected as an MLA on multiple terms. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha from

Maharashtra in 1992 and to Lok Sabha in 1998. He served as the governor of Andhra Pradesh from October 2004 to January 2006.

Shinde had represented ministries of Home Affairs and Power in the erstwhile Manmohan Singh governments.

In recent years, the Congress veteran has failed to ensure victory for himself in Lok Sabha elections. He was defeated by BJP candidates in 2014 and 2019 in the Solapur Lok Sabha seat. Currently, his daughter Praniti Shinde represents this constituency.



# Govt considering FDI regulatory mechanism

**New Delhi:** The government is considering setting up a foreign investment regulatory mechanism for post-investment review and monitoring in the country, according to sources.

At present, the consideration is at the discussion level only, they added.

"It has been observed that all countries do oversight on the FDI (foreign direct investment), which is coming into their country. People suggest that in India also, there should be an oversight mechanism. It's a kind of oversight on money, which is coming up in the country as FDI," one of the sources said.

**The government also eased FDI norms in sectors, such as space, e-commerce, pharma, civil aviation, contract manufacturing, digital media, coal mining, and defence, besides rolling out the PLI scheme for 14 sectors.**



the FDI coming into the country is beneficial to the economy and originates from legitimate sources.

India is a major destination for foreign direct investments given its 1.4 billion market, stable policies, demographic dividend, good investment returns and skilled workforce.

The government has taken a series of measures to attract overseas investments like promoting ease of doing business through simplifying procedures and significantly reducing compliance burden for the industry.

The official added that the measures to improve ease of doing business, zero tolerance for corruption and the focused effort

**India receives maximum investments from countries like Mauritius, Singapore, the US, the Netherlands, the UAE, the Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Japan, the UK, and Germany.**

on emerging sectors like electronics have helped promote 'Make In India' and boost domestic and foreign investments in the country.

The 'Make in India' initiative was launched on September 25, 2014, to facilitate investment, foster innovation, build world-

class infrastructure, and make the country a hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation.

The government is also developing industrial townships to boost domestic manufacturing and attract foreign investors by providing world-class infrastructure.

Sectors, which attract healthy overseas inflows, include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunication, pharma and chemicals.

On a question of whether India needs a dedicated law to deal with national security risks from FDI, Saurav Kumar, Partner, IndusLaw, said that a dedicated law to deal with national security risks in foreign investment may strengthen India's position with respect to international law by providing a clearly defined legal basis for rejecting investments on national security grounds.

"This would not only reduce the risk of international challenges but also showcase that India's actions are transparent, predictable, and aligned with global best practices," Ku-

**119 per cent – Increase in FDI flow in last 10 years**  
**47.8 per cent Increase in FDI in April-June this fiscal on healthy inflows in services, computer, telecom and pharma sectors**  
**USD 667 billion The FDI in 2023-24**  
**90 per cent Total FDI received through automatic route**

mar said.

Rudra Kumar Pandey, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co said it is important that a specific domestic law is introduced which provides clear guidelines on parameters for processing the foreign investment application, aspects relating to a national security risk, the threshold for determining beneficial owner, the appointment of a nodal officer to interact with the applicant, providing of regular update, specific grounds of rejection and other relevant provisions to bring out the transparency in the approval procedure.

## Goyal holds discussions with 140 firms

**New Delhi:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday held detailed discussions with companies that are getting fiscal benefits under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

The minister engaged with 140 companies out of the 1,300 manufacturing units across 14 sectors, which have been the beneficiaries of the scheme.

"We had estimated that in the 14 sectors, about Rs 1.46 lakh crore would be invested...Our estimate is that we could look at an investment of upward of Rs 2 lakh crores being seeded through the production linked incentive scheme (throughout the scheme period)," Goyal told reporters here after the meeting.

At the job front, he added that originally it was estimated about 8.5 lakh jobs will be created under the PLI scheme, but looking at the numbers that some of them are saying, "we could easily look at about 12 lakh (jobs). It was also our expectation that we'll see additional production of about Rs 11 lakh crore."

## GSTN restores GST returns data

**New Delhi:** GST Network on Sunday said the monthly returns data of July and August 2017, the initial months of the Goods and Services Tax rollout, has been restored on the portal.

The GSTN had last week said it is implementing its data policy, as per which data for taxpayers will be retained for seven years only. Thus, GST returns data will not be available beyond 7 years for taxpayers, and they would be archived.

Accordingly, on August 1, 2024, returns filed for July 2017 were archived, and on September 1, 2024, data for August 2017 was archived.

However, trade and industry had sought some more time before implementing this policy so that they could download their relevant data from the GST portal for any future reference.

In an advisory to taxpayers, GSTN on Sunday said GST returns for 17-18 were made available again on the feedback received from the trade and industry.



"In view of the requests received from the trade due to the difficulties faced, data has been restored back on the portal. We recommend you to download and save the data if needed, as the archival policy shall be implemented again after giving advance information," GSTN said.

As per GST law, taxpayers are not allowed to file their GST returns after the expiry of a period of three years from the due date of furnishing the said return.

As per the GST portal data policy, data for taxpayers will be retained for seven years only.

GST was implemented on July 1, 2017.

-PTI

## IPA seeks distinction on spurious drugs

**New Delhi:** There is a need for a clear distinction between spurious and substandard drugs as linking counterfeit products with legitimate manufacturers has severe reputational and financial impact, the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) has stated. The industry body's statement comes in the wake of a recent report by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, which cited more than 50 products as NSQ.

# Rajan wants govt to promote labour-intensive industries

**New Delhi:** With 7 per cent economic growth, India is not creating enough jobs as reflected by the number of applicants for vacant posts in some states, Reserve Bank's former governor Raghuram Rajan said and suggested the government needs to focus on promoting labour-intensive industries to generate employment.

Rajan further said some Indians, especially those at upper level, are comfortable

and have high incomes, but consumption growth from the lower half of the country has still not recovered to pre-pandemic level.

"That is the unfortunate part...You would think with 7 per cent growth, we would be creating a lot of jobs. But if you look at our manufacturing growth, it is more capital intensive," he told PTI.

Rajan was asked whether the Indian economy,



which is growing at 7 per cent, is creating enough jobs.

According to him, the in-

dustries that are more capital-intensive are growing faster, but labour-intensive industries are not growing.

"It is not going well at the lower level. I think the desperate need is for jobs. And you can see this, forget the official statistics.

"You can see it in the number of applications for government jobs, which are overwhelming," said Rajan, who is a professor of finance at US-based Chicago

Booth. He said that in the medium term, the Indian economy will grow at 6-7 per cent.

While welcoming the apprenticeship schemes announced by the finance minister in this year's Budget, Rajan said, "But we have to monitor that very closely, see what works and expand what works much more." Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in the Union Budget of FY25 that the

## L&T gears up for semicon

**New Delhi:** Fabless chip company L&T Semiconductor Technologies expects manufacturing of semiconductor products designed by it to start in the next two years, a top company official said.

L&T Semiconductor Technologies CEO Sandeep Kumar said the company will set up its chip manufacturing plants after achieving a threshold revenue in the range of USD 50 million to USD 1 billion.

-PTI

## Coking Coal Imports

# Govt delegation to leave for Mongolia



**New Delhi:** An Indian delegation, including senior government officials, will leave for Mongolia next month to discuss importing coking coal from the landlocked nation.

The move aims at diversifying raw materials sources, and will not only increase the availability of the key steel making material but also help in cost optimisation of producing the commodity.

"We are looking at the possibility of import of coking coal from Mongolia. An industry delegation went (to Mongolia some time back) and a government delegation is going next month," Steel Secretary Sandeep Poundrik told PTI. India remains dependent

on select group of nations -- largely Australia -- to meet 80-90 per cent of its coking coal requirements. As they are located far, it takes months for cargo ships to transport the raw material to India. The logistics adds to the overall cost production of steel makers.

Imports from Mongolia, which is geographically closer to India, will provide cost benefit to the domestic steel players and improve availability of the raw material.

The government has been taking several measures to source coking coal from Russia and Mongolia.

State-owned SAIL has imported coking coal from Russia to produce steel.

-PTI



Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde with Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis during the inauguration of the southern extension of Pune Metro Phase 1 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. Pic: PTI

# Reliance wins arbitration case

**New Delhi:** The Calcutta High Court has upheld a Rs 780 crore arbitration award in favour of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd in a dispute with West Bengal-based Damodar Valley Corporation, the Anil Ambani group firm said in a stock exchange filing.

More than a decade back, Reliance Infrastructure had won a contract to set up a 1,200 MW thermal power plant in Purulia in West Bengal for Rs 3,750 crore.

The project was delayed due to disputes and other

reasons, leading to DVC seeking damages from Reliance Infrastructure. Reliance Infrastructure, however, challenged this, and an arbitration tribunal in 2019 ruled in favour of the company and directed DVC to pay Rs 896 crore to the company.

DVC challenged the order of the arbitral tribunal in the Calcutta High Court, which was dismissed by the court.

"This is to inform that on September 27, 2024, the Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta de-

livered its judgment in a petition filed by Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) challenging the arbitration award under Section 34, dated September 29, 2023, amounting to approximately Rs 780 crore, including accrued interest in favour of the company concerning the Raghunathpur Thermal Power Project," the firm said in the filing.

The company said the court "with the exception of relief on pre-award interest and reduction in the rate of interest on bank guarantee totalling to Rs

181 crore and upheld the (arbitration) award, totalling approximately Rs 780 crore, including accrued interest. In addition, the bank guarantee of Rs 600 crore will also be released".

Reliance Infra said it is currently conducting a detailed review of the judgment and "will proceed, based on legal advice, either to enforce the Award to the extent upheld or to challenge the judgment dated September 27, 2024, where it interferes with the Award".

-PTI

# I-T Act review: Govt to invite suggestions

**New Delhi:** The government has proposed to invite suggestions on Income Tax Act, 1961, from the private sector and tax experts beginning October, as part of an exercise to simplify the direct tax law, sources said.

In a meeting with industry chambers earlier this month, the government said that a functionality will be created in the Income Tax portal wherein suggestions could be made on different sections of the I-T Act with a view to simplifying the language and reducing litigation.

Following the Budget announcement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had set up an internal committee for a comprehensive review of the six-decade old direct tax law and make it concise, lucid, easy to read and understand.

"In the meeting with industry associations, the revenue department suggested that the functionality be developed by the first week of October to give suggestions for reworking the income tax law," a source said.

