

THE PERFECT VOICE



Transparency key in trust betn developers, homebuyers

... pg 2



Choked by Trash Mithi River Struggles

... pg 6



Ashwin-Jadeja tango saves India

... pg 10

No power can restore Art 370, says Modi

Katra (Reasi): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Congress and NC alliance following remarks by Pakistan's defence minister regarding Article 370 and accused the coalition of pursuing the neighbouring country's agenda.

Modi claimed that Pakistan's agenda fosters violence and unrest.

The PM asserted that Article 370 cannot be reinstated in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasising that "no power on Earth can bring back Article 370".



His attack came after Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Asif revealed

that his country, the National Conference (NC) and the Congress are on one page on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the restoration of statehood.

"You must stay vigilant. You have to be cautious. Every vote for the Congress facilitates the implementation of the manifestos of the National Conference and the PDP. What are they announcing?"

The PM pointed out Pakistan's open support for the Congress and NC, and said, "Nobody talks about them here, but they are in currency there. Pakistan is happy with their manifesto. Pakistan's defence min-

They will restore Article 370 and bring back the era of violence and bloodshed. Maybe there is no enthusiasm about the alliance of the National Conference and Congress here, but the neighbouring country is very excited. 'Unki balle balle Pakistan mein ho rahi hai' (They are being celebrated in Pakistan).

The governments run by the NC and Congress allowed our waters to flow across the border. They never dared to construct a big dam here. The Shahpur Kandi dam project remained untouched for years and as a result, thousands of hectares of land in Jammu became lifeless.

- Narendra Modi, PM

ister has openly supported the Congress and the National Conference.

"He said the agenda of the National Conference and the Congress on Article 370 and 35-A is the same as that of Pakistan. This is what their ministers are saying," he said.

Modi said Pakistan itself has exposed the NC and the Congress, showing that the two parties want to implement the bordering country's agenda here. "The agenda of Pakistan, which has destroyed

generations and bled us in Jammu and Kashmir, is being implemented by these people here. The Congress and the NC have worked in a direction for decades that suited Pakistan," he said.

Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Asif sparked a political controversy by claiming that the Pak government and the Congress-National Conference alliance were on the same page regarding the restoration of statehood and special status in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hezbollah, Israel trade new strike

Beirut: The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah said on Thursday the mass bombing attack against it using its communications devices was a "severe blow" and said Israel had crossed a "red line".

But he said the group would continue its daily strikes into northern Israel, vowing Israelis would not be able to return to their homes there until the Gaza war ends.

As Hassan Nasrallah spoke in a televised speech from an unknown location, Hezbollah and the Israeli military traded new strikes over the border and at least two Israeli soldiers were killed. Israeli warplanes also flew low over Beirut and broke the sound barrier, scattering birds and prompting people in houses and offices to quickly open windows to prevent them from shattering.

Fears are rising that 11 months of exchanges of fire between the two sides will escalate into all-out war, particularly after this week's unprecedented bombings widely blamed on Israel in which hundreds of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah were remotely detonated in Beirut, parts of Lebanon and the Syrian capital Damascus.

Is the war inevitable - Page 9

Asiatic Employees urge Centre to take over



Mumbai: The employees' union of the 220-year-old Asiatic Society of Mumbai on Thursday urged the Centre to take over the institution citing its "poor upkeep".

The society and its library are located in the Town Hall, a grand heritage structure with spectacular steps, at Horniman Circle in south Mumbai. It is a treasure of books, periodicals, ancient manuscripts, painted folios, artefacts, maps and prints.

According to the Asiatic Society Of Mumbai Employees Union (ASMEU), the managing committee has failed to follow up with the Union government to get the status of "an institution of national importance" for the society.

ASMEU president Prakash Reddy accused the managing committee of failing to raise funds for the maintenance of the library and the society's activities.

Reddy said there is a possibility of serious damage to the rare and precious books and other things in the library due to the "inefficient" managing commit-

tee and "paucity" of funds. "The future of the society is dark due to its inefficient managing committee, and more so due to its incompetent office-bearers, who are interested mainly in growing their networks through event management than doing anything constructive for the institution," Reddy claimed.

He also demanded salary as per the 7th pay commission for the 25 employees of the society who are currently receiving pay as per the 6th pay commission.

"We also urge the government of Maharashtra to formally request the Union Ministry of Culture to take over the responsibility of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai for the preservation of 220 years of legacy for future generation," he said.

Sir James Mackintosh, the chief and recorder of the erstwhile Bombay on November 26, 1804, had set up the Asiatic Society and its library, which has been located in the Fort area since 1833. The library has 2.8 lakh books and bound volumes of periodicals since the 15th century.

Release of terrorists responsible for J-K terror

National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah on Thursday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying the release of terrorists in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed in 1989 and Indian Airlines plane in Afghanistan in 1999 are responsible for the growth of terrorism in the region.

Abdullah was replying to PM Modi's speech in an election rally at Srinagar earlier in the day accusing the National Conference (NC), Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP) for "destruction" of Jammu and Kashmir.

The former J&K CM said the people should be thankful that the NC was there in 1947 at the time of Partition otherwise the Muslim majority state would have become a part of Pakistan.

Rubaiya is the sister of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.



Chief Minister Eknath Shinde picks garbage during the launch of state level cleanliness campaign 'Swachta Hi Seva' at Girgaon Chowpatty in Mumbai.

Pic: PTI

Tirupati Laddu Controversy TDP shows "lab report" claiming "beef tallow" in the consecrated sweet

Amaravati: Amid the controversy over the alleged use of substandard ingredients and animal fat in the preparation of the world renowned Tirupati laddu, the ruling Telugu Desam Party on Thursday claimed that the adulteration has been confirmed by Gujarat-based livestock laboratory, NDDB CALF Ltd on the ghee samples.

TDP spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy in a press conference displayed the purported lab report which apparently confirmed the presence of "beef tallow" in the given ghee sample.

The purported lab report also claimed the presence of "lard" (relating to pig fat) and fish oil in the samples. The sample receipt date was July 9, 2024 and the lab report was dated July 16.

However, there was no official confirmation on the lab report from either the Andhra Pradesh government or the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the famous Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple.

CALF (Centre for Analysis and learning in Livestock & Food) is a multidisciplinary analytical

laboratory at NDDB (National Dairy Development Board) based in Gujarat's Anand.

Andhra Chief Minister and TDP supemo N Chandrababu Naidu had on Wednesday alleged the previous YSRCP government had used substandard ingredients and animal fat in making Tirupati laddu, a consecrated sweet.

The allegation has been vehemently denied by the opposition YSR Congress Party.

-PTI

Sharmila demands SBI probe - Page 5

Sandip Ghosh's registration cancelled

Kolkata: The West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC) on Thursday cancelled the registration of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's former principal Sandip Ghosh, an official said.

Ghosh, who is in CBI custody, has been removed from the list of Registered Medical Practitioners maintained by the WBMC, he said. His licence was cancelled under various provisions of the Bengal Medical Act of 1914, the official said. He is an orthopaedic surgeon and without the licence, he cannot practice.

Ghosh was arrested by the CBI on September 2 for his alleged involvement in the financial irregularities at the hospital amid the protests over the rape and murder of the on-duty trainee doctor. He was later accused of evidence tampering in the rape-murder case.

Sumit Nagal demanded USD 50,000 to play for India

By Amanpreet Singh

New Delhi: The All India Tennis Association on Thursday claimed that Sumit Nagal demanded an annual fee of USD 50,000 to play Davis Cup ties for India but the country's top singles player defended himself, saying it is "standard practice" for athletes to be paid for their services.

Nagal had opted out of the recent Davis Cup tie against Sweden, citing a back strain that also forced him out of the US Open men's doubles competition last month.

Nagal had entered the ATP 250 Hangzhou Open and was scheduled to play on Thursday but withdrew citing the same back issue. "You tell me why should a player be asking for money to play for the country. This is a big question. He had demanded an annual fee of USD 50,000 (approx 45

lakh) and said if he is not paid, he will not play," Dhupar told PTI.

Largely restricted to World Group I, India play only two ties in a single season -- in February and September.

"Let the country decide if it is right or not. Then, it is the decision of the government and everybody. The players are also paid by TOPS. And it's not that they don't get paid for playing the Davis Cup. They do get paid," Dhupar insisted.

The AITA head was referring to the prize money

that AITA receives from the International Tennis Federation (ITF) for Davis Cup participation and distributes among team members.

For a World Group I tie, AITA gets around Rs 30 lakh and 70 per cent of it is distributed among the participating players while the remaining 30 per cent is kept by the national federation to manage administrative expenditure. The prize

money goes down for a lower group tie.

"No other player asked for additional money over and above their share of the ITF prize money."

A former India Davis Cupper confirmed to PTI that there have been instances in the past when

the country's leading players asked for money to play Davis Cup and those demands were accepted.

Nagal did not deny the AITA claim as he put his defense through a statement on social media.

AITA was furious that Nagal chose to skip Davis Cup last week by citing injury but "recovered miraculously" to compete in Hangzhou Open. Nagal withdrew from the ATP 250 tournament, two days after AITA came out with its statement.

Nagal said representing the country was always "a

privilege and an honour that I hold in the highest regard."

"It was a difficult decision to withdraw from the Davis Cup...However, after consulting with my medical team, it became clear that competing while carrying an injury could not only jeopardize my health but also adversely impact the team's chances.

It has been learnt that captain Rohit Rajpal had taken Nagal's proposal to the AITA Executive Committee which, after initial reluctance, agreed to pay him but asked the captain to renegotiate the figure.

However, before an agreement could be reached, Nagal withdrew from the tie and the discussion on the matter ended without progress.

Nagal, during the tie, criticised AITA on social media platforms,

Regarding compensation, I want to clarify that it is standard practice in professional sports for athletes to be compensated for their participation in events, even when representing their country. This is not about personal gain. My discussions with AITA and the Davis Cup Captain are confidential and I would not like to indulge in any speculation about this.

- Sumit Nagal, tennis player

saying many of them were there just to enjoy junkets. He further justified his break.

"In professional sports, injury management is a complex science. Sometimes, just a few days of rest and targeted rehabilitation can make the difference between aggravating an injury and being fit to play again."

Nagal had skipped the tie against Pakistan too early this year, conveying to the team management that the contest was being played on grass court and his game was more suited to the hard surfaces.

Skipper Rajpal is also being criticised on social media with many questioning his credentials to be a Davis Cup captain.



Transparency key in trust betn developers, homebuyers



MahaRERA Chairman Ajoy Mehta is retiring on Friday after an impactful tenure that began in February 2021. A 1984 batch IAS official, Mehta has held several key positions throughout his distinguished career.

As you retire from the position of MahaRERA Chairman, how has been your journey since February 2021? Excellent. It's been a fulfilling journey. Our objective has always been to enhance transparency, accountability, and credibility in the real estate sector.

setting up micro-control rooms for regulatory compliance, have been replicated by regulatory bodies in other states. We also mandated that developers submit Director Identification Numbers (DIN) and performance details on a self-affidavit during project registration.

between homebuyers and developers, we created a Grievance Redressal Cell and appointed a retired Additional District Collector to oversee compensation recovery.

THE PERFECT INTERVIEW

One of your major initiatives was enhancing transparency through project information disclosure. Could you elaborate on how this has impacted homebuyers? Transparency is key in building trust between developers and homebuyers.

What were some other major steps taken to protect homebuyers and ensure the quality of projects?

We took several measures, such as requiring developers to issue a 'Quality Assurance Certificate' annually. This guarantees the construction quality of projects.

You've made it mandatory for developers to follow a standardized Agreement for Sale and Allotment Letter. What was the reasoning behind this decision?

Standardising these documents ensures that critical aspects, such as carpet area, defect liability period, and conveyance deeds, cannot be altered to the detriment of homebuyers.

What are your thoughts on the future of MahaRERA after your retirement?

I am confident that the foundations we have built will continue to strengthen the real estate sector. MahaRERA's initiatives, such as the three-tiered scrutiny during project registration and the mandatory disclosure of information, will have a long-lasting positive impact.

MahaRERA has also implemented initiatives to address grievances and improve compensation recovery. Could you explain these?

To ensure timely resolution of disputes

Other states have adopted some of MahaRERA's decisions. Can you tell us more about this influence? Yes, some of our decisions, such as

Protest held in Sillod over 'Pakistan'

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: A protest march was held in Sillod in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on Thursday against former Union minister and senior BJP leader Raosaheb Danve for allegedly referring to the place as Pakistan.

Sillod's Shiv Sena MLA and state minister Abdul Sattar slammed Danve and said the protest march was held by the people of his constituency and not just by his party workers.

The march started from the Shivaji statue in the town and ended at the local tehsil office.

"People are very angry due to this statement. Danve referred to Sillod as Pakistan three times. This issue will be taken up with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Proper action must be taken as Danve is playing the politics of caste and religion," Sattar told reporters.

BJP scared of Rahul: Cong slams over threats



Mumbai: The Congress on Thursday held protests in Maharashtra to condemn threats against Rahul Gandhi, with senior leader Ramesh Chennithala asserting such statements should be taken seriously.

Taking part in a protest in Bhayander near Mumbai, Chennithala said a ruling party MP, MLA and a Union minister had threatened Gandhi and slammed the "scared BJP and its allies".

"These should be taken seriously. Rahul Gandhi's reputation and credibility have increased significantly both in India and abroad. He is the only leader in the country fighting against Narendra Modi and the RSS. He has become a major challenge for the BJP. This is why a scared

occasion, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole said, "Rahul Gandhi has embarked on the journey to protect the country's Constitution and democracy. Rahul Gandhi is a calm leader, but the BJP is targeting him, and he is being continuously threatened. The Congress will not tolerate this and will respond forcefully."

Among those who took part in the protests were Leader of Opposition in the assembly Vijay Wadetiwar, Mumbai unit chief Varsha Gaikwad and MLA Aslam Shaikh. In Colaba in south Mumbai, several party workers were detained during a protest led by Gaikwad outside the residence of assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar.

Police tried to stop the agitators at Salgaonkar junction, an official said.

Shinde hails controversial MLA Gaikwad



Buldhana: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday supported his embattled MLA Sanjay Gaikwad and asked the Congress to protest against Rahul Gandhi for his comments on reservations.

Gaikwad was panned by leaders cutting across party lines after he offered Rs 11 lakh to anyone who cut off Gandhi's tongue for the latter's statement in the US on reservations.

Shinde also attacked AAP leader Atishi, who will be sworn in as Delhi chief minister on September 21, for "supporting" terrorist Afzal Guru.

The BJP has been claiming Atishi's parents signed a mercy petition for

Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru.

Addressing an event connected to the state government's Ladki Bahin Yojana, Shinde praised Gaikwad for conceptualising the statues of saints and other revered personalities in Buldhana.

"The Congress must protest in front of Rahul Gandhi residence for his statement against Constitution," Shinde asserted. Asserting that the Mahayuti was firmly in favour of reservations to help the deprived segments of society, Shinde urged people of the state to teach a lesson to those making statements against quota.

Gandhi, however, has asserted he was misquoted and that he wants the

reservation cap of 50 per cent to be removed.

