

# THE PERFECT VOICE



**Maratha quota process Will quit politics if CM says I am hindering ... pg 2**



**'Kachre Se Azadi' with Mangrove Soldiers ... pg 6**



**Aim is to win gold with a new record ... pg 10**

## Expert panel reveals horrifying stories in Malayalam cinema

# Women actors asked to surrender to sexual demands in lieu of work

By Press Trust of India

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The much-awaited Justice Hema Committee report on harassment faced by women in Malayalam cinema industry has recorded explosive accounts of harassment, exploitation and ill-treatment of the female professionals, and has alleged that a "criminal gang" was controlling the industry where unyielding women are squeezed out.

The panel report also alleged there was a "power nexus" consisting of a handful of producers, directors, actors and production controllers.

The Kerala government constituted the panel after the 2017 actress assault case involving actor Dileep to study issues of sexual harassment and gender inequality in Malayalam cinema.

The report released on Monday sheds light on the widespread and persistent sexual harassment faced by women in the Malayalam cinema industry, with many alleging they were subjected to unwanted advances even



An artist puts her handprints on a wall during a protest against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor, at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata on Monday. Pic: PTI

before commencing work. The women actors who are ready to compromise are given code names, and those who are not ready to yield are pushed out of the field, as per the report.

The report highlighted the widespread nature of the issue, sparking concerns about the safety and well-being of women in the industry.

"It has come out in evidence that certain men in cinema, who are well-known and well-reputed for their ability as artist, director or whoever he be in the film industry have shocked certain women in cinema by sexual harassment and physical advances made by them towards them," the expert panel report said.

The copy of the report

was given to the media under the RTI Act after five years of its submission to the government.

In a series of shocking and shameful revelations, the report stated that female actors faced harassment, including instances where the doors of their rooms were knocked on by intoxicated individuals in the film industry.

Many of them, who suffered sexual harassment, were reluctant to complain about this to the police due to fear, it said.

"The sky is full of mysteries, with the twinkling stars and the beautiful moon. But scientific investigation revealed that the stars do not twinkle, nor does the moon look beautiful," the report said.

"Do not trust what you see; even salt looks like sugar," the opening lines of the report said.

As per the report, submitted by the three-member panel, the major issue which women face in the film industry is sexual harassment.

"It is the worst evil which women in cinema face in the film industry. The women in cinema are most reluctant to speak out about the sexual harassment which they are subjected to, even to other women or close relatives," it said.

The commission said it was "shocked to hear the sexual harassment stories" revealed to it by women working in the Malayalam film industry.

"The offer to act or for do-

ing any other job in cinema comes to a woman coupled with demand for sexual favours. As I already mentioned, the woman would be asked to adjust and compromise, thereby she is asked to surrender to sexual demands," the report said.

Quoting various women in the film industry, the Hema Committee pointed out that while going for work in cinema, they are often accompanied by their parents or close relatives, since the demand for sex is made along with the offer for the chance in cinema and hence, they are apprehensive of their safety in their work place.

"In most of the hotels, where they are staying, the doors are knocked by the men working in cinema who could be mostly under intoxication. Many women have stated that knocking will not be polite or decent but, they repeatedly bang the door by force," the report detailed.

On many occasions, they felt that the door would collapse and men would make entry into the room by force, it said.

## ED raids in 'illegal' broadcast of T20 cricket

**New Delhi:** The ED, along with the Gujarat Police, undertook searches in multiple states on Monday as part of a money-laundering probe linked to alleged unauthorised streaming of ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 matches by a "betting" website.

The federal agency said in a statement that 20 premises in Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru (Karnataka), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) and Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) were covered by its officials and those from the Ahmedabad cyber police department in the case against the "magicwin" web portal.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) case, filed under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), stems from an Ahmedabad police FIR, which stated that a website -- magicwin.games -- had unauthorisedly hosted, streamed and broadcast matches during the world cup.

The broadcast rights for

the tournament were given to Star India Private Limited by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the ED said.

magicwin is a website compatible with any Internet browser on mobile phones, Smart TVs and computers, through which the company's paid content is broadcast and allows viewers to watch matches for free, the agency added.

The portal "illegally" broadcast the T20 world cup matches between Canada and Ireland on June 7 and India and Pakistan on June 9 through a link, streaming the content from OTT platform Disney+Hotstar, causing "huge" financial losses to the company authorised to broadcast the tournament, the ED claimed.

"The website indulged in illegal activities like betting on live cricket matches and other games. The broadcast of live matches of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 was without any subscription fee.



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the inauguration of a photo exhibition at Chitrakala Parishad, Bengaluru on Monday. Pic: PTI

## CRPF officer killed in terror attack

**Jammu:** A CRPF inspector was killed when terrorists opened fire on a patrol party in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, officials said.

The CRPF along with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the local police was fired upon by terrorists around 3:30 pm in the remote Dudu area of Basantgarh, the officials said.

They said an inspector of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) belonging to the 187th battalion was hit by a bullet and later succumbed to injuries while being taken to hospital.

The terrorists fled the scene in the face of strong retaliation by the joint patrolling party, the officials said, adding reinforcements have been rushed to the scene and a search operation has been launched to track down and neutralise the militants.

## Will yatra fetch 'Jan Sanman' to Ajit Pawar?

By Abhijit Mulye

**Mumbai:** The day when Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's Jana Sanman Yatra reached Mumbai, political circles were busy speculating whether the "Damage Control Yatra" would fetch him real Jana Sanman in the form of increased electoral fortunes or will he fall flat.

Keeping his flock together, keeping the party's Secular tag and traditional voter base - aka Muslim Votes - intact and not to allow the alliance partners to bog down his party and successfully get more seats in pre-poll alliance talks are some of the immediate challenges that Pawar is currently facing. Jana Sanman Yatra is an attempt to address all these challenges.

Ajit Pawar has been facing accusations that by joining hands with the Hindutva Parties like the BJP and the Shiv Sena, he has gone away from his party's ideological base and the party has been struggling to emphasise that the faction has not deserted the NCP's original secular ideology. Pawar



addressed the issue on the second day of the yatra at Yeola town in Nashik. "We are not clinging to power. Power can come and go, but when we have power, it should be used for the betterment of the society. This is the teaching we got from Yashwantrao Chavan. Our party stands by the ideology of Shivaji Maharaj-Phule-Shahu-Ambedkar. We have not given up on this ideology and we will not leave it till we die. This is my word to you," he assured the party supporters.

Pawar also appears to be working on the impression that he brought a bad name to the family and broke fam-

ily ties. He did that by saying that he accepts that he made a mistake. "I love all my sisters. No one should allow politics to enter homes. I made a mistake in fielding Sumetra against my sister. This should not have happened. But the parliamentary board of NCP took the decision which I followed. Now I feel it was wrong," he said while trying to make the course correction.

Ajit Pawar's next headache is to deal tactfully with the alliance partners while keeping his flock together. To be able to keep his flock together, he will have to be seen working for them.

## Pakistan reports fourth case of mpox

**Islamabad:** Authorities in Pakistan on Monday reported a suspected case of Monkeypox (mpox) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, taking the number of people affected by the virus to

four. A 47-year-old resident of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), who recently returned from Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, was admitted to Islamabad's Pakistan In-

stitute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) with mpox symptoms.

Dr. Nasim Akhtar, the hospital's focal person, told the media that the patient showed symptoms consist-

ent with mpox and has been placed in a special ward designated for such cases at PIMS. Earlier, Pakistan reported three cases of mpox -- all from the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

# Think tank advises engagement with Bangladesh

**Guwahati:** Former foreign secretary Harshvardan Shringla has said that India needs to engage with those in power now in Bangladesh, as instability in the neighbouring country has a direct impact on the security scenario of the North-eastern region.

Shringla said this at a programme in which a report on policy options for India in dealing with the current Bangladesh situation was released.

The report, to be submitted to the Centre, was prepared by a think tank Soci-

ety to Harmonise Aspirations for Responsible Engagement (SHARE).

The political instability in Bangladesh has direct repercussions both on security and developmental projects in North East India, security and defence experts, who are members of SHARE, said at the event.

"India has to engage with those in power or those behind the powers in Bangladesh as stability in the neighbourhood has a direct import to the security scenario of North East India.

"We have two core con-

cerns - Bangladesh's territory not be used in any manner inimical to its (India's) interests and ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minorities in the neighbouring country," the former ambassador to Bangladesh said.

Shringla also said that the recommendations in this report are prefaced by three key facts -- it remains uncertain who is currently responsible for policy making in Bangladesh, there is palpable anti-India sentiments in the neighbouring country, and finally, eco-



conomic stability and employment generation there.

The report was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the National Security Advisor for implementation, former Eastern

Command GOC-in-CLT Gen R P Kalita (Retd) said at the event.

Ex-Ladakh Lt Governor R K Mathur said that care has been taken to ensure the recommendations are "im-

plementable and acceptable to all sections and ideologies" as the neighbouring country goes through socio-political upheaval.

"The recommendations are divided into short, medium and long-term so as to ensure a staged approach to policymaking on India's part which is mutually acceptable," the former defence secretary said.

Assam Chief Information Commissioner Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, highlighting the recommendations, said dialogue with all stakeholders is in India's core inter-

ests, especially with regard to tackling a possible refugee crisis in the Northeast which has a border of 1885 kms with Bangladesh.

A matter of alarming concern for North East India is the disturbing developments of an armed mob breaking the high-security prison in Bangladesh's Sherpur on August 6 freeing more than 500 inmates while in another jail-break in Gazipur, 209 prisoners escaped, Mahanta said.

Those who were freed include senior Ansarul Bangla Team (ABT) and

Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB), the former DGP said.

"This is an exceptionally alarming situation, especially for Assam and Tripura, where several ABT and JMB modules have been busted with 60 members of these outfits arrested from these states in 2022-23 and more than 30 of them are from Bangladesh," he said.

This should ring alarm bells within India's internal security and law enforcement apparatus, Mahanta, who is also SHARE's General Secretary, pointed out.

Maratha quota process

Will quit politics If CM says I am hindering

**By Correspondent**

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday countered allegations of Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange and said he would quit politics if Chief Minister Eknath Shinde asserts that he was hindering the process to give the community reservations.

the senior BJP leader and has routinely accused him of being the main obstacle in the Maratha community's quest for reservations.

Stating sarcastically the he knew Jarange has "special affection" for him, Fadnavis said, "Should Chief Minister Eknath Shinde assert that my presence poses a hindrance to reaching a decision concerning the Maratha quota, I shall tender my

resignation and withdraw from politics."

"We must not forget that a chief minister is the head of the state and is responsible for making all decisions. As citizens, we share the responsibilities. Decisions that benefitted the Maratha community were made either during my term as chief minister or under CM Eknath Shinde's tenure. Creating such a narrative deliber-

ately is wrong," Fadnavis claimed at a press briefing here.

Jarange holds Fadnavis, also the state's home minister, responsible for the police lathicharge on Maratha quota activists in Antarwali Sarati in Jalna in August last year.

State Congress President Nana Patole said Jarange's statement regarding Devendra Fadnavis was absolutely correct.



Jarange slams Sambhaji Bhide

**Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar:** Activist Manoj Jarange took a swipe at right-wing leader Sambhaji Bhide, who allegedly questioned the need for reservation for Marathas.

Talking to reporters on Sunday, Jarange alleged that Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was using Bhide as a new weapon against him.

"Bhide is speaking Fadnavis's words, and he is being used as a new weapon against me. The Maratha community is going farther away from Fadnavis and the BJP," Jarange claimed.

He also slammed Maharashtra Minister Chhagan Bhujbal over his statement about the number of Marathas who attended his rally in Nashik.

Bhujbal, a leader of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) community, on Sunday claimed that only 8,000 Marathas had attended Ja-

range's rally in Nashik on August 13.

The activist held rallies in Solapur, Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara, Pune, Ahmednagar and Nashik in the last couple of weeks.

"Bhujbal is a member of the state government, and Fadnavis is the home minister. The police belong to them. We know how many Marathas were in the rally. If Bhujbal is keeping a count of Marathas taking to the streets, he should be made an officer of the regional transport office (RTO) and handed a whistle to count Marathas in vehicles," he said.

Jarange has been demanding the implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of Maratha community members and reservation to the latter under the OBC category.

Patil confronted

**Jalna:** A group of Maratha quota activists confronted NCP (SP) Maharashtra unit chief Jayant Patil and sought the party's stand on the issue of reservations for the community.

The incident took place during the Sharad Pawar-led party's 'Shivrajya Yatra' in Badnapur here on Sunday. Patil was accompanied by Lok Sabha MP Amol Kolhe and MLA Rajesh Tope.

The activists wanted Patil to make a statement on the party's stand on granting reservations to Marathas in jobs and education.

The NCP (SP) leader experienced a similar episode in Ghanswathi, which is just a few kilometres away from Antarwali Sarati, the epicentre of the Maratha quota stir being led by activist Manoj Jarange.

I pay attention only to seniors: Ajit

**By Correspondent**

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar on Monday said he is not bothered about his criticism by others and is only concerned about what key leaders of the ruling Mahayuti alliance say.

Pawar's remarks came a day after a group of BJP workers led by the party's Junnar chief Asha Buchake waved black flags at his convoy.

"I don't have anything to do with what other people say. I pay attention to the key people, CM Eknath Shinde of Shiv Sena and Chandrasekhar Bawankule and Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP," Pawar told reporters during his Jan Sanman Yatra in Mumbai.

The Nationalist Congress Party, led by Pawar, had demanded that Fadnavis, who also hold the



Home portfolio, to clarify as to whether he approved of the behaviour of his BJP workers.

Buchake had claimed that the NCP is trying to promote its candidate in the Junnar seat for the upcoming assembly polls.

"They are trying to strangle us... Therefore we have adopted an aggressive stand," she told reporters after the protesters raised slogans against Ajit Pawar.

An official meeting was organised on tourism development in Junnar on Sunday but the BJP was not invited for the meeting, she said.