Another source said

that the exercise is not to write a new tax law or a tax code.

"Just by removing the outdated clauses, the number of pages could be brought down by about 100. The aim of the I-T law review is simplification of language and mitigation of litigation," the source added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in 2024-25 Budget presented in July had proposed that the I-T law review would be completed in six months.

Considering that the six-month timeline ends in January, it is widely expected that the amended I-T Act could be brought in the Budget session of Parliament.

Since no new changes are expected in the law, the amended Act could form part of the Finance Bill, 2025 as well, another source said.

"It could be that the revenue department is looking at incorporating the amendments suggested by the industry in the first draft and then put the amended draft law in public domain," a source said.

-PTI

# Regulatory, policy reforms crucial for pharma: Report

**New Delhi:** India's regulatory and policy reforms are crucial for shaping the future of pharmaceutical research and development by streamlining approval processes, strengthening IP protections and incentivising innovation, as several policy challenges continue to hinder the growth of R&D in the sector, according to a report.

As the country modernises its regulatory framework and enhances collaboration with global regulatory agencies, India is well-positioned to become a global

leader in pharmaceutical innovation, as per the report by Deloitte and industry chamber ASSOCHAM.

It acknowledged that India's pharmaceutical ecosystem is transforming significantly, supported by comprehensive regulatory and policy reforms to foster innovation and growth.

The regulatory framework, which governs drug discovery, development and commercialisation, is being actively enhanced to streamline approval processes, increase transparency and reduce barriers to entry for

**The report said, "Several policy challenges continue to hinder the growth of India's pharmaceutical R&D sector, such as inadequate capacity for drug regulation, the need for advanced testing facilities and the lack of a strong framework for monitoring quality compliance in manufacturing units."**

innovative products.

There is scope for harmonisation between state and central policies to ensure a uniform regulatory environment across the country. There is also a lack of alignment among different regulatory bodies, resulting in overlapping jurisdictions

and inconsistent regulatory outcomes, the report said.

"Additionally, bureaucratic complexities within the regulatory framework led to extended timelines for drug approvals and clinical trials, making India less attractive for conducting high-quality clinical re-

search," it noted.

Another major challenge in this area is the high cost of compliance with global standards, which can be particularly burdensome for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), the report added.

"Addressing these specific impediments through streamlined processes and clearer regulations is essential for enhancing India's position in global pharmaceutical R&D."

In order to position India as a hub for pharmaceutical research and development,

with a robust ecosystem capable of supporting global standards and driving innovative advancements, the report suggested that the government should actively promote the country as a leading hub for pharmaceutical discovery and preclinical and clinical research.

Using its expanding CRO sector, cutting-edge research centres, cost efficiency and diverse patient base, India can position itself as an attractive collaborator for global pharmaceutical companies in these areas, it said.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"We have got some very capable companies in India with the right engineering talent, the right production footprint. India is a market that is going to grow and that makes sense for us to continue sourcing more from India."**



**Mahendra Nair,**  
Group VP, GE Aerospace



# Filmmaker to Deputy CM: Son Rises in DMK govt

Chennai: "I don't know whether I will win or lose... But I will fight sincerely till the very end," from Udhayanidhi Stalin's Tamil flick 'Manithan,' would help understand how he in politics too used such simple and effective messaging and the manner in which it contributed to jump start his political career path.

In the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, in order to target the BJP-led Centre, Udhayanidhi came up with his "29 paisa" campaign.

He repeatedly attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "29 paisa Modi" as the Centre returned only "29 paisa out of every one rupee paid as tax" to the Union government by the state and this helped the ruling DMK further strengthen its narrative against the BJP and its allies that the state suffered at the hands of the Saffron party-led dispensation.

On September 28, 2024 Udhayanidhi Stalin was elevated as Deputy Chief Minister.

Born on November 27, 1977, Udhayanidhi's real innings in his party began with his appointment as DMK youth wing secretary in July 2019 and under his leadership, the party reaffirmed its goal to inculcate the Dravidian spirit into the party cadres by organising ideology-based workshops and interactions and the focus remained on using technology to reach out to more and more youths and increase party membership. Also, several other



DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin visits his grandfather M. Karunanidhi's residence before taking oath as Tamil Nadu deputy Chief Minister in Chennai on Sunday. Pic: PTI

initiatives like the youth wing conference and a state-wide motorcycle rally enthused cadres and helped build his image further as a go-getter.

In the 2021 Assembly polls, he was hugely successful with his 'single brick' campaign to send across a message to people that the Madurai AIIMS project of the BJP-led Centre remained a non-starter though it was announced in the 2015-16 Union Budget. It was arguably the first time he outshone his colleagues in the party and several leaders vied with each other to praise him for his natural ability to connect with the people.

Last year, though Udhayanidhi's comments on Sanatan Dharma led to a nation-wide controversy, it in a way, helped the party to reiterate and convince its key political constituencies that his comments were a reflection of the party ideology to eradicate practices that went against the Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the women as well and that it had absolutely nothing to do with religion.

The party, rallying in his support, campaigned that national icons like Periyar EV Ramasamy, Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Naryana Guru had spoken against discrimination including

those based on a person's birth. That the Sanatan Dharma controversy cut no electoral ice in Tamil Nadu was also seen as a success for Udhayanidhi.

Naturally, being the son of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and grandson of late DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi brought its own unique advantages for Udhayanidhi's growth within the party. After he took over as Minister, he launched several initiatives to encourage sportspersons and improve sports infrastructure and distribution of Kalaignar sports kit was one among them.

After finishing his graduation from a city college,

Udhayanidhi became well known as a film producer/distributor, over a decade ago, and later as an actor as well. Since 2016, he helms DMK's Tamil mouthpiece 'Murasoli' and since then he has been active in party work assigned to him.

In 2021, he won for the first time as an MLA from Chepauk-Tiruvallikeni Assembly constituency here and became the Sports and Youth Welfare Minister in December 2022. Also, in 2022, he was retained as youth wing chief and it helped him further demonstrate his organising skills and build his influence with leaders clamouring for his elevation at recent events to commemorate the 75 anniversary of DMK's founding.

His long expected elevation as Deputy Chief Minister is more or less only a formality as he had already been chairing high-level review meetings of the government. While it took over three decades of active party work for his father, MK Stalin to become Deputy CM in 2009, the journey of Udhayanidhi, who initially appeared to be not very keen on politics, is comparatively quick.

Like his success as a lawyer to win justice in his film 'Manthian' (Man/human being), DMK cadres are confident that he will go on to win more laurels, especially in the 2026 Assembly polls when top actor Vijay's Tamizha Vetri Kazhagam will for the first time face an electoral fight. -PTI

## Only Bengal deprived of flood grants: Mamata

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday described the flood situation in the northern districts as "alarming" and claimed that the state has been deprived of central assistance to deal with the natural calamity.

Banerjee, who was on her way to north Bengal to inspect the flood situation there, told reporters that her government was dealing with the deluge on a war footing.

"North Bengal is reeling under flood. Districts like Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar have been affected. Due to heavy rain in catchment areas of Koshi river, places in Bihar and Malda and Dakshin Dinajpur districts of Bengal will be affected in the near future," she said on her way to Siliguri.

Accusing the central government of "not performing its role to help the state fight against the calamities," she said, "The Centre did not take up maintenance work of Farakka barrage and its water-bearing capacity has reduced to a great extent despite our repeated reminders to them."

She alleged that the BJP leaders used to visit West Bengal "only during polls but forget about the state when it matters most".

"Only Bengal is being deprived of flood grants", Banerjee claimed.

The state government, on its part, has been "dealing with the situation on a war footing and launched a public address system for evacuation of people living near rivers to safer places", she said. -PTI

## Govt mulls three bills to implement plan



New Delhi: The government is likely to bring three bills, including two to amend the Constitution, to put in place its plan to hold simultaneous elections.

One of the proposed Constitutional amendment bills, that deals with aligning the local bodies elections to that of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, will require an endorsement from at least 50 per cent of the states.

The proposed first constitutional amendment bill would deal with making provisions for holding Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly elections together. Citing recommendations of the high-level committee, sources said the proposed bill would seek to amend Article 82A by adding sub-clause (1) relating to the 'appointed date'. It will also seek to insert sub-clause (2) to Article 82A relating to the end of terms of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies together.

It also proposes to amend Article 83(2) and insert new sub-clauses (3) and (4) relating to the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It also has provisions related to the dissolution of the legislative assemblies and amending Article 327 to insert the term "simultaneous elections".

This bill will not require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the states, the recommendation said. -PTI

The proposed second Constitutional amendment bill will require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the state assemblies as it will deal with matters relating to state affairs.

It will seek to amend constitutional provisions relating to the preparation of electoral rolls by the Election Commission (EC) in consultation with State Election Commissions (SECs) for elections to local bodies. The proposed second Constitutional amendment bill will also create provisions to hold simultaneous elections to municipalities and panchayats, along with elections to Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies by inserting a new Article 324A.

The third bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union territories having legislative assemblies -- Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir -- to align the terms of these Houses with other legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha as proposed in the first constitutional amendment bill.

The statutes it proposes to amend are the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act-1991, the Government of Union Territories Act-1963 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019. -PTI

## Cong demands FM's resignation

New Delhi: The Congress on Sunday attacked the BJP after a case was lodged against Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others on a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme and demanded her resignation for "undermining democracy".

The opposition party reiterated its demand for a Supreme-court monitored inquiry through an SIT into the whole electoral bond scheme.

Addressing a press conference here along with party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi, Congress general secretary-in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh charged that four ways were used to extort money through the "conspiracy of electoral bonds - prepaid bribery, postpaid bribery, post-raid bribery and through farzi companies".

He said the Finance Minister should immediately resign as she is "guilty" politically, legally and morally.

Ramesh said the FIR was lodged on orders of the court and the Congress has

nothing to do with the FIR. He said the Congress has been demanding a Supreme-court monitored inquiry through an SIT into the electoral bonds scheme and reiterates that demand.

Singhvi also accused the BJP of "undermining democracy".

"The Finance Minister cannot do this on her own. We know who is number 1 and number 2 and this was done on whose directions," he said.

"The larger issue is the level playing field which is necessary for free and fair polls. Free and fair polls are critical for democracy. This is an attack on our democratic system," Singhvi said while terming it as "EBS - Extortionist BJP Scheme".