Attacking Atishi, Shinde claimed, "People who support terrorists like Afzal Guru have been made chief minister of Delhi. This is treason."

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the opposition was misleading people by claiming money meant for welfare of Dalits, tribals and farmers was being diverted for the Ladki Bahin Yojana.

"This is not true. Separate funds have been allocated for Ladki Bahin Yojana. This scheme will not stop. It will continue," he said.

CRIME WATCH

Official held for taking bribe

Thane: A coordinator in the Raigad Zilla Parishad's primary education department has been arrested for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 40,000 for releasing the salaries of four teachers, the Anti-Corruption Bureau said on Thursday.

Man found dead in lake

Thane: The body of an unidentified man was found in the Upavan lake in Maharashtra's Thane city on Thursday morning, civic officials said. Some persons on morning walk near the lake spotted the body at 7.43 am and alerted the police.

Four of family found dead in Dhule

Mumbai: A couple and their two children were found dead at their residence in Maharashtra's Dhule district on Thursday, police said. As per initial information, the police suspect the couple committed suicide after giving a poisonous substance to their children, an officer said.

IPS officer Nimit Goyal resigns

Mumbai: Indian Police Service officer Nimit Goyal has tendered his resignation citing personal reasons, a senior police official said here on Thursday.

Goyal, a 2014-batch Maharashtra-cadre officer, is currently serving as Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) in Nagpur city. He wanted to work in the private sector and submitted his resignation on July 8. The resignation was forwarded to the Director General of Police and state home department will take decision on it, the official added.

15 held for throwing stones at Ganesh procession

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Police have arrested 15 persons for allegedly pelting stones at a Ganesh festival procession in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city, an officer said on Thursday.

Three women and two men were injured in the incident which took place in Pundaliknagar area at around 11.30 pm on Tuesday, the final day of the Ganesh festival, he said.

Some members of a Ganesh mandal threw 'gular' (vermillion powder) on persons representing another mandal, leading to

a quarrel among them.

Members of one Ganesh Mandal allegedly hurled stones on a procession of the other mandal, a police release said. After receiving information, police personnel, including a SRPF team, reached the area and apprehended four persons from the spot.

A case under relevant provisions was registered against the four persons caught there and 11 others who fled from the spot, the officer said. Later, police teams were sent to trace the other 11 accused and they were also arrested, he said.

Probe into EY employee's death

Pune: The death of 26-year-old Chartered Accountant Anna Sebastian Perayil was being investigated, Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said here on Thursday.

Sebastian, who worked with S R Batliboi, a member firm of EY Global, died of cardiac arrest in Pune this July. Her mother this month wrote to EY India Chairman Rajiv Memani, flagging the "glorification" of overwork at the multinational consulting firm. "An investigation is underway in the matter," said the minister.

Hold civic elections first, says Raj Thackeray

Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray has said if the Union government is so concerned about the 'one nation, one election' reform, it should first hold polls to the civic bodies in Maharashtra.

Elections to several municipal bodies in the state, including the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), are pending. "If so much importance is being given to elections, then first hold civic body polls," Raj

Thackeray said in a post on X on Wednesday, noting that by October many civic bodies will be running under administrators for more than four years. While the Union cabinet has approved a recommendation for simultaneous elections by a high-level panel, it must also consider views of the states, the MNS chief said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If the government is considering to issue a GR based on the 1911 gazette, then what is the need for the OBC commission in Maharashtra? If the Eknath Shinde government issues a GR after listening to Jarange, then the OBCs will reply accordingly."



Laxman Hake, OBC leader

HC On Film 'Emergency'

Creative freedom can't be curtailed on apprehension of public disorder

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Thursday said creative freedom and the freedom of expression cannot be curtailed and the censor board cannot refuse to certify a film just because there is an apprehension of a law and order problem.

A division bench of Justices B.P. Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla expressed its displeasure with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for not taking a decision on the issuance of a certificate to Kangana Ranaut-starrer film "Emergency", and ordered for the decision to be taken by September 25.

It asked if the CBFC thinks the people of this country are so naive to believe everything that is shown in a movie. On the petitioner's claim that the CBFC was delaying issuance of certificate to the movie due to political reasons, the HC noted the film's co-producer Ranaut was herself a sitting BJP parliamentarian and questioned if the ruling

party was acting against its own MP. Ranaut, who has directed and co-produced the film besides playing the lead role of former prime minister late Indira Gandhi, earlier this week accused the CBFC of stalling certification to delay the release. The bench said, "You (CBFC) have to take a decision one way or the other. You must have the courage to say this film cannot be released. At least then we will appreciate your courage and boldness. We don't want the CBFC to sit on the fence."

The court was hearing a petition filed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises, seeking a direction to the CBFC to issue a certificate for the film "Emergency". The biographical drama, earlier scheduled for release on September 6, is caught up in controversy after Sikh organisations including the Shiromani Akali Dal objected, accusing the film of misrepresenting the community and getting historical facts wrong. The HC earlier this month refused to any urgent relief by directing the censor board to certify the movie immediately. The court had said it cannot grant any urgent relief at this stage in wake of the directive issued by the Madhya Pradesh HC asking the censor board to consider objections to the movie before certifying it. The bench had then directed the censor board to take its decision on issuance of the certificate to the film by September 18. On Thursday, senior counsel Abhinav Chandrachud, appearing for the CBFC, told the court that the board's chairman has referred the movie to the

revising committee for final decision. Chandrachud said there was an element of apprehension of public disorder.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that my client SMT. MARY VERGHESE, Residing at Room No. 4, Jyoti Building Amber CHS Ltd., Phase II, Vallipier Road, Near Old RTO Office, Kalyan, Dist. Thane, Pin - 421301, has filed Police Complaint at Kalyan Police Station bearing No. 8yA08uhhU4-2024 dated 18.09.2024 in connection of Lost/Misplaced of Share Certificate of No. 35 bearing Distinctive No. 171 to 175 of Amber CHS Ltd. Any person having any objection in connection of the above said Share Certificate, the same may be made known to me in writing within 15 days from the date of issue of this notice, failing which my client shall proceed for issuing the duplicate Share Certificate with Society. Place: Virar Date: 20.09.2024 (NITIN N. SHAH) Adv. & Notary Add: Shop No. 23, SHREE VRINDAVAN CHS LTD., 284 Agashi Rd, Behind Woodland Cinema, Virar (West), Dist-Palghar PIN 401303, Mobile No. 9860103468

Canara Bank advertisement containing financial details, a table of property sales, and contact information for branches and services.

We have made our demand clear. We will not budge an inch

How many seats do you expect in the Mahayuti?

We have conveyed our demand to both the partners. We are waiting for the reply. Right from beginning our party chief Ajit Pawar is insisting for early decision on seat sharing. This will certainly avoid lingering around till the last-minute like in the Lok Sabha elections. Let's hope something will take place at the earliest. When we joined the alliance (BJP-Shiv Sena), we were assured of getting 80 to 90 seats to contest in the assembly elections. However, for recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, we got very few seats to contest. This time around we have made our demand clear and we will not budge an inch.



THE PERFECT INTERVIEW

As the announcement of the dates for the state assembly election is on cards, the three parties in Mahayuti are at loggerheads over seat sharing. The NCP has made it clear that the party is firm on contesting 70 to 80 seats and will not budge an inch. Looking at the scenario the fracas among three alliance partners might reach a breaking point. **'The Perfect Voice's Senior Editor Suyash Padate talked to state NCP chief Sunil Tatkare on the demands of the NCP. Excerpts...**

Are you hopeful of getting respectable seats?

Keeping aside various arguments and doubts, I think the NCP will get a respectable number of seats. During the discussion of seat sharing we have stress on several factors like sitting MLAs and the winnability of the seat. This factor will be considered while deciding the final seat distribution. The situation in Maharashtra has changed after the Lok Sabha election and that the people of the State would no longer fall for the baseless narrative which had badly

positively' because discussion is going on and will continue. The issue is contentious and everyone wants to contest the maximum number of seats.

We have made our stance clear and we are pressing for it. I will repeat what I have said that this time around we will not budge an inch. One or two seats here and there is possible but not beyond it.

What transpired in the meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah?

I cannot comment about the meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah. The seat-sharing talks among the ruling Mahayuti partners - NCP, Shiv Sena and BJP for the assembly polls are proceeding ahead. For the time being we will say 'proceeding ahead

affected the Mahayuti during the Lok Sabha election.

There is a speculation over friendly fights on some seats with the constituents of Mahayuti. What is your take?

We are optimistic about getting the expected number of seats and there is no question of a friendly fight on any seats. Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana is all set to become a game-changer. Apart from this my party has supported the Maratha reservation without touching the OBC reservation. This stand has made a lot of positive impact across the state. We are gaining ground in many parts and the forthcoming election will underscore this.

CM has made four appointments on various corporations and boards. What is your reaction?

I will not say anything at this particular juncture. It is CM's prerogative and he has made these appointments. Of course, he should have considered the names of other partners too. Our party chief Ajitdada is the right person to comment on this issue.

Case against five for forging death certificate

Thane: Police have registered an FIR against five persons for allegedly forging the death certificate and will of an education baron from Maharashtra's Thane district to acquire his property, an official said on Thursday.

Shivajirao Jondhale, who had set up a number of educational institutions, died in April this year due to an ailment, police said. According to a complaint by his son Sagar Shivajirao Jondhale, the accused allegedly collaborated to forge his father's death certificate and will and submitted them to the Bombay High Court in May for probate, with the intention of illegally acquiring his property.

Based on the complaint, the Vishnu Nagar police in Dombivli registered the First Information Report (FIR) on September 15 against five persons under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 465 (punishment for forgery).

PM in Maharashtra today

By Correspondent



Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Maharashtra on Friday, where he will attend the first anniversary programme of 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme in Wardha and also lay the foundation stone of a textile park in Amravati.

During the 'PM Vishwakarma' programme to be held in Wardha around 11.30 am, PM Modi will release certificates and loans to the beneficiaries of this scheme, an official release said.

Symbolising the tangible support extended to artisans under this scheme, he will distribute credit under the PM Vishwakarma scheme to 18 beneficiaries under 18 trades. As a tribute to their legacy and enduring contribution to society, the prime minister will release a commemorative stamp to mark one year of progress under the scheme, it said.

In Amravati, the PM will lay the foundation stone of 'PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and

Apparel (PM MITRA) Park'. The 1,000-acre park is being developed by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) as the state implementation agency. The central government had approved setting up of seven PM MITRA Parks for the textile industry.

PM MITRA Parks are a major step forward in realising the vision of making India a global hub for textile manufacturing and exports. It will help in creating world-class industrial infrastructure that would attract large scale investment including foreign direct investment (FDI) and encourage innovation and job creation within the sector, the release said.

IPS Shivdeep Lande resigns

Patna: Senior IPS officer Shivdeep Lande on Thursday said he has resigned from service.

Lande, an officer of the 2006 batch of Bihar cadre, was the Inspector General of the Purnea range. He is the second IPS officer of the state to resign from service in the last two months. She was the SP of Darbhanga rural. Speaking to reporters after tendering his resignation, Lande said, "I have resigned from IPS because of some personal reasons. I will remain in Bihar and continue to work for the people."

Cong says solar project moved to Gujarat; govt denies

By Correspondent



Mumbai: A solar panel project, which was proposed to be set up at Nagpur in eastern Maharashtra, has been shifted to neighbouring Gujarat, claimed Leader of Opposition in assembly Vijay Wadettiwar of the Congress on Thursday.

Wadettiwar maintained the mega project would have brought investment worth Rs 18,000 crore to Maharashtra.

"It has come to light that the project has gone out of the state due to political and bureaucratic apathy," the

Congress leader alleged. State Industries Minister Uday Samant rejected Wadettiwar's claim.

Wadettiwar noted this was the third mega industrial venture after Vedanta-Foxconn and Tata-Airbus projects to be moved to BJP-ruled Gujarat from Maharashtra, where the saffron party is a constituent of the ruling

coalition. The MLA from Bramhapuri in Chandrapur district alleged leaders of the ruling dispensation were busy making remarks on "chopping off and singeing tongues" -- referring to comments against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi -- Hindu-Muslim, "breaking parties and stealing MLAs".

"Industries are finding it difficult to work in Maharashtra," he insisted.

Meanwhile, Industries Minister Samant rejected Wadettiwar's assertion and accused the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA),

of which the Congress is a constituent, of spreading lies. He pointed out that a leading renewable energy company, which supplies 550 MW of electricity, is planning to expand its capacity to 2,000 MW in Maharashtra.

Tagging a statement from ReNew, he said the company has clarified it was not going anywhere.

The private company is committed to invest Rs 1 lakh crore and generate 30,000 employment opportunities in Maharashtra, Samant asserted.



Volunteers from different organisations participate in a beach clean up drive a day after immersion of the idols of Lord Ganesha at Girgaon Chowpatty in Mumbai.

Pic: PTI

CCTV network to guard mangroves

Thane: A CCTV camera network to keep a watch on mangrove belts in the Mumbai region would be installed soon, officials have said.

The forest department on Wednesday floated a tender for the Rs 120-crore project and released a Request for Proposal. With 669 cameras and a centralised monitoring system, the video surveillance will cover 195 sensitive mangrove zones in Mumbai, Thane, Bhiwandi, Navi Mumbai, Panvel and Uran, officials said.

S.V. Rama Rao, head of the forest department's Mangrove Cell, said the high-priority project also seeks to assure people that the environment is being protected and nurtured. B.N. Kumar, director of non-profit NatConnect Foundation who was campaigning for CCTV surveillance, expressed happiness over the development while claiming that mangroves and wetlands have been under attack by land mafia.

The proposed network, however, should also cover mangrove belts under the jurisdiction of government agencies such as CIDCO and JNPA, he added.

Burqa-clad woman, man threaten Salman Khan, held

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A burqa-clad woman and a man were detained after threatening renowned screenwriter Salman Khan in Bandra area of Mumbai, police said on Thursday.

Salim Khan, father of Bollywood actor Salman Khan, was sitting at the Bandra Bandstand promenade after his routine walk Wednesday morning when the duo threatened him, citing jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's name, police said.

The duo told the police that they were playing mischief with Khan, an official said.

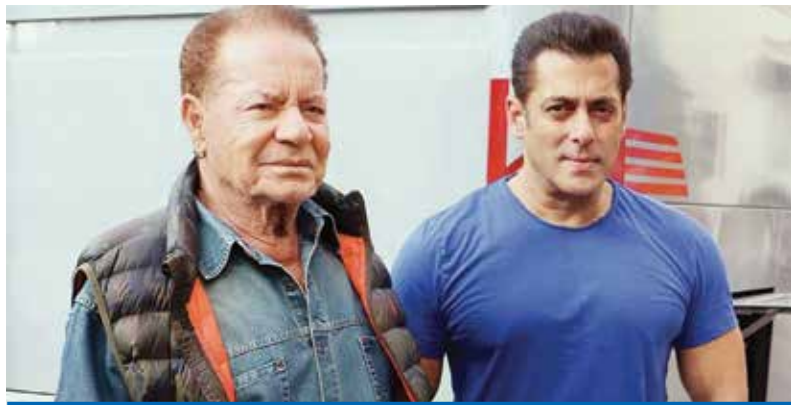
"The man and the woman, who were riding a two-wheeler spotted Salim Khan and stopped close to him. They asked him 'Lawrence Bishnoi ko bheju kya?' (Should we send Lawrence Bishnoi to you)," the official said.