"If we are part of Mahayuti, then why were pictures of CM Shinde and deputy CM Fadnavis not put up in the meeting hall," she added.

Asked if he will get a 'rakhi' tied on his wrist from estranged cousin Supriya Sule on Raksha

Bandhan, Ajit Pawar said, "I will do it if she is in Mumbai today."

Raksha Bandhan festival, which falls on the last day of the holy Hindu month of Sawan, is marked by the practice of sisters tying a 'rakhi' on the wrist of their brothers.

Pawar last week expressed his regret for making his wife Sunetra Pawar contest against his cousin Supriya Sule in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Sule won the election.

Pawar had accepted that he made a mistake and said, "I love all my sisters. No one should allow politics to enter homes. I made a mistake in fielding Sunetra against my sister. This should not have happened. But the parliamentary board of NCP took the decision which I followed. Now I feel it was wrong".

Three drown in Raigad

**Alibag:** Two brothers and their relative drowned in a river during a picnic in Maharashtra's Raigad district, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred in Savitri river in Mahad on Sunday afternoon, an official said.

The deceased, Munna Shahabuddin Nalband (38), his brother Dilawar (28) and their relative Zahid Zakir Patel (28), were residents of Mahabaleshwar and had come to Mahad for a picnic.

The trio entered the river for a swim but couldn't gauge the depth of the water and drowned, he said.

The local police carried out a search and rescue operation, and the bodies were fished out in the evening, the official said.



The residents of Worli Koliwada celebrate Narali Poornima by traditional way of breaking coconut. Pic: Rajesh Waradkar

BMS speaks against B'desh

**Nagpur:** The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), said on Monday that the atrocities against humanity in Bangladesh must be stopped immediately, calling the upheaval in the neighbouring nation a foreign conspiracy.

The Indian trade and cultural heritage along with Bangladesh have suffered a big blow due to the chaos reigning there after the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

BMS said and demanded intervention by the Indian government to bring back normalcy.

In a release, BMS' media in-charge Suresh Choudhari said the brutal atrocities and looting committed against the minority Hindu community after the vicious coup in Bangladesh on August 5 were the result of a pre-planned and well-thought-out foreign conspiracy.

BMS' concerns over Hindus in Bangladesh echo those of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. During a speech on Independence Day, Bhagwat had said that Hindus living in Bangladesh were being subjected to violence for no reason.

Mahayuti will collapse due to bickering: NCP (SP)

**By Correspondent**

**Pune:** The NCP (SP) on Monday claimed the ruling Mahayuti coalition will disintegrate before Maharashtra assembly elections owing to internal "rifts" among the Shiv Sena, BJP, and NCP led by Ajit Pawar.

NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase referenced Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam's criticism of PWD Minister and BJP leader Ravindra Chavan and the waving of black flags by BJP workers at Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's convoy.

Kadam termed Chavan as a "useless minister" over the poor state of the Mumbai-Goa Highway.

Tapase stated Kadam's outburst is a sign of the deteriorating relations within the Mahayuti alliance.

He also highlighted a protest by BJP supporters who showed black flags at Ajit Pawar's convoy in Junnar during the Jan Samman Yatra on Sunday.

"There is no coordination between the constitu-

ent parties of the Mahayuti, no mutual respect, and no genuine concern for the welfare of the people of Maharashtra," Tapase alleged in a statement.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis were dissatisfied with Ajit Pawar's attempts to hijack the "Ladki Bahin Yojana," a flagship cash transfer scheme of the government, he alleged.

According to Tapase, opposition leaders, MLAs, and MPs were deliberately not invited to the formal launch of the "Ladki Bahin" scheme on Saturday, which shows the ruling coalition was more interested in playing politics than serving the people.

"Mahayuti alliance exists solely to retain power and protect its members from legal scrutiny," he stated.

Tapase alleged the BJP had engineered splits within key opposition parties, including the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and NCP (SP) to destabilise the previous MVA government.

People rejected the ruling alliance in recent Lok Sabha elections realising that BJP has "dismantled the political fabric of Maharashtra by orchestrating defections and weakening the opposition", he alleged and expressed confidence in Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi's strong performance in the upcoming assembly elections.

Kadam, a former minister, took a dig at Chavan over incomplete work on the Mumbai-Goa Highway that passes through the coastal districts of Maharashtra, only to be countered by Fadnavis who questioned if his comments were in line with the principles of the Mahayuti alliance.

"After a 14-year wait, even Lord Ram's vanvas (exile) ended, but problems on the Mumbai-Goa Highway persist. We are still deprived of good roads. State PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan seems completely useless. Despite being in an alliance, I openly believe that Devendra Fadnavis should ask for Chavan's resignation," Kadam said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to state that Shri. Jhimaji Sonu Khawle, member of "Eksar Laxmi Naryan Building no.3 CHSL" and owner of the below scheduled property, expired on 06.10.2013 and Smt. Savitri Jhimaji Khawle wife of owner expire on 16/03/2022 (hereinafter collectively referred as "Deceased").

By and under a Deed of Release dated 29.02.2024, duly registered with the Office of Sub-Registrar of Assurances under Serial No.BRL-7-4332-2024, by and between the sole legal heirs of the Deceased i.e. (1) MRS. NANDA ARJUN NAWGTE (Married Daughter) alias NANDA JHIMAJI KHAWLE (2) MRS. MADHURA SANJAY GAONKAR (Married Daughter) alias GAYA JHIMAJI KHAWLE (3) MRS. APARNA BHALCHANDRA PARADKAR (Married Daughter) alias SAROJINI JHIMAJI KHAWLE (therein referred to as the "Releasees"), released, transmitted, transferred and conveyed each of their 20% undivided share, right, title and interest acquired through Late Shree Jhimaji Sonu Khawle and his wife in favour of (1) MR. ADITYA JHIMAJI KHAWLE AND (2) MISS. REKHA JHIMAJI KHAWLE (therein referred to as the "Releasees" and thereby the Releasees become equal owner of below scheduled property.

Accordingly, (1) Mr. Aditya Jhimaji Khawle, (2) Miss. Rekha Jhimaji Khawle are now claiming to be the owners of the below-mentioned property.

Any legal heirs or other claimants/objector or objectors to the transfer of the said shares and interest of the deceased member in the capital/property of the society, are hereby requested to make the same known in writing, with copies of such documents and other proofs in support of his/her/their claims/objections for transfer of shares and interest of the deceased member in the capital/property of the society, to the undersigned at his office at Advocate Ashutosh Mourya, C/o. Vijay Singh & Associates, Gala No. 51, Master Industries, Mamlatdar Wadi Road No. 2, Malad (West), Mumbai - 400 064, within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date hereof along with the certified copies of the supporting Deeds and/or documents, failing the investigation for under mentioned premises will conclude without taking into consideration such claims or objections which are deemed to have been waived and abandoned and for which neither my clients nor me shall be responsible. Please take notice that the answers/claims given by public Notice shall not be considered.

**THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO:**

Residential Premises on Ownership basis being Flat bearing, No. 102, B wing admeasuring 450 Sq. Ft. Built up Area, on the First Floor at "Eksar Laxmi Naryan Building no.3 CHSL" having address Eksar Road, Borivali West, Mumbai - 400 103, lying and being on piece and parcel of land bearing CTS No.2262/A/1, 2262/B Eksar, Taluka Borivali within the Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai Sub-urban, along with 5 (Five) fully paid-up shares of Rs.50/- (Rupees Fifty Only) each bearing distinctive numbers 026 to 030 (both inclusive) recorded under Share Certificate No.6 issued by the "Eksar Laxmi Naryan Building no.3 CHSL" bearing Registration No. Bom/WR/HSG(TC)/1761/1985-86.

Dated this 20Day of August, 2024.

Sd/-  
Mr. Ashutosh Mourya Advocate, High Court

One dead, two drowned

**Pune:** One person died, and two others are feared drowned while performing a ritual in a river in Pimpri Chinchwad in Pune on Monday, a civic official said.

A team of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) and divers from a local NGO are looking for the missing persons in the Indrayani river, he said.

"Some persons from Vedashree Tapovan University had come to the river near Moshi to perform 'nadi puja' (river worship) in the morning, while performing the ritual, one of them slipped into the waters, and two others entered the river to save him," said the official from Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation.

The body of one person has been fished out while a search is on for two others, he said.

Stop giving sugary items

**Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar:** A group of paediatrics has written to the Maharashtra government urging it to stop giving sugary food items in school midday meals.

The Maha Academy of Paediatrics, in its letter to state school education minister Deepak Kesarkar, said such food items could result in children becoming diabetic and obese.

The letter cited the government's GR on serving rice pudding to children four times a week under the Pradhan Mantri Poshan

Shakti Nirman Yojana (formerly known as midday meal scheme).

"The GR mentions that 25 grams of sugar be added to the meals of students from Class I to V and 45 grams for students from Class VI to VIII," the letter said.

**SCHOOL MIDDAY MEALS**


"We need 25 grams of sugar per day. There are two types of sugar. One is added and the other is naturally present in food items. The students keep eating other

food items throughout the day, which increases their sugar intake," Maha Paediatrics Association president Dr Ramgopal Chejara told PTI.

"Adding 25 grams and 45 grams of sugar in these meals could make the children diabetic and obese. Our teams have visited schools. We have appealed to the government to stop giving such sugary food items," he said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve too criticised the state government over this GR.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**



**Sharad Pawar, President, NCP(SP)**

**"PM Modi was insisting on holding all elections simultaneously but the very next day, there is announcement of three different poll dates for three different states. The PM talks about one thing while the system takes another decision."**

- PTI

# No truce between Ajit, Supriya on Rakshabandhan

By Anand Mishra

**Mumbai:** The estranged relationship between brother Ajit Pawar and sister Supriya Sule visibly took a new low on Rakshabandhan Day when NCP chief Ajit Pawar released a video highlighting the importance of the auspicious day and chose not to mention her anywhere in the message.

Posting a two-minute-long video on X, shot with Ajit surrounded by hundreds of women tying rakhi on his hand, with heart-warming song and music in background, Ajit Pawar said, "Rakshabandhan is the interweaving of the sacred relationship between brother and sister. This dada (brother) is always standing by your side!" Supriya's complete omission in the video has sent a clear signal that nothing is going right between the two Pawar clans and fiercer competition awaiting in the coming election days.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar (65), apparently trying to meltdown the alienated relationship with her sister Supriya Sule (55), had recently stated that he honestly "regretted" running his wife, Sunetra

Pawar, against Sule in the Lok Sabha election earlier this year. In an interview, he had stated, "Politics has a place... a lot of families are involved in politics. One should not let politics enter into family life. I have, however, slightly erred. I should not have put Sunetra against my sister. But, this decision was taken by the parliamentary board. However, it was done at that time."

Ajit's interview was seen as a compromising gesture between the two political rivals, but Supriya took no longer to dismiss his "honest admission". Attacking her cousin, Sule had accused Pawar of mixing business and personal relationships. She replied, "No one remembered their sister prior to the Lok Sabha campaign, only after the result he (Ajit) started remembering their sisters. It's unfortunate that our brother has never understood the relationship between a brother and a sister. He has been mixing love and business together."

Supriya Sule, the daughter of NCP founder Sharad Pawar, had further responded, "In love, there is no money and business, and in business, there is no love. In business, if you

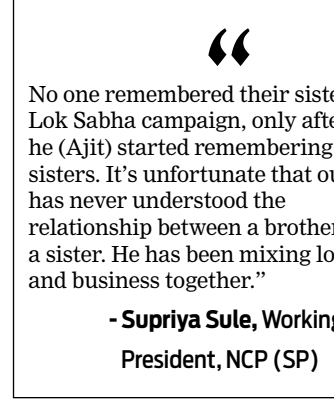
bring in love, then you would suffer losses, and if you bring money into love, then you can't have a relationship. It is unfortunate that the Maharashtra government has not understood the difference between love and business." Sule's hard stance against his brother, had hinted at an uncompromisable battle in the near future. It may be recalled here that in July 2023, Ajit Pawar had vertically split the party, garnering support from more NCP MLAs than his uncle Sharad Pawar. A distraught Sule had admitted that ties with his brother were not the same anymore.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Sharad Pawar-led faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), aligned with the INDIA bloc, demonstrated significant strength, securing eight out of the ten seats they contested. On the other hand, the Ajit Pawar faction, part of the Mahayuti alliance, managed to win only one seat. As a result, Ajit Pawar's faction was excluded from Modi's Cabinet post-elections, with the NCP being offered only a Minister of State (MoS) position—a move that Sule had termed as "demotion".



“Politics has a place. A lot of families are involved in politics. One should not let politics enter into family life. I have, however, slightly erred. I should not have put Sunetra against my sister. But, this decision was taken by the parliamentary board. However, it was done at that time.”

- Ajit Pawar, President, NCP



“No one remembered their sister prior to the Lok Sabha campaign, only after the result he (Ajit) started remembering their sisters. It's unfortunate that our brother has never understood the relationship between a brother and a sister. He has been mixing love and business together.”

- Supriya Sule, Working President, NCP (SP)

## Supriya ties Rakhi to Dindori MP Bhagare

Supriya Sule, who is on a tour of Nashik, tied Rakhi to Dindori MP Bhaskar Bhagare and few other workers. Earlier, Ajit Pawar had mentioned that he would have tied the rakhi if Supriya was in Mumbai, but she was in Nashik. Sule, ended up tying the rakhi to Dindori MP Bhaskar Bhagare during a gathering in Chandwad, Nashik, on the eve of Rakhi Purnima. After the ceremony, she extended her best wishes to MP Bhaskar Bhagare and other farmers, attached with the party activities.

## Accused Mihir Shah seeks immediate release

**Mumbai:** Mihir Shah, the main accused in the BMW hit-and-run case, has moved Bombay High Court claiming he has been illegally detained and has sought immediate release.