A case was registered on Saturday against Sitharaman and others on the directions of a court in Bengaluru, following a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme.

BJP Karnataka chief BY Vijayendra and party leader Nalin Kumar Kateel have also been named in the FIR. -PTI



Tram lovers perform a song as part of a campaign to save tram services in the city, at Esplanade tram depot in Kolkata on Sunday. Pic: PTI

## Karat to be Polit Bureau coordinator

New Delhi: Senior CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the party's Polit Bureau and the Central Committee as an interim arrangement until the 24th Party Congress to be held in April next year, the Left party said on Sunday.

The decision comes in the wake of the death of CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury on September 12 at the age of 72.

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), now in session in New Delhi, has decided that Comrade Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee, as an interim arrangement until the 24th Party Congress to be held in April 2025 at Madurai," the CPI(M) said.

"This decision was taken due to the sad and sudden

demise of the sitting General Secretary of the CPI(M), Comrade Sitaram Yechury," it added.

Karat, one of the senior-most leaders of the CPI(M), was its general secretary from 2005 to 2015. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1985 and became a Polit Bureau member in 1992.

The Polit Bureau is the key decision-making wing of the party. -PTI

## Nitish govt run by ex-babus: Kishor

Patna: Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, alleging that the state government was being "run by four retired bureaucrats" and the CM was in the "grip of these former babus".

Addressing a press conference here, three days ahead of floating his own political party, Kishor vowed to dislodge the JD(U) president from power.

He charged the longest-serving CM of Bihar with running his government through a handful of "retired bureaucrats".

He also claimed that the 2025 Bihar assembly polls



would be fought on the issue of 'three S', that is 'sarab' (liquor), 'survey' (land) and 'smart meter', and asserted that these issues would prove to be the "final nail in the coffin for the current regime".

"The Nitish Kumar government is being run by four retired bureaucrats. The CM is in the grip of

these babus. Neither Kumar nor these bureaucrats are aware of the problems being faced by the people. Kumar has changed now. He has lost his morality and is only interested in securing the chief minister's chair," Kishor alleged.

His 'Jan Suraj' initiative will become a political party on October 2.

## Chirag may forge alliance

Ranchi/Dhanbad: Union minister Chirag Paswan on Sunday said his party, LJP (Ram Vilas), would contest the assembly elections in Jharkhand, and all options were being explored, including forging an alliance or going solo, for it.

His statement came a day after Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said his party would contest the polls in alliance with the AJSU Party and JD(U).

## YouTubers booked for defamation

Kochi: A case has been registered against some YouTube channels for allegedly airing objectionable videos and statements about well-known actor-filmmaker Balachandra Menon.

The case was registered based on a complaint lodged by Menon with the city police commissioner here on Saturday.

The accused YouTube channels had reportedly aired the interview of an actress who had allegedly made some insulting re-

marks against the "April 18" actor-director.

As per the FIR, the videos were deliberately propagated by the accused on September 27 with an intention to defame Menon and intimidate him.

Multiple FIRs have been registered against several high-profile Malayalam film personalities following allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors, sparked by revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report. -PTI

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"By cancelling her campaigning, Mehbooba Mufti has shown she is shedding tears over the death of terrorists. It is her habit to call terrorists martyrs. She had similarly wept for Burhan Wani some time back."



R.P. Singh,  
National Spokesperson, BJP

## Govt's NRI cell got 400 complaints of domestic violence

New Delhi: The government's NRI cell received over 400 complaints from women in 2022, with key issues ranging from domestic violence, confiscation of passports, desertion to dowry demands and child custody disputes.

According to the latest annual report from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) accessed by PTI, 109 complaints were registered between January and March 2022, while 372 were received from April to December.

The report highlighted that the NRI cell, which handles cases related to NRI marriages from women both in India and abroad, saw several serious allegations, including confiscation of passports by in-laws, and women being unable to join their husbands abroad due to the husband's disappearance or unknown whereabouts.

"The complexity of NRI marriages often involves significant challenges, including legal and financial aid, child custody issues, and the location of missing



spouses," the report stated, urging collaboration across government departments to resolve these cases. The NRI cell receives a

total of 481 complaints from women in 2022, the report said.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) co-

ordinated with the Ministries of WCD, External Affairs, and Home Affairs to resolve the issues. In 2022, the NCW issued nearly 3,500 letters to relevant authorities to expedite the resolution of matrimonial disputes involving NRIs.

Beyond bureaucratic efforts, the NCW provided psycho-social and legal counselling to complainants. The report revealed that around 45 walk-in complaints were handled during the year, in addition to regular telephonic counselling sessions. Hearings were

held in approximately 20 cases to facilitate follow-ups with authorities or mediate reconciliation efforts between the parties involved.

The Ministry of External Affairs identified 10 IDMs in nine countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Canada, where such facilities were deemed necessary based on the number of Indian women residing there. However, the proposal to set up the facility in Australia was later dropped. -PTI



# Chandrayaan-3 landed on possibly oldest craters of Moon



Chandrayaan-3 landing site is a unique geological setting where no other missions have gone. The images from the mission's Pragyan rover are the first on-site ones of the Moon at this latitude. They reveal how the Moon evolved over time.

S Vijayan, Associate professor, Physical Research Laboratory

**New Delhi:** India's lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 possibly landed in one of the oldest craters of the Moon, according to scientists who analysed images from the mission and satellites.

The crater was formed during the Nectarian period, which dates back to 3.85 billion years and is one of the oldest time periods in the Moon's history, the team, including researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Ahmedabad, said.

In this case, Chandrayaan-3 was found to have landed within a crater -- about 160 km in diameter -- and detected in the images as a nearly semi-circular structure.

A crater is formed when an asteroid crashes into the surface of a larger body like a planet or a Moon, and the displaced material is called 'ejecta'.

Revealing how the Moon evolved over time, the images showed that one half of the crater was buried under material thrown out or 'ejecta' from the South Pole-Aitken basin -- the largest and most known impact basin on the Moon, the researchers said.

An impact basin is a large, complex crater with diameter over 300 km, while a crater measures under 300 km in diameter.

Forming of ejecta is "similar to when you throw a ball on sand and some of it gets displaced or thrown outwards into a small pile," explained Vijayan, who is the corresponding author on the study that appeared in the journal *Icarus*.

S Vijayan, an associate

professor in the Planetary Sciences Division, Physical Research Laboratory, said, "When an impact basin is forming, surface material will be thrown out. If the diameter of the impact basin is larger, sub-surface materials from greater depths will be excavated," Vijayan said. The researchers said this likely indicated one half of the crater, the other half of which was 'degraded' by getting buried under ejecta from the South Pole-Aitken basin.

"Further, near the landing site, ejecta or material 'thrown out' from another impact crater further away was observed -- images captured by the Pragyan rover revealed that material of the same nature was present at the landing site," Vijayan said.

The Pragyan rover was deployed on the lunar surface by the Vikram lander,

Chandrayaan-3. "Together, the images from the mission and satellites showed that the Chandrayaan-3 landing site consists of material deposited from different regions of the Moon," he said.

The mission, launched by ISRO, Bengaluru, made a soft landing near the Moon's south pole on August 23, 2023. The landing site was christened the Shiv Shakti Point on August 26, 2023.

For validating their results, the researchers also observed other craters formed during the Nectarian period and found that most of them were severely degraded and modified -- a finding that "substantiates our discovery of a buried crater."

The finding is also an indication of the weathering effects due to exposure to space, or 'space weathering,' they said.

-PTI



Students participate in a rally organised by Cardiological Society of India (CSI), Assam on World Heart Day in Guwahati on Sunday.

Pic: PTI

## Over 125 killed in floods, landslides in Nepal

By Shirish B Pradhan

**Kathmandu:** The death toll from rain-triggered floodings and landslides across Nepal climbed to 125 on Sunday, police said.

Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday, with flash floods reported in parts of the country.

According to the Armed Police Force sources, 64 people are missing in floods, landslides and inundation, while 45 people have been injured.

The Kathmandu Valley reported the highest number of 48 deaths. At least 195 houses and eight bridges were damaged. The security personnel have rescued nearly 3,100 people.

Eyewitnesses said they had never seen such a devastating flood and inunda-



A flood-affected area following heavy rainfall in Kathmandu, Nepal on Sunday.

Pic: PTI

tion in the Kathmandu Valley in 40-45 years. The death toll has reached 102, the Armed Police Force said in a statement.

"I've never before seen flooding on this scale in Kathmandu," said Arun Bhakta Shrestha, Climate and Environmental expert at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain

Development (ICIMOD).

Kathmandu's main river, the Bagmati, was flowing above danger levels after incessant rain lashed much of eastern and central Nepal on Friday and Saturday, a report published by ICIMOD said on Saturday.

A low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal and the more northerly than usual

position of the monsoon trough was the reason behind Saturday's exceptionally intense rain, it said.

Scientists say that while climate change is changing the amount and timing of rainfall across Asia, a key reason for the rise in the impact of floods is the built environment, including unplanned construction, especially on floodplains, which leaves insufficient areas for water retention and drainage.

The floods and landslides have thrown life out of gear in many parts of the country, with many highways and road stretches disrupted, hundreds of houses and bridges buried or swept away, and hundreds of families displaced. Thousands of passengers have been stranded in various places due to road disruption.

-PTI

## Elderly woman dies in animal attack

**Udaipur:** A 65-year-old woman was mauled to death in a suspected leopard attack in Rajasthan's Udaipur district, officials said on Sunday.

Gattu Bai was attacked by an animal on Saturday when she was alone at her home in Gurjaron ka Guda village in Gogunda area, they said.

According to officials, when her husband returned home in the evening and could not find her, he alerted the villagers. The locals initially found pieces of her saree, some jewellery and traces of blood which led them to intensify the search.

Later, the woman's mutilated body was found in a nearby forest, they said.

-PTI

## Great Nicobar Project

# Govt hell-bent on inflicting ecological disaster, says Ramesh

**New Delhi:** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has written to Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav over the Great Nicobar Island infrastructure project, alleging the high-powered panel tasked to revisit environmental clearances to the project was "biased" in its very composition and did not carry out any meaningful reassessment.

Ramesh also expressed "grave concern" over expressions of interest being invited even as the National Green Tribunal deliberates on petitions before it.

In his letter to Yadav, Ramesh also questioned the credibility, composition, and conclusions of a high-powered committee (HPC) tasked to revisit the environmental clearances granted to the Great Nico-



bar Island infrastructure project.