After threatening him, the duo fled from the spot.

Salim Khan's bodyguard had observed the two-wheeler's number and lodged a complaint at the Bandra police station on Wednesday, based on which a case was registered.

Police examined the CCTV footage in the area and tracked down the duo. The duo was booked as per section 292 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for "committing public nuisance" and some other sections, he said.

In June 2022, when Salim Khan was sitting on a bench at Bandra Bandstand after his morning walk, an



Salman Khan had a serious security scare in April this year when two men on motorcycle, allegedly belonging to the Bishnoi gang, opened fire outside Galaxy Apartments.

unidentified man handed him a letter that mentioned a threat to kill him and his son Salman.

Biker breaches Salman's security In a double security scare for actor Salman Khan and his family, a biker entered his convoy. A 21-year-old motorcycle rider entered the police convoy accompanying Salman Khan between Mehboob Studio and Galaxy Apartments, the actor's home, the official said.

The actor, who has received several threats from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and has been provided 'Y-plus' security cover by the Mumbai police, was returning to his residence.

Around 12.15 am, after the convoy passed Mehboob Studio, Uzair Faiz Mohiuddin, who was riding a

motorcycle, tried to get close to Salman Khan's car, said the police official.

Security personnel tried to warn him, but he kept getting close to Salman Khan's car, he said.

After the actor reached his house, two police vehicles chased the motorcycle rider and forced him to stop, the official said.

During questioning, Mohiuddin, a resident of Bandra West, told police that he was a college student.

A case was registered against him at Bandra police station under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 125 (rash and negligent act endangering safety of others) and 281 (rash and negligent driving) but no arrest has been made, the official said.

Police nab two for killing man

Thane: The Thane police have arrested two persons for allegedly killing a man in Pune city, an officer said on Thursday.

Pravin Mahato, a nursery worker, was murdered on Monday by the duo, who slit his throat with a blade, alleging that he was in a relationship with the wife of one of them, the police said.

"After killing the victim in Hinjawadi area of Pune, the assailants identified as Raju Kumar Nathuni Prasad Singh (33) and Dhiraj Kumar Ramod Singh (20), fled from the spot," senior inspector Vijay Kadbane of the Manpada police station in Dombivli said. "The Pune police sought the assistance of their counterparts in Thane to trace the suspects who were believed to be heading towards their hometown in Bihar. An operation was launched by the Manpada police and the duo was eventually apprehended near Kalyan railway station on Wednesday morning," he said.

Expressing confidence about the position Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coming to power in Maharashtra after the assembly polls, Pandey noted that under its rule common citizens will not

Ex CP Sanjay Pandey joins Congress

By Correspondent



Mumbai: Former Mumbai police commissioner Sanjay Pandey, who was arrested in 2022 in the NSE co-location case, on Thursday joined the Congress ahead of the assembly polls in Maharashtra.

He was inducted into the Congress by its Mumbai unit chief and Lok Sabha MP Varsha Gaikwad at the party office in south Mumbai.

Calling himself a 'secular' minded person, the retired IPS officer who briefly served as the acting Maharashtra director general of police, maintained that no other political party except the Congress follows secular ideology.

"I am not joining a party but a family. I wanted to join the Congress way back in 2004, but didn't get a chance," said Pandey on the occasion as he started a new political innings.

Expressing confidence about the position Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coming to power in Maharashtra after the assembly polls, Pandey noted that under its rule common citizens will not

have to fear anything. "As a retired police commissioner, I can say how false cases were filed against me," he said.

The retired 1986-batch IPS officer was arrested in 2022 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case linked to the alleged illegal phone tapping of National Stock Exchange (NSE) employees. Pandey, probed in the case in connection with a company founded by him, was later granted bail.

Pandey served as Maharashtra's acting DGP and later as Mumbai police commissioner when the MVA government headed by Uddhav Thackeray was in office. He was accused by the BJP, then in the opposition, of conspiring with the MVA government to implicate its leaders in false cases.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I am 100 per cent confident the next CM of Maharashtra will be from the MVA and Congress. We will work and perform in these elections. The year 2024 polls is going to be good for us."



- Balasaheb Thorat, Leader, Congress

Coldplay announces two Mumbai shows

Mumbai: British rock band Coldplay, popular with Indian listeners for hit songs "Yellow", "Paradise", and "Magic", will perform in Mumbai next year as part of their "Music Of The Spheres World Tour 2025". This will mark the group's first visit to India in eight years.

Coldplay, comprising Chris Martin, Guy Berryman, Phil Harvey, Will Champion and Jonny Buckland, are set to take the stage for two shows on January 18 and 19, 2025, at the DY Patil Sports Stadium.

Tickets for the India leg of the tour will go live on September 22

at 12 pm, exclusively on online ticket platform BookMyShow, a press release stated.

Besides performing several hits from "Music Of The Spheres" and new singles "We Pray" and "feelslikeimfallinginlove" from their upcoming album "Moon Music", Coldplay will also perform songs, including "Yellow", "The Scientist", "Clocks", "Fix You", "Viva La Vida", "Paradise", "A Sky Full Of Stars" and "Adventure Of A Lifetime".

The Grammy-winning band previously performed in Mumbai

as part of the Global Citizen Festival back in 2016.

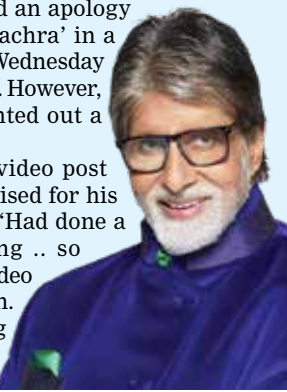
"Music Of The Spheres World Tour 2025" will commence on October 30 at the Marvel Stadium in Melbourne, Australia, and will conclude on August 31, 2025, with a show at the Wembley Stadium in London, the UK.

Coldplay's upcoming new album is titled "Moon Music", which will be released on October 4. According to the release, it will set new standards for sustainability, with each LP made from 100 per cent recycled plastic bottles (nine per record). -PTI

Bachchan apologises after pronouncing Marathi word incorrectly

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has issued an apology after mispronouncing Marathi word 'kachra' in a video. Bachchan, 81, shared a video on Wednesday in which he pledged not to litter on streets. However, his friend, singer Sudesh Bhosale, pointed out a mistake the actor made in the video.

Now, the actor has shared another video post where he narrated the same and apologised for his mistake. The caption of the post read, "Had done a video where pronunciation was wrong.. so corrected it.. Apologies." He began the video by saying, "Hello, I'm Amitabh Bachchan. A few days ago, I shared a video on raising social awareness stating that I won't litter."



Tupperware lifts lid on its financial problems with bankruptcy filing

New York: The company behind Tupperware, the plastic kitchenware that revolutionized food storage after World War II and became inextricably linked to the parties where women seeking a measure of financial independence and fun in midcentury America sold the colorful products, has filed for bankruptcy.

Tupperware Brands, the Orlando, Florida-based consumer goods company that produces the iconic line of containers, said it was seeking Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after struggling to revitalize its core business and failing to secure a tenable takeover offer.

Despite enjoying the same cultural ubiquity as Kleenex, Teflon and other brands whose trademarked names are eponymous with entire product categories, Tupperware has suffered from waning sales, rising competition and the limitations of the direct-to-consumer marketing model that once defined its success.

The company said Tuesday in its bankruptcy filing that consumers shifting away from direct sales, which make up the vast majority of its sales more than a quarter-century after the first Tupperware parties, has hit the storied business hard.

The company also cited

growing public health and environmental concerns about plastic, internal inefficiencies that made it challenging to operate globally, and the "challenging microeconomic environment" of the last several years for its financial straits.

Tupperware said it planned to continue operating during the bankruptcy proceedings and would seek court approval for a sale "in order to protect" the brand.

Tupperware's roots date to 1946. As the company tells it, chemist Earl Tupper found inspiration while creating molds at a plastics factory. He set out on a mission to create an airtight lid seal — similar to the one on a paint can — for a plastic container to help families save money on food waste.

The brand experienced explosive growth in the mid-20th century, particularly with the rise of direct sales through Tupperware parties. First held in 1948, the parties were promoted as a way for women to earn supplemental income by selling their friends and neighbors the lidded bowls for holding leftovers.

The system worked so well that Tupperware eventually removed its products from stores. It also led Tupper to appoint Brownie Wise, who came



up with the house party idea, as a company executive, a position that was rare for a woman at the time.

In the decades that followed, the brand expanded to include canisters, beakers, cake dishes and all manner of implements, and became a staple in kitchens across America and eventually, abroad as well. A newspaper reporter who went undercover to work as a footman in Buckingham Palace captured pictures of the royal Tupperware on the breakfast table of Queen Elizabeth II.

The story behind the company also showed up on TV screens and on stage, with depictions in PBS' 2004 film "Tupperware!" and the play "Sealed for Freshness."

"For more than 70 years, Tupperware Brands

has centered on a core purpose - to inspire women to cultivate the confidence they need to enrich their lives, nourish their families, and fuel communities around the world," Tricia Stitzel, the company's first female CEO, wrote as recently as 2018. "And we continue to make decisions, from our innovative products to our strategic growth strategy, which reflect this purpose."

In the 2000s, Tupperware also diversified beyond its containers by acquiring beauty and personal care companies, most of them direct-selling brands like Avroy Shlain, Fuller Cosmetics, NaturCare, Nutrimetics and Nuvo.

Financial analysts, however, criticized Tupperware in recent years for sticking with the direct

sales model and failing to evolve with the times, most notably the large number of women who work outside the home.

The company's sales improved some during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when Americans were cooking and eating more at home. But overall sales have been in steady decline over the years due to rising competition from Rubbermaid, OXO and even takeout food containers that consumers recycle. Vintage Tupperware also remains in demand as a collectible.

Overall, sales for food storage supplies are up 18 per cent compared to before the pandemic, according to figures from market research firm Circana. But despite that growth - and the ongoing popularity of food storage videos on social media - the troubles for Tupperware remained.

Historically, Tupperware marketed its products as higher-quality durable items. But consumers who are looking for durability are interested in more sustainable materials, such as glass and stainless steel, said Jennifer Christ, manager of consumer and commercial research for the Freedonia Group, a market research company.



A view of 24-carat gold-plated model of James Bond's Goldfinger Aston Martin DB5, priced at 24,999 pound sterling and one of only seven made in museum quality 18 scale by British car kit makers Agora Models, on display at Burlington Arcade in central London on Thursday created in collaboration with 007 film makers, Eon Productions, and Aston Martin to celebrate 60 years of the 1964 James Bond film Goldfinger. Pic: AP/PTI

Home, Household Market to Hit USD 237 Billion

By correspondent

Mumbai: The Home and Household Market in India is poised to cross USD 237 billion by 2030, growing at an annual rate of over 10 per cent, driven by rising personal wealth, changing consumer tastes, and an increasing emphasis on comfort and convenience across various product segments, as per a report by Deloitte.

This study, titled "Powering Consumption Growth - India's Home and Household Market," was unveiled at the two-day MAPIC India 2024 conference, which kicked off here on Wednesday. It also noted that the domestic and home goods sector is experiencing robust demand, especially in tier 2 and tier 3 cities that are emerging as key growth areas.

Drug under clinical trial cures patient

By Correspondent

Mumbai: An investigation drug currently under phase III clinical trials was successful in treating a 64-year old patient with type-2 diabetes and hypertension suffering from a complex case of meningitis, according to a statement by Wockhardt.

This represents the first case of nosocomial meningitis caused by multidrug-resistant *Pseudomonas* successfully treated with Zidebactam/Cefepime, underscoring its potential as a valuable therapeutic option, the statement said.

The investigation drug in phase III study - Zaynich (Zidebactam/Cefepime) has successfully treated over 35 critically ill patients in India and US who

were suffering from extremely drug-resistant infections under compassionate use.

Meningitis, an inflammation of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord, poses significant treatment challenges due to the difficulty of antibiotics in penetrating the blood-brain barrier.

In this case, following a spinal puncture to withdraw cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), the patient developed fever, drowsiness, and unconsciousness, leading to mechanical ventilation and a diagnosis of bacterial meningitis. The condition was confirmed when CSF analysis identified a pan-drug resistant superbug, *Pseudomonas* and initial treatments failed to halt the patient's deterioration.

Google's plea against CCI order in android case

New Delhi: Google LLC on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the arguments in the case related to the tech giant's alleged anti-competitive practices in the Android mobile device matter may take five-six days.

On March 29 last year, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had handed out a mixed verdict on Google's alleged anti-competitive practices in the case -- upholding a fine of Rs 1,338 crore but scrapping conditions like allowing hosting of third-party app stores on its Play Store.

The top court is seized of cross-pleas of Google and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) challenging a verdict of an appellate tribunal in a case related to the tech giant's alleged anti-competitive practices in the Android mobile device matter.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra has already listed the cross-pleas for hearing on Thursday.

The pleas, however, are unlikely to reach for hearing during the day as the bench is seized of part-heard matters.

At the outset of day's proceedings, senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for the tech giant, mentioned the plea and said the hearing in the case may take five-six days.

"It (the plea) will retain its position on board (list of businesses). Let us see things go...Let this matter start. We will see," the CJJI said.

Earlier in July, the apex court had said it will hear in the second week of September the cross-pleas of Google and the CCI in the case.

The bench had appointed lawyer Sameer Bansal as the nodal counsel for preparing common digital pleadings with the help of lawyers from both sides for easy adjudication of the matter.

The NCLAT, in its verdict, had upheld the fine imposed by the CCI on the tech giant for exploiting its dominant position in Android.

The NCLAT had struck down an anti-trust regulator order that had said Google will not restrict the removal of its pre-installed apps by the users.

Both Google and the CCI came to the Supreme Court against the NCLAT judgement.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar with others during the inaugural session of Sansad TV@3 Conclave at the Parliament House, in New Delhi. Pic:PTI

Thomson enters Indian audio market with TV soundbars

New Delhi: French consumer electronics brand Thomson, through its brand licensee Super Plastics Pvt Ltd (SPPL), on Thursday announced its foray into the Indian audio market with the launch of soundbars here.

Thomson, which is already present here in the TV and other appliances segments, also has plans to expand its play into the audio segment by launching more products in the soundbar and entering into the larger speaker and party speakers segment, SPPL

CEO Avneet Singh Marwah said.

As part of SPPL, it has invested Rs 50 crore to set up a new manufacturing unit at its existing Noida plant, which will produce half a million units in a year, he added.

"We are aiming to have a 10 per cent market share of the audio segment in the online channels," Marwah said.

According to Marwah, the Indian audio market is experiencing rapid growth. Sales of products such as soundbars have increased

after a rise in sales of 4K smart TVs and the growing consumption of OTT content.