Shah was arrested on July 9, two days after he allegedly rammed his BMW car into a two-wheeler in Mumbai's Worli area, killing Kaveri Nakhwa (45) and

### BMW HIT-N-RUN CASE

leaving her husband Pradeep injured.

In his habeas corpus (produce the person) petition filed in HC last week, Shah claimed his detention was illegal and that he must be released immediately.

A division bench of Justices Bharati Dangle and Manjusha Deshpande is likely to take up the plea for hearing on Wednesday.

Shah (24) is accused of speeding off towards Bandra Worli Sea Link after the accident even as the woman remained on the bonnet of the car and then got entangled in its wheels for a distance of more than 1.5 kilometres.

## Sachin Waze questions UAPA

**Mumbai:** Dismissed policeman Sachin Waze has moved Bombay High Court challenging provisions of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and the National Investigating Agency (NIA) probe into the Antilia bomb scare case and the death of businessman Mansukh Hiran.

A division bench of Justices Bharati Dangle and Manjusha Deshpande on Monday directed NIA to file its affidavit in response to the petition filed

by Waze, who is in jail in connection with the two cases.

The bench quipped that the 185-page petition filed by Waze from jail was more like a thesis.

### ANTILIA BOMB SCARE CASE

“Is this a petition or a thesis? It has quoted Oscar Wilde and all. This seems like a thesis for a PhD,” the court said. Senior counsel Aabad Ponda,

appearing for Waze, said the accused is in jail with nothing to do but this.

Waze, in his plea, has sought immediate release pending hearing of the petition.

Ponda argued UAPA provisions have been wrongly invoked in the case and that the NIA had begun its probe even before the Act was applied in the case.

“The provisions of UAPA cannot be applied in cases all and sundry. This is just a case

of gelatin recovered outside someone's residence in Mumbai. There was no terror caused,” Ponda said.

The NIA's competency is also under challenge as the agency had begun its investigation even before an order was passed by the Centre, Ponda said.

After hearing the arguments briefly, the HC sought a response from NIA and posted the matter for hearing on September 23. - PTI

## Sena leader calls BJP minister “useless minister”

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam on Monday called BJP leader and PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan a “useless minister” over the poor state of the Mumbai-Goa Highway, only to be countered by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis who questioned if his comments were in line with the principles of the Mahayuti alliance.

Talking to reporters in Thane, Kadam, a former minister, took a dig at Chavan over incomplete work on the Mumbai-Goa Highway that passes through the coastal districts of Maharashtra.

### Devendra Fadnavis:

“What alliance principle does Kadam adhere to while making such comments in public? He could have addressed his concerns internally with us. Nevertheless, I will look into the issues he has raised.”



### Ramdas Kadam:

“After a 14-year wait, even Lord Ram's vanvas (exile) ended, but problems on the Mumbai-Goa Highway persist. We are still deprived of good roads. State PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan seems completely useless. Despite being in an alliance, I openly believe that Devendra Fadnavis should ask for Chavan's resignation.”



## Zeeshan welcomes Ajit, keeps eyes rolling

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Congress MLA from Bandra (East) Zeeshan Siddique has once again kept everybody guessing over his possible defection. However, looking at the scenario, his switching to the NCP fold has now remained just a formality.

On Monday, Zeeshan welcomed Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar when Jan Sanman Yatra reached Mumbai. The Congress MLA was in an open jeep with Pawar. A bike rally has also been organised by Zeeshan's team and later he shared dais NCP Chief.

When contacted, Zeeshan Siddique said, “As of now I am in Congress. Presently, I have no plans to join any other party. The Congress party and its leadership has done gross injustice with me. At the right time I will decide on a future course of action”.

Zeeshan Siddique's father, former minister Baba Siddique, had joined Ajit Pawar's NCP a few months ago. Even at that time the Congress MLA's support to NCP has sparked speculations that Zeeshan will also quit the Grand Old Party just before the Assembly elections and join NCP to contest from the Bandra

East constituency. During the recently held state council elections, there were allegations that Zeeshan had cross-voted. However, he maintained that he was loyal to the Congress.

Zeeshan further said, “I have not joined NCP. This function was organised to thank Ajit Pawar for the 'Ladki Bahin Yojna' as there are more than 12,000 beneficiaries from my constituency. Moreover, if we talk about the Congress, Mumbai Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad recently took out a rally from my constituency, but I was not even invited. When the Congress started distribut-

ing the nomination forms for the state assembly polls, which they will screen and later decide the candidate, I was denied the same form by the party, which means their message is loud and clear. Let me tell you that I am going to contest the upcoming state Assembly elections from this constituency, but from which party, I have not decided yet. I still consider myself a Congress party worker.”

Significantly, Monday's active participation of Zeeshan with Ajit Pawar has triggered speculations that when he will complete the formality.

## Man gets 20 years in jail for raping teen stepdaughter

**Thane:** A 44-year-old man was sentenced to 20 years in jail by a court here for raping his teen stepdaughter.

Thane Additional Sessions Judge GG Bhansali also fined him Rs 15,000, which the court said must be paid to the victim. The accused, a Mira Road-

based painter, raped his 14-year-old stepdaughter in December 2014, said additional public prosecutor RW Pande.

Six prosecution witnesses, including the victim, her sister and chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), were examined to

prove the case beyond doubt, Pande said.

In his order, the judge said, “The requirement in a criminal case of proof 'beyond reasonable doubt' to support a conviction does not mean proof beyond all possible doubts. The victim of rape is not an accomplice, and her evi-

dence can be acted upon without corroboration.”

“She stands at a higher pedestal than an injured witness. If the evidence is reliable and inspires confidence, the conviction can be based on the sole testimony of the prosecutrix,” the judge further said in the order.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



Priyanka Chaturvedi, MP, Shiv Sena (UBT)

“The country is witnessing large-scale protests after a lady doctor pursuing her 2nd year PG internship at RG Kar hospital was brutally sexually assaulted and killed. The case gives us yet another stark reminder, since the 2012 Nirbhaya case, of how unsafe we continue to feel.”

## Protest march held at Sion

**Mumbai:** Resident doctors of BMC-run Sion hospital on Monday held a silent march to protest attacks on medical professionals.

In the early hours of Sunday, a woman doctor was assaulted at the hospital by drunk relatives of a patient, the incident coming amid massive nationwide protests against the rape-murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor on August 9 in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

## Banker falls prey to sextortion

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** A 26-year-old senior executive of a private bank, who is also the son of a police personnel, coughed up Rs 2.5 lakh after he was caught in sextortion, police said on Monday.

The complainant lost the money in the early hours of Thursday (August 15) when he was at his home in Mumbai's Prabhadevi area.

In his complaint, the

bank executive said he received a friend request from a woman, who identified herself as Kriti Sharma, on Instagram around 1 am. He accepted the request and the two started chatting, said an official citing the FIR.

The complainant shared his mobile number with the woman, who then made a WhatsApp video call to him. The woman on the other side was naked and she urged him to take off his clothes, as per the FIR.

The bank executive told police he later learnt that the woman had recorded the video call without his knowledge.

Around 1.20 am, he received his video from the same number, with the woman threatening to share it with his Instagram contacts and on social media if he didn't pay her money.

The woman promised to delete the video if the complainant paid Rs 1 lakh. After he complied, she

made more demands, eventually extracting Rs 2.5 lakh through five UPI transactions, the official said.

Realising that he was trapped and duped, the bank executive approached the Dadar police and filed a complaint, the official said.

Police have registered a case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Information Technology Act, the official said, adding that a probe is underway.

BRIEF

Field day for quick commerce titans

Glenmark US arm launches generic ophthalmic drug

Glenmark Pharma's US subsidiary Glenmark Therapeutics Inc. has launched a over-the-counter drug Opatadine Hydrochloride Ophthalmic Solution USP, 0.1%, which is a generic version of Pataday twice daily relief. Pataday, the trademark owned by Novartis AG, is an eye allergy drop that contains olopatadine, an antihistamine that can relieve itchiness caused by indoor and outdoor allergens with annual sales of approximately USD 26.4 million.

Zen Tech granted patent in mine detection

Zen Technologies Limited has been granted a patent for its revolutionary Mine Detection System. This innovation incorporates GPS/GIS technology to plot and record in memory the coordinates of mines in terms of Latitude/Longitude and Military Grid in Defense Series Maps (DSM). This feature ensures that the system can accurately navigate to pre-recorded coordinates and assist in the safe retrieval of mines.

Vishnu Chemicals buys 100% stake in Jayansree Pharma for Rs 51.99 crore

Vishnu Chemicals acquired 100 percent stake of Jayansree Pharma Private Ltd at an enterprise value of Rs 51.99 crore. The newly acquired company will manufacture chemicals and operate in areas aligned with the group. As part of its growth strategy, Vishnu plans to commission the production of an inorganic chemical Strontium Carbonate at this unit and start generating business at the earliest.

Adani Power likely to acquire Butibori power plant

Adani Power is in talks to acquire 600 MW Butibori thermal power project in Nagpur for a deal in the range of Rs 2,400-3,000 crore, mint reported citing sources. This power plant was earlier owned by Reliance Power. A potential acquisition would help Adani capitalize on rising electricity demand in India. According to industry experts, the project's valuation has been lowered due to a halt in power generation. The value of the project was earlier around Rs 6,000 Crore.

Mumbai, August 19: India's quick commerce titans had a frenzy day on Raksha Bandhan with record sales as per their respective comments on their social media handles. Top honchos of Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart and Zep- to were gung-ho about their sales figures on the festive day over the same day last year. Taking to LinkedIn, Zep- to's, Co-founder Kaivalya V said, "We've already sold 4x more rakhis than we did last year, and the party is just getting started."

cha added, "We just crossed 1 million Lifafas—what a crazy way to end a Sunday night! All-time high on orders, sales, and first-time buyers as well. At the peak of the festival eve, Blinkit reported sales of 693 rakhis per minute. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Albinder Dhindsa, CEO of Blinkit, said, "We hit the highest-ever OPM (orders per minute), GMV, chocolate sales, and most other metrics today!"

Wissing highest order per minute in festive sales, Swiggy Instamart, Co-

founder Phani Kishan said on his social media handle X, "Expecting to sell as many rakhis today as we did till today this year (and that's already 5x of last year!)"

A day earlier, Kishan had posted, "We've sold 5x the number of rakhis this year on @SwiggyInstamart than what we sold the entirety of last year."

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) -- an industry body expects the festive trade of over Rs 12,000 crore across the country during the Raksha Bandhan festival.

Maharashtra in top five in investment

Mumbai: The private capital expenditure is likely to jump 54 per cent to Rs 2.45 lakh crore from Rs 1.59 lakh crore in FY24, a paper by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) staffers said on Monday. The estimate has been arrived at after analysing investment intentions of private corporates based on the projects sanctioned by banks or financial institutions (FIs) during FY24, the paper by Kamal Gupta, Rajesh Kavediya and others, said.

"The phasing profile of the pipeline projects finance suggests that the envisaged capex will increase significantly to Rs 2.45 lakh crore in 2024-25 from Rs 1.59 lakh crore in 2023-24," the paper, which does not represent the central bank's views, said. "The investment cycle is expected to remain upbeat and its sustainability needs to be watched closely," it added. Rising domestic demand, higher capacity utilisation, improved profitability, sustained credit demands, business optimism and the government's infrastructure development thrust bode well for private capex, the paper said. The analysis is based on a study that focused exclusively on projects costing over Rs 10 crore, and majority owned by private corporates. The estimates could differ from the actual private corporate fixed investment data provided in national accounts

on modifications in terms of their planned amount and timing, shift in funding to other sources and some shelving as well, the paper said. In the last few years, watchers have been saying that investments are being led by government or state-run entities, and the private sector has taken a back seat. The paper said private sector investments are a major driver of India's long-term growth. "Infrastructure sector continued to attract the major share of envisaged capital investment, led by 'Roads & Bridges' and 'Power' sectors, reflecting the government push towards infrastructure development," it said.

market access, and its relative success compared to other investment options has led to a rise in market participation since the pandemic," the report notes. The report also shed light on the historical backdrop of this expansion. The Indian stock market took over 25 years to reach its initial million-investor milestone, whereas it added million investors in a span of 5 months. This swift increase mirrors a wider trend of financial inclusivity and a change

in investment preferences among the youth in India, who are increasingly choosing stocks as a way to build wealth. The stock markets, previously considered the exclusive territory of the wealthy, are now drawing in a varied and younger crowd, motivated by the potential for higher returns and the ease of digital platforms. This trend is likely to continue for many years. Broking companies, depositories and stock exchanges will benefit from this long term theme.

Investors surpass 100m mark

MUMBAI: In August, the Indian stock exchanges hit a major milestone, with the number of investors in the country surpassing the 100 million mark, as reported by the National Stock Exchange (NSE). This milestone underscores the growing engagement and involvement of the Indian populace in the stock market, signaling a significant change in the financial environment. Several elements have led to this increase in the number of investors. The report points out that the advancement in digitalization, greater awareness among investors, and better access to the market have all been key factors in making the stock market more accessible and attractive to a wider audience. Furthermore, the strong performance of stocks over the last few years, particularly since the outbreak of the pandemic, has also drawn in new investors. "A mix of digitalization, investor awareness, better

market access, and its relative success compared to other investment options has led to a rise in market participation since the pandemic," the report notes. The report also shed light on the historical backdrop of this expansion. The Indian stock market took over 25 years to reach its initial million-investor milestone, whereas it added million investors in a span of 5 months. This swift increase mirrors a wider trend of financial inclusivity and a change

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Domestic air traffic rises 7.3 pc to 1.29 crore on annual basis in July

New Delhi: Indian carriers flew more than 1.29 crore passengers in July, an increase of more than 7.3 per cent compared to the year-ago period, official data released on Monday showed. However, the air traffic in July was lower compared to 1.32 crore people carried by the domestic airlines in June

this year. IndiGo continued to dominate domestic air traffic with its market share rising to 62 per cent in July while that of Air India dropped to 14.3 per cent. Last month, the domestic market share of Vistara climbed to 10 per cent while that of AIX Connect and SpiceJet declined to 4.5 per

cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively, as per the data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Also, Akasa Air and Alliance Air's share slipped to 4.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent, respectively. "Passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-July 2024 were 923.35 lakh as against 881.94

lakh during the corresponding period of the previous year thereby registering an annual growth of 4.70 per cent and monthly growth of 7.33 per cent," DGCA said. In July, domestic air traffic touched 129.87 lakh compared to 132.06 lakh in June this year and 121 lakh in July 2023.