"It is also a matter of grave concern that while the NGT deliberates on petitions before it, ANIIDCO has already invited expressions of interest that is a precursor for the clearing of around 65 square km of biodiversity-rich forests. I believe the Government of India is hell-bent on inflicting an ecological and humanitarian disaster on our country," the former environment minister said.

Ramesh cited media reports stating that the ministry has filed a counter affidavit to the NGT's eastern zone bench in which it has said that the clearances granted for the Great Nicobar infrastructure project have not violated the Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) notification, 2019 and NGT orders to revisit the project's green clearances have been complied with.

"I read news reports about the counter-affidavit

filed by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in the National Green Tribunal on the Great Nicobar Island Development Project on which we have had detailed exchanges earlier. "First, I am shocked that the High-Powered Committee (HPC) constituted by the MoEF&CC in pursuance of the NGT's directive to review environmental and CRZ clearances did NOT associate any independent institution or expert when the NGT had given it the flexibility to do so," he said.

"It is truly amazing that the HPC has among its members (i) NITI Aayog that conceived the project; (ii) the project proponent Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO); (iii) a repre-



sentative of the MoEF&CC's Expert Appraisal Committee that recommended the clearances in the first place; and (iv) MoEF&CC that granted the clearances. Need I say anything more on the credibility and integrity of the HPC?" he said.

The HPC, howsoever, biased by its very composition, has not carried out any meaningful and comprehensive reassessment as it had been directed to do, he said.

Ramesh and Yadav have had a series of exchanges via letters on the project.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had clearly diluted the NGT's directive and gave very limited terms of reference to the HPC. As I recall, the NGT gave only 'by way of instance' just three 'unanswered deficiencies'. The terms of reference have been restricted to just these three examples cited by the NGT in its order that led to the constitution of the HPC.

Jairam Ramesh, Leader, Congress

## Study reveals pollution extent

**Panaji:** The CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography's study on microplastics over the last decade has been instrumental in uncovering the extent of pollution on Goa's coast.

The CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Dona Paula began its research on microplastics in 2013-14 with the partial support of the state and Central governments.

A team of researchers led by principal scientist Dr Mahua Saha has been collecting samples from beaches littered with plastic bottles and other waste to study the presence and impact of microplastics.

CSIR director Dr Sunil Singh said the problem is that microplastics in water have started making their way into food and entering human bodies.

# India's vulnerable communities expect climate justice, action

By Nivedita Khandekar

**New Delhi:** At a time when world leaders and other stakeholders are gathered at the New York Climate Week, India's vulnerable farming communities are expecting increased climate finance amid recognition of the disproportionate impact of the changing climate on their lives even when they are not responsible for it.

Even when the country received 917.8 mm rainfall against the normal of 857.5 mm as of Friday, the plains of northwest India, large parts of the Indo-Gangetic plains, and almost half of northeast India have re-



ceived deficit rainfall, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

Not just the lack of rainfall, it is the excessive heat,

majorly across the northeast that had heatwave conditions till earlier this week, that is putting the kharif crop in danger for many farmers.

On one hand, New York is hosting Climate Week NYC from September 22 to 29, an annual event that promotes climate action, on the other, the UN General Assembly took up the issue on several fronts, including raising trillions of dollars

to aid poorer countries suffering the most from climate change.

Asserting that India has the potential to modernise its economy and increase prosperity while securing both people's health and the climate, Hisham Mundol, Chief Adviser with the Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) in India, a non-profit, that works with local organisations for bringing out sustainable livelihood

in the agriculture, live stocks and fisheries sector, made clear what the vulnerable communities are expecting.

According to the 2021 study by National Institute of Disaster Management, between 1995 and 2020, India experienced 1,058 climate-related events, including floods, cyclones, droughts, cold waves, and heatwaves.

On September 22, world leaders at the United Nations adopted a 'Pact for the Future' that includes a Declaration on Future Generations.

According to the UN, this Pact aims to ensure that international institutions can deliver in the face of a world that has changed dramatically since those institutions were created.

Among the stakeholders from India attending the Climate Week events is Nidhi Pant, co-founder of Science For Society - S4S Technologies and a Women

Climate Collective (WCC) alumni, who works at the intersection of agriculture, gender, energy access and financial inclusion.

Pant's S4S Technologies works with farmers across Maharashtra, especially those from Marathwada where almost 30-40 per cent households are headed by women who are the primary breadwinners after the death of their husbands, including by suicide.

Explaining the benefits of attending big-ticket events such as the New York Climate Week, Pant said, she and her team are looking forward to action points for climate adaptation for making "farmers climate resilient and help them increase their income for preventing them from going back to poverty".

That will include some agricultural practices that have worked across the world and can be adapted in India, Pant told PTI before

departing to the US, adding, one of best practices that Indian farmers, especially the vulnerable women farmers, can benefit from is a weather advisory.

Weather advisory is part of the Early Warning for All (EW4All) that the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has envisaged for every earth citizen by 2027.

A WMO release earlier this week said that the opening days of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) highlighted the need for global action to address climate change and the growing impact of extreme weather events.

Pant's organisation helps women farmers with processing of cosmetically damaged produce, for example, the onions which have two of the three layers peeled off or the tomatoes with spots.

India's vulnerable communities hope that there is adequate recognition of the fact that they are disproportionately impacted by climate change but are not responsible for it. Therefore, countries and industries that have been responsible for rising temperatures and other climatic and environmental disruptions should provide judicious funding to enable resilience, adaptation and building.

Hisham Mundol, Chief Advisor, Environmental Defence Fund (EDF)

-PTI

Almost 10-20 per cent of produce is cosmetically damaged. The reasons can be many, from excess heat to some infection to anything.

Nidhi Pant, Co-founder, Science For Society



# Nasrallah's killing shakes Hezbollah, Houthi, Iran

Beirut: Israel's assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah is a monumental and hugely demoralising blow to the group he led for 32 years, marking a significant inflection point for Lebanon and the region.

Hezbollah's announcement of his death Friday triggered tears and celebrations across the Arab world, pointing to the widespread reach and influence of a divisive man who has been at the forefront of Middle Eastern politics for decades. The 64-year-old Nasrallah headed arguably the most powerful paramilitary force in the world — also a U.S.-designated terror organization — that is now left without a clear successor at a critical juncture. It remains to be seen whether his death will be a trigger for an all-out war between the two sides that could potentially drag in Iran and the United States.

## Is it a decapitating blow?

Nasrallah's assassination is a severe blow to the group, not a decapitating one. But analysts say Hezbollah will need some time to absorb the shock and recover.

But Hezbollah today is very different from the rag-tag organization it was in the '90s. In recent years, he has presided over an army-like group estimated to have tens of thousands of fighters and a sophisticated arsenal capable of reaching anywhere inside Israel.

It has become the chief part of a cluster of Iranian-backed factions and governments of the self-named "Axis of Resistance."

"Hezbollah will not back down following the killing of its leader, as it will need



A woman reads the Quran at the site of the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday. Pic: AP/PTI

to convey steadfastness in the face of Israel if it's going to retain its credibility as the strongest resistance actor in the region," said Khatib.

## Iran's dilemma

In his first remarks Saturday following Nasrallah's death, Iran's supreme leader gave no indication of how Tehran will respond.

In a vague statement, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, "all regional resistance forces" support and stand beside Hezbollah, but he did not elaborate.

Iran is the main backer of Hezbollah and other anti-Israeli militant groups in the region, but it has largely avoided clashing directly with Israel due to domestic considerations.

Hezbollah, however, is Iran's chief ally and proxy group, and Tehran may have to respond to retain its credibility with its partners in the axis.

"Iran is very much in a policy dilemma right now," said Firas Maksad, of the Middle East Institute. On one hand, clearly it very much has wanted to avoid an all-out and direct confrontation, given its long-standing preference for asymmetric warfare and using proxies.

"But on the other hand, a lack of a worthy response given the magnitude of the event will only encourage Israel to push deeper past Iran's red lines," he said. Not responding also sends a signal of weakness to its regional proxies.

Any direct Iranian in-

volvement risks dragging Israel's chief ally, the U.S., into the war, just over a month before the U.S. elections and at a time Iran has signaled its interest in renewing negotiations with the U.S. over its nuclear program.

Maksad said one possible scenario is a coordinated response from the entire axis. Whether that will be coupled with a direct response from Iran itself is an open question.

## Who will succeed Nasrallah?

There is no one nearly as influential and respected among the group's remaining leadership as Nasrallah.

The man widely regarded as his heir is Hashem Safieddine, a cousin of Nas-

**Nasrallah was regarded by supporters as a charismatic and shrewd leader. Despite being a divisive figure, he is credited with pushing Israeli forces from south Lebanon in 2000 following an 18-year occupation, as well as transforming the organisation from a local militia to a major political player in Lebanon and a top armed force in the region. He held tremendous sway over the group and the country's Shiite community.**

rallah who oversees the group's political affairs. It is not known if he survived Friday's attack, and the Hezbollah statement announcing Nasrallah's death Friday made no mention of a successor.

The group's Shura Council will have to meet in the coming days or weeks to choose its new leadership. Lebanese journalist and writer Maher Abi Nader said Safieddine or Nabil Kaouk, a member of the group's executive council,

were the likely successors.

Whoever ends up replacing Nasrallah in the current atmosphere will have to contend with a deeply weakened force facing growing anger and frustration on the home front.

In just over 10 days, the Iran-backed group has been hit by a series of devastating attacks that dealt a severe blow to its military structure and exposed deep intelligence failures.

Explosives hidden in the group's pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands — many of them Hezbollah members. Israel has also rained down missiles on residential areas where the group has a strong presence, killing hundreds and displacing tens of thousands of people.

Orna Mizrahi, a senior researcher at the Tel Aviv-based think tank Institute for National Security Studies, noted that Nasrallah was sometimes a "voice of reason" who was interested in engaging Israel in a war of attrition, holding the militant group back from using the full force of their formidable arsenal against Israel. Filling those shoes will be a tough act, analysts say.

## China calls to deescalate tensions

China on Sunday called on "parties concerned, especially Israel", to immediately take actions to cool down tensions to prevent the conflict in West Asia from going out of control in the aftermath of the killing of Iran-backed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Israeli bombing.

"China is closely following the incident and is deeply concerned over the escalation of tensions in the region," a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said.