"Now 85 per cent of customers buying TV online search for soundbars also and around 50 per cent of that ends up buying that," Marwah added.

Now the company will tap those segments by providing bundled offers with TV. "We will sell (soundbars) separately or bundled with new TV also. It will have an 'add to cart' option. The customers will have both options," he added.

World markets shoot higher after Fed's first rate cut

New York: Markets in Europe and Asia shot higher on Thursday after the Federal Reserve kicked off its efforts to prevent a recession in the US with a bigger-than-usual cut to interest rates.

US futures were higher after a lackluster response on Wall Street to the Fed's move the day before. The future for the S&P 500 jumped 1.3 per cent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.8

The dollar rose to 142.88
Japanese yen from 142.29 yen
The euro rose to USD 1.1151 from USD 1.1120

per cent. Germany's DAX added 0.8 per cent to 18,861.88 and the CAC 40 in Paris advanced 1.3 per cent to 7,541.50. In London, the FTSE 100 gained 0.9 per cent to 8,326.93.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index rose

2.1 per cent to 37,155.33, lifted by major export manufacturers' shares. Toyota Motor Corp. surged 5.1 per cent, Sony Group Corp. added 2.9 per cent and Hitachi Ltd. climbed 5.8 per cent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 2 per cent to

18,013.16. The Shanghai Composite index climbed 0.7 per cent to 2,736.02, while Taiwan's Taich closed 1.7 per cent higher.

South Korea's Kospi rose 0.2 per cent to 2,580.80.

The Bank of Japan and the Bank of England are also holding monetary policy meetings this week. Neither central bank is expected to move on rates, though the language of what the officials say could

be an indicator of later moves and still influence markets.

Because the Fed's half-percentage point rate cut was so well telegraphed, markets had already climbed in anticipation. So, Wall Street's reactions to the 180-degree turn on its policy rate were relatively muted.

It was the first cut to the federal funds rate in over four years.

Damani sells VST Industries shares

New Delhi: Radhakishan Damani, the founder and promoter of DMart, on Thursday sold shares of VST Industries for over Rs 4 crore to investors including Reliance Mutual Fund through an open market transaction.

According to the bulk deal data available on the NSE, Damani offloaded 1 lakh shares or 0.65 per cent stake in VST Industries.

Steps to resolve traders' shipping related woes

New Delhi: The government on Thursday announced steps, including reducing certain charges at ports and purchase of five additional second-hand container vessels by SCI, to resolve shipping sector-related problems of exporters and importers.

These measures were announced after a meeting of all the concerned stakeholders of the international trade segment, including senior officials of ministries like commerce and industry, shipping, ports,

- The SCI announced that they are chartering container ships to significantly increase the container capacities, on an immediate basis capacity will be enhanced by 9,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit)
- The Railway board and Container Corporation announced that empty containers can now be stored at the yard at zero cost for 90 days. The charges of Rs

finance, civil aviation and railways; apex exporters body FIEO (federation of

Major decisions

- 3,000, that is being levied beyond 90 days, are now halved to Rs 1,500
- The storage and handling rates will be reduced for containers from Rs 9,000 to Rs 2,000 (for a 40 ft container) and from Rs 6,000 to Rs 1,000 (for a 20 ft container)
- The Central Board of Indirect

Indian export organisations), customs officials, freight forwarders, trans-

- Taxes and Customs (CBIC) announced that custom clearances at the ports will be expedited by simultaneous screening of two twenty feet containers
- The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) assured to eliminate any congestion and bottleneck at Nhava Sheva port

port operators and shipping companies. Exporting community

- Private container yards will have to mandatorily register themselves with GST authorities and should not accept any charges in cash in order to ensure illegal profiteering arising out of shortage and delay
- All charges like container transportation and Lift-on-Lift-off at yards would be embedded in the delivery order given to shippers

and experts have flagged shipping sector issues which are hurting the

country's exports, which has contracted by 9.3 per cent in August. The issues figured in the discussions include container shortage, surge in ocean freight rate and shipping cost, shipping delays at the Indian ports, and turnaround time at the ports.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that several issues were discussed to look at addressing the challenges that exporters and importers are facing in the shipping area.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"India comes with an opportunity where we can collaborate together. Being an agro based country, where the farmers are the backbone in terms of production, there's an abundance. How to convert this abundance into opportunity? is what we are targeting."



- Chirag Paswan, Union Minister for Food Processing

MUDA Works Undertaken On CM's Verbal Instruction

Karnataka
Governor seeks
report from govt

Bengaluru: Escalating the cold war with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah the Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has sought a detailed report from the government in connection with Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) allegedly undertaking works worth Rs 387 crore in violation of rules, purportedly on the verbal instruction of the CM in his Varuna constituency, and Srirangapatna.

Gehlot has written to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh citing detailed representation submitted to him by a complainant in this regard, and terming the allegation as "serious in nature."

The letter comes close on the heels of the Governor according sanction on August 16 for investigation against Siddaramaiah under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of Pradeep Kumar S P, T J Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna, in connection with a MUDA site allotment case.

The Governor said in the letter that a person named P S Nataraj from Mysuru



In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife B.M. Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout.

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. Opposition and some activists have also claimed that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land.

has submitted a detailed representation dated August 27, wherein, he has informed that the MUDA has undertaken works worth Rs 387 crore in violation of section 15 and 25 of the Karnataka Urban Development Authority Act,

1987 on the Chief Minister's oral instruction in Varuna and also in Srirangapatna constituency."

The petitioner has also informed that in spite of non-availability of funds in the Authority, a decision has been taken on the oral

instruction, he said, adding, "further, he alleged that by doing this the authority has misused its power and requested to conduct enquiry from CBI."

"Since the allegation is serious in nature, it is directed to look into the matter and submit the detailed report along with documents at the earliest," the Governor added.

The High Court on September 12 completed its hearing on Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of Governor Gehlot's approval for investigation against him in the MUDA site allotment case and reserved its orders.

On August 19, Siddaramaiah moved the High Court challenging the legality of the Governor's order.

Meanwhile, in a move aimed at clipping the powers of the Governor, the state Cabinet that met on Tuesday has cleared a Bill to amend the Karnataka State Rural Development & Panchayat Raj University Act that proposes to divest the Governor of the power to appoint the vice-chancellor to the Karnataka State Rural Development & Panchayat Raj University, and giving that powers to the government.

-PTI



Police use water cannons to disperse Muslim Youth League activists during their protest march demanding the resignation of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. Pic:PTI

Animal Fat In Tirupati Laddu

Sharmila demands CBI probe

VHP demands stern action

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Thursday termed as "serious issue" Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's allegation that animal fat was used in making the famous Tirupati laddu, and demanded stern action against those involved in it.

"Everybody knows about the anti-Hindu acts and deeds of the previous YSR government in Andhra Pradesh but nobody could expect that it may fall down to this level," VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal said in a statement.

"This is a very serious issue, raised by none other than Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu. Punish those who used animal fat in Tirupati laddu prasadam," he said, demanding "quick stern action against the culprits".

"Punish those who used animal fat in Tirupati laddu prasadam."

Amaravati: The YSRCP on Thursday lashed out at Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for claiming that animal fat was used in making Tirupati laddus during the previous regime and said this has undermined the deity and hurt the sentiments of the devotees.

State Congress chief Y.S. Sharmila, sister of YSRCP president and former CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, demanded a CBI probe to ascertain Naidu's claim.

She assailed the CM and YSRCP for indulging in 'heinous politics' over the preparation of Tirupati laddus.

During an NDA legislative party meeting on Wednesday, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu claimed that the previous YSRCP government did not

even spare Sri Venkateswara temple and used substandard ingredients and animal fat for making laddus.

Sharmila said Naidu's allegations hurt the sentiments of crores of Hindus

who consider Lord Venkateswara as a revered deity. "Immediately constitute a high-level committee or investigate with the CBI whether animal fat was used instead of ghee," said Sharmila in a press

release.

Senior YSRCP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Y.V. Subba Reddy noted that Naidu's allegations have undermined the hallowed nature of the deity and hurt the sentiments of the devotees. -PTI

BJP promises Rs 2,100 per month for women

Chandigarh: The BJP on Thursday released its manifesto for the October 5 Haryana assembly polls, promising a monthly assistance of Rs 2,100 for women, two lakh government jobs for the youth and guaranteed government job for Agniveers hailing from the state.

Union minister and BJP president J.P. Nadda released the 'sankalp patra' in presence of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Union Ministers M L Khattar, Rao Inderjit Singh, Krishan Pal Gurjar and head of the party's poll manifesto committee, at Rohtak.

The ruling BJP in Haryana, which is eyeing to ride to power for a third consecutive term after the polls next month, also promised to purchase 24 crops at MSP. The BJP government in Haryana was already buying 14 crops at MSP. Last month after CM Nayab Singh Saini's announcement, the state gave approval to a proposal of buying 10 more crops at MSP.

Facing flak from opposition parties over the Agnipath scheme, which is for short-term military recruitment, Nadda said there will be a guarantee of

government job for every Agniveer hailing from Haryana. Among 20 main points in the manifesto, the BJP promised Rs 2,100 per month for all women under the Lado Lakshmi Yojna.

The ruling party said two lakh government jobs will be given to the youth without 'kharchi-parchi', a reference to the alleged corruption prevailing earlier under the Congress regime. The ruling BJP also announced to give cooking gas cylinder at Rs 500 under the Har Ghar Grihini Yojna.

The state government is already giving cooking gas cylinder at Rs 500 under the Har Ghar Grihini scheme to BPL and antyodaya families in the state. The BJP also promised 5 lakh houses in urban and rural areas if it is voted to power after the assembly elections besides a scooter for every college-going female student in a rural area under the Awwal Balika Yojna.

Scholarships for Haryana students belonging to the OBC and SC communities in any government medical and engineering colleges in the country will be given, the BJP manifesto stated.

-PTI



A damaged SUV after it crashed into a guardrail in New Delhi on Thursday. At least two people suffered injuries in the accident.

Nearly 37,000 SC judgements translated in Hindi : CJJ

New Delhi: Nearly 37,000 Supreme Court judgements since Independence have been translated into Hindi and now the process is underway to translate them in other regional languages, Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said on Thursday.

After Hindi, "Tamil is leading now", the CJJ, who

was sharing bench with Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said during the hearing of a case. Justice Chandrachud said the apex court is in the process of translating its judgements in regional languages recognised by the Constitution.

The eighth schedule of the Constitution recognises

22 languages.

The CJJ also urged lawyers to give "neutral citations" of judgements from electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) during the hearings. The top court, in 2023, launched the e-SCR project to provide free access to its judgements to lawyers, law students and the common public. -PTI

India faces terror threat from ISIS, Al-Qaeda

New Delhi: The "most significant" terrorism threat faced by India appears to be from the ISIS or Al-Qaeda-linked groups that are active in and around Jammu and Kashmir, the FATF said on Thursday in its report for the country on combating money-laundering and terror-financing crimes.

The 368-page report also made a mention of the recent situation in Manipur, which is witnessing ethnic violence for more than a year now, leading to over 220 deaths.

It said a "sudden rise" in terrorist-financing (TF) investigations was seen in

2023 and this was attributed to events arising out of incidents in Manipur that led to such probes in more than 50 cases. The FATF said India has suffered from the effects of terrorism consistently since the country achieved independence in 1947.

"These can be summarised as theatres associated with ISIL or AQ-linked extremist groups active in and around Jammu and Kashmir, whether directly or via proxies or affiliates, as well as other separatist movements in the region; other ISIL and AQ cells, their affiliates, or radicalised individuals in India."

The Paris-headquartered global body, which leads action and finalises recommendations to combat terror financing and money laundering, said regional insurgencies in the north-east and north of India and left-wing extremist groups seeking to overthrow the government are the other terrorist threats for the country.

"The most significant terrorism threats appear to relate to ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) or AQ (Al-Qaeda) linked groups active in and around Jammu and Kashmir," it said.

Jawan injured in IED explosion

Chaibasa: A CoBRA battalion jawan was injured in an IED explosion during a search operation against Maoists in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district on Thursday, a police officer said.

The incident occurred around 7.30 am in Saranda forest in Jaraikeela police station area, he said.

Modi pays tribute to J-K's first Muslim IAS official

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid tribute to Jammu and Kashmir's first Muslim IAS officer Mohammad Shafi Pandit who died earlier in the day.

Pandit, who retired as chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission in 2009, died at a Delhi hospital while undergoing treat-

ment for cancer.

"I have come to know Kashmir's pride and first (Muslim) IAS officer Mohammad Shafi Pandit has passed away. He was working for the benefit of society even after retirement. In this hour of grief, we are with his family," the prime minister said while addressing an election rally.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Whether it was Holi or Deepawali, Raksha Bandhan or Shivratri, Ramnavami or Janmashtami, they had banned all of them, they had stopped the events. Because some people did not like the tune of Hare Rama Hare Krishna, Samajwadi Party used to ban it. They used to stop the Kanwar Yatra."

- Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister, UP



Women over 50 pc of at liquor outlets

Thiruvananthapuram: Shattering glass ceilings and defying long-held social taboos, women now make up over 50 per cent of the workforce at Kerala State Beverages Corporation known as BEVCO, the state-run liquor retailer.

In what might be a first for India, Kerala has positioned women salespersons at liquor outlets, a job they view as no different from any other government role.

"Initially, I was very worried, as we all consid-

ered it a problem. But after six months of working, I started enjoying the job, and we hardly encountered any problems," Leena, a woman salesperson employed in a KSBC outlet in Thiruvananthapuram for the last two years, told PTI.

Many of these employees and their families initially had apprehensions about women working in liquor outlets. But it was the women who went to the court to get their rights to work in



BEVCO. "Ten years ago, women went to court and won their rights to work in BEVCO. Earlier, women were not recruited to work in liquor outlets, and the court directed the

government to recruit women as well. Now women comprise more than 50 per cent of our workforce," Harshita Attaluri, IPS, Managing Director of KSBC, told

PTI. Initially, BEVCO outlets were considered difficult places for women to work. But over the years, women have found it to be a safer place to work, and they hardly encounter any problems.

"If there are any complaints of misbehaviour from the side of the consumers, we immediately respond and police take action," Attaluri said. She said that the representation of women at BEVCO reflects Kerala society, where women

constitute more than 50 per cent of the population. "Our only problem is the long working hours. But any other job would have its own challenges. We find most of the customers who come to our outlets as friendly and cooperative," Sangeetha, another salesperson, said.

She also demands that a system educating people about legal action if they misbehave with the staff should also be properly displayed in the outlets, like other public offices.

Choked by Trash Mithi River Struggles

By Esha Lohia

Mumbai: For those who have admired the Thames and the Seine that run through major global cities, the plight of the Mithi River that streams through the bustling city of Mumbai, is distressing. The river, that once had clear waters, is now a cesspool of sewage, mosquitoes, plastic and waste which is choking aquatic life and killing the natural habitat of migratory birds. The Mithi River has always quietly crossed the city, originating from the tail-water discharges of the Vihar and Powai lakes and finding its way to reach the Arabian Sea. But the river sprang into prominence during the deluge of 2005 when it threw up tonnes of garbage and sewage that Mumbai has dumped into it for several decades.