New Delhi: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has asked the Finance Ministry to identify high risk taxpayers in the GST composition scheme on a periodical basis and verify from other sources, including third parties, their declared value of sales to check tax evasion. Based on an analysis of 8.66 lakh composition taxpayers under the central jurisdiction between 2019-20 to 2021-22 fiscals, the CAG found that a significant number of GST taxpayers have a high risk of crossing the turnover threshold for composition levy scheme (CLS). These high risk taxpayers were identified by audit from the data contained in GST returns along with third party data sources such as IT returns, 'Vahan' database etc. The GST composition scheme is available to taxpayers whose aggregate turnover, in the preceding financial year, has not exceeded Rs 1.5 crore.

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BITCOIN WORLD

Volatility Amid Trump-Harris Rivalry



By Murtaza Merchant



The digital assets market wrapped up another week filled with significant developments, with Bitcoin at the forefront, navigating through a series of market fluctuations influenced by broader economic factors. The week also witnessed new dynamics in the ongoing U.S. presidential race, particularly Trump and Kamala Harris, adding further intrigue to the political landscape.

Bitcoin experienced a tumultuous week of trading, driven by a combination of on-chain activity and macroeconomic news. A key highlight was the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reporting a cooling of the U.S. consumer price index (CPI) inflation to 2.9%, sparking optimism among investors. However, this positive sentiment was countered by a significant move from Bitgo, which transferred \$1.97 billion worth of Mt. Gox's BTC holdings, signaling a possible repayment plan for creditors and adding to the market's volatility.

Amidst these fluctuations, Japan's Metaplanet made headlines by increasing its Bitcoin holdings, contributing to mixed market sentiments. In another major development, El Salvador announced a massive \$1.6 billion investment aimed at advancing the proposed Bitcoin City, further underscoring the nation's commitment to cryptocurrency.

Marathon Digital also played a notable role in the week's Bitcoin narrative, revealing plans to acquire additional BTC through a \$250 million convertible senior notes offering, which quickly became oversubscribed. Meanwhile, the expiration of 24,000 Bitcoin options on Friday, with a put-call ratio of 0.83 and a notional value of \$1.4 billion, added to the sentiment that volatility might ease in the coming days. Despite the ups and downs, Bitcoin managed to stabilize, closing the week above the \$59,000 mark.

Trump vs. Harris: The Battle Intensifies

In the political arena, Vice President Kamala Harris gained the upper hand over Republican candidate Donald Trump in the latest polls. According to the New York Times, Harris's odds of winning surged to

49%, while Trump's slipped to 47%. This shift in momentum has ignited widespread discussion across the nation, as the Democratic VP continues to strengthen her position in the presidential race. Despite Trump's recent high-profile interview with Elon Musk, the poll results have dampened the Republican candidate's campaign. Interestingly, Musk had also extended an invitation for an interview to Kamala Harris, which went unanswered. Nonetheless, Harris's lead has added a new dimension to the election race, increasing the pressure on Trump's campaign.

In response, Trump returned to X (formerly Twitter) this week, launching a fresh ad as part of his campaign efforts. These developments underscore the intensifying rivalry between the two candidates, as the election race heats up.

Other Notable Crypto Developments

In other crypto news this week, Franklin Templeton made waves by filing for a Crypto Index ETF that includes both Bitcoin and Ethereum. Additionally, Coinbase and KuCoin took steps to expand their operations by applying for licenses in Turkey.

In the wake of a security breach, WazirX moved its assets to new multisig wallets, distancing them from their previous custodian. Meanwhile, Grayscale expanded its offerings by unveiling a new MakerDAO Trust, further diversifying its crypto portfolio. The week also saw a significant legal development as Judge Torres's final ruling in the XRP lawsuit laid the groundwork for what's now being referred to as the 'Ripple Test,' a ruling that could have far-reaching implications for the crypto industry.

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

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union minister for Information Technology

"In the case of the Broadcasting Services Bill, our thought process is we must encourage new technology, we must encourage new forms of creating content. We must encourage new mediums of sharing content, that will require a huge amount of consultation."

Identify high risk taxpayers in GST composition scheme: CAG

New Delhi: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has asked the Finance Ministry to identify high risk taxpayers in the GST composition scheme on a periodical basis and verify from other sources, including third parties, their declared value of sales to check tax evasion. Based on an analysis of 8.66 lakh composition taxpayers under the central jurisdiction between 2019-20 to 2021-22 fiscals, the CAG found that a significant number of GST taxpayers have a high risk of crossing the turnover threshold for composition levy scheme (CLS). These high risk taxpayers were identified by audit from the data contained in GST returns along with third party data sources such as IT returns, 'Vahan' database etc. The GST composition scheme is available to taxpayers whose aggregate turnover, in the preceding financial year, has not exceeded Rs 1.5 crore.

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Table of BSE SENSEX TOP GAINERS for August 19, 2024, listing companies like Tata Steel, TCS, NTPC, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Reliance, Titan, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, and Power Grid with their percentage gains and points.

Table of BSE SENSEX TOP LOSERS for August 19, 2024, listing companies like M&M, Indusind Bank, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, ICICI Bank, Nestle India, Maruti, LT, and ITC with their percentage losses and points.

Banks tapping alternative sources

Mumbai: Banks are tapping alternative sources like commercial paper and certificates of deposit as deposit growth lags credit growth, RBI August Bulletin said on Monday. In the primary market, certificates of deposit (CD) issuances amounted to Rs 3.49 lakh crore during 2024-25 (up to August 9), significantly higher than Rs 1.89 lakh crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. This increase amid deposit growth lagging credit expansion prompted banks to rely on alternative funding sources, as per the RBI article.

SG Mart plans 200 service centers by 2030

Mumbai: SG Mart, a leading B2B marketplace for construction materials, plans to add 10-20 steel service centers every years and by 2030 has set a target to have a network of 200 service centers, of which 101 service centers would be overseas and 99 in India, company official said addressing analysts and investors. Industry like auto, consumer durables, construction do not buy raw steel in coil form or long steel form and hence needs processed steel which are sourced from small and unorganized service centers. In absence of a Pan-India national level chain of service centers, the company intends to bridge the



gap, said Anubhav Gupta, group chief strategy officer, SG Mart. "Two of our service centers are operational, doing business of 10,000-12,000 ton a month. Two new service centers in India will be starting in the next two to three months. The construction work is underway and we will be starting those service centers in the next two to three months.... And the fifth service center we are starting in Dubai because there are also a lot of user industries that need processed steel," Gupta said. So, with a network of five service centers, we should be doing like 30,000-40,000 ton of processed steel every month which gives us a 4% to 5% EBIT-

DA margin, Gupta said. In smaller towns, like Raipur, Patna, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Jammu, Kochi, these industrial clusters don't have service stations. So, they buy material from metro cities and they pay a rate of Rs 1,200 a ton. So, we thought we should penetrate deeper into the market and get service stations established, Gupta said. The construction materials market is experiencing significant shifts towards digital solutions, with increasing reliance on online platforms for procurement. The company reported a first quarter net profit of Rs 26.3 crore on a revenue of Rs 1,144.4 crore.

## Kolkata doctor rape and murder

# CBI checks former principal's chat

Kolkata: CBI officers for the fourth consecutive day on Monday questioned the former principal of Kar Medical College, Sandip Ghosh in connection with their probe into the rape and murder of a woman doctor.

Ghosh reached the CBI's city office at CGO Complex on Monday morning, an official said.

Ghosh was asked to specify his role after getting the news of the death of the doctor, who he had contacted and why he made the parents wait for nearly three hours, he said.

The ex-principal was also questioned who had ordered the renovation of the rooms near the seminar hall at the emergency building of the hospital after the incident.

Ghosh has been questioned for several hours in the last three days since Fri-

day by the CBI officers. The officers of the central probe agency are also checking his mobile phone call list details as well as his WhatsApp chat list.

Ghosh, an orthopedic doctor, had resigned from the R.G. Kar Medical College principal's post two days after the woman's body was found on August 9. He had expressed fears of being attacked, prompting his lawyer to seek protection from the Calcutta High Court. The court directed him to approach a single bench.

### Senior doctors march

Senior doctors Kunal Sarkar and Subarna Goswami appeared before the police on Monday afternoon in connection with posts they shared on social media over the alleged rape and murder of a doctor at the RG

Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Sarkar and Goswami reached the Kolkata Police headquarters at Lal Bazar leading a march of doctors. The procession that began at the Medical College, Calcutta, was stopped by the police near Phears Lane-BB Ganguly Street Crossing, and the two doctors were escorted to the police headquarters by senior officers.

They were asked by the police to appear before it for the posts they shared on social media.

Manas Gumta, a protesting doctor, said that medics would intensify the stir if attempts were made to stifle the "demands seeking justice".

Sarkar and Goswami were accused by the police of spreading misinformation and disclosing the identity of the postgraduate

trainee doctor who was allegedly raped and killed while on duty at the hospital.

### Arrest for sharing photo

A person was arrested in Kolkata for allegedly disclosing the identity on social media of the doctor who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and issuing threats to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, police said on Monday.

The arrest was made after a complaint was lodged at the Taltala police station, they added.

"A complaint was received that the person with Instagram username 'Kirtisocial' uploaded three stories related to the incident that recently took place at RG Kar MCH, disclosing the picture and identity of the victim," a police officer said.



Doctors during a protest over their safety in the wake of RG Kar Medical College incident, at Nirman Bhawan in New Delhi on Monday.

Pic: Shahbaz Khan/PTI

## Man kills two women, sexually assaults bodies

Barabanki (UP): The district administration here has invoked the National Security Act against a man accused of murdering two women and engaging in sexual activities with their bodies, officials said on Monday.

The NSA was invoked on Saturday against Amrendra Rawat (26), who was arrested last year for the women's murder in the Ramsanehi Ghat area, Additional Superintendent of Police (South) Akhilesh Narayan Singh said.

He was also booked under



the Gangsters Act in May last year, the police added.

Singh said the NSA was invoked considering the heinous nature of the crime, which would make it difficult for the accused to get bail.

"Rawat has confessed before us of murdering the women and then performing sexual acts with the bodies,"

he further said.

A strangled and dishevelled body of a 60-year old woman was discovered in a nearby forest in the Ramsanehi Ghat police station area on December 29, 2022.

"During investigation, it was found that the woman was raped after murder," Singh said, adding it was also found that a similar incident was reported earlier in December 2022.

Rawat was caught in January last year, while he was trying to kill an elderly woman.

### Karnataka CM files writ petition in HC

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday filed a writ petition in the High Court challenging the order of the Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot giving sanction for investigation against him in connection with irregularities in the allotment of alternative sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The CM submitted that the sanction order was issued without due application of mind, in violation of statutory mandates, and contrary to constitutional principles, including the advice of the Council of Ministers - PTI

## No talk yet with Champai: Marandi

Ranchi: Jharkhand BJP president Babul Marandi on Monday said that no talk was held yet with Champai Soren regarding his joining the saffron party.

Marandi said that Champai is a seasoned politician and he would himself decide his own path.

Amid speculation about a potential switch to the BJP, Champai reached Delhi on Sunday afternoon.

Later in a social media post, Champai Soren said that he experienced "bitter humiliation" as chief minister, which compelled him to seek an alternative path.

"No talk was held yet with



Champai Soren. He is a seasoned politician and has been part of the separate Jharkhand movement. He will himself decide his own path," Marandi said.

Mentioning Champai's post, he said, "It indicates that he was deeply hurt. He felt humiliated the way he

was removed from the CM's post."

Champai highlighted in the post that he had been asked to resign during the meeting of party legislators on July 3. He was taken back, as his self-respect was hurt.

The ex-CM said he had announced in the meeting, "a new chapter in my life is going to begin from today".

He further said he had three options. First to retire from politics, second to float a separate outfit, and third, if find any ally, to carry forward with them.

"From that day until now, and through the upcoming

Jharkhand Assembly elections, all options are open for me in this journey," Champai said.

Speaking over chief minister Hemant Soren's allegation that BJP poaches MLAs, Marandi said, "It means he (Hemant Soren) is saying his MLAs are 'Bikao' (ready to be sold). If you term all MLAs as 'Bikao', who will want to stay with you (CM). If any MLA expresses his grief, you (CM) should listen to him," Marandi said.

During a government function in Godda on Sunday, Chief Minister Hemant Soren accused BJP of poaching MLAs.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce

"The Citizenship (Amendment) Act has provided respect and safety that is your right. This is one of the best Raksha Bandhan celebrations of my life".

## 'Animal', 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' lead IIFA 2024 nominations

New Delhi: Action drama "Animal" and family drama "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" have emerged as the top nominees at the International Indian Film Academy Awards 2024, the organisers announced on Monday.

While "Animal", starring Ranbir Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna, led the competition with 11 nominations, "Rocky Aur Rani..." -- starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt --

came in a close second with 10 nods.

The nominees in the best picture category are: social dramas "12th Fail" and "Satyaprem Ki Katha", "Animal", "Rocky Aur Rani...", action thriller "Jawan", and "Sam Bahadur", based on the life of India's first field marshal Sam Manekshaw

In the direction category, the race is among Vidhu Vinod Chopra for "12th Fail", Sandeep Red-

dy Vanga for "Animal", Karan Johar for "Rocky Aur Rani...", Atlee for "Jawan", Siddharth Anand for "Pathaan" and Amit Rai for "OMG 2".