Separately, China also issued an advisory asking its citizens not to travel to Lebanon due to the intensification of the conflict. "China opposes the infringement on Lebanon's sovereignty and security, opposes and condemns any action against innocent civilians, and opposes any move that fuels antagonism and escalates regional tensions," the Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said.

**Nasrallah's killing is a significant setback for Hezbollah, not only because of the pivotal role he played in Hezbollah's strategy but also because his elimination reveals the extent of the group's vulnerability vis-à-vis Israel. This will shake the confidence of Hezbollah's Iran-backed allies across the Arab world, from the Houthis in Yemen to the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, as well as Iran itself, sparking a tectonic shift in Iran's network of influence in the Middle East.**

Lina Khatib, Associate Fellow, Chatham House, an international affairs think tank

## Growing tensions in Lebanon

Any new Hezbollah leader will also have to contend with rising resentment and frustration among a significant section of the Lebanese population. For years, critics say, Hezbollah deprived Lebanon of its sovereignty by behaving as a state within a state and making unilateral decisions involving war and peace.

Many Christians and Sunnis, as well as a portion of the Shiite community, are opposed to the war and what they regard as Nasrallah's unilateral decision to attack Israel in support of

the Gaza front on October 8, a day after the Hamas attack on Israel that ignited the war in the Palestinian territory.

Tensions are extremely high in tiny Lebanon, which is already drowning under the force of an economic meltdown and multiple other crises. A humanitarian crisis has rapidly unfolded with tens of thousands of people displaced, many of them sleeping in parks and makeshift shelters. Dozens of schools designated as sheltered became full within days.

The country is bankrupt and has been without a president and functioning government for two years. In the void, sectarian tensions and frustrations within the country could spiral into armed violence.

Maha Yahya, director of the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Center, said Hezbollah now has to contend with all of that as it struggles to regroup.

"And it will have to be more accommodating to Lebanon's other political parties and communities," she said.

# Hindus' quest for political representation in B'desh

By Pradipta Tapadar

Dhaka: Hindu community leaders in Bangladesh are advocating for the formation of a dedicated political party, reflecting an urgent call for political representation to protect their rights and ensure their safety in an environment marked by instability and fear.

Hindu leaders from the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCOP) and other groups have been at the forefront of discussions about establishing a separate political party or demanding reserved parliamentary seats.

"There are currently three opinions that are being discussed in detail: first, going back to the separate electorate system from 1954; second, establishing a separate political party for Hindus; and third, reserving seats in Parliament for



minorities," BHBCOP member Kajal Debnath told PTI.

In the wake of unprecedented violence and political upheaval in Bangladesh, the Hindu community — the largest minority community in Bangladesh — stands at a pivotal crossroads.

The turmoil began after the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 following a student movement, a moment that triggered widespread protests and chaos.

Debnath said the data collected by the BHBCOP points to 2,010 incidents of attacks on the Hindu community, ranging from murder and physical assaults to sexual assaults, attacks on

temples, and destruction of property.

There are no official figures from the Bangladesh government on the number of attacks.

"The discussions and exchanges of opinions regarding forming a political party are at the top of our priority. Although nothing has been finalised, let's see how it pans out," said Ranjan Karmakar, a leader from the Hindu community.

"The proposed political party could serve as a critical vehicle for change, ensuring their concerns are represented and addressed," he pointed out.

The community members attributed this decrease in the Hindu popula-

**The Hindu population is scattered across Bangladesh. In some areas, it comprises 35 per cent of the voters, while in most places it is 6-8 per cent of the voters. Those Hindu leaders from the Awami League who won in the last election garnered both Hindu votes and votes from Awami League supporters of other communities.**

Kajal Debnath, Member, BHBCOP

tion to socio-political marginalisation and sporadic violence, intensifying the urgency for political mobilisation.

Debnath opined that forming a party for Hindus may not work in favour of minorities, as it might divide the secular votes and not result in victory.

## Judge makes new requests to allow X

Paulo: Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes has added conditions for Elon Musk's X to have its service reestablished in the country, one day after the social media platform said it had complied with all the judge's demands, including naming a legal representative.

De Moraes said in a ruling on Friday that X may only be reinstated in Brazil after another company linked to the billionaire, satellite-based internet service provider Starlink, withdraws its appeals related to the case. X has been blocked in Brazil for nearly a month. De Moraes ordered the shutdown after sparring with Musk for months over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation.

Earlier this month, de Moraes ordered Starlink's assets be used to cover X's fines that already exceeded USD3 million.

**X was blocked in the highly online country of 213 million people, where it was one of X's biggest markets, with more than 20 million users. Brazil has more restrictive rules on speech than the US.**

# Militants kill seven labourers in Balochistan



By Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad: At least seven ethnic Punjabi labourers were killed on Sunday by suspected militants in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province in the latest incident of targeted killing in the volatile region.

The workers were employed for the construction of a house in the Khuda-i-Abadan area of Panjgur town, police said.

The victims belonged to Punjab province's Multan district and they were sleeping under the same roof after daylong labour at the time of the attack.

The attackers armed with automatic weapons

entered the premises and opened indiscriminate fire.

"Seven labourers were killed on the spot and another was injured in the firing," Inspector General Police Moazzam Jah Ansari told Dawn.

The victims were identified as Sajid, Shafiq, Fayyaz, Iftikhar, Salman, Khalid and Allah Wasia.

Nobody claimed responsibility but Panjgur SSP Fazil Shah Bokhari said that "it is a terrorist attack" and added that investigation was launched.

President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned that attack, while the PM also sought a report from

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. He also reiterated his resolve to take all possible measures to root out terrorism.

The attack is one of a series of such incidents in which Baloch militants target Punjabi workers in the province. The militants allege that the Punjabi-dominated establishment was depriving the province of its mineral wealth, a charge denied by the authorities.

In the last such incident, its rebels killed at least 23 people in Musakhel district of the province in August. The armed men offloaded passengers from trucks and buses and shot them after checking their identities.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"I'm not going to talk here about the senselessness and the danger of the very idea of trying to fight to victory with a nuclear power, which is what Russia is."**



Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister, Russia

# Footage of motorcade racing wounded JFK to hospital auctioned

By Jamie Stengle

Dallas: Newly emerged film footage of President John F. Kennedy's motorcade speeding down a Dallas freeway toward a hospital after he was fatally wounded has been sold at auction for USD137,500.

The 8 mm colour home film was offered up by RR Auction in Boston. The auction house said the buyer wishes to remain anonymous.

The film has been with the family of the man who took it, Dale Carpenter Sr,



since he recorded it on November 22, 1963. It begins as Carpenter just misses the limousine carrying the president and first lady Jacqueline Kennedy but capturing other vehicles in the

motorcade as it travelled down Lemmon Avenue toward downtown. The film then picks up after Kennedy has been shot, with Carpenter rolling as the motorcade roars down Interstate 35.

The shots had fired as the motorcade passed through Dealey Plaza in front of the Texas School Book Depository, where it was later found that assassin Lee Harvey Oswald had positioned himself from a sniper's perch on the sixth floor. The assassination itself was famously captured on film by Abraham Zapruder.

Carpenter's footage from I-35, which lasts about 10 seconds, shows Secret Service Agent Clint Hill — who famously jumped onto the back of the limousine as the

shots rang out — hovering in a standing position over the president and Jacqueline Kennedy, whose pink suit can be seen. The president was pronounced dead after arriving at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

Bobby Livingston, executive vice president of the auction house, said in a news release that the film "provides a gripping sense of urgency and heartbreak".

Carpenter's grandson, James Gates, said that while it was known in his family that his grandfather

had film from that day, it wasn't talked about often. So Gates said that when the film, stored along with other family films in a milk crate, was eventually passed on to him, he wasn't sure exactly what his grandfather, who died in 1991 at age 77, had captured.

Projecting it onto his bedroom wall around 2010, Gates was at first underwhelmed by the footage from Lemmon Avenue. But then, the footage from I-35 played out before his eyes. "That was shocking." -AP



## EDITORIAL

## Eroding Edge

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), once a seemingly unassailable political force in Mumbai, is facing troubling signs of waning influence in the city. Recently, the BJP found itself bested by its former allies, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) faction, not only in high-profile legislative contests but now also in the domain of university politics. The recent clean sweep by the Aaditya Thackeray-led Yuva Sena in the University of Mumbai Senate elections - winning all ten seats - suggests that the BJP's grip on Mumbai's electoral landscape is loosening. It also raises questions about the party's readiness for the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly election.

When it was in alliance with the undivided Shiv Sena, the BJP had expanded its urban appeal across Mumbai while leveraging the Sena's grassroots muscle. But since the dramatic split within the Shiv Sena in 2022 and the emergence of two rival factions — one led by Uddhav Thackeray and the other by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde (who aligned with the BJP) — the political calculus has altered. The BJP, which had previously counted on the Shiv Sena's backing in Mumbai, now faces a formidable opponent in Uddhav's faction.

The Yuva Sena's success in the Senate polls, much more than just a victory in the field of student politics, is an ominous sign for the BJP's urban strategy. The win comes on the heels of the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s triumph in the Maharashtra Legislative Council elections earlier this year, where the party secured both the Mumbai Graduates and Mumbai Teachers constituencies, reflecting the diminishing appeal of the BJP even among its traditionally strong urban voter base. The BJP's rout in 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Mumbai, where it managed to win only one of the three seats it contested in the city, has only underscored its vulnerability. This was in stark contrast to the 2019 general election in Mumbai city, when the BJP had won all three seats it fought on.

It seemed at the time that the party's blend of Hindu nationalism and development promises resonated with the city's middle class. However, by 2024, this support seems to have frayed. Internal divisions, the Sena split, and discontent with the BJP's governance in Maharashtra appear to have undermined its urban appeal.

The Mumbai Senate election result is testimony to the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s capacity for resilience with the party's youth wing emerging proving that it is able to rally support from a demographic crucial to the 2024 Assembly elections.

The question facing the BJP led by Devendra Fadnis is whether it can arrest this decline before the state elections. Compounding problems for the BJP, its ally, CM Shinde's Shiv Sena, has struggled to compete with the Thackeray brand's enduring appeal in Mumbai.

If the BJP fails to reverse its trend of losing in Mumbai, the upcoming Assembly elections could see a further erosion of its influence in the city.