The river, which drains into the Mahim creek, trickles through slums, industrial and residential zones. A glance at the banks of the river show how it's been turned into a cesspool of sewage, water hyacinth, untreated effluents, garbage like thermocol, foams, cheap footwear, electric wires, cement waste, and plastic waste. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board's 'Action Plan for the Mithi River' highlights the presence of 947 industries along the riverbanks, including automobile manufacturing, plywood supply stores, hardware stores, silk mills, ready-mix concrete suppliers, and scrap dealers. This is besides the household waste that goes into the river.

The pollution has taken its toll on the ecological balance that rivers offer. The garbage has contaminated and stagnated the water which has become the prime reason for mosquitoes breeding in its waters in large numbers and a stench that spreads over neighbouring areas. Plastic and rubber waste is choking aquatic life and making the river an uninhabitable home for migratory birds.

The Mithi, spanning 17.84 kilometres, gained public attention following the devastating floods of July 26, 2005, which resulted in the loss of over a thousand lives in Mumbai.



THE WAY OF THE WASTE

The sewage network in Mumbai covers only 84 percent of the city and 68 percent of the population as of April 2021. Most informal settlements – which house 42 percent of the population – aren't connected to the pipe network or have septic tanks that need to be emptied out instead. WHICH REPORT? There are 29 outfalls in western suburbs draining directly into sea while 14 drain into Mithi river which ultimately joins Mahim creek.

Since then, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) have invested substantial funds in efforts to revitalise the river. However, despite these significant expenditures, the river's condition remains largely unchanged.

"Several household and municipal wastewater is directly discharged into the river through drainage outlets and sewers, contributing to significant pollution," says Abhijit Waghre who contributed to a three-part photo essay series on Mithi river along with Sahil Kanekar and Kartiki Naik. WHEN?

Industrial waste is a large contributor too and accumulation of solid waste in the river hinders its ability to carry stormwater, necessitating regular desilting operations. Accordingly, for 2024, the BMC has set a target to remove a total of 270,000 metric tonnes of silt. "Every year the authorities do the process of

desilting but it is simply a way of generating money. The collection mechanism is quite pathetic. Why do you have a system where one has to take a boat in the middle of the river to collect the trash? The authorities should rather install nets in the drain itself or on roads. Almost 68 percent of the solid waste in Mithi is raw sewage," says Stalin, Director at NGO Vanashakti.

Rejuvenating a dying river

With a public outcry over the dismal state of the river, the BMC has taken steps at desilting and cleaning but citizen awareness lies at the core of change. In 2023, the BMC initiated a project – Rejuvenation of Mithi river, by installing a sewage treatment plant that passes the polluted water through the STP through tunnels and after treatment, water is released in the river. However, even after spending thousands of crores in the project, there is no evidence of any change in the water quality.

White tigress Riddhi dies



Bhopal: A 15-year-old white tigress, 'Riddhi', a prime attraction for visitors at Bhopal's Van Vihar National Park for several years, has died possibly due to old-age related problems, a veterinarian said on Thursday.

Riddhi was brought to Van Vihar from Indore zoo under an animal exchange programme when she was four-year-old.

The white tigress, now aged 15, was housed in an enclosure and was one of the main attractions for visitors at the national park. "Since the last two days, the tigress had not taken her regular meals, which was a normal practice for her. She appeared normal in her enclosure till Wednesday, but on Thursday morning, the animal was found unconscious," said the park's wildlife veterinarian, Atul Gupta.

After a medical examination, Riddhi was declared dead, he said, adding the carcass was disposed of as per norms after an autopsy.

Prima facie, the wild animal's cause of the death was failure of internal organs due to old-age, Gupta informed.

Tigers normally have a life-span of 15 to 16 years in the wild, whereas in captivity they survive for a comparatively longer period due to the protected environment and care given to them, according to wildlife experts.

-PTI



Firefighters work to extinguish a fire on the outskirts of Sever do Vouga, a town in northern Portugal that has been surrounded by forest fires for several days.

Pic: PTI

China's Lunar samples show distinct characteristics

By K.J.M. Varma

Beijing: Lunar samples brought back by China's Chang'e-6 mission from the little explored far side of the moon have exhibited "distinct characteristics" compared to previously obtained lunar samples, a paper published by the Chinese scientists has said.

A team of scientists in their first research paper published on the lunar samples from the far side of the moon said on Tuesday the Chang'e-6 soil samples have a lower density than previous samples from other parts of the moon, indicating a more porous and loosely structured composition.

The plagioclase content of the Chang'e-6 samples is significantly higher than that of the Chang'e-5 samples, while their olivine content is significantly lower. The study also revealed the

Chang'e-6 lithic fragment

samples are primarily composed of basalt, breccia, agglutinate, glasses and leucocrate. Geochemical analysis of the Chang'e-6 lunar samples has shown that their concentration of trace elements such as thorium, uranium and potassium is markedly different from the samples retrieved by the Apollo missions and the Chang'e-5 mission, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

China in May this year launched a 53-day lunar probe mission to collect samples for the first time from the far side of the Earth for scientific studies, the first endeavour of its kind in the history of human lunar exploration, according to China National Space Administration (CNSA).

Chang'e 6 consists of four components: an orbiter, a lander, an ascender and a re-entry

module.

The returner of the Chang'e-6 in June brought back 1,935.3 grams of samples from the far side of the moon.

The study was carried out jointly by members from the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Lunar Exploration and Space Engineering Centre, and the Beijing Institute of Spacecraft System Engineering.

In July this year, Chinese scientists studying soil samples of the moon brought by China's Chang'e-5 mission in 2020 found water molecules in lunar soil.

Based on lunar soil samples returned by China's Chang'e-5 mission in 2020, Chinese scientists have found a hydrated mineral "enriched" with molecular water, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

-PTI

Mamata sees conspiracy behind Bengal floods

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the Centre of failing to carry out dredging at the DVC dams, which released water resulting in floods in several districts of the state.

Banerjee held the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) accountable for the "man-made" floods and suggested there was a conspiracy behind the situation in the state. DVC dams are located at Maithon and Panchet, both along the Jharkhand-Bengal border.

While supervising the flood conditions at Pashkura in Paschim Medinipur district, she warned that she would sever all ties with the corporation. "This is not rainwater, it is water released by the central government organisation DVC from its dams. This is a man-made flood, and it's unfortunate. Why isn't the



central government dredging the DVC dams, where the water storage capacity has decreased by 36 per cent. There is a larger conspiracy at play. This cannot continue and we will start a major movement against this," she added.

Banerjee claimed the DVC has released 5.5 lakh cusecs of water this year, contributing to the current crisis.

"I will instruct the administration to ensure that everyone receives adequate relief materials," she added.

From Pashkura, Banerjee is scheduled to visit flooded areas in Hooghly and Howrah, according to government sources.

Since Wednesday, she has been touring various parts of the state affected by the floods.

-PTI

Guj CM launches statewide Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign

Ahmedabad: Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has launched the 'Swachhata Hi Seva 2024' campaign, aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility towards cleanliness among all citizens.

"Swachhata Hi Seva 2024 is a nationwide campaign launched on September 17 which will culminate on October 2. In Gujarat, this cleanliness drive will be held from September 17 to October 31, the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a government release stated.

Patel formally kicked off the drive by cleaning a road near the vegetable market in sector 7 of Gandhinagar on Tuesday night. Local MLA Ritaben Patel, Mayor Miraben Patel and office-bearers of various committees of the Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation along with senior officials also joined the CM in cleaning the road with brooms.

Influential nations urge G20 to increase climate finance

New Delhi: A group of influential countries has urged the G20 nations to increase the overall pool of financing for climate action and urgently shift away from investments in fossil fuels.

In a letter to the G20 bloc, the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) said all countries must work together to mobilise as much funding as possible to tackle the climate crisis as they convene to set a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The NCQG is the new amount that developed nations must mobilise annually, starting in 2025, to support climate action in developing countries.

However, slow progress in mid-year UN talks in Bonn, Germany, and technical discussions in Baku has cast doubt on the possibility of setting an ambitious new climate finance target at the



Countries in the coalition include Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Finland, Fiji, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK, among others.

conference. The HAC emphasised that G20 countries, responsible for around 80 per cent of global emissions and holding 85 per cent of global GDP, had the power, resources and responsibility to "change the course of our planet's future".

"We urge the G20 to lead

all parties in collectively increasing the overall pool of financing for climate action from all sources and to urgently shift away from investments in fossil fuels," the coalition said.

"As the costs of climate change rise and we work together to set a New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance (NCQG), we must deliver as much funding as possible to tackle the climate crisis. We must approach COP29 in a spirit of collaboration," it added.

According to a report released by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on September 10, between USD 5.012 trillion and USD 6.852 trillion would be needed cumulatively until 2030 to support developing nations in achieving their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which are national plans to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Huge python grabs Thai woman

Bangkok: A 64-year-old woman was preparing to do her evening dishes at her home outside Bangkok when she felt a sharp pain in her thigh and looked down to see a huge python taking hold of her.

"I was about to scoop some water and when I sat down it bit me immediately," Arom Arunroj told Thailand's Thairath newspaper. "When I looked I saw the snake wrapping around me." The four-to-five-meter-long (13-to-16-foot-long) python coiled itself around her torso, squeezing her down to the floor of her kitchen. "I grabbed it by the head, but it wouldn't release me," she said. "It only tightened." Pythons are non-venomous constrictors, which kill their prey by gradually squeezing the breath out of it. Propped up against her kitchen door, she cried for help but it wasn't until a neighbor happened to be walking by about an hour and a half later and heard her screams that authorities were called.

EU backed initiative to address India's water woes

By Aditi Khanna

London: A project, led by a consortium of partners including the UK's Aston University, announced a significant milestone on Wednesday in alleviating water challenges faced by coastal villages in India and other emerging economies after completing a pilot phase in Gujarat.

The India-H2O project, a European Union (EU) backed initiative aimed at addressing growing water scarcity in coastal regions, completed the pilot project in the coastal area of Gujarat using desalination, the process of removing salt from water. Through innovative desalination technology and the design of

closed loop supply chain for sustainable practices, the India-H2O team claims to have developed a solution that not only purifies salt water but also ensures that it is safe and affordable for communities to use.

"The completion of this pilot project, its successful operations for more than six months, and feasibility of village scale deployment of the project across coastal villages in Gujarat state ensure commercial uptake of the project not only in India but also across the emerging economies," said Prasanta Dey, Professor of Operations Management at Aston Business School and the lead for Supply Chain Innovation and Business Case Assessment



for the project.

"We are proud to have developed a solution that has the potential to transform the lives of people living in water-scarce coastal regions. Our technology not only addresses the immediate need for clean water but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of these communities. It is a

promising approach that can be replicated across other coastal regions in India and in emerging economies worldwide," he said.

A desalination plant was specifically designed to tackle the unique water issues prevalent in coastal regions. These areas often suffer from a scarcity of clean water due to

levels of salt found in groundwater, which limits access to safe drinking water.

The project's solutions include advanced methods to make desalination more energy-efficient, filtering water using renewable energy, recycling wastewater through natural plant processes and using salt-tolerant plants (halophytes) to manage leftover salty water. The experts say their innovative approaches have shown great promise in providing sustainable clean drinking water in coastal villages, helping to reduce water scarcity. Additionally, growing the special plants supports the food supply chain and creates jobs in the community.

Building on the success of

the pilot project, the India-H2O team is now focusing on scaling up the solution to reach more communities across coastal India. Discussions are also underway with stakeholders in other emerging economies to explore the potential for adapting and implementing this innovative solution in their regions.

The India-H2O project is funded by the European Commission, UK government and India's Department of Biotechnology, Department of Science and Technology. It is a collaborative effort involving international and local partners, working together to combine expertise in water treatment, sustainable technology, and community engagement.

-PTI

"We are proud to have developed a solution that has the potential to transform the lives of people living in water-scarce coastal regions. Our technology not only addresses the immediate need for clean water but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of these communities. It is a promising approach that can be replicated across other coastal regions in India and in emerging economies worldwide."

Prasanta Dey,
Lead for Supply Chain Innovation and Business Case Assessment for the project

Keir Starmer faces flak for taking freebies

The British PM says he has done nothing wrong

Waheed Alli allegedly paid for PM's clothes, eye glasses

London: Less than three months after he was elected on a promise to restore trust in politics, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is trying to shake off criticism over donations from a wealthy businessman and the hefty salary of his most senior aide.

The Labour Party leader, who won power in a landslide victory on July 4, denies impropriety over thousands of pounds (dollars) worth of clothes and eyeglasses paid for by Waheed Alli, a media entrepreneur and longtime Labour donor.

Starmer is also facing grumbling among his own employees over the salary of chief of staff Sue Gray. The BBC disclosed that she is paid 170,000 pounds (\$225,000) a year — about 3,000 pounds more than the prime minister's salary.

Gray's salary is at the top of a set of pay bands for political advisers, which have been raised since the election. The government said it did not interfere in setting the pay scale.

"The pay bands for any official, any adviser, are not set by politicians. There's an official process that does that," Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said Thursday.

In recent days British media have been full of largely anonymous grumbling from government of-

ficials about Gray, a former senior civil servant best known for leading an investigation into lockdown-breaching parties in government buildings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gray's findings helped topple Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and her subsequent move

Lawmakers are allowed to accept gifts but have to declare donations and extra-parliamentary income within 28 days. Starmer missed the four-week deadline to declare the donations of clothes and a personal shopper for his wife from Alli. He says the delay was due to his staff seeking

er has declared "gifts, benefits and hospitality" worth more than 100,000 pounds since December 2019, more than any other lawmaker.

The donations include thousands of pounds' worth of tickets for Premier League games involving Starmer's beloved



to work for Starmer led the Conservatives to claim the "partygate" probe was politically biased, something Gray denies.

Labour claims the leak of Gray's salary and the donation revelations — branded "frockgate" in the press after dresses bought for the prime minister's wife, Victoria Starmer — is being whipped up by the Conservatives and their media supporters to tarnish the government.

advice on exactly what needed to be declared.

"I'm very consistent with following the rules," Starmer said this week. He rejected suggestions that prime ministers should get a wardrobe budget, saying taxpayers should not have to pay for politicians' clothes.

The scale of the freebies accepted by Starmer has raised eyebrows even among supporters. Sky News reported that Starm-

team Arsenal.

"I'm a massive Arsenal fan," Starmer told reporters during a trip to Rome this week. "I can't go into the stands because of security reasons. Therefore, if I don't accept a gift of hospitality I can't go to a game. You could say, Well bad luck...But, you know, never going to an Arsenal game again because I can't accept hospitality is pushing it a bit far."

-AP



People line up to hear Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speak at a campaign event at Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale NY on on Wednesday. Pic:AP/PTI

Imran's party claims members arrested

Lahore: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party on Thursday claimed that Punjab Police have launched a crackdown on the outfit, arresting dozens of its workers ahead of its planned power show in Lahore on Saturday.