Bhatt ("Rocky Aur Rani..."), Deepika Padukone ("Pathaan"), Rani Mukerji ("Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway"), Kiara Advani ("Satyaprem Ki Katha") and Taapsee Pannu ("Dunki") will contend for the award of performance in a leading role (female).

In the performance in a leading role (male) category, the nominees are Vikrant Massey ("12th Fail"), Ranbir Kapoor ("Animal"), Ranveer Singh ("Rocky Aur Rani..."), Shah Rukh Khan ("Jawan"), Vicky Kaushal ("Sam Bahadur") and Sunny Deol ("Gadar 2").

In the performance in a supporting role (female) category, Triptii Dimri, who garnered massive fan following post her appearance in "Animal", is in the

competition with Geeta Agrawal Sharma ("12th Fail"), Sanya Malhotra ("Sam Bahadur") and Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi ("Rocky Aur Rani..."). "Rocky Aur Rani..." co-stars Dharmendra and Tota Roy Chowdhury have each secured a nomination in the performance in a supporting role (male) segment alongside Gajraj Rao of "Satyaprem Ki Katha", Anil Kapoor of "Animal" and Jaideep Ahlawat of "An Action Hero".

### NETAS & LADKI BAHIN



Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during Raksha Bandhan celebration with women in Thane on Monday.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Raksha Bandhan celebration with school children, in New Delhi on Monday.



President Draupadi Murmu during Raksha Bandhan celebration with school children, in New Delhi on Monday.



Women tie 'rakhis' to Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during Raksha Bandhan celebration and Kisan Tiranga Yatra, in Sehore district on Monday.



Patna Union Minister Chirag Paswan celebrates Raksha Bandhan festival with his sisters, in Patna on Monday.



Assam Chief Minister Hemanta Biswa Sarma during Raksha Bandhan celebration in Guwahati on Monday.



Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav being greeted during Raksha Bandhan celebration at the party office, in Lucknow on Monday.

# 'Kachre Se Azadi' with Mangrove Soldiers

## ISRO shares small satellite business

**New Delhi:** ISRO's latest satellite launch vehicle "SSLV" is the first rocket in its category to be ready for commercialisation with two others, 'Vikram' from Skyroot and 'Agnibaan' from Agnikul Cosmos, expected to vie for market share to place small satellites in orbit.

According to industry estimates, the satellite launch market in India is expected to grow from USD 720 million in 2022 to USD 3.5 billion by 2033 and small satellites are likely to be the most preferred modes for a number of applications ranging from providing internet connectivity to earth observation.

Space start-ups such as Pixxel and Satsure have already announced plans to have constellations of small satellites for the range of services they plan to offer and Indian launch vehicles will vie to be the preferred rockets to place these satellites in orbit.

"Larger launch vehicles are there, but with a large number of satellites being launched, companies do not want to wait, they want to launch a satellite as soon as they can and small vehicles are tailor made for them," Lt Gen A K Bhatt (ret'd), Director General of Indian Space Association, told PTI. Pixxel is also considering using ISRO's launch vehicles to place its hyper-spectral satellites in orbit later this year.

"Right now, of the six satellites we are building, three of them will launch with SpaceX and three with ISRO," Pixxel CEO Awais Ahmed told PTI in July.

- PTI



**Dharmesh Barai's Environment Life Foundation has made significant strides in environmental conservation and cleanup drives. The foundation, which mobilised over 75,000 volunteers, addresses crucial issues like untreated city waste entering oceans. Despite the successes, challenges persist, including the need for improved waste management systems. Future initiatives include expansion beyond Mumbai, aiming for a broader impact.**

By Esha Lohia

After the Independence Day 2020 flag-hoisting ceremony, Dharmesh Barai and his friends collected trash from Nerul Creek. They were motivated by the sight of two feet of waste, including thermocol, footwear, discarded lighting, and medical waste.

Dharmesh, who runs the 'Environment Life Foundation, defines its aim as "Every life depends on the environment, and the environment depends on every life".

This Independence Day, marked the 4th anniversary of the Mangroves Cleanup Drive with over 200 volunteers collecting one tonne of trash from the Shiv Mandir, Karave Jetty, Onkar Bhojne, a renowned Marathi cinema actor, and Deepak Lanjekar joined this initiative.

Over the past four years, this drive has mobilised 75,000 citizens and provided millions of lives with their natural habitats. Dharmesh says, "Cleanup drives are not a solution; they create awareness. The more people join us in the awareness campaigns, the more they

will evolve and make inherent changes in their lives. Once someone gets their hands dirty cleaning up other people's mess, they're less likely to be the ones making it. They will be able to educate their families and friends thereon."

**The Foundation of Environment Life** Dharmesh began his environmental journey as a college student, organising numerous plantation and waterfall cleanup drives. In 2014, he was deeply inspired by the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and decided to transform the joyous trips to nearby waterfall destinations into a cleanup drive. He organised his first waterfall cleanup drive with some colleagues, where they split into six teams and collected approximately 2 tonnes of waste in nearly three hours of work.

On August 15, 2020, he embarked on a new chapter with friends Rohan Bhosale and Shriram Shankar, launching the Mangrove Soldiers initiative under 'Environment Life'. This endeavour has since united residents, NGOs, corporations, and government officials in the shared goal of mangrove conservation.

Since then, the foundation has been arranging cleanup drives every Sunday. Currently, the foundation consists of seven core members and over 100 regular volunteers and has mobilised 75,000 volunteers for mangrove cleanups and over 10,000 for waterfall cleanups. Additional volunteers also support fort restoration and trekking route cleanup drives.

**The 200-Week Challenge**

Dharmesh and his foundation recently completed a 200-week-long initiative in June to restore a 35-kilometre mangrove forest along the Navi Mumbai coastline. Launched on Independence Day, 2020, the project gained support from locals, schools, NGOs, and colleges. With the help of 1,300 participants, they removed 10 tonnes of non-degradable trash, successfully reviving the designated mangrove areas over the past nine weeks.

The final phase focused on the Sarsool Jetty, cleared in nine weeks. With the mangroves now handed over to the forest department for continued care, this achievement marks a significant milestone in environmental conservation.

IRS officer Sameer Wankhede commended Dharmesh for inspiring community action and demonstrating the power of unity in protecting the environment.

**Constant Concern**

Throughout the cleanup drives and campaigns, a common issue of city waste being untreated before entering the ocean continues to persist. Dharmesh explains, "70% of the waste comes from nullahs, 30% is from the drainage. Drainage waste includes cigarette boxes, packets, spoons, etc whereas nullah waste includes sofas, suitcases, trolly bags, etc. There is no filtration in the drainage system so far and this persists to be a challenge."

The Environment Life Foundation is committed to comprehensive environmental solutions. Their impact extends beyond Mumbai, with established initiatives in Odisha and future projects planned for Goa. Dharmesh emphasises that the cleanup drives and campaigns are constant efforts to raise awareness; however, authorities should take strict measures to identify and treat the waste at its core.

## India's water vision to be ready by 2047

**New Delhi:** The Central Water Commission (CWC) is charting a new course with its Vision 2047, focusing on addressing the evolving challenges posed by climate change, its Chairperson Kushvinder Vora said.

In a conversation with PTI, Vora outlined the commission's strategic plan, which is divided into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals aimed at bolstering India's water management infrastructure.

"We are creating Vision 2047 for ourselves, keeping in view the challenges, especially climate change, which has led to new emerging issues," Vora said. He said the strategy involves a comprehensive approach to deal with the immediate, medium, and long-term needs of water management in the country.

In the short term, he said the CWC is concentrating on capacity building and the review and revision of existing guidelines. "Wherever needed, guidelines have to be upgraded, and new ideas must be brought in," Vora said. One of the key areas under review is the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) consideration, where the commission is working on new guidelines to assess risk and manage water flow from glacial lakes and rainfall.

The CWC is also focusing on improv-



ing monitoring capabilities, which Vora described as crucial for handling the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. "We are now seeing more rainfall in less time, leading to flood situations in urban areas, even in regions like Rajasthan. This is all due to climate change," he explained. For its mid-term goals, the CWC is venturing into new studies and areas of research, particularly through the use of remote-sensing technology. "We are doing most of our assessments through remote sensing, whether it's crop area evaluation or the performance assessment of irrigation projects," Vora said.

The CWC is also developing a mobile app to enhance the monitoring of water bodies, supported by multiple memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with various organisations.

Looking further ahead, the CWC's

long-term goals include the development of indigenous software for modelling exercises, a key component of their future plans. "We are soon launching a centre of excellence for modelling, which will cater to many of our future needs," Vora said. This centre will play a critical role in managing flood risks, particularly in the Himalayan region where glacial lake outbursts pose a significant threat, he added.

Vora explained the importance of these efforts, highlighting that water reaches dams in two ways - directly through rainfall and from glacial lakes, which can burst and cause flood-like situations.

He also said the government has decided to expand glacier monitoring in the Himalayan region, increasing the number from 902 to 2,500 to better predict and prevent disasters like GLOFs. "With climate change, risk analysis has become a crucial part of all our decisions, especially in water resources," he added.

The CWC continuously conducts risk analysis of dams, using hydrological data spanning 30 years to assess how flood conditions have evolved over time.

- PTI



Commuters move through waterlogged road during rain, in Chikkamagaluru, Sunday

Pic: PTI

## Project for microplastic contamination

**New Delhi:** Food regulator FSSAI has launched a project to assess microplastic contamination in food products and develop methods for its detection.

The FSSAI has launched an innovative project to tackle the growing concern of microplastic contamination in food, recognising microplastic pollution as an emerging threat that requires immediate attention.

According to an official statement, the project - Micro-and Nano-Plastics as Emerging Food Contaminants: Establishing Validated Methodologies and Understanding the Prevalence in Different Food Matrices - was started in March this year. The aim is to develop and validate analytical methods for detecting micro and nano-plastics in various food products, as well as as-

sess their prevalence and exposure levels in India. "The primary objectives of the project include developing standard protocols for micro/nano-plastic analysis, conducting intra- and inter-laboratory comparisons, and generating critical data on microplastic exposure levels among consumers."

- PTI

## What we can do about Gen Z's climate anxiety

By Diana Bogueva and Dora Marinova

**Perth:** In June 2024, 13 young people in Hawaii took on their state government in court and won the right to have greater input in climate policy.

They sued the state for infringing on their right to "a clean and healthful environment", as promised under the State constitution.

In victory, the young people forced a number of concessions including a pledge to pursue net zero by 2040 and over USD 40 million investment in electric vehicles over the next six years. Young people are turning

to activism as a way to process the emotional weight of a world in crisis.

From Greta Thunberg to Australia's Anjali Sharma, there are plenty of people in Gen Z who are taking action on climate.

Despite the United Nations also adding the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2022 which further opens the possibility to take governments to the courts, it's not easy. Gen Z is growing up in an era where the impacts of climate change are both immediate and undeniable and it's leaving them feeling

powerless. Generation Z - those born between 1995 and 2010 - make up 30 per cent of the global population. In Australia's latest census, Gen Z accounted for 18.2 per cent (or 4.6 million) of the country's 25 million population. Unlike previous generations, who had time to gradually adjust to the realities of environmental transformations, Generation Z is acutely aware of the ecological crises unfolding around them, leading to a deep sense of environmental anxiety.

**Distress and fear** As a result, many digitally



connected, globally aware Gen Zers experience intense climate anxiety, characterised by chronic fear, distress and deep concern for the planet's future.

A survey of Australian Gen Z university students was conducted between September 2021 and April

2022 with 446 participants which revealed that climate change is their top environmental concern.

They often feel let down by older generations, governments and institutions, whose actions seem inadequate in the face of the growing evidence about the

environmental threats the world and Australia in particular face.

More than 80 per cent of the young people participating in the survey expressed significant worry and many experiencing severe climate anxiety.

This anxiety manifests in various forms, including eco-anxiety, solastalgia (distress triggered by environmental changes) and climate grief, reflecting the complex emotional landscape of a generation coming of age amid a global environmental emergency.

The situation Gen Z faces and their future prospects are further exacerbated by

the complexity of other developments resulting in what is known as a polycrisis, a "great disagreement, confusion, or suffering that is caused by many different problems happening at the same time so that they together have a very big effect."

**Existential threat**

Eco-anxiety, a chronic fear of an environmental catastrophe, arises from the perception that climate change poses an existential threat.

For many in Gen Z, the overwhelming nature of this threat leads to persistent worry and stress. This is also fuelled by the sense

of urgency and responsibility they think they have to comply with.

Gen Z are witnessing their local natural environments and the broader global ecosystem undergo rapid, often destructive and irreversible changes, including biodiversity loss, species extinction and the degradation of ecosystems.

With 96 per cent of Australian Gen Zs believing that climate change is human-made, young people are experiencing heightened levels of stress, anxiety and depression as they grapple with the realities of a warming planet.

- 360info.ORG

# Chinese, Philippine ships collide again in disputed waters

**Taipei (Taiwan):** Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships collided at sea, damaging at least two vessels, in an encounter early Monday near a new flashpoint in their increasingly alarming confrontations in the disputed South China Sea.

Each blamed the other for the collision near Sabina Shoal, a disputed atoll in the Spratly Islands, where Vietnam and Taiwan also have overlapping claims. There were no reports of injuries.

China's coast guard accused the Philippines of deliberately crashing one of its ships into a Chinese vessel. It said in a statement on its website that two Philippine coast guard ships entered waters near the shoal, ignored a warning from the Chinese coast guard and intentionally collided with one of the Chinese boats at 3:24 am.

"The Philippine side is entirely responsible for the collision," spokesperson Gan Yu said. "We warn the



Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocation, otherwise it will bear all the consequences arising from that." Jonathan Malaya, assistant director-general of the Philippine government's National Security Council, accused the Chinese coast guard of falsely saying the Philippine coast guard ships had rammed its vessels.

Video and photographs,

including ones taken by journalists from a US TV network who were on board one of the Philippine coast guard ships, showed that the Chinese ships caused the collisions, Malaya told a news forum in Manila.