By

Sumant Vidwans

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the left-leaning candidate from the National People's Power (NPP), decisively won against his primary opposition. The new president, a former trade union leader with an anti-elite stance, campaigned on promises of economic equality, greater state control over resources, and curbing foreign debt dependency. His socialist ideology emphasised nationalising key industries, fostering social welfare programmes, and limiting foreign influence—particularly that of Western nations.

The main contenders in this election included Ranil Wickremesinghe, the incumbent president from the United National Party (UNP), and Sajith Premadasa, the leader of the centre-right Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB). Despite fierce competition, Dissanayake's promise of economic reform and critique of the 2022 economic crisis resonated with the electorate, who are still reeling from the economic shocks. Voter concerns centred on the unresolved debt crisis, unemployment, inflation, and the high cost of living, which dominated the election discourse.

Sri Lanka's presidential elections have historically been a battleground for competing ideologies and foreign interests. Since gaining independence in 1948, the country has oscillated between socialist-leaning policies and pro-market, right-wing governance. Presidents like Chandrika Kumaratunga and Mahinda Rajapaksa advocated for greater state control, while more recent leaders, including Ranil Wickremesinghe, sought

to liberalise the economy. Behind these political shifts is a geopolitical landscape where India and China vie for influence.

## Influence of India and China

India has always been a key player in Sri Lanka, due to its geographical proximity and shared cultural heritage. However, China's involvement has grown in recent years, driven by its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Sri Lanka's strategically located ports, especially Hambantota, have made this island nation a focal point of China's maritime ambitions. This dynamic has created a delicate balancing act for previous Sri Lankan presidents, requiring them to navigate the competing interests of these two Asian giants.

Economic Crisis and Survival  
The so-called Chinese "debt trap" became a major issue during Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency. The country borrowed heavily from China to finance infrastructure projects, including the infamous Hambantota Port. These loans, with high interest rates, quickly became unsustainable.

By 2022, Sri Lanka faced an economic meltdown triggered by a foreign exchange crisis and exacerbated by the global pandemic. The country defaulted on its foreign debt for the first time in its history, leading to severe shortages of essential goods, widespread protests, and the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Sri Lanka managed to recover through a combination of International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance, temporary relief from creditors, and austerity measures. Yet, the scars of that crisis remain, and the recent election has highlighted lingering discontent among the population, especially over the perception that foreign influence was a key contributor to the economic collapse.

## Impact on Indo-Lankan Relations

The election of Anura Kumara Dissanayake could significantly alter Indo-Lankan relations. India, which had strength-



ened ties with the previous government through economic support and strategic collaborations, may now face renewed competition from China. With Dissanayake's commitment to reducing reliance on Western and multilateral institutions like the IMF, there are growing concerns that he may lean heavily on China for future financial and infrastructure support. This shift could reintroduce the risks of economic entanglement and sovereignty loss that Sri Lanka faced under the previous Rajapaksa administration.

From India's perspective, the recent election has created new diplomatic challenges, coinciding with increasing hostility from most other neighbouring countries like Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Maldives. Once seen as a potential ally, Sri Lanka may now tilt towards Chinese influence, leaving India diplomatically isolated in the region, with Bhutan remaining its only ally. Given the current situation, it is crucial for the Government of India to focus more on its neighbours. An India surrounded by hostile neighbours will always be at risk, and these risks will escalate as India becomes stronger economically and militarily.

## Cautious Optimism for the Future

While it's too early to make definitive judgements on the trajectory of Sri Lanka's foreign and domestic policies under the new president, signs indicate Sri Lanka may be heading towards another phase of Chinese influence. However, given the disastrous consequences of previous involvement in China's debt trap, the new government should tread carefully.

India, for its part, must remain watchful and proactive and continue to focus on diplomatic engagement, economic assistance, and strengthening cultural ties with Sri Lanka to counterbalance China's financial allure. At the same time, India must recognise the changing political winds and prepare for a future where its neighbours may not always be aligned with its strategic goals. The outcome of this election serves as a reminder that regional stability is fragile, and India's role in South Asia has never been more crucial.

As Sri Lanka embarks on this new political chapter, the world is watching it closely and cautiously.

(The writer is an IT professional. Views personal.)

## GLOBAL WATCH

## Post-Nasrallah, fragile peace or renewed turmoil?

The assassination of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's long-standing Secretary-General, by an Israeli airstrike marks a pivotal moment in the Middle East, already in turmoil from Israel's grinding war with the Palestinian militant faction Hamas.

In a statement, President Biden remarked: "Nasrallah and the terrorist group Hezbollah were responsible for killing hundreds of Americans. His death by an Israeli airstrike is a measure of justice for his many victims—thousands of Americans, Israelis, and Lebanese civilians."

For over three decades, Nasrallah was not only the face of Lebanon's most formidable militia but also a symbol of Iran's influence in the Levant. He rose to prominence in the early 1990s, shaping Hezbollah from an obscure guerrilla group into one of the world's most powerful non-state military forces. His leadership was pivotal in Hezbollah's defiance against Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon, culminating in Israel's withdrawal in 2000. Nasrallah's role in the 2006 Lebanon War cemented his reputation as a strategic leader capable of challenging Israeli military dominance.

However, Nasrallah's importance extended far beyond Lebanon. As an indispensable ally of Iran's Islamic



Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), he acted as a conduit for Tehran's influence across the region. Under his command, Hezbollah grew into a regional actor, dispatching fighters to Syria in support of Bashar al-Assad's regime during the Syrian Civil War and extending its reach into Iraq and Yemen.

Nasrallah's assassination also strikes at the heart of Iranian foreign policy. Hezbollah was Iran's most reliable proxy in the Levant, essential to its broader regional ambitions, particularly in confronting Israel. His charisma and military acumen were key to Iran's strategy, and his loss creates a significant void for Tehran.

The leadership vacuum he leaves behind poses a challenge for Hezbollah and Iran alike. While Tehran may seek tighter control over Hezbollah, it risks undermining the group's local legitimacy, which is crucial to its survival. Moreover, Iran's broader regional influence could come under pressure, as Nasrallah was a key figure in the 'Axis of Resistance'—the Tehran-Damascus-Hezbollah alliance that has shaped much of the region's recent history. Without his steady leadership, fissures may emerge within this alliance, especially as Iran grapples with economic sanctions and domestic unrest.

The most immediate consequences of Nasrallah's death will likely be felt in Syria. The Assad regime, heavily

reliant on Hezbollah during the Syrian Civil War, now faces uncertainty. Nasrallah's leadership fortified Assad's hold on strategic battlegrounds, particularly in the Alawite heartland and key positions such as Qalamoun and Aleppo. His assassination could embolden opposition groups and foreign powers, such as Turkey, to challenge Assad's territorial control.

Yet Hezbollah has proven resilient, with a deeply entrenched hierarchy. The group has vowed revenge, and the specter of another conflict with Israel, reminiscent of the destructive 2006 war, looms large.

While some in the West may see Nasrallah's demise as a step toward peace, this is likely an illusion. Nasrallah's death is not the death of Hezbollah. In fact, it may unleash something far worse. Hezbollah, the militant organization he transformed into a political juggernaut, is not just a group. It is a machine, part charity, part army, part government. And now that its head has been severed, the question is not whether the machine will continue to function, but rather how?

Like the mythic Hydra, cutting off one head of Hezbollah's leadership could see many more grow in its place. The organization's decentralized structure ensures that lieutenants and commanders can seamlessly take over, maintaining Hezbollah's formidable presence.

## STATES WATCH

## The Rise and rise of Udhayanidhi Stalin

Udhayanidhi Stalin's elevation as Deputy Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu's fractious political landscape signals a critical juncture, full of portents for the future. The 46-year-old son of the state's Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, and grandson of the towering Dravidian figure M. Karunanidhi, Udhayanidhi's rise is no mere accident.

Yet, Udhayanidhi's promotion is not merely a familial gesture but a strategic manoeuvre amidst a Cabinet reshuffle that dropped three ministers and inducted four new ones, including V. Senthil Balaji, who recently secured bail after spending 15 months in jail for a money laundering case.

His elevation had been anticipated since January but faced delays due to political fallout from his anti-Sanatan Dharma remarks, as well as tragic events like the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy, which claimed 66 lives. Nevertheless, Udhayanidhi's elevation seems to have gone unchallenged, with a notable absence of dissent during his induction into the Cabinet just 19 months after making his legislative debut.

Udhayanidhi's ascent is a continuation of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's (DMK) long-standing tradition of family-driven politics. Karunanidhi, a five-time chief minister, left behind a political empire, now controlled by his son Stalin. The younger Stalin, however, is steadily

The elevation of M.K. Stalin's son highlights a strategic continuation of the DMK's family-driven legacy amid controversies and rising expectations.



Tamil Nadu

grooming Udhayanidhi to be the heir apparent. For DMK loyalists, this is not unusual; the DMK's history is inseparable from the Karunanidhi lineage. Udhayanidhi's elevation as Deputy CM, though gradual, underscores a well-planned political succession.

He began his career in cinema, where he carved a niche for himself as an actor and producer. When Udhayanidhi entered politics in 2019 as the DMK's youth wing leader, the stage was set for his rapid rise. His success in the 2021 assembly election, winning the Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni constituency with a sizeable margin, was widely seen as the final nod towards his inevitable ascension to power. His post as Tamil Nadu's Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development allowed him to gradually build his political credibility.

Udhayanidhi has often courted controversy with his sharp remarks.

In September 2023, he sparked outrage when he called for the "eradication" of Sanatan Dharma, equating it with social ills like casteism. The remarks snowballed into a nationwide indignation with critics accusing him of stoking religious tensions. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) quickly seized on the opportunity, accusing him of hurting Hindu sentiments.

Despite the backlash, Udhayanidhi remained unrepentant, framing his comments as part of the DMK's long-standing ideological battle against caste discrimination. His defiance resonated with the party's base, which sees the DMK as a bulwark against the rise of 'Hindutva' politics in the South.

Controversies apart, he has essayed an instrumental role in revitalizing the DMK's youth wing, which has become a key pillar in the party's electoral success. The DMK's triumph in the 2021 state elections, dethroning the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) after a decade in power, was partly attributed to the rejuvenated grassroots campaign led by Udhayanidhi.

His tenure as a minister was marked by noteworthy accomplishments like spearheading initiatives to boost Tamil Nadu's sports infrastructure, leading the state to host the Chess Olympiad in 2022. Additionally, Udhayanidhi has been a prominent face in the DMK's welfare schemes, promoting key initiatives like the 'Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam' (Healthcare at People's Doorstep), which has been popular for bringing medical services to underserved communities.