"Police have detained Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentary leader in Punjab Assembly Ali Iftikhar Awan, senior leader Afzal Phat and dozens of other party workers ahead of its power show at the ground of Minar-i-Pakistan, Lahore on Saturday (Sept 21)," PTI leader Ali Ijaz Butter said.

He said despite "fascist tactics" by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, the PTI would hold a historic rally in Lahore.

Fruit, seafood latest front in escalating Taiwan-China tensions

Taipei: Taiwan said Thursday that China's ban on imports of its fruit, vegetables, seafood and other goods violates trade rules, in the latest escalation of tensions between the self-governing island republic and its massive neighbor, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and has vowed to annex it by military means.

The Taiwanese government's Mainland Affairs Council said the ban, which takes effect next week, ignores rules laid out by the World Trade Organization, of which both sides are members.

The move comes amid growing military, political and economic pressure on Taiwan's government to concede to Beijing's

control. Taiwan's semi-tropical climate and fertile soil have nurtured an agricultural industry valued at around \$500 billion dollars, alongside high-tech corporations that produce the world's most cutting-edge computer chips.

China's move "harms the interests of farmers" on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and does nothing to improve relations between the two, the council said. China and Taiwan should seek dialogue through the WTO to resolve their differences, it added.

The WTO is one of the few forums through which discussion is possible between the two sides, which divided amid civil war in

1949. Chinese diplomatic pressure has barred Taiwan from the United Nations and reduced its number of official diplomatic allies to 12.

The Chinese ban appears to target rural Taiwanese, who for the past two decades have largely voted for pro-independence candidates but whose local officials have been courted by China with all-expense vacations and other enticements.

China has used trade pressure on countries such as Australia, South Korea and Norway over perceived political slights, using its market for resources and consumer goods as leverage, with mixed results.

-AP

North Korea calls for bolstering nuclear weapons

Seoul: North Korea said Thursday that leader Kim Jong Un supervised successful tests of two types of missiles — one designed to carry a "super-large conventional warhead" and the other likely for a nuclear warhead, as he ordered officials to bolster up his country's military capabilities to repel US-led threats.

The tests were apparent references to the multiple missiles launches those neighbouring countries said North Korea performed off its east coast on Wednesday, extending its run of weapons display as confrontations with the US and South Korea escalate.

The official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim oversaw the launch of the country's newly built Hwasongpho-11-Da-4.5 ballistic missile tipped with a dummy "4.5-ton super-large conventional warhead."

It said the test-firing was meant to verify an ability to accurately hit a 320 kilometer (200 mile)-range target, suggesting it's a weapon aimed at striking sites in

South Korea. KCNA said Kim also guided the launch of an improved "strategic" cruise missile, a word implying the weapons were developed to carry nuclear warheads.

KCNA cited Kim as stressing the need to continue to "bolster up the nuclear force" and acquire "overwhelming offensive capability in the field of conventional weapons, too." "Only when we have strong power, can we contain and frustrate the enemies' strategic misjudgment and will to use armed forces," Kim said, according to KCNA.

North Korea has been pushing to introduce a variety of sophisticated weapons systems designed to attack both South Korea and the mainland US to deal with what it calls its rivals' intensifying security threats.

Worries about North Korea deepened last week as it disclosed photos of a secretive facility built to enrich uranium for nuclear bombs.

-AP



An Iraqi bulldozer carries a shipment of emergency medical aid, as they prepare to offload it into a military plane to be sent to the Lebanese health ministry, a day after several were killed and thousands were injured.

Japanese student stabbed near his school in China dies

Beijing: Officials in Tokyo said Thursday that a 10-year-old Japanese student attending a Japanese school in southern China who was attacked the day before has died, asking Beijing to provide details of the stabbing and take preventive measures. A suspect is in custody.

Japan's Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa expressed condolences and said it was "extremely regrettable"

the student died despite requests for caution and enhanced safety around the time of the anniversary of the start of Japan's invasion of China in the 1930s.

Kamikawa said she also instructed Japanese schools in China to review their safety measures, and requested China to provide details of the attack and do its utmost to prevent a recurrence of similar attacks on the Japanese.

-AP

UN-chartered plane damaged in Islamist attack

Bamako (Mali): A plane that was used for humanitarian work by the World Food Program was damaged during an Islamist attack in the capital of Mali, according to the South African aviation company that owns the plane.

The company, National Airways Corporation, said late Wednesday that the plane "came under terrorist attack" on Tuesday while it was on the ground in Bamako, Mali.

It said all crew and staff were unharmed and in a remote safe house.

On Tuesday, Islamic militants attacked a military

training camp and the airport in Bamako. Mali troops subdued the militants following gunfire that killed some soldiers, authorities said.

An al-Qaida-linked group has claimed the attack.

At least 15 suspects were arrested, a security official who was inside the training camp at the time of the attack told The Associated Press. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to reporters.

National Airways Corporation said it was "a tragic state of affairs" that their

"assets are damaged and destroyed in a fellow African country whilst performing humanitarian work in support of the citizens of Mali, under the auspices, approval, markings and the flag of the World Food Program (WFP)."

The al-Qaida-linked militant group JNIM claimed responsibility for the attacks on its website Azal-laq. Mali, along with its neighbours Burkina Faso and Niger, has for more than a decade battled an insurgency fought by armed groups, including some allied with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

Protest against Bangladesh test series

Chennai: Condemning alleged violence against Hindus in Bangladesh and seeking protection for them, the Hindu Makkal Katchi (HMK) on Thursday staged a protest here urging the Centre and cricket team India to stop the India-Bangladesh test series. Led by HMK chief Arjun Sampath, HMK cadres, raised slogans asking the central government and UN to protect Bangladeshi Hindus and 'ban' the Bangladesh-India cricket test series.

Canada reduces study permits

Ottawa: Canada has announced to reduce study permits for international students, a move that is likely to affect many Indian nationals.

In a post on X, PM Justin Trudeau said, "We're granting 35 per cent fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number's going down by another 10 per cent." "Immigration is an advantage for our economy - but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down," he said.

The move comes as the Canadian government is looking to reduce the number of temporary residents. Canada is one of the most sought-after destinations for Indian students. Trudeau's announcement is likely to impact many Indian students who wish to study in Canada.

Education is a key area of mutual interest between India and Canada. India is the largest source country of foreign students with an estimated 427,000 Indian students studying in Canada.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"One of the important leaders today in the Global South is your good country, India. Today, the Global South depends on the India way in contributing to shaping the future."



- Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN Ambassador

Quad more strategically aligned: White House

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: The upcoming Quad Summit in Delaware will show that the four-nation grouping is more strategically aligned and relevant than ever before, the White House has said.

QUAD, comprising Australia, Japan, India and the US, is an initiative of President Joe Biden. In the first 100 days of his presidency, Biden convened a virtual leadership summit of the QUAD countries in 2020.

Since then QUAD leaders have been holding an annual summit on a rotation basis.

"We believe you'll see... that the Quad is more strategically aligned and more relevant than ever before," John Kirby, White House National Security Council Strategic Communications Director told reporters at a news conference here on Wednesday.

Kirby's comments came ahead of President Biden's hosting of the other three QUAD leaders from Aus-



tralia, India, and Japan in Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday. It was India's turn to host the Quad Summit. But following a request from Washington, India agreed to host the Summit next year.

Biden will host the fourth 'Quad Leaders Summit' in Wilmington, Delaware, on

September 21.

Kirby said the current Quad Summit will be the first time that the US has hosted foreign leaders in Wilmington, the president's hometown. "And he's very excited about that, about showing them a place and a community that shapes so much of the public servant

and the leader that he became. It's also a reflection of his belief that like politics, foreign policy is also personal," he said.

Kirby said Biden will meet PM Narendra Modi, Japanese PM Fumio Kishida and Australian PM Anthony Albanese individually, and later in a plenary. Kirby said over the last more than three years, Biden has made it a priority to invest in rebuilding America's network of alliances and partnerships across the Indo-Pacific.

"We believe you'll see... that the Quad is more strategically aligned and more relevant than ever before."

John Kirby, White House National Security Council Strategic Communications Director

EDITORIAL

Unified Elections

India's 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) initiative, championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, seeks to synchronize elections for both the national Parliament (Lok Sabha) and state legislative assemblies.

The proposal presents a radical departure from the status quo, offering potential gains in efficiency, fiscal prudence, and governance stability. The premise is both straightforward and ambitious: reduce the frequent election cycle that grips India in a near-perpetual state of political campaigning and instead hold simultaneous elections once every five years.

India's election cycle is a mammoth affair. With 28 states and 8 union territories, each operating on different electoral schedules, national and state elections are an ongoing event, often causing policy paralysis. Governments, perpetually mindful of upcoming elections, are incentivized to prioritize short-term populist policies rather than long-term development goals. By aligning all elections, governance can shift its focus back to uninterrupted policy-making.

However, ONOE faces daunting challenges - the potential erosion of federalism, logistical difficulties and marginalization of regional voices. The proposal could upend the delicate balance between central and state governments. Conducting simultaneous elections in India is a massive logistical challenge, given the country's 900 million eligible voters and the need to deploy millions of polling officials and security personnel.

Organizing both national and state elections require more resources and precise coordination. The Election Commission of India (ECI) would face immense pressure to ensure free, fair, and smooth elections, and unlike staggered polls, simultaneous elections complicate managing crises such as political violence, natural disasters or allegations of malpractice.

The ECI spends billions on conducting polls across the country, from voter mobilization to security arrangements. The ONOE framework could radically reduce these expenses. As demonstrated by the Netherlands, where simultaneous elections for the Dutch Parliament and municipal councils streamline costs, such efficiency gains are replicated in both time and money saved. The fewer elections a nation must hold, the less strain on its resources.

However, not every stakeholder will view ONOE favourably. The Indian media, in particular, stands to lose in revenue terms. The staggered nature of India's elections means that news outlets, especially television and digital media, enjoy a steady flow of advertising revenue from political parties over multiple election cycles. A continuous wave of elections keeps media houses flush with campaign ads, debates, and political analysis shows—making elections a lucrative business.

In sum, ONOE offers India a chance to enhance the efficiency of its democratic process. If implemented with care, this reform could lead to better governance, reduced fiscal waste, and a more engaged electorate.

CONSCIENCE CALLING

Mamata Gets a Dose of Her Own Medicine



By Romita Datta

In her thoughts and words, Mamata and movement are synonymous. She feels pride in her role in the anti-farmland acquisition protests in Singur and Nandigram, viewing them as political milestones that served as her springboard for her success and power. However, she did not anticipate the movement she once glorified would backfire in her backyard.

The lessons she tried to teach Gen Z have ironically returned to haunt her. The monthlong apolitical protest by Bengal's junior doctors over their friend's rape and murder is proving to be her toughest challenge as an administrator.

Mamata Banerjee faces mounting pressure as Bengal's junior doctors continue their strike over a colleague's rape and murder. Despite her concessions, including agreeing to change police and health officials, unresolved issues and ongoing corruption persist. The doctors' demand for a safe working environment remains unmet, prolonging the protest.

Initially, she ignored the movement, tried politicising it to create divisions, and questioned the ethics of depriving the poor of treatment and healthcare. She summoned senior doctors who supported the protestors, arrested a few social media activists, and paraded the families of patients who died during the strike as a veiled threat to the strikers.

But the protest grew into a mass movement, uniting people across all socio-economic backgrounds, ages, and genders in the call for justice. They empathised with the loss, making it more than just the tragedy of one family. Mamata became unnerved, unable to handle teeming millions who were in no mood to listen or have faith in her assurances. With the Supreme Court taking suo motu cognisance of the heinous incident, there was an added pressure of being under the judiciary's close watch.

Being image-conscious, Mamata Banerjee visited the dharna on September 14th. She took a big leap to end the impasse over the junior doctor's strike vis-à-vis their five-point demands, which included the arrest of culprits, the removal of Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and two other IPS officers, taking disciplinary action against former RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Principal Sandip Ghosh, and safety and security measures as valid conditions for resuming work.

The chief minister's appearance on day 35 surprised some, though seasoned observers knew her intent. Heavy rain had damaged the protest site, but the junior doctors remained undeterred. With the case now in CBI court, the government blamed delays on the agency. However, the public saw through this, recognising an attempt to downplay the junior doctor's rape and murder as just another crime, blaming a minor civic volunteer.

Mamata needed a photo-op, and things unfolded as planned. Some junior doctors saw a sign of genuine reconciliation. A few emails later, they arrived at her doorstep for dialogue, sticking to their five-point demand. They requested the discussion be live-streamed for transparency—hardly unreasonable, given Mamata's frequent use of live-streaming for government events and



party meetings. However, Mamata was adamant about not going live on air.

The striking doctors gave no scope for complaints of disruption and law and order issues over their protest marches. In fact, on two occasions of face-to-face exchanges between the chief minister and the agitating doctors, they stood with folded hands, calm but firm in their resolve and not ready to budge. If the chief minister wanted the government to videotape the entire dialogue, they also made a legitimate demand to do so from their end. But the government was unwilling. Mamata appealed to the doctors to have faith in her and her administration. And this was something doctors knew could not be relied upon.

Trust in this government is rapidly eroding, and much of the blame falls on Mamata. Each time a scam breaks, she claims ignorance. Bengal is growing weary of her holier-than-thou stance. Scandals like the education recruitment scam, food scam, and Ponzi schemes have implicated her ministers or close associates. Her continued insistence on being unaware of these wrongdoings, even in her own circle, is hard to accept. In the latest health department scandal—ranging from exam bribes to organ theft—Mamata again pleads ignorance, despite being the health minister.

The meeting finally took place on September 16th, when Mamata agreed to change the police commissioner and a

couple of health officials as per the doctor's demands. However, she was not ready to change her health secretary, Narayan Swaroop Nigam, on the pretext that she needed an experienced person to hand-hold the new officers. The doctors are firm on having his ouster as he chose to ignore the red flags the 1000-page investigation report on corruption in the hospital that former deputy super of R. G. Kar, Akhtar Ali, raised in 2023. Three out of five demands have been met. But the fear of unlit passages, insufficient CCTVs, inadequate toilets, no restrooms for women, the same contractual civic volunteers on the run, and the same mid-and junior-level health officials and interns, who were complicit with corruption, still roaming free, returning to normalcy appears to be a far cry.

The doctors will continue with their strike till the atmosphere is safe and conducive for them to work. The Supreme Court has given credence to their worries.

The junior doctors have sought another meeting with the chief secretary soon to take stock of the status of their demands. Until then, Mamata cannot breathe easily. The meeting must happen. There's no escaping either for Mamata or her government till the demand for justice is met. The world is watching!

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

GLOBAL WATCH

The Fall of Justin Trudeau's Star

Justin Trudeau, once the golden boy of Canadian politics, is facing the most difficult moment of his nearly-decade long premiership. The defeat of his Liberal Party in the recent Montreal by-election at the hands of the Conservatives under Pierre Poilievre has deepened the sense that Trudeau's political brand has run its course.

It was a symbolic blow to Trudeau's political fortunes. Montreal has long been a Liberal stronghold where Trudeau has historically enjoyed strong support.