The Philippines' National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea said two of the coast guard ships, BRP Bagacay and BRP Cape Engaño, "encountered unlawful and aggressive maneu-

vers" from Chinese coast guard vessels while en route to Patag and Lawak islands, which are occupied by Filipino forces, in the contested region.

"These dangerous maneuvers resulted in collisions, causing structural damage to both Philippine Coast Guard vessels," the statement said.

The task force said the collision between BRP Cape Engano and one of the Chi-

nese ships created a hole in the deck of the Philippine ship about 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) in size.

About 16 minutes later, the other Philippine ship, BRP Bagacay, was rammed twice on its port and starboard sides by a different Chinese vessel, leading to structural damage, the task force said.

"This is the biggest structural damage we have incurred as a result of the dangerous maneuvers carried out by the Chinese coast guard," Commodore Jay Tarriela of the Philippine coast guard said at the news forum.

The task force said the Philippine coast guard "stands firm in its responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our maritime domain while addressing any threats to our national interests."

Gan, the Chinese coast guard spokesperson, said China claims "indisputable sovereignty" over the Sprat-

ly Islands, known in Chinese as the Nansha Islands, including Sabina Shoal and its adjacent waters. The Chinese name for Sabina Shoal is Xianbin Reef.

In a separate statement, he said a Philippine ship that was turned away from Sabina Shoal entered waters near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, ignoring the Chinese coast guard's warnings. "The Chinese coast guard took control measures against the Philippine ship in accordance with law and regulation," he added.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also blamed the Philippines for the incident. "Not only did they ignore China's coast guard's warnings, the vessels deliberately collided into Chinese coast guard vessels that were carrying out law enforcement operations in a dangerous manner," ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing Monday.

## Blinken, on ninth Mideast trip since Gaza war began



**Tel Aviv:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will use his ninth diplomatic mission to the Middle East since the start of the Israel-Hamas war to press for the quick conclusion of an elusive cease-fire agreement.

Blinken arrived in Israel on Sunday before what mediators have billed as a last push to reach a deal that will take place in Cairo later this week. He will meet with top Israeli officials on Monday before travelling to Egypt on Tuesday.

Late last week, the three countries mediating the proposed cease-fire reported progress on a deal under which Israel would halt most military operations in Gaza and release a number of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of hostages held by Hamas.

A senior official travelling with Blinken said his arrival in the region comes at a "critical time" in the cease-fire talks and the secretary would press all parties on the importance of concluding it quickly to end civilian suffering in Gaza and prevent the conflict from engulfing the region. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to preview Blinken's travels.

Shortly before Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting there are areas

where Israel can be flexible and unspecified areas where it won't be. "We are conducting negotiations and not a scenario in which we just give and give," he said.

In addition to Netanyahu, Blinken will meet Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and President Isaac Herzog on Monday.

On Friday, the US and fellow mediators Egypt and Qatar said they were closing in on a deal after two days of talks in Doha, with American and Israeli officials expressing cautious optimism. But Hamas has signalled resistance to what it called new demands by Israel.

The evolving proposal calls for a three-phase process in which Hamas would release all hostages abducted during its October 7 attack, which triggered the deadliest war fought between Israelis and Palestinians. In exchange, Israel would withdraw its forces from Gaza and release Palestinian prisoners.

Officials said the US has presented proposals to bridge all the gaps remaining between the Israeli and Hamas positions. Formal responses to the US outline are expected this week and could lead to a cease-fire declaration unless the talks collapse, as has happened with multiple previous efforts to end the 10-month-old war.

## Shrine vandalized again

**Tokyo:** Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, which honors Japan's war dead, including convicted World War II war criminals, was vandalized again overnight Monday.

"It is deplorable that an act seeking to denigrate the shrine's dignity has happened again," the shrine said in a statement.

In May, a stone pillar at Yasukuni was spraypainted red. A Chinese suspect was



arrested in July. Neither the police nor the Shinto shrine would go into details of the latest vandalism, saying an investigation

was ongoing. Japanese media reports said graffiti reading "toilet" in Chinese, written with what appeared to be black

markers, was found Monday morning on a stone pillar near the shrine's arch.

Asian nations that suffered from Japanese aggression before and during World War II see Yasukuni as a symbol of militarism.

Convicted Class A war criminals, including Hideki Tojo, Japan's wartime prime minister, are among the 2.5 million Japanese war dead enshrined at Yasukuni. - AP

## 1 dead, 6 missing as boat sink

**Rome:** A sailboat believed to be carrying foreign tourists capsized and sank off Sicily in bad weather early Monday, and seven people were missing, authorities said.

Fifteen people were rescued from the 49-metre sailboat, but another seven were unaccounted for, said Luca Cari, a spokesman for the Italian fire rescue service.

He said a helicopter and rescue boats from the coast guard and fire rescue ser-

vice were at the scene searching for the missing. The boat capsized around 5 am off Palermo.

Local media said a fierce storm, including water spouts, battered the area overnight. The daily Il Giornale de Sicilia reported the sailboat was flying a British flag and had mostly British passengers on board, but also people from New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Ireland and British-French citizens.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



**Paetongtarn Shinawatra,** Prime Minister, Thailand to Narendra Modi

**"I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our bilateral relations, especially in the areas of trade and investment, culture, people-to-people contact, and tourism, in particular to increase air travel between both countries."**

## 2 Russians rescued, 1 missing in Pak

**Islamabad:** A Pakistani army helicopter rescued two Russians while one is missing after their team was hit by a pile of ice on a treacherous peak in the country's north, an official said Monday.

Karrar Haidri, the secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, said a rescue mission was underway to safely bring down two more climbers who were part of the five-member Russian team stranded on Gasherbrum peak in the Karakoram range after the ice formation hit their team.

"Unfortunately, the expedition encountered a devastating disaster. As the team ascended the mountain, an ice formation, possibly a serac, collapsed, unleashing a catastrophic event," Haidri said.

He said the rescue mission was launched on Saturday after the ice hit the climbers, who were on a mission to retrieve the body of a climber lost on the same mountain in 2023.



**External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba before a meeting in New Delhi on Monday.**

## Seven killed in Nepal landslide

**Kathmandu:** Seven people from two families were killed in separate incidents of landslides triggered by incessant rains in western Nepal in the last 24 hours, police said on Monday.

Four members of a family were buried alive in the Bajhang district as a landslide swept away a house at the Bungal municipality-10

on Sunday night, according to the police.

Those killed included 50-year-old Kali Dhami, her daughter-in-law and grandchildren aged six and three, said the police.

However, six other members of the family managed to escape from nature's fury.

In the Jajarkot district, a

landslide buried a temporary shelter in the Majhagaun of Nalgad municipality-2 in the early morning on Monday, killing three members of a single family.

According to the police, the family had been living in a temporary shelter after their house collapsed in the earthquake last year.

# Thousands expected in Chicago

**Chicago:** Thousands of activists are expected to converge on Chicago this week for the Democratic National Convention, hoping to call attention to abortion rights, economic injustice and the war in Gaza.

While Vice President Kamala Harris has energized crowds of supporters as she prepares to accept the Democratic nomination, progressive activists maintain their mission remains the same.

Activists say they learned lessons from last month's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee and are predicting bigger crowds and more robust demonstrations in Chicago, a city with deep social activism roots.

Demonstrations are expected every day of the convention and, while their



### CALL FOR GAZA CEASE-FIRE

agendas vary, many activists agree an immediate cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war is the priority.

Things kicked off Sunday on the convention's eve with a march along Michigan Avenue against the war in Gaza and for abortion and LG-BTQ+ rights. The march began in late afternoon and stretched into the night.

Police lined the march route and there were no

signs of major conflict. At one point, anti-abortion activists staged a small counter-protest.

Police did not immediately respond to an email asking if there had been arrests more than three hours into the march.

Organizer Linda Loew

said even though Democrats have pushed to safeguard reproductive rights at home, the issue is international. They marched in solidarity with people everywhere who struggle for the right to control what happens to their bodies, as well as to protest the money the US spends to back wars that could be used for healthcare, she said.

"We believe that the billions of dollars that continue to flow to the state of Israel and the flow of weapons are having an inordinate and horrific impact, but in particular on women, children and the unborn," she said. "All of these things are tied together."

The largest group, the Coalition to March on the DNC, has planned demonstrations on the first and

last days of the convention. Organizers say they expect at least 20,000 activists, including students who protested the war on college campuses.

"The people with power are going to be there," said Liz Rathburn, a University of Illinois Chicago student organizer. "People inside the United Center are the people who are going to be deciding our foreign policy in one way or another."

Activists sued the city earlier this year, saying restrictions over where they can demonstrate violate their constitutional rights.

Chicago leaders rejected their requests for permits to protest near United Center on the city's West Side, where the convention is taking place

- AP

## Police reshuffle in Dhaka

**Dhaka:** The chiefs of 32 police stations in Dhaka have been transferred, days after the transfer of the 18 other officers-in-charge, in a major reshuffle after the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led government in Bangladesh, a media report said on Monday.

The order for the transfer came at midnight on Sunday, the bdnews24.com news portal reported.

With the latest transfer, the heads of all 50 police stations under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have been transferred now.

The other 18 officers in charge had been transferred on August 13.

According to the report, those transferred will no longer have the "command power" they did as chiefs.

## Three security personnel killed in terror attack

**Peshawar:** Three security personnel were killed as militants from the Afghanistan side launched a major attack at a border security post in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province early on Monday, security authorities said.

The attack comes a day after four security personnel were killed in two separate terror attacks in the same province.

In the early hours of Monday, the militants targeted a Pakistani border security post in the Wara Mamund area in Bajaur district on the Pak-Afghan border in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province.

The ensuing gun battle resulted in the death of three Pakistani security person-

nel, the sources said, adding that the attack took place in the Gardo sector.

Earlier on Sunday, a policeman and a Station House Officer (SHO) were killed after militants attacked with heavy weaponry the Bargaji police station in the militancy-affected southern Lakki Marwat district of the same KPK province.

The policeman died on the spot while the injured SHO, who had sustained multiple bullet wounds during the exchange of fire, succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

The militants took refuge in a house close to the police station before the attack. In another incident on Sunday, at least two Frontier Constabulary security personnel were killed.

EDITORIAL

Monsoon of Mahayuti's discontent

Like a shotgun marriage, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) now appears to be suing for divorce with its ally, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

In the intricate dance of Indian politics where alliances are as fluid as the Ganges, the simmering tensions between Ajit Pawar and BJP have again resurfaced ahead of the critical Maharashtra Assembly election after saffron party workers waved black flags at Pawar during the latter's campaign rally in rural Pune.

Within the ruling Mahayuti coalition, while CM Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and the BJP are ideologically 'organic' allies, Ajit Pawar, who split the NCP founded by his uncle Sharad Pawar in July last year to align with the BJP, is the odd man out.

Just how uneasy is this marriage of convenience became abundantly clear after the Mahayuti's disastrous performance in the recent Lok Sabha election where the BJP scored a mere nine of 29 seats it contested on.

This prompted the BJP's parent body, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), to ascribe the former's poor performance to its alliance with Ajit Pawar in controversial editorials in the RSS mouth-piece Organiser.

Dissonant notes are now being struck with increasing frequency by the Maharashtra BJP leadership over the need to keep up the alliance with the NCP faction ahead of the crucial Assembly election later this year.

For the BJP, taking Pawar's NCP faction along has neither benefited the BJP nor Ajit Pawar as the latter failed to win the Pawar clan's citadel of Baramati. BJP leaders claim half-hearted campaigning by the Ajit Pawar-led NCP caused defeats on several seats.

While Ajit Pawar's family's political legacy and his own experience in state governance make him a formidable force, his ambitions and assertiveness are increasingly at odds with the BJP's overarching vision for the state.

The undivided NCP's vote base has always comprised Marathas, along with a large number of Muslim and Dalit voters, as well as a section of OBCs. But there was no evidence that this vote base transferred to the BJP during the Lok Sabha election.

This makes the BJP's alliance with Ajit Pawar quite pointless. BJP leader Devendra Fadnis has often said his party's relations with the NCP were merely "strategic" and born of thoroughly pragmatic considerations, unlike its organic alliance with Mr. Shinde's Shiv Sena. Has the moment for the BJP to rethink on its allies arrived?

NATIONAL INTEREST

J&K Election: A Defining Moment



By Kiran D. Tare

The 2024 Jammu & Kashmir election, the first major vote since the abrogation of Article 370, is a crucial test for Indian democracy in the Valley. It will gauge the success of Narendra Modi's policies against deep-seated local discontent, historical tensions, and persistent security threats. The outcome could significantly impact J&K's political future, shaping the region's path towards stability and integration.

As Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) prepares for its first major electoral exercise since the abrogation of Article 370, the 2024 election will not merely be a contest for power but a referendum on the future of democracy in the Valley.

The outcome will have far-reaching implications, not just for the people of J&K but for the broader narrative of Indian democracy. The election will reveal whether the Narendra Modi-led NDA's policies have succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the populace or whether the quest for peace and stability remains elusive.

From Insurgency to Article 370

Once a princely state, Kashmir has long been a flashpoint in South Asia, with its roots of conflict stretching back to the partition of British India in 1947. The region is a battleground for competing nationalisms, with India and Pakistan claiming it but only having control over certain areas.

The insurgency that began here in the late 1980s, fuelled by a combination of local discontent and external support, led to widespread violence, human rights abuses, and economic stagnation.

On August 5, 2019, the BJP-led central government under PM Modi took the momentous decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which had granted J & K special autonomy. This move was presented as a means to fully integrate J&K into the Indian Union, with promises of economic development, improved security, and political stability. The abrogation was met with mixed reactions—celebrated by many across India but met with scepticism and opposition by parties like the Congress and some in J&K and beyond.