As Deputy Chief Minister, Udhayanidhi is likely to consolidate his influence further in the social welfare and youth development portfolios, where he has already made his mark. His role also assumes greater significance in light of the upcoming 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election.





### KALEIDOSCOPE

1. People take part in a half marathon organised by Himachal Pradesh Police at Ridge in Shimla on Sunday.
2. Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor poses ahead of the 24th International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) awards in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on Saturday.
3. An artist prepares an 'environment friendly' puja pandal using plants ahead of Durga Puja festival, at Lalabagan Nabankur in Kolkata on Sunday.
4. Shiite Muslims protest against the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Karachi on Saturday.
5. People take part in a protest over the alleged violence against minorities in Bangladesh, in Agartala on Sunday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

### DEEP DIVE

## Parents, Time to Reassess Screen Time Habits



By  
Ruddhi Aditya Phadke



Aggression, social awkwardness, arrogance, bullying, sibling rivalry, being glued to screens, lack of patience, intolerance, and disobedience are some of the common traits that we observe in children under six. Some attribute it to parenting styles, others to changing attitudes in children, but the most common culprit is seen as screen time. While this argument seems never-ending, let us go back to the 1980's. It was then, as a child, that I spent time in daycare, where I learnt new things. I was exhausted when I got home after playing active games with my friends. "By 7 p.m., parents took over—homework came first, followed by dinner conversations and then bedtime stories. Grandparents' vacation visits were the cherry on top, filled with storytelling and games. Having said that, there was some part of the day when I used to find ways to kill my boredom. That part is essential for the development of a child, which is exactly missing today. With the availability of screens, things have gotten even tougher. There are several

**Mumbai-based Manasi Joshi, a practicing clinical psychologist at Nair Hospital, pointed out that blaming screens for inappropriate behaviour is a 'conveniently simplistic conclusion' that allows us to escape accountability.**

other factors apart from screen watching that are contributing to the increased aggression among children. Manasi Joshi, a clinical psychologist at Nair Hospital in Mumbai, pointed out that it is hypocritical to expect children to set goals for them that are unachievable for us as adults. "A bad habit is a bad habit. It has nothing to do with age. If you expect your children to eat without watching screens, you must do it yourself first. I suggest all parents go back and find out at what point of temptation you handed over the screen to your child for the first time. Was it when the child was not eating, or was it when the child was being cranky? In a way, you ended up rewarding that child for the inappropriate behaviour."

Given the challenge of working parents today, where they are expected to be available for work around the clock, Manasi says parents must make children understand that they are using their phones only for office work and not to kill boredom.

Banning screens does not mean you have to arrange expensive or complicated activities. Just two glasses of water, bits of paper, and crayons are more than enough to keep this age group busy. However, parents need to shed some laziness, set aside their phones, and guide their children to find simple ways to stay occupied.

An all-too-common sight in restaurants today is adults peacefully eating while children are glued to their mobile phones. Manasi pointed out, "A big mistake that parents make today is to indulge in conversations that have no relevance for the child. Parents need to

find a way to indulge more in conversations that involve their children in a positive way. Leaving family disputes and other topics to time slots when children are not around is the best way to tackle this."

Apart from screens, aggression is attributed to social status and problems of plenty. Parents have stopped teaching their children to wait for a certain wish to be fulfilled. Additionally, the behaviour of everyone they encounter daily—family members, teachers, friends, and even strangers—directly influences their psychology. Parents give commands to discipline their children or tell them what they shouldn't do. Let me share with you an example. How do you get your child to tidy up a room full of scattered toys? "Rather than saying, 'I need all of this in place in five minutes,' it's better to say, 'Let's do it together.'"

That said, it is still very important to minimise screen time in children's lives. Manasi pointed out, "Increased viewing of screens has led to the rising number of cases of children developing social disconnect, aloofness, not being able to mingle among peers, acute depression, etc. In some rare and most severe cases among older children, extensive screen watching has led to sexual exploitation."

Creativity is hindered, children lose connections, attention spans are dwindling, and social skills suffer due to excessive screen time. However, along with limiting screen viewing, it would be a good idea if parents adopt changes to their own lifestyles to allow children to develop as better individuals.

### LEADER'S VOICE

## Happy that Many People Taking New Initiatives to Conserve Water



By  
Narendra Modi



My dear countrymen, for the last few weeks it has been raining heavily in different parts of the country. This rainy season reminds us how important 'water conservation' is... how important it is to save water.

Water saved during rainy days helps a lot during water scarcity months, and that's the spirit of campaigns like 'Catch The Rain'. I am happy that many people are taking new initiatives to conserve water. One such effort has been witnessed in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.

You know that 'Jhansi' is in Bundelkhand, whose identity is linked with water scarcity. Here, in Jhansi, some women have given a new lease of life to the Ghurari river. These women are associated with a Self Help Group and they have led this campaign by becoming 'Jal Saheli'. No one would have ever imagined the way these women have saved the dying Ghurari river. These Jal Saheli created a check dam by filling sand in sacks, stopped the rain water from getting wasted and filled the river to the brim with water. These women have enthusiastically contributed to the construction of hundreds of reservoirs and their revival. This has not only solved the water problem of the people of this area; Happiness too has returned to their faces.

Friends, at some places woman power enhances water power whereas at other places water power also strengthens woman power. I have come to know about two very inspiring efforts from Madhya Pradesh. Here in Raipura Village of Dindori, construction of a large pond has raised the groundwater level considerably. The women of

this village benefited from this. Here the women associated with 'Sharada Aajeevika Self Help Group' have also entered into a new occupation of fish farming. These women have also started a Fish Parlour where their income is also enhancing through the sale of the fish. The efforts of women in Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh are also commendable. When the big pond of Khomp village started drying up, the women took the initiative to rejuvenate it. The women of 'Hari Bagiya Self Help Group' removed a large amount of silt from the pond... they used the silt removed from the pond on barren land to set up a fruit forest.

Due to the hard work of these women, not only has the pond been filled with water, but the crop yield has also increased substantially. Such efforts of water conservation being done in every nook & corner of the country will prove very helpful in dealing with the water crisis. I fully trust that you too will definitely join such efforts happening around you.

here is a border village 'Jhala' in Uttarkashi of Uttarakhand. The youth here have started a special initiative to keep their village clean. They are running a campaign, 'Dhanyvaad Prakriti' or 'Thank you nature' in their village. As part of this, the village is cleaned for two hours every day. The garbage scattered in the streets of the village is collected and dumped at a designated place outside the village. Due to this, Jhala village is also turning clean and people are becoming aware as well. Just imagine, if every village, every street, every locality in your area starts a similar 'Thank You'

campaign, how much change can come about!

A cleanliness drive is being promoted aggressively on the beach of Puducherry too. Here, a woman named Ramya ji is leading a team of youth from Mahe Municipality & its surrounding area. The people of this team, through their efforts, are cleaning the Mahe Area, especially the beaches in the vicinity.

I have discussed only two efforts here. But if we look around, we will find that in every part of the country, some unique effort or the other is definitely going on, associated with 'cleanliness'. Just a few days later, on the 2nd of October, the Swachh Bharat Mission is completing 10 years. This is an occasion to commend those who turned it into such a big mass movement in Indian history. It is also a befitting tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who dedicated his entire life to this cause.

Friends, today it is the success of the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' that the 'Waste to Wealth' mantra is becoming popular among people. People have started talking about Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, citing their examples as well. Like I just came to know about a great effort in Kozhikode, Kerala. Here, Seventy four (74) years old Subramanian ji has repaired more than 23 thousand chairs and thus made them re-usable again. People also call him 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle', that is, RRR, (Triple R) Champion. His unique efforts can also be seen at the offices of Kozhikode Civil Station, PWD & LIC.

*(This is an excerpt of the Prime Minister's address through Mann Ki Baat on September 29.)*



# India lose gold as marksman came late

By Ajai Masand

**New Delhi:** India lost a potential gold at the ISSF Junior Shooting World Championship in Lima, Peru after a pistol marksman was penalised two points for "reporting late" to the preparation arena ahead of the 10m finals.

The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) on Saturday penalised Umesh Choudhary, a 20-year-old marksman, for violation of Rule 6.17.1.3, which states that "a two (2) point/hit penalty will be deducted from the score of the first match shot/series if the athlete does not report on time", thus bringing into focus the role of coaches and support staff in the mammoth 60-member contingent.

Choudhary got 7.4 points on his first shot in the final after deduction of the two points.

The score-sheet of the final on the ISSF's website stated, "A2 Athlete 1412 CHOUDHARY Umesh



Umesh Choudhary

(IND) - ISSF Rule 6.17.1.3. Late reporting to the preparation area".

National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) secretary, Rajiv Bhatia, said he had "no idea" about the incident and would "not like to comment" on the issue.

Choudhary had finished third at the end of the qualification round with a score of 580 and had not been penalised two points, he could have potentially won a gold medal in the eight-shooter final.

Choudhary finished sixth in the medal round

due to the penalty.

The ISSF rule on reporting and start times states, "The Start Time for a Final is when the CRO (Chief Range Official) begins the commands for the first match shot/series. Athletes must report to the Finals Range Preparation Area at least 30 minutes before the Start Time.

"Athletes must report with their equipment including sufficient ammunition to complete the Final, competition clothing and a national team uniform that is appropriate to wear in the Victory Ceremony.

"The Jury must confirm that all finalists are present and that their names and nations are correctly recorded in the results system and on the scoreboards. Juries must complete equipment checks during the reporting period as soon as possible after the athlete reports," it states.

"During Finals security measures should be put in place to ensure the security of all equipment and athletes belongings left

within the Preparation area."

It is not known what caused the delay in the reporting time for the shooter.

Bhatia, when reminded that the details of the penalty were on the ISSF website as well, said, "Then, he might not have reached the arena on time. I have no idea why and for what reason he did not reach the arena on time. I will have to check with the officials there (in Peru)."

Asked if the coaches should be more vigilant, he said, "I will not say anything on this because nothing has been reported to us. I don't want to discuss this."

On whether it had left the NRAI embarrassed he said, "It's not possible that it has happened for the first time. Do you think that only the coaches are responsible, and the shooters have no responsibility? They should know the rules, they are participating in the World Championships."