Emboldened by the win, Poilievre's Conservatives tabled a no-confidence motion in the House of Commons where Trudeau's Liberal Party has been reduced to a minority following the withdrawal of support from the New Democratic Party (NDP) earlier this month, thereby dissolving the Supply and Confidence Agreement that had sustained the government since March 2022.

This political turbulence notwithstanding, Trudeau's government is expected to survive the vote next week by the skin of its teeth, thanks to the backing of the separatist Bloc Québécois. Bloc leader Yves-François Blanchet confirmed that his party will oppose the motion. While the Bloc's support ensures Trudeau avoids a collapse in the short term, his long-term future appears increasingly fragile.

Trudeau's initial ascent to power in 2015 was nothing short of meteoric. His promises of real change and a government that reflected the diversity and progressiveness of modern Canada resonated deeply

The loss of the Montreal by-election proves that Trudeau's Liberals, long perceived as Canada's natural governing party, now seem vulnerable



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau meets with Chairwoman of the Advisory Board of the Anti-Corruption Foundation and widow of former Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Pic: AP

with voters. He projected an image of openness and inclusivity that contrasted sharply with the perceived austerity of Stephen Harper's Conservative government. Trudeau was a prime minister for a new generation. Nine years later, the sheen seems to have worn off.

The Canadian Prime Minister has been facing intense criticism over his foreign policy, which has been marred by strained relations with key allies like China and India. Retaliatory tariffs and a deterioration in economic ties with China have been a consequence of Trudeau's confrontations over trade issues.

His government's perceived leniency toward Khalistani separatists has further strained relations with India.

In fact, one of Trudeau's most complex entanglements has been with India - a relationship frequently marked by missteps and double standards. In 2018, Trudeau embarked on an official visit to India, intending to strengthen bilateral ties. Instead, it turned into a diplomatic disaster, derailing relations between the two countries.

At the heart of the controversy was the invitation extended to Jaspal Atwal, a convicted Sikh extremist, to attend official events during Trudeau's visit. This diplomatic gaffe not only embarrassed the Canadian government but also exposed Trudeau's delicate balancing act with the large Sikh diaspora in Can-

ada, which has significant political influence, particularly in provinces like British Columbia.

Trudeau's vocal support for farmers protesting India's agricultural reforms in 2020 further complicated the relationship, as India accused Canada of interfering in its domestic affairs.

His handling of Canada's environmental agenda has proven problematic. While he initially presented himself as a climate champion, critics argue that his government's incremental progress on climate change lacks the bold action required.

Compounding Trudeau's troubles are the various ethical controversies that have plagued his tenure. The SNC-Lavalin affair in 2019, which saw Trudeau accused of pressuring his then-attorney general to drop criminal charges against the Quebec-based engineering firm, was a significant blow to his reputation. It was followed by the WE Charity scandal in 2020, where his government was criticized for awarding a multimillion-dollar contract to an organization with personal ties to his family.

Although Trudeau managed to survive these scandals politically, they have eroded trust in his leadership. A leader who once embodied integrity and transparency now finds himself associated with the very political machinations he once promised to transcend.

STATES WATCH

Political Showdown in poll season

In the run-up to the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is mounting a determined challenge against the incumbent Hemant Soren-led Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) government. With a well-orchestrated campaign strategy, the BJP is deploying its top brass to unseat the ruling coalition. Union Minister Smriti Irani and others have already hit the campaign trail, while the state leadership — featuring prominent figures such as Babul Marandi, Arjun Munda, and Amar Bauri — is leading the charge on the ground. The stakes are high, with both national and regional dynamics shaping the electoral contest.

Jharkhand has been a crucial battleground for the BJP, with the party losing the state in 2019. Since then, it has been working on a comeback strategy by addressing key tribal and regional issues, aiming to expand its voter base. The BJP is concentrating on exposing the perceived failures of the JMM government. Rising unemployment, sluggish infrastructure development, and widespread corruption have given the BJP ample material to criticize the Soren administration. Hemant Soren's al-

leged involvement in a mining lease scandal has also been leveraged by the opposition to fuel the anti-incumbency narrative. The BJP's push for 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE), recently passed by the Union Cabinet, has already turned into a key issue in the electoral narrative. The JMM has been vocal in its opposition, terming the move authoritarian and an attack on India's federal structure. The BJP, on the other hand, has welcomed the decision, projecting it

For the JMM, the upcoming Assembly election will test whether its regional identity and tribal roots can withstand the BJP's onslaught on Hemant Soren's governance.

croachment of mining and industrial projects. However, internal divisions and external pressures have weakened the JMM's once-dominant position. One of the most significant political shifts in this election season is the defection of Champai Soren, a key tribal leader in the

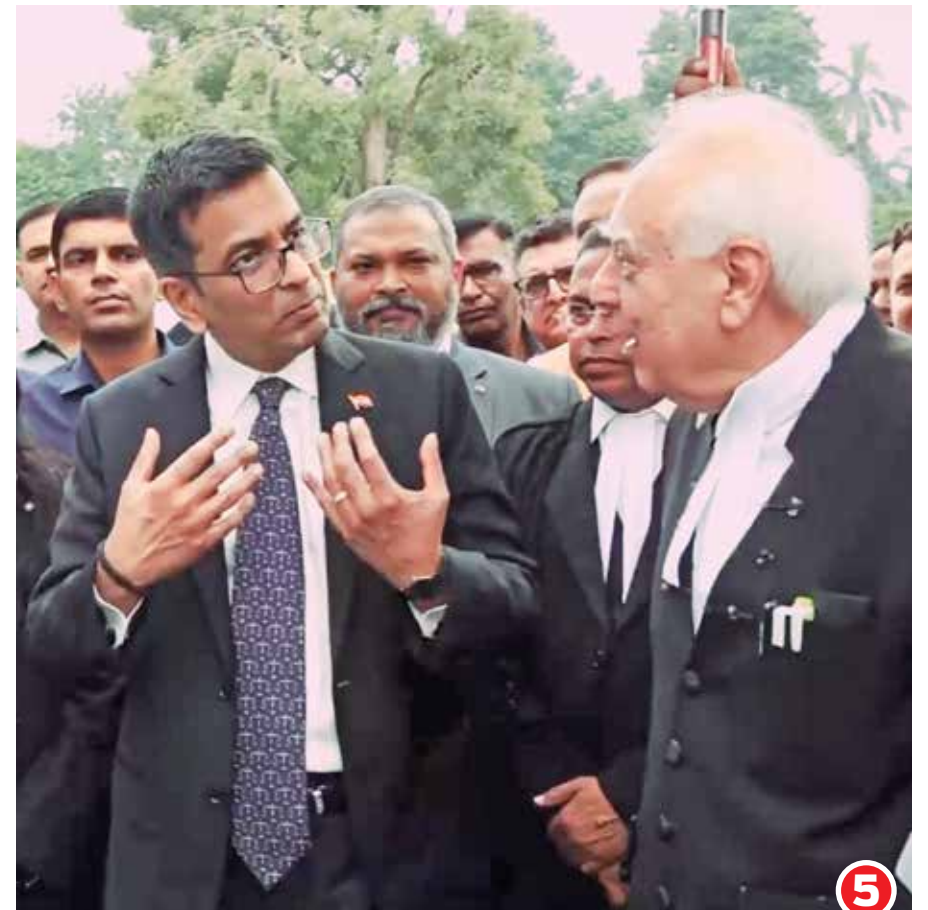
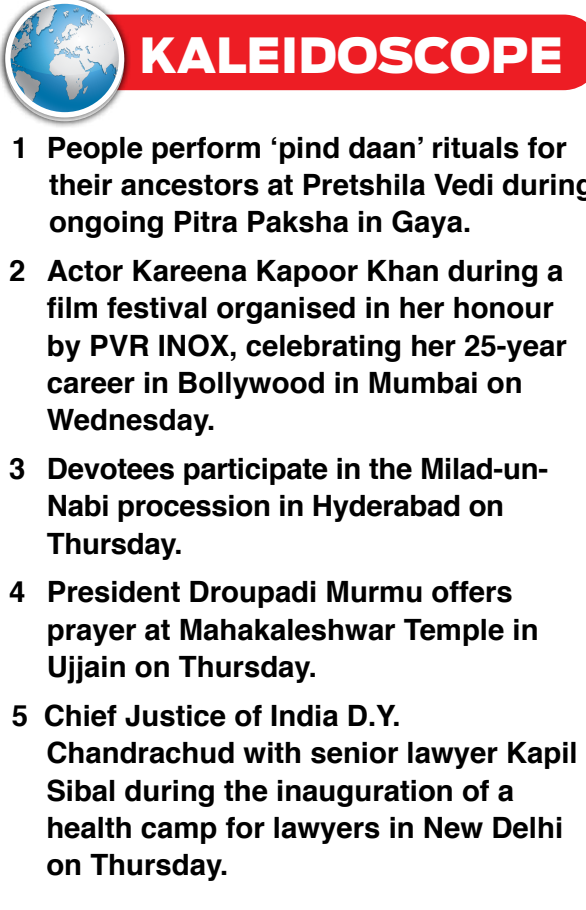
Kolhan region, from the JMM to the BJP. Champai's departure is a serious blow to the JMM's tribal base and provides the BJP with a crucial opportunity to make inroads in a region where tribal loyalty has long favoured the JMM. Soren's influence in constituencies such as Chaibasa and Jamshedpur is likely to shift the electoral balance, further complicating Hemant Soren's bid for re-election.

Additionally, both the BJP and the JMM face competition from a new political outfit - the Atal Vichar Manch, founded by former Union Minister and BJP leader Yashwant Sinha. Sinha, once a close ally of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has criticized the current BJP for straying from Vajpayee's inclusive political ideology. The Atal Vichar Manch's ability to siphon off BJP votes could lead to unpredictable outcomes in tightly contested constituencies.

Jharkhand's electoral history is marked by frequent power shifts and fragile coalitions. The state's first Chief Minister, Babul Marandi, had struggled to maintain political stability, setting a precedent of volatile governance. This has been a recurring theme in Jharkhand, where tribal identity politics, land issues and regional demands have shaped the state's political landscape.



Jharkhand



KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 People perform 'pind daan' rituals for their ancestors at Pretshila Vedi during ongoing Pitra Paksha in Gaya.
- 2 Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan during a film festival organised in her honour by PVR INOX, celebrating her 25-year career in Bollywood in Mumbai on Wednesday.
- 3 Devotees participate in the Milad-un-Nabi procession in Hyderabad on Thursday.
- 4 President Droupadi Murmu offers prayer at Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain on Thursday.
- 5 Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud with senior lawyer Kapil Sibal during the inauguration of a health camp for lawyers in New Delhi on Thursday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

TALK OF THE TOWN

The Missing Magic of Festival Songs in Bollywood



By
Abhijit Joshi



It's common in offices or colleges to hear someone say, "HOLI KAB HAI? KAB HAI HOLI... KAB..."

This famous line is from Gabbar Singh, played by Amjad Khan, in the classic film Sholay. In the same movie, Hema Malini and Dharmendra, who live in the village Ramgarh, dance to the song Holi Ke Din Jab Dil Mil Jate Hai. Even after 50 years, this film continues to leave an impact, showing how strong Hindi films have been across generations.

Celebrating festivals with singing and dancing is an integral part of Hindi films. But recently, songs celebrating festivals like Diwali, Karwa Chauth, and Christmas have faded from the scene, while songs on Ganpati and Holi took center stage. However, even those songs have become rare in the last few years.

In recent times, a few movies have managed to leave an impact with their festival songs.

The Ganpati song from Hrithik Roshan's Agneepath and the Holi song from Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani are examples, but otherwise, festival songs are missing.

There was a time when audiences eagerly waited for festival songs, and films were often released around festivals. Many of these songs are still played during celebrations. Some of the iconic ones include:

Dahi Handi Songs: Dahi Handi, celebrated on the second day of Krishna Janmashtami, is marked with joy in many parts of India, but Mumbai's celebration is unique. Bollywood has captured this energy in several movies like Bluffmaster, Khuddar, Agneepath, Badla, and Hello Brother. Veteran actor Sharmaji Kapoor's iconic song Govinda Aala Re from Bluffmaster (1963) remains popular, but Mach Gaya Shor from Khuddar (1982), featuring Amitabh Bachchan, is an all-time hit that still gets people dancing. The song Chandi Ki Daal Pe from Hello Brother (1999) struck a chord with younger audiences and is still played today. Another favorite is Go Go Govinda from OMG - Oh My God. However, in recent years, no new Dahi Handi song has had the same effect.

Ganpati Songs: A few iconic Ganpati songs have continued to resonate with audiences. Deva Shri Ganesh from Agneepath (2012), thanks to Ajay-Atul's music, is played throughout the 10-day Ganesh festival. The original Ganpati song from the older Agneepath didn't have the same impact as the 2012 version. Mourya Re from the remake of Don (2006) starring Shahrukh Khan also became a hit, as did Sadda Dil Vi Tu from ABCD, which is a favorite in Ganesh pandals. However, in the last decade, no new Ganpati songs have been as popular.

Holi Songs: Filmmakers have always loved Holi songs for their ability to show love and festivity. Classic Holi songs like Holi Ke Din (Sholay), Rang Barse (Silсила), Ang Se Ang Lagana (Darr), and Holi Khele Raghuvra (Baghban) continue to be played every year. Recent songs like Lahu Munh Lag Gaya from Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela and Jai Jai Shivshankar from War have added to the collection, but none have achieved the legendary status of Amitabh Bachchan's Rang Barse. In the last 5-6 years, no new Holi song has stood out.

Diwali Songs: Despite being one of the biggest festivals, Diwali has very few songs associated with it. Only 7-10 Diwali songs are memorable. Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham is a rare example, where Jaya Bachchan's character waits for her son Shahrukh Khan, welcoming him with an aarti. Films like Vastav, Amdani Atthani Kharcha Rupaiya, and Taare Zameen Par feature Diwali songs, but overall, the festival lacks iconic musical representation. Festival songs in Hindi cinema seem to be losing their charm, with no major releases in recent years. Hopefully, Bollywood will bring back the magic of festival songs that audiences love. Let's hope for the best.

(The writer is a communication professional. Views personal.)

EXPLAINER

Is Israel preparing for war with Hezbollah?

With Israel's defense minister announcing a "new phase" of the war and an apparent Israeli attack setting off explosions in Lebanon, the specter of all-out combat between Israel and Hezbollah seems closer than ever before.

Hopes for a diplomatic solution to the conflict appear to be fading quickly as Israel signals a desire to change the status quo in the country's north, where it has exchanged cross-border fire with Hezbollah since the Lebanese militant group began attacking on Oct. 8, a day after the war's opening salvo by Hamas.

Troops drawn from Gaza to the northern border

While the daily fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has escalated on several occasions, the bitter enemies have been careful to avoid an all-out war.

That appears to be changing — especially after pagers, walkie-talkies and other devices exploded in Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday, killing at least 20 and wounding thousands in a sophisticated attack Hezbollah blamed on Israel.

"You don't do something like that, hit thousands of people, and think war is not coming," said retired Israeli Brig. Gen. Amir Avivi, who leads Israel Defense and Security Forum, a group of hawkish former military commanders. "Why didn't we do it for 11 months? Because we were not willing to go to war yet. What's happening now? Israel is ready for war."