As the ruling party, the BJP is expected to leverage its position of power and the narrative of development and security post-Article 370 abrogation. The party's strategy in the coming election will likely focus on showcasing the infrastructure projects initiated in the region and the promise of economic growth. However, the BJP must contend with the lingering discontent over the abrogation and how it was executed.



A dominant force in J&K politics for decades, the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (NC), led by the Abdullah family, is poised to be a formidable challenger. The party has consistently opposed the abrogation of Article 370, framing it as an assault on the region's identity and autonomy. The NC's campaign is expected to revolve around promises to restore the region's special status and push back against what it perceives as central government overreach.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), another key player led by Mehbooba Mufti, has also been vocal in its opposition to the scrapping of Article 370. The PDP is likely to focus on addressing the alienation felt by many in the region. However, the party has faced internal challenges and a shrinking support base since its controversial alliance with the BJP earlier, which may affect its performance. Apni Party, a relatively new entrant to the political landscape founded by Altaf Bukhari, positions itself as a centrist force advocating for pragmatic politics and development. Distancing itself from the polarising debates on Article 370, the party focuses instead on issues like job creation, infrastructure, and good governance. Its success will depend on appealing to voters tired of traditional politics and yearning for tangible progress.

Then there is the Congress party, which has struggled to maintain a strong foothold in J&K in recent years. The party's stance on Article 370 has been ambiguous,

with leaders airing conflicting views.

The Stakes

The region's political landscape has been profoundly altered by the events of 2019, and the election will test whether the promises of development and integration made by the central government resonate with the electorate.

While violence has decreased, the spectre of terrorism remains, with sporadic attacks continuing to disrupt the fragile peace. There has been an upsurge in militancy in Jammu since the beginning of the year. In January 2024, terrorists gunned down seven civilians in Dhangri village, and Captain Deepak Singh was killed in last week's encounter in Doda. The election will naturally take place under tight security, with the government keen to project an image of normalcy and progress. Yet, deep-seated mistrust between the local population and the central government, the legacy of violence, and the geopolitical sensitivities surrounding Kashmir all pose significant hurdles. Nevertheless, the 2024 election has the potential to be a transformative moment, offering a chance for J & K to redefine its future in a way that aligns with the aspirations of its people while ensuring long-term peace and stability in the region.

In this most delicate of regions, the ballot box will speak volumes about the past, present, and future of a land that has long been at the heart of South Asia's geopolitical chessboard.

GLOBAL WATCH

Ukraine's Push into Kursk: A New Chapter in an Age-Old Struggle

The latest Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk region marks a significant escalation in a conflict deeply rooted in centuries of historical entanglements.

After months of being on the defensive, the Ukrainian forces' venture into the Russian region of Kursk on August 6 has transformed the narrative of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The incursion into Kursk, considered a safe Russian bastion away from the frontlines, represents the most substantial cross-border operation by Ukraine since the war began in February 2022. This audacious move is fraught with historical implications.

Historical Precedents

To understand the significance of Ukraine's latest offensive, one must delve into the complex history of the Russo-Ukrainian relationship. Acclaimed Harvard-based historian Serhii Plokhy has underscored the cyclical nature of this conflict, tracing it back to the formation of the 'Kyivan Rus' in the 10th century - a polity both Russians and Ukrainians claim as their cultural and political ancestor.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—a moment when Ukraine could finally assert its independence. Yet, as Plokhy notes, the dissolution of the Soviet empire, instead of erasing the deep-seated



grievances, reignited them. Subsequent decades have been marked by a tug-of-war over Ukraine's identity, sovereignty, and geopolitical orientation. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its subsequent support for separatist movements in eastern Ukraine were not isolated incidents but part of a larger pattern of historical domination and resistance.

A Tactical and Symbolic Move

Kursk has historically been a key strategic location. During World War II, it was the site of the largest tank battle in history, where Soviet forces halted the German advance in 1943. The region's symbolism is not lost on the Ukrainian leadership. By striking deep into Russian territory, Kyiv aims to demonstrate its resilience and capability, turning the tables on a country that has long treated Ukraine as a subordinate.

During WWII, the German Wehrmacht, determined to regain the initiative lost at Stalingrad, launched Operation Citadel, a bold offensive

aimed at encircling and annihilating Soviet forces. But the Red Army had prepared an elaborate defensive strategy, and Kursk became a graveyard for Hitler's ambitions.

The significance of Kursk is hard to overstate. For the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, it was a signal that the tide had turned irrevocably in their favour. The outcome was not just a military victory, but a psychological one, too. It shattered the aura of German invincibility and emboldened the Soviet command to drive Hitler's armies right up to Berlin.

Fast forward to 2024. Like the Soviet defenders at Kursk, Ukrainian forces are not merely fighting for strategic gains but to shift the narrative of the conflict. The symbolism of pushing into Russian soil—of turning the tables on an aggressor—is powerful. It suggests that Ukraine, like the Soviets before them, is determined to transform a war of defence into one of offense by bringing the reality of war closer to the Russian populace.

STATES WATCH

Puducherry demands statehood

A long-pending demand, the plea for statehood to this union territory echoed once again in the state Assembly earlier this week, when the House passed a unanimous resolution expressing its sentiments with the Centre on the matter.

The territorial Assembly had in the past adopted resolutions on 15 occasions seeking statehood. The election manifestos of all political parties released during the run up to either Assembly or Lok Sabha polls all along had been insisting they would strive hard for ensuring statehood to Puducherry, a coastal town located about 170 km from Chennai.

Puducherry and its outlying regions of Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam located as enclaves either in Tamilnadu, Kerala or Andhra Pradesh had been together as a union territory since their merger with the Indian Union through a referendum in 1954.

It has been the contention of the parties coming to power that the lack of full-fledged powers to the elected government at had been a major handicap. They state that even to introduce a Bill in the territorial Assembly, the consent of the Centre is necessary. The House had adopted a resolution on August 14 on the statehood issue, with all parties backing the motion.

Chief Minister N Rangasamy, who heads the AINRC-BJP coalition government, has been pressing the plea for statehood as he is of the view that in the present constitutional status of



Puducherry being a Union Territory, the decisions of the elected government could not be implemented expeditiously as several hurdles have to be overcome.

He had recently said that "the only solution for all the difficulties the territorial government is facing is conferment of statehood on Puducherry."

Former Puducherry Chief Minister and senior Congress leader V Narayanasamy said statehood was 'absolutely' necessary and re-affirmed his party's support for the cause.

Want of statehood had been standing in the way of government not being able to implement its decisions, members belonging to both the ruling and opposition blocks point out more often than not. The territorial Assembly had in the past adopted resolutions on 15 occasions to seek statehood.

It is also the grievance of the territorial government that Puducherry has not been presently accommodated in the Central Finance Commission. The devolution of central funds would be more if Puducherry is included in the Commission.

Frequent tussles between the elected government and the then Lt Governor Kiran Bedi during the previous Congress regime headed by

Narayanasamy had affected the decision-making of the elected government. Whenever differences of opinion cropped up between the two constitutional authorities in the past, the matter used to be referred to the Union Home Ministry for its opinion.

For instance, when a question arose whether the free rice scheme be implemented either by supplying rice to the ration card holders through fair price shops as decided by the elected Congress government or people be paid in cash equivalent to the quantum of rice through their bank accounts as was insisted by the then LG Bedi, it was referred to the Union Home Ministry for its decision. Bedi had the last laugh.

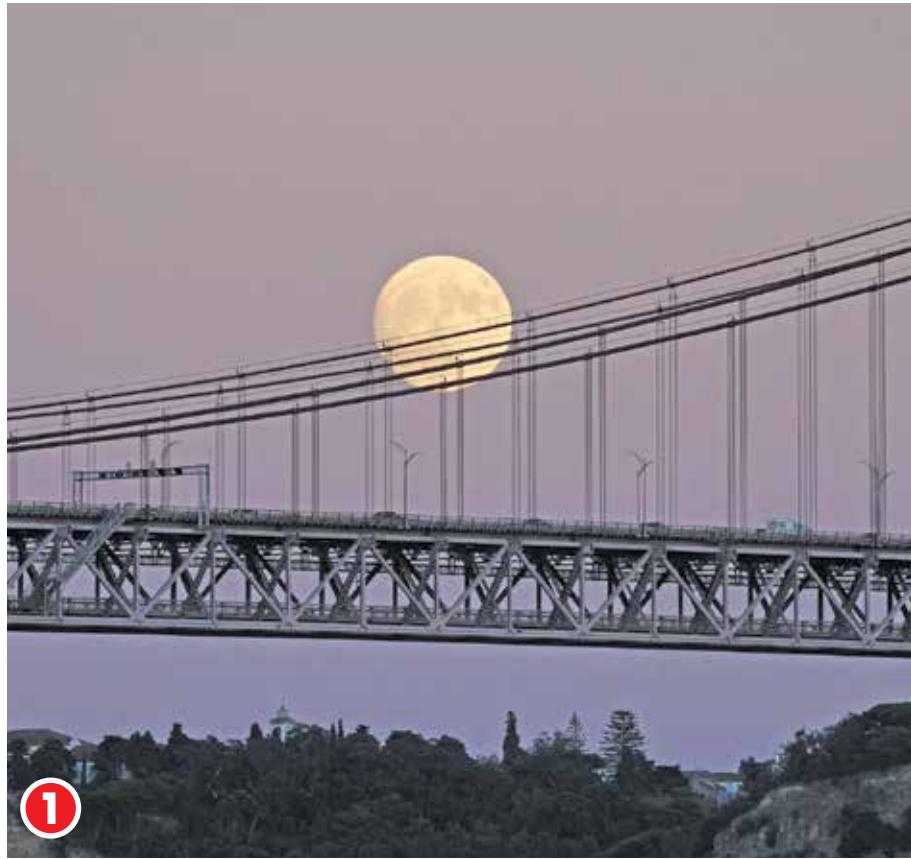
Recently, the incumbent government had decided to supply free rice through ration shops. This was approved in-principle in June this year by the then Lt Governor C P Radhakrishnan. It is the contention of the opposition parties that now that the Union Territory has the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) as a part of the AINRC coalition ministry, there would be no difficulty in getting statehood.

The demand for statehood has thus been intensified now more than ever with the legislators becoming optimistic of achieving the goal.

Though largely symbolic, Ukraine's daring incursion into Russia's Kursk region marks a shift in the narrative of a conflict deeply rooted in centuries of historical entanglements.

The Puducherry Assembly has passed a resolution demanding statehood to the Union territory. Why this long pending demand has suddenly cropped up and what are the political dynamics behind the demand?





### KALEIDOSCOPE

1. A nearly full supermoon rises behind the April 25th Bridge across the Tagus River in Lisbon, Portugal on Sunday
2. Girls tie 'rakhi on wrists of a Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the occasion of Rakshabandhan on Monday.
3. Attari Women tie 'rakhi on wrists of a Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the occasion of Rakshabandhan festival at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah Border post, about 35km from Amritsar on Monday.
4. Jammu Devotees offer prayers at Aap Shambhu Temple on the last 'Somwar' of the holy month of Shravan, in Jammu on Monday.
5. Protesters demonstrate prior to the Democratic National Convention on Sunday

All Picture PTI AP



## THE BIG FACE-OFF

### PART - I

Donald Trump and Kamala Harris offer worlds-apart contrasts on top issues in presidential race



Vice President Kamala Harris has replaced President Joe Biden atop the presidential ticket, but his “finish the job” campaign mantra can still largely apply to her top policy goals. She’s promising to continue a lot of what Biden was doing during the past four years if she’s elected to four of her own. Former President Donald Trump, for his part, is itching to get back to the White House and accomplish what he didn’t during his first term. On nearly every issue, the choices — if the winner gets his or her way — are sharply defined.

- AP

The former president often brags about appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe v. Wade, ending the constitutional right to an abortion. After dodging questions about when in pregnancy he believes the procedure should be restricted, Trump announced last spring that decisions on access and cutoffs should be left to the states. He said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law. But he’s declined to say whether he would try to limit access to the abortion pill mifepristone. He told Time magazine that it should also be left up to states to determine whether to prosecute women for abortions or to monitor their pregnancies.

#### ABORTION

Like Biden, Harris has criticized bans on abortion in Republican-controlled states and promised as president to block any potential nationwide ban should one clear a future GOP-run Congress. Harris was the Democrats’ most visible champion of abortion rights even while Biden was still in the race. She has promoted the administration’s efforts short of federal law — including steps to protect women who travel to obtain abortions and limit how law enforcement collects medical records.

His mantra for one of his top policy priorities: “DRILL, BABY, DRILL.” Trump, who in the past cast climate change as a “hoax” and harbors a particular disdain for wind power, says it’s his goal for the U.S. to have the cheapest energy and electricity in the world. He’d increase oil drilling on public lands, offer tax breaks to oil, gas and coal producers, speed the approval of natural gas pipelines and roll back the Biden administration’s aggressive efforts to get people to switch to electric cars, which he argues have a place but shouldn’t be forced on consumers. He has also pledged to re-exit the Paris Climate Accords, end wind subsidies and eliminate regulations imposed and proposed by the Biden administration targeting energy-inefficient kinds of lightbulbs, stoves, dishwashers and shower heads.

#### CLIMATE/ENERGY

As a senator from California, Harris was an early sponsor of the Green New Deal, a sweeping series of proposals meant to swiftly move the U.S. to fully green energy that is championed by the Democratic Party’s most progressive wing. Harris also said during her short-lived 2020 presidential campaign that she opposed offshore drilling for oil and hydraulic fracturing. But during her three and a half years as vice president, Harris has adopted more moderate positions, focusing instead on implementing the climate provisions of the Biden administration’s Inflation Reduction Act. That provided nearly \$375 billion for things like financial incentives for electric cars and clean energy projects. The Biden administration has also enlisted more than 20,000 young people in a national “Climate Corps,” a Peace Corps-like program to promote conservation.