The last time an Indian shooter was penalised two points was during the ISSF World Cup in Osijek, Croatia in 2021 when Olympian Elavelin Valarivan protested a shot but the jury concluded that it was correct.

Recently, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) elected former Member of Parliament Kalikesh Singh Deo as its new president and this is the country's first major international shooting assignment after he took charge. -PTI

## Sharma lands two eagles, moves up to T-44

**Madrid:** India's Shubhankar Sharma compiled an interesting round of two-under 69 that included two eagles as he moved up from T-57 to T-44 with one more round to go in the acciona Open de España presented by Madrid.

Sharma had two eagles, two birdies and four bogeys in the third round and this week he had landed three eagles - he had one in the first round - but has also dropped two doubles and two bogeys each on the first two days and four on the third.

At even par for 54 holes, he is T-44.

Angel Hidalgo will take a two-shot lead into the final round after producing a 68 on day three at Club de Campo Villa de Madrid.

The home favourite has led the way since carding an opening 65 in the Spanish capital and produced a confident display of front-running to get to 13 under after 54 holes.

Hidalgo is still looking for a maiden win on the DP World Tour and will be paired in an all-Spanish final group tomorrow alongside two-time Major Champion Jon Rahm and compatriot David Puig.

Rahm, a three-time winner of his national open in 2018, 2019 and 2022, played much of the round without his damaged driver but birdied two of the last three holes to reach 11 under, with Puig a further shot back as both carded 65s. -PTI

## 'Non-stop chess does take toll on physical, mental aspects'



**New Delhi:** Playing chess all year round can take a huge toll on the physical and mental aspects of a player and Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa acknowledged that sometimes he has to completely take his mind off the sport to prepare for the upcoming challenges.

Praggnanandhaa, who returned from Budapest recently after guiding India to its first-ever chess Olympiad gold, said that one of the manifestations of playing non-stop chess is that at times he doesn't even want to look at the chessboard.

"Yeah, for sure. It takes some mental toll and a physical thing (as well). But we are used to it... we need to get used to it because there are tournaments all year round. I had a similar thing (situation) last year as well, so I'm sort of used to it, that's how I want to put it," said the 19-year-old from Chennai.

Praggnanandhaa is now gearing up to compete in the Global Chess League (GCL) in London, a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and the international chess federation (FIDE).

Praggnanandhaa will be turning out for the Magnus Carlsen-led Alpine SG Pipers, one of the six franchises in the GCL, scheduled to

commence on October 3.

"Sometimes I don't feel like looking at chess... then I don't look at chess (board). When I feel like looking at chess (board), I do. When I play these tournaments (across the world), sometimes I don't look at the chess (board) during breaks or between the events. That's how it works for me," said Praggnanandhaa.

Praggnanandhaa along with D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and P Harikrishna clinched the chess Olympiad gold in the 'Open' category.

The chess ace added that one of the reasons he couldn't give off his best in the Olympiad was the mental toll tournaments had taken on him.

Praggnanandhaa finished with six points in 10 games, winning three, drawing six, and losing one.

"Reasons could be that I've been playing a lot and it has taken a toll mentally. But, you know that sometimes it happens that you didn't play your best and you have to accept that fact and play your best in the next one... just knowing what went wrong, why it happened. So now I'm focusing on my next event (GCL). -PTI

## Fitness or termination: PCB

**Karachi:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has issued a stern warning to 6-7 centrally contracted players, urging them to improve their fitness or risk losing their contracts.

The Pakistan team fitness trainer and physiotherapist will conduct another round of fitness tests on Monday in Lahore after some players didn't meet the required benchmarks in the tests held earlier this month.

"The players who have central and domestic contracts have been told in clear terms that there will be no compromise on fitness and they have to meet the benchmarks set by the team's fitness experts," a board official said.

The official said that "the two foreign head coaches, Jason Gillispie and Gary Kirsten had told the PCB Chairman that no player should be given any benefit as far as fitness levels are concerned."

These fitness tests are aimed at assessing stamina, endurance, muscle strength, and other crucial factors.

The PCB has delayed the announcement of the list of players eligible for central contracts for the 2024/2025 period, which typically runs from July to July. Last year, the announcement was postponed until September due to changes in board leadership.

This year it is anticipated that the board will reduce the number of players receiving central contracts from the existing list of 27 as the new coaches are also laying a lot of stress on performance and behavioural evaluations. -PTI

## 2025 Club World Cup final to be at MetLife Stadium

**New York:** Next year's championship of the expanded Club World Cup will be played on July 13 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, site of the 2026 World Cup final.

Twelve stadiums will be used for the 32-team tournament, FIFA said Saturday night, including five of the 11 US venues for the 2026 World Cup.

Sites include six NFL stadiums; four Major League Soccer homes; the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, site of the 1994 World Cup final; and Camping World Stadium in Orlando, Florida, another 1994 World Cup site.

FIFA made the announcement at 6:20 p.m. EDT on a Saturday, when US sports attention was focused on college football and Major League Baseball pennant races. FIFA Presi-



dent Gianni Infantino revealed the sites at the Global Citizen Festival, an anti-poverty group's event in New York's Central Park.

FIFPRO, the international players' union, in December criticised FIFA for scheduling an event that "will undercut the rest and recovery time of these players at the end of the 2024-25 season." It said FIFA's decision "demonstrates a lack of consideration for the mental and physical health of participating players, as well as a disregard for their

personal and family lives."

FIFA has not announced any broadcast agreements for the matches. The site announcement was streamed on YouTube.

The 2026 World Cup sites to be used are Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta; MetLife Stadium; Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida; Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia; and Lumen Field in Seattle. The additional NFL home is Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina. -AP

## Laxman praises facilities in CoE

**Bengaluru:** VVS Laxman, the head of the newly inaugurated BCCI Centre of Excellence, on Sunday said the modern facilities here will help players upskill themselves and maintain top-notch fitness level which will in turn help India maintain their dominance in all three formats.

The erstwhile National Cricket Academy (NCA), which was operating at the Chinnaswamy Stadium premises since 2000, was rebranded as BCE and moved closer to the international airport, and the facility was inaugurated by BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Saturday in presence of other dignitaries in a closed-door ceremony.

"I think beneficiaries (of Centre of Excellence) will be not only the future generation of cricketers, but also the current generation of cricketers. They come to upskill themselves, get ready for the challenges."



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) takes a shot, pursued by Charlotte FC midfielder Andrew Privett (34) during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla on Saturday. Pic: AP/PTI

# IPL Meeting: Dhoni becomes "Uncapped Player"

By G Unnikrishnan/Kushan Sarkar

**Bengaluru:** The 10 IPL franchises will be allowed to retain a maximum of six players from their previous squads, including usage Right To Match (RTM) card at the auction that will cost Rs 75 crore out of an enhanced team purse of Rs 120 crore, the IPL governing council decided on Saturday.

In a significant move, the BCCI also decided that all those India players, who haven't played any international game for at least five calendar years will be deemed "uncapped players", a move being seen to ensure that Chennai Super Kings can retain the peerless Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who last played for the country in

the 2019 ODI World Cup semifinal.

It is learnt that for an uncapped player, the retention cost will be Rs 4 crore and hence CSK even if they retain Dhoni, can surely save a lot for the auction.

A team was allowed up to four retentions in the last mega auction held in 2022.

On the day, BCCI secretary Jay Shah also announced a fixed match fee of Rs 7.50 lakh for all players selected to play the league games with an additional 1.05 crore income over and above their salaries.

A fixed salary purse of Rs 12.60 crore in addition to the auction cum retention purse of Rs 120 crore will have to be kept by the franchises for next season.

"The total salary cap will

now consist of auction purse, incremental performance pay and match fees. Previously in 2024, the total salary cap (auction purse + incremental performance pay) was Rs. 110 Crs which will now be Rs. 146 Crs (2025), Rs. 151 Crs (2026) and Rs. 157 Crs (2027)," the BCCI release stated.

The IPL franchises can now retain 6 players from their existing squad, either via retention or by using the RTM option.

It is the discretion of the franchise to choose its combination for Retentions and RTMs. The 6 retention/RTMs can have a maximum of 5 capped players (Indian & Overseas) and a maximum of 2 uncapped players.

While the retention valuation wasn't given in the



BCCI media release, the PTI confirmed it from an IPL GC source.

"The first retention will cost Rs 18 crore followed by second retention of Rs 14 crore and third retention of Rs 11 crore. However, if a franchise opts for fourth and fifth retention, they will again have to pay Rs 18 crore and Rs 14 crore respectively.

"So, any franchise opts

for all five retention of capped players, then will have only Rs 45 crore to buy or even use their RTM card to buy another 15 players and prepare a squad. There is no cap on Indian and overseas retention," a senior BCCI and IPL governing council member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

It is understood that most of the stronger franchises like Mumbai Indi-

ans, Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad were in favour of six to eight retentions as opposed to likes of some other franchises which don't have too much star power.

"We introduced more deductions for retention four and five to ensure a level playing field. You can go ahead and retain five but then you will have less than Rs 50 crore to deal with at the auction table.

"Also if franchises opt for only three retentions, then more star value will be added to auction and some of the teams with lesser strength can set their house in order. The idea is to have a good competition," the source said.

This is the route possibly BCCI wants to take.

If Mumbai Indians want

to retain Hardik Pandya, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah and Tilak Varma, Rs 75 crore will be deducted from their purse.

And then with Rs 45 crore at auction, what happens if Ishan Kishan's price skyrockets to Rs 15 crore and they are forced to use a RTM card.

It then effectively boils down to Rs 30 crore to select 14 more players.

One needs to note that retention price is only a deduction from the team purse for the auction but it may or may not be the actual salary of the player which is a player-franchise separate contract.

Meanwhile, Shah took to twitter to announce the per match fee which effectively means that an uncapped

Indian player, who can play three games of IPL, stands to earn

Rs 22.5 lakh apart from a minimum base price of Rs 20 lakh.

Hence, he can earn 42.5 lakh in a season by playing just three games of three hours whereas if he plays 10 Ranji Trophy games in a season, he stands to earn Rs 24 lakh only.

"In a historic move to celebrate consistency and champion outstanding performances in the IPL, we are thrilled to introduce a match fee of INR 7.5 lakhs per game for our cricketers!"

"A cricketer playing all league matches in a season will get Rs. 1.05 crores in addition to his contracted amount," Shah tweeted. -PTI