As fighting in Gaza has slowed, Israel has fortified



The family of Israeli Defense Forces paramedic Sgt. Agam Naim, the first woman Israeli Defense Forces soldier killed in combat in the Gaza Strip, sit at her grave during her funeral in Kibbutz Mishmarot, Israel on Wednesday.

forces along the border with Lebanon, including the arrival this week of a powerful army division that took part in some of the heaviest fighting in Gaza.

The division played a key role in Gaza, spearheading the army's operations in the southern city of Khan Younis, a Hamas stronghold. The offensive inflicted heavy losses on Hamas fighters and tunnels, but also wreaked massive damage, sent thousands of Palestinians fleeing and resulted in scores of civilian deaths. Israel says Hamas endangers civilians by hiding in residential areas.

The military also said it staged a series of drills this week along the border.

A 'new phase' of war

The military movements have been accompanied by heightened rhetoric from Israel's leaders, who say their patience is running thin.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Wednesday night declared the start of a "new phase" of the war as Israel turns its focus toward Hezbollah. "The center of gravity is shifting to the north by diverting resources and forces," he said.

He spoke a day after Israel's Cabinet made the return of displaced residents to their homes in northern Israel a formal goal of the war. The move was largely symbolic — Israeli

leaders have long pledged to bring those residents home. But elevating the significance of the aim signaled a tougher stance.

After meeting Wednesday with top security officials, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared: "We will return the residents of the north securely to their homes."

An official with knowledge of the encounter told The Associated Press that the envoy, Amos Hochstein, told Netanyahu that intensifying the conflict with Hezbollah would not help return evacuated Israelis back home.

Netanyahu, according to a statement from his office, told Hochstein that residents cannot return without "a fundamental change in the security situation in the north." The statement said that while Netanyahu "appreciates and respects" U.S. support, Israel will "do what is necessary to safeguard its security."

Is war inevitable?

Israeli media reported Wednesday that the government has not yet decided whether to launch a major offensive in Lebanon.

Much, it seems, will depend on Hezbollah's response. The group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, is expected to deliver a major speech on Thursday.

But public sentiment in Israel seems to be supportive of

tougher action against Hezbollah.

A poll in late August by the Israeli Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank, found that 67 per cent of Jewish respondents thought Israel should intensify its response to Hezbollah. That includes 46 per cent of Jewish respondents who believed Israel should launch a deep offensive striking Lebanese infrastructure, and 21 per cent who seek an intensified response that avoids striking Hezbollah infrastructure.

"There's a lot of pressure from the society to go to war and win," said Avivi, the retired general. "Unless Hezbollah tomorrow morning says, 'OK, we got the message. We're pulling out of south Lebanon,' war is imminent."

Such a war would almost certainly prove devastating to both sides.

Already, more than 500 people have been killed in Lebanon by Israeli strikes since Oct. 8, most of them fighters with Hezbollah and other armed groups but also more than 100 civilians. In northern Israel, at least 23 soldiers and 26 civilians have been killed by strikes from Lebanon.

Israel inflicted heavy damage on Lebanon during a monthlong war against Hezbollah in 2006 that ended in a stalemate. Israeli leaders have threatened even tougher action this time around, vowing to repeat the scenes of destruction from Gaza in Lebanon.

But Hezbollah also has built up its capabilities since 2006. Hezbollah has an estimated 150,000 rockets and missiles, some believed to have guidance systems that could threaten sensitive targets in Israel. It has also developed an increasingly sophisticated fleet of drones.

Capable of striking all parts of Israel, Hezbollah could bring life in Israel to a standstill and send hundreds of thousands of Israelis fleeing.

-AP

ASHWIN-JADEJA tango saves India

Hasan Mahmud strikes early

By G Unnikrishnan

Chennai: Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparked on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday.

Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56.

The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match.

In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the cream of Indian top-order -- Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) -- before snapping Rishabh Pant's return to Test cricket (39 off 52 balls)

in the initial moments of the second session.

KL Rahul, another Indian batter who is re-entering the Indian Test establishment, fell for 16 to off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz as fortune's pendulum stayed firmly in Bangladesh's quarter.

But then came the two gladiators who know Chepauk like the back of their hand -- Ashwin by birth and Jadeja through his long association with the Chennai Super Kings.

One more wicket at that stage would have extended the dominance of Bangladesh, but such thoughts hardly disturbed Ashwin and Jadeja.

Ashwin went off the blocks with a flurry of boundaries, a firm validation of his oh-so-smooth timing born out of fluent hand movement through shots and precise footwork.

There was this ramp shot off Mahmud, who tried to rattle Ashwin with a short-pitched delivery that climbed onto his body.

But the veteran player arched himself back ever so slightly to gain space to execute the ramp over the slip -- fabulous in conceptualisa-

Hasan Mahmud, the 24-year-old Bangladesh bowler, grabbed the spotlight with a three-wicket burst in the first session, which rocked a famed batting line-up comprising heavyweights Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill. He did not celebrate his wickets. "I don't really celebrate and there's no real reason why. You could say that if I celebrate after taking a wicket, it will make the batter feel more upset so that's why I don't celebrate," he had said at a press conference.

tion and execution.

At times, he scored at a strike rate in excess of 100 and was not hesitant to travel the more uncultured way.

A slog sweep that went for six over mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Shakib Al-Hasan testified that.

Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end going and he did that with minimum fuss.

A past master in operating from behind the giant shadows of superstars, Jadeja looked extremely comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed.

But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours.

Bangladesh's star of the day Mahmud, too was not spared as Jadeja, who raised his fifty off 73 balls, played a drag-pull off the pacer to send him for a six.

Other times, he wing-heeled across the pitch for those ones and twos to keep the Bangladesh bowlers frustrated.

The spectators eventually witnessed the moment that they had been waiting for when Ashwin reached the hundred with a single off Shakib, and they welcomed it with applause, cheers and loud bugling.

It was his second consecutive hundred at his home ground after going past the three-figure mark here against England in 2021. And it could not have come at a better time as well.

But before the epic fight-back, the Indian innings

resembled a crumbling rampart. It's not often that a team winning the toss would elect to bowl first here as that translates into a fourth-innings chase.

But Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto bit the bullet while going against the trend, and was rewarded for it too.

Rohit, who was saved by DRS when he was on 1, was the first to depart.

The Indian skipper had little choice other than playing a wobble seam delivery that came at him on a tight angle as he edged to Shanto at second slip.

Gill lasted just eight balls but he would count himself unlucky, feathering Mahmud's down the leg side delivery to stumper Litton Das.

Kohli walked into the Chepauk amid loud cheers

and looked confident. But an old failing resurfaced to haunt him.

Mahmud pitched one just short of the length outside the off-stump, and the length was not suitable for a drive.

But the star batter chose to play an expansive one with the ball nestling in Litton's gloves after taking a healthy edge off his bat.

Jaiswal and Pant added 62 runs for the fourth wicket to temporarily check the free fall before both perished in close succession in the middle session.

Bangladesh might have thought the effort was good enough to keep the home side flat on the ropes, but Ashwin and Jadeja made them wiser as to why it is so tough to keep India on the back-foot at home for long.

-PTI



Ravichandran Ashwin celebrates his half century on the first day of a test cricket match between India and Bangladesh, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Thursday.

Pic: PTI

India vs Bangladesh Day 1, First Test

Chennai: Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between India and Bangladesh here on Thursday.

India 1st Innings:

Yashasvi Jaiswal	c Shadman Islam b Nahid Rana 56
Rohit Sharma	c Najmul Hossain Shanto b Hasan Mahmud 6
Shubman Gill	c Litton Das b Hasan Mahmud 0
Virat Kohli	c Litton Das b Hasan Mahmud 6
Rishabh Pant	c Litton Das b Hasan Mahmud 39
KL Rahul	c Zakir Hasan b Mehidy Hasan Miraz 16

Ravindra Jadeja batting 86

Ravichandran Ashwin batting 102

Extras: (B-18, LB-5, NB-4, W-1) 28

Total: (For 6 wks, 80 overs) 339

Fall of wks: 1-14, 2-28, 3-34, 4-96, 5-144, 6-144.

Bowling: Taskin Ahmed 15-1-47-0, Hasan Mahmud 18-4-58-4, Nahid Rana 17-2-80-1, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 21-2-77-1, Shakib Al Hasan 8-0-50-0, Mominul Haque 1-0-4-0.



Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil returns a shot to Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia during their quarterfinal match at the Korea Open tennis championships in Seoul, South Korea on Thursday.

Pic: AP/PTI

Valluri Ajaya Babu strikes gold

Suva (Fiji): Indian weightlifter Valluri Ajaya Babu produced a record-breaking performance to clinch the gold medal in the men's 81kg junior and senior categories at the Commonwealth Championships here on Thursday.

The 19-year-old Babu heaved a total of 326kg (147kg + 179kg) to finish on top of the podium.

With his performance, Babu set a Commonwealth record clean and jerk in the 81kg junior category. He also smashed the junior national marks in snatch, clean and jerk and total weight sections.

Compatriot Sairaj Pardeshi bagged the youth gold in the same category while finishing second in the junior section behind Babu.

Lalruaffela won the silver in the men's 89kg event with a best effort of 301kg (135kg+166kg) while Hrudananda Das, who lifted 299kg, clinched the silver medal in the youth category and the bronze in junior section.

Coco Gauff splits with coach Brad Gilbert

New York: Coco Gauff split from coach Brad Gilbert after more than a year and one Grand Slam title together, the pair announced via separate messages on social media.

The end of their partnership comes 2 1/2 weeks after Gauff's defense of her 2023 championship at the U.S. Open unraveled amid 19 double-faults during a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 loss to Emma Navarro in the fourth round at Flushing Meadows.

That Sept. 1 loss was the latest in a series of disappointing-for-her results in recent months for Gauff, a 20-year-old American who recently dropped from No. 3 to No. 6 in the WTA rankings.

It was after a first-round exit at Wimbledon last season that Gauff really took off with the help of the coaching duo of Gilbert and Pere Riba. Riba wasn't with her this year.

Gauff went 22-1 during a stretch in 2023 that included trophies at Washington,



Cincinnati and the U.S. Open — her first at a major tournament — all while still a teenager.

Gilbert posted a thank-you Wednesday on social media to Gauff "and the entire team for an absolutely amazing summer run in 2023 and for 14 months of incredible team effort."

"Coco, at just 20 years young, your future is incredibly bright, and I wish you nothing but continued success ahead," wrote Gilbert, a former pro who has worked with players such as Andre Agassi, Andy Murray and Andy Roddick in the past. "I'm excited for the next chapter in my

coaching career."

In her message Wednesday, Gauff thanked Gilbert and added: "We had an incredible run and I wish you all the best in the future!"

Their tenure also included semifinal appearances by Gauff at the Australian Open this January and French Open this June — losing to the eventual champions at both.

At Wimbledon in July, Gauff departed in the fourth round — also against Navarro — and there were some mid-match back-and-forths between Gauff and Gilbert at Centre Court over what an alternate game plan might be.

Arsenal captain sustains ankle damage

London: Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard has sustained "significant" ankle ligament damage that will keep him out of action for "a while" manager Mikel Arteta said.

The midfielder was injured playing for Norway this month and scans have confirmed the extent of the damage.

"It's something quite significant so we are going to lose him for a while. Hopefully not months," Arteta said. Arsenal plays Atlanta in the Champions League on Thursday and Manchester City in the Premier League on Sunday.

Odegaard is a key figure for Arsenal, which finished runner-up to City in each of the last two seasons. "He's, our captain. One of our biggest players, one of our most consistent players in the last two or three seasons," Arteta said. "Our identity is related to his way of playing and his way of behaving."

Indian women crush Georgia in 45th Chess Olympiad

Budapest: Grandmaster R Vaishali and Vantika Agrawal put up impressive performances as Indian women defeated Georgia while World Championship challenger D Gukesh led the men to victory over China in the seventh round as both teams continued their unbeaten streak in 45th Chess Olympiad here.

Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1, while the men eked out a 2.5-1.5 over China.

On a day that saw D Harika settling for a draw with Nana Dzagnidze and Divya Deshmukh being held by Nino Batsiashvili from a better position, it was Vantika who handled

her time pressure extremely well to play almost 20 moves with just about a minute on her clock to win her game and seal India's seventh straight victory.

The Indian women took their tally to an impressive 14 points out of a possible 14 and stretched their lead to two points over nearest rivals Poland, Kazakhstan and France who all have 12 points apiece.

In a surprising turn of events a blunder by Olivia Kiobasa of Poland against Nataliya Buksa of Ukraine cost the Polish team dearly in the sixth hour of play as what looked like a certain victory became a 2-2 draw.

In the open section, Indian Grandmaster Gukesh showed the way.



R Vaishali

Playing the white side of a Closed Sicilian Gukesh reached a drawn endgame after nearly five hours of play but he remained focus to find one mistake that was made by Chinese top board Wei Yi.

Speculation were rife about a possible clash be-

tween D Gukesh and Ding Liren — the two contestants in the next World Championship for a final showdown ahead of their match in Singapore in November.

However, the Chinese think tank decided to rest the reigning world cham-



Vantika Agrawal

pion. That was already a shock for the pundits of the game.

R Pragganandhaa played out a quick draw as black against Yangyi Yu of China while P Harikrishna pressed for some time before the position petered out to be

equal in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame against Wang Yue of China on the fourth board.

Earlier Arjun Erigaise went for the kill against an alert Bu Xiangzhi and the latter found a nice piece sacrifice to force a draw through repetition.

With just four rounds to come, the Indian men have done everything correct thus far and are sitting pretty with a 100 per cent score like their female counterparts.

Iran is the only team in close pursuit of the leaders on 13 points while a pack of four teams — Serbia, Hungary, Armenia and defending champions Uzbekistan share the third spot on 12 points each.

In the next round now, the Indian men will take on Iran while the women are pitted against Poland.

Results round 7 open: India (14) beat China (11) 2.5-1.5 (D Gukesh beat Wei Yi; Yu Yangyi drew with R Pragganandhaa; Arjun Erigaise drew with Bu Xiangzhi; Wang Yue drew with P Harikrishna); Iran

(13) beat Vietnam (11) 2.5-1.5; Lithuania (10) lost to Hungary (12) 1.5-2.5; Uzbekistan (12) beat Ukraine (10) 3-1; Serbia (12) beat Netherlands (10) 3-1; Armenia (12) beat England (10) 2.5-1.5; France (11) drew with Georgia (11) 2-2.

Women: India (14) beat Georgia (11) 3-1 (D Harika drew with Nana Dzagnidze; Lela Javakhishvili lost to R Vaishali; Divya Deshmukh drew with Nino Batsiashvili; Bella Khotenashvili lost to Vantika Agrawal); Ukraine (11) drew with Poland (12) 2-2; Azerbaijan (10) lost to Kazakhstan (12) 1-3; Armenia (11) drew with United States of America (11) 2-2; Mongolia (11) drew with Germany (11) 2-2; Spain (10) lost to France (12) 1.5-2.5.

- PTI