After refusing to accept his loss to Biden in 2020, Trump hasn’t committed to accepting the results this time. He’s repeatedly promised to pardon the Jan. 6 defendants jailed for assaulting police officers and other crimes during the attack on the Capitol. He vows to overhaul the Justice Department and FBI “from the ground up,” aggrieved by the criminal charges the department has brought against him. He also promises to deploy the National Guard to cities such as Chicago that are struggling with violent crime, and in response to protests, and has also vowed to appoint a special prosecutor to go after Biden.

#### DEMOCRACY/RULE OF LAW

Like Biden, Harris has decried Trump as a threat to the nation’s democracy. But, in attacking her opponent, the vice president has leaned more heavily into her personal background as a prosecutor and contrasted that with Trump being found guilty of 34 felony counts in a New York hush money case and in being found liable for fraudulent business practices and sexual abuse in civil court. The vice president has also talked less frequently than Biden did about Trump’s denial that he lost the 2020 presidential election and his spurring on the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol. When she’s interrupted during rallies with supporters’ “lock him up” chants directed at Trump, Harris responds that the courts can “handle that” and “our job is to beat him in November.”

# Aim is to win GOLD with a new record

By Amit Anand

New Delhi: Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil wants to improve upon his world record in his bid to defend his title in the Men's F64 category at the Paris Paralympics Games. Sumit, along with Bhagyashree Jadhav (shot put, F34 category) will be Indian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics Games to be held from August 28 to September 8, 2024.

He had set a world record thrice in the

Tokyo Paralympics and won the gold medal with the best throw of 68.55 metres.

He bettered it with a new world record throw of 70.83 metres at the 2023 Para World Championships and further



improved it at the Hangzhou Para Asian Games (2023) to win the gold with an effort of 73.29 metres. F64 category deals with problems in Lower limb/s. Athlete competing with prosthesis affected by limb deficiency and leg length difference. "My long-term goal is to achieve a distance of 80 meters but in the Paris Paralympics, I will try to win the gold medal with an effort of 75 meters,"

the 26-year-old told PTI-Bhasha in an exclusive interview.

The athlete, who lost one of his limb in a road accident in 2015, won the gold medal at the Para World Championship in May this year with an effort of 69.50 metres.

Sumit said: "My throws during practice have been quite consistent. I have worked hard on increasing strength without changing my technique. I will try to improve my previous record."

When asked about the pressure of being defending champion and being the Indian flag bearer, he said, "There is no pressure right now but things will be known after reaching Paris. Once you reach the Games village or at competition venue, things become a lit-

tle different. I will try to do my best without taking pressure."

"I want to enjoy this moment. For the first time, such a large and strong contingent from India is going to the Paralympics and I feel proud to be the flag bearer," he added.

The Indian contingent comprises 84 athletes across 12 disciplines for the Paralympics.

This Padma Shri awardee said, "Being a flag bearer in an event like Paralympics is a different kind of emotion. This is the first time I will be a part of the opening ceremony of the Paralympics."

"At the time of the Tokyo Paralympics, there were a lot of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I reached late there according to the schedule of my competition."

## The policy hurts the players: Jaspal Rana

New Delhi: Ace shooter Rana has slammed the national federation's "ever-changing" Olympic selection policy, saying that it has hurt some of the most promising talents in the past and will damage more youngsters if there is no consistency going forward.



Rana, a pistol legend in his own right who won three Asiad gold medals in the 2006 edition, hardly minced words as he questioned the federation's tendency to make last-minute changes to its policy, and its stubborn refusal to acknowledge or facilitate the presence of shooters' personal coaches at national camps and trials.

"The (federation's) selection policy changes every six months. I met the sports minister and told him 'get the selection policy from the federation. Let them decide... whatever they decide, right or wrong, we are not

discussing that, and then stick to it'.

"You will see the difference (in the performance of shooters)," said the decorated marksman.

Several talented shooters like Saurabh Chaudhary, the only one to make the 10m air pistol final at the Tokyo Games, and Asian Games gold-medallist pistol shooter Jitu Rai faded away in a matter of few of years at a time when they were among the brightest prospects for Olympic glory. Rana said the system failed them and many more.

"Where is (pistol shooter)

Saurabh Chaudhary, where is (Asian Games gold medalist pistol shooter) Jitu Rai? Does anybody talk about them? No. Are we talking about (10m air rifle shooter) Arjun Babuta, who finished fourth in Paris? He missed the medal by a fraction," the firebrand 48-year-old asked.

"Nobody is thinking how to get him back on the platform (again)," said Rana, who was allegedly told to leave the Karni Singh ranges by the federation's High Performance Director Pierre Beauchamp during the Paris Olympics Selection Trials.

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) amended its selection criteria in 2021 after a second successive medal-less Olympic outing in Tokyo, drastically reducing the bonus points awarded to quota winners and re-introducing trials to decide the final squad after a considerable gap.

Earlier, the composition of the final squads was at NRAI's discretion and quotas used to be swapped if the federation did not consider a shooter good enough.

Names were finalised based on NRAI's own obscure assessment of the shooters' performance leading up to the Games, causing anxiety among even the best of performers.

But even with the introduction trials, there was no consistency and NRAI faced criticism for restricting the number of shooters who could aim for an Olympic berth to just top five based on international and camp performances.

This made it impossible to even have a full field of eight shooters at the trials, which was widely ridiculed and criticised.

Rana said he wasn't against change but would like more consistency during an Olympic cycle.

## Sumit Nagal bows out

Winston-Salem (US): India's top singles player Sumit Nagal bowed out of the Winston-Salem Open, an ATP 250 event, after a straight set defeat against Borna Coric in the first round, here.

### WINSTON-SALEM OPEN

Nagal lost 4-6 2-6 to the Croatian player in one hour and 10 minutes.

Nagal converted the only breakpoint he got in the contest while dropping his serve four times.

In the doubles draw, former junior national champion Dhakshineswar Suresh will feature along with British partner Luca Pow. Dhakshineswar, who is in US College circuit, could not qualify for the singles main draw, falling in the second round of the qualifying event 3-6 4-6 to American fourth seed Learner Tien.

## Priority will be improvement in quality of football

New Delhi: All India Football Federation's (AIFF) newly-appointed secretary general Anilkumar on Monday said his top priority is to "improve the quality" of football in the country while involving each and every stakeholder, such as the FIFA, clubs, state associations and governments.

An experienced sports administrator, Anilkumar was welcomed at the Football House by the AIFF treasurer Kipa Ajay in the presence of deputy secretary general M Satyanarayan.

"So, the priority will be the improvement of quality of football," Anilkumar, who took charge on Monday, told the AIFF website.

"I don't know how long we will take to make it at that level. But still we are starting with the hope that we can do something better. We will not



give up until we succeed.

"And along with you, all Indian football fans, we will continue to work across India with those who love football, who support Indian football," he added.

### AIFF'S NEW SECRETARY GENERAL SPEAKS

Anilkumar felt when the quality improves, the spectator turnout and viewership will improve, and the money will come to all areas of foot-

ball. The newly-appointed secretary general said that though Indian football has been growing since many years, it may not have reached the expected level if one looks at the FIFA rankings.

"So, we have a huge responsibility to improve that ranking. Our focus will be to work together with all the stakeholders to improve the quality of Indian football and make it more acceptable at the international level.

"With the executive committee's direction, and along with our team at the AIFF headquarters, we will do better things to improve the system."

He said the federation will soon sit with all the clubs and investors for a discussion on the way forward, and will seek help from the state governments as well as the Centre.

## Find it hard to fathom playing T20 WC in Bangladesh: Alyssa Healy

Sydney: Australia skipper Alyssa Healy has said it might not be right to go ahead with the women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in October as it would put a lot of pressure on the country which is still recovering from the large-scale violence and protests that left hundreds dead.

The country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India with Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus being made the chief of the interim government.

The women's T20 World Cup is scheduled in Bangladesh from

October 3-19 with 10 teams, including defending champions Australia, competing in the event.

"I'd find it hard to fathom playing there at the moment, as a human being, I feel like it might be the wrong thing to do," Healy was quoted as saying by AAP on Cricket Australia.

"(That would be) taking resources away from a country that is really struggling. They're needing everyone they can possibly get in there helping people that are dying."

Healy, however, said

that the final call rests with the International Cricket Council, which is expected to make a decision this week.

"There's obviously bigger factors at play than putting a cricket tournament on in Bangladesh at the moment... but I'll leave it to the ICC to work out," she added.

Australia recently played a white-ball series in Bangladesh with all the six matches -- three ODIs and an equal number of T20Is -- being played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka.

It was Australia's first visit to the coun-

try since the 2014 T20 World Cup, and was pivotal to their preparations for the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh.

However, Healy was confident that even if the tournament is shifted elsewhere, the entire exercise won't go waste. Australia had won all six matches held in March-April.

"Going there and getting used to those conditions and slow turning wickets has probably put us in a good place," Healy said.

"It's more about what our team looks like, and what people

are working on individually headed into a World Cup on the subcontinent.

"Whether it is in Bangladesh, or it's not in Bangladesh, I don't think affects us greatly with the make-up of what we've got. We're well prepared for whatever is thrown at us."



## Jeev finishes tied-12th

Lusaka (Zambia): Jeev Milkha Singh started the final round with three birdies in the first four holes and finished tied 12th at the Zambia Legends Championship.

In between his superb start and the great finish, Jeev had one birdie, an eagle two and three bogeys, as he gets ready for the HSBC Legends Indian Championship which will be hosted by Jeev himself.

South Africa's Keith Horne secured his maiden Legends Tour title in stunning style with some great front-running at Bonanza Golf Club, near Lusaka.

The nine-time Sunshine Tour champion opened the day with a three-shot lead and got off to a great start



with three birdies in the first four holes.

Eventual runner-up Adilson da Silva stayed on his tail as he made it to the turn in five-under-par for the day, but he never got closer than within two shots of the leader.

Horne had eight birdies, four on each side of the turn. After 11 birdies in the second round against two bogeys in his 9-under, Horne was dominant during the week.

- PTI

# Mike Tyson feels good after a health scare

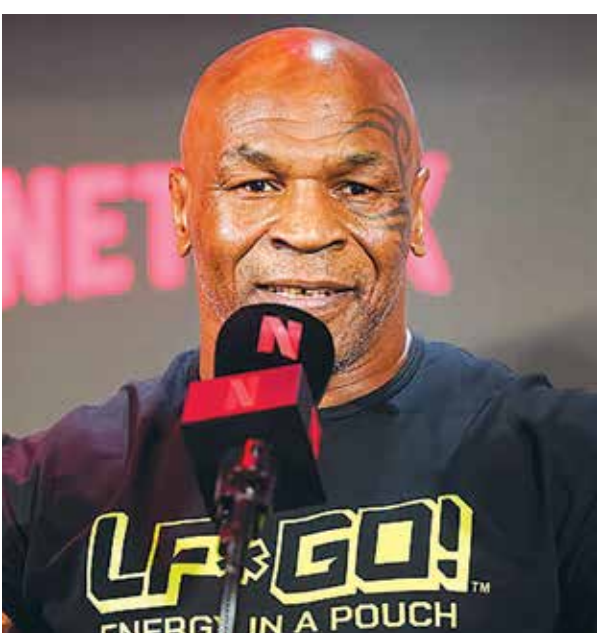
New York: Mike Tyson is 58 years old and coming off a health scare that forced the postponement of his return to the ring.

The boxer once considered the most dangerous man in the world could be putting himself in danger by putting the gloves on again. Yet he was quick to respond Sunday when asked why he was going through with his bout against Jake Paul.

"Because I can. Who else can do it but me? Who else is he going to fight to make this happen?" Tyson said, motioning toward the crowd at a packed press conference where fans cheered the former heavyweight champion and booed Paul.

"We've just got to listen to the facts. We've got a YouTube fighting the greatest fighter that ever lived."

Tyson and Paul restarted the buildup to their match



that is now scheduled for November 15 at the home of the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas. They had been set to meet July 20 be-

fore Tyson became nauseous and dizzy on a flight from Miami to Los Angeles in May, with his representatives attributing the episode

to an ulcer problem.

Tyson said on Sunday he resumed training two or three weeks ago and feels fine.

"Hey listen, I'm just ready," Tyson said.

The undisputed heavyweight champion 1987 to 1990, Tyson (50-6, 44 KOs) retired in 2005 before coming back for an exhibition match against Roy Jones in 2020. Fans seem excited for his return, with a number of them turned away Sunday because too many showed up for their press conference on the final day of the Fanatics Fest event in New York.

Paul (10-1, 7 KOs) sparred as much with the fans who booed him as with the fighter across the stage.

"Hey New York, you're just like Mike Tyson," Paul said.

"You were good 20 years ago." Tyson's most domi-

nant days are actually longer ago than that, and Paul understands that he probably wouldn't get much credit for a victory against such a diminished opponent. Yet the former Disney Channel star who insists he will become a boxing champion said there is benefit to fighting Tyson even now.

"Big moments, big pressure, big stages, one of the greatest to ever do it, more experience than me, more fights than me, I'm going to learn a lot in this fight and through this training camp," Paul said.

"So this is helping me in my future fights and everything that I want to accomplish."

He took a fight after Tyson had to pull out, stopping bare-knuckle fighting champion Mike Perry in the sixth round on July 20. Perry, like many of the fighters on

Paul's resume, comes from the mixed martial arts world, rather than from a boxing background. He preferred to fight Tyson then and is eager now for his second chance.

"I was ready before, you needed a little break," he said to Tyson.

"Your tummy hurt still?" The fight that will stream on Netflix will be an official bout, though contested with eight 2-minute rounds and heavier gloves than usual.

The truest boxing match on the card might be the one that precedes it, when super lightweight champion Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano have a rematch of Taylor's thrilling victory in 2022 in the first women's boxing match to headline at Madison Square Garden.

Then Paul will try to show what he hopes to become in boxing, or perhaps Tyson



can demonstrate what he once was. He said his health problems won't prevent that.

"I had a small adversity. I got sick, but I'm better," Tyson said.

"I feel good."