

# THE PERFECT VOICE



**BJP searching for 'X' factor**  
... pg 3



**The Great Nicobar infra project faces concerns**  
... pg 6



**A Rising Star in the World of Carrom: Ayesha Sajid Khan**  
... pg 10



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister and BJP National President J.P. Nadda during the launch of BJP's membership campaign 'Sadasyata Abhiyan 2024', in New Delhi on Monday. Pic-PTI

## Teenage riders killed

**Thane:** Two teenage boys travelling on a scooter were killed after it was hit by a container truck on the Mumbai-Nashik highway in Thane district in the small hours on Monday, police said.

The deceased Khurshid alias Ayan Nazir Ali Ansari, 18, and Ashish Varma, 15 were returning to Bhiwandi city after celebrating Dahi Handi feat when the accident occurred. -PTI

## Semiconductor unit at Sanand

**New Delhi:** The government on Monday cleared a proposal of Kaynes Semiconductor to set up a Rs 3,307-crore semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat, that will have the capacity to churn out 6.3 million chips a day.

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav noted that a complete semiconductor ecosystem is coming up in India under the India Semiconductor Mission, and promised that the country

will take a long-term view of this "foundational" sector and increase the outlay, as needed.

He likened the semiconductor industry to steel and chemicals industries which feed into many other allied sectors, and said the sector will be "crucial" for India's growth and the industrial production blueprint of the country.

The minister said that the progress of Tata's fab,

a complex project, has been "very good", and added that land has been allocated, and geo-technical investigations are done.

"Today, the Cabinet has approved Kaynes' plant, with a capacity of 6.3 million chips per day. The plant will come up in 46 acres, it is a big plant and large portion of the production will go for Kaynes Industries, it has already been booked," the minister said.

## RSS open to caste data for welfare

**Palakkad (Kerala):** The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) said on Monday it has no objection to collecting data on specific communities or castes, provided that the information is used for their welfare and not exploited as a political tool for electoral gains.

Addressing the media here after a three-day coordination conclave called Samanwaya Baithak in this district, Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, said caste and caste-relations were a "very sensitive issue" for the Hindu society and it is an important issue "for our national unity and integrity".

"So, as RSS thinks, yes, definitely for all welfare activities, addressing to the particular community or caste which is lagging behind and so special attention is needed to some communities and caste. So, for that the government needs the numbers. It is very well practiced. So, the government needs numbers, it takes. Earlier also it has taken. So, it can take it. No problem."

"But it should be only to address the welfare of the those communities and caste. It should not be used as a political tool for electioneering. And so we put with a caution line for everyone," Ambekar said.

-PTI

## SC Comes Down Heavily On Bulldozer Action

# How can houses be demolished without following procedure?

**New Delhi:** With several state administrations flattening the houses of those involved in criminal cases with bulldozers, the Supreme Court on Monday questioned how can anybody's house be demolished just because he is an accused.

The court said it will lay down the guidelines on the issue that would be enforceable across the country.

"How can anybody's house be demolished only because he is an accused?"

**The bench said: "We are not going to protect any unauthorised construction or encroachment in public roads. Not even the temples on public roads," the top court said.**



Even if he is a convict, still it can't be done without following the procedure as prescribed by law," a bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, referred to an earlier affidavit filed by the state in the matter. He said the affidavit states that merely because a person was alleged to have been a part of some offence can never be a ground for demolition of his immovable property.

Mehta said the state has said that demolition of an immovable property can take place "only for violation of and in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the respective applicable municipal law or law governing development authorities of the area".

**Stressing on the need for formulating guidelines on the issue, the bench said it was necessary to ensure that neither an individual takes advantage of a loophole nor authorities rely on lacunae.**

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for one of the petitioners, said, "Let a statement be recorded that across the country, bulldozer justice will not be meted out to people". He said almost every state was now indulging in this and demolishing properties.

"We will lay down guidelines for across the country," the bench said.

## IC-814 Series Row

# I & B Ministry summons Netflix content head

**New Delhi:** The government has summoned the content head of OTT platform Netflix over the series 'IC-814: The Kandahar Hijack', which has triggered a row over the depiction of hijackers, contending that nobody has the right to play with the sentiments of the nation.

Official sources said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has summoned the content head of Netflix India on Tuesday, seeking an explanation on

the allegedly contentious aspects of the OTT series portraying the 1999 hijack of an Indian Airlines flight by Pakistan-based terror outfit Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.

The depiction of hijackers of the Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu to Delhi has stirred controversy with a section of viewers objecting to the 'humane' projection of the perpetrators.

"Nobody has the right to play with the sentiments of the people of this nation. Indian culture and civilisation

should always be respected," another official source said.

"Should we allow any foreign people to slipshod over our cultural values," the source said without elaborating.

Using hashtags #BoycottNetflix, #BoycottBollywood and #IC814, several X users shared posts claiming the filmmakers changed the names of the hijackers to 'Shankar' and 'Bhola' to allegedly protect the terrorists who belonged to a certain community. -PTI

## Accused dies, cops suspended

**Mumbai:** Three policemen from Thane district, including a sub-inspector, have been placed under suspension after a man suspected of kidnapping a teenager, whom they were bringing to Mumbai in a train after detaining him in Madhya Pradesh, died en route, an official said on Monday.

A team from the Thane district rural police nabbed the accused, Aniket Jadhav, against whom an FIR of kidnapping a teenager in July 2024 was registered in Vasind town here, after tracking him down to somewhere in adjoining Madhya Pradesh, he said.

The probe team was bringing the 24-year-old to Mumbai by the Rajdhani Express but at Murai near Gwalior, he jumped out of the window of the train's washroom on August 25 and died, said the official. While the police claimed Jadhav committed suicide, his family members based in Thane district suspected foul play in his death.

## Nod to Manmad-Indore rail

**New Delhi:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Monday approved a 309 km new line project between Manmad and Indore providing the shortest rail connectivity between the two major commercial hubs of Mumbai and Indore, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said. The demand for this route has been pending since many decades.

The total cost of the project has been pegged at Rs 18,036 crore and it will be completed by 2028-29, the minister said.

The project will generate direct employment for about 102 lakh man-days, or what Vaishnav described as "human days", during the construction.

An official statement later said the new line between Indore and Manmad will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility ensuring enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways.

The project is a result of the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multimodal connectivity which has been possible through



integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for the movement of people, goods and services, it said.

"The project is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a new India which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities," the ministry said.

"The project has been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services," it

added. The project covers six districts in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 309 km.

It will promote tourism in the region by providing a shorter route between western/southwestern parts of the country and central India. This will increase the tourist footfall to various tourist/religious places in the Ujjain-Indore region, including the Sri Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple.

The project will provide direct connectivity to Pithampur Auto Cluster (which houses 90 large units and 700 small and medium industries) from the gateway port of JNPA and other state ports.

It will also provide direct connectivity to the millet-producing districts of Madhya Pradesh and onion-producing districts of Maharashtra which will facilitate the distribution of the same to the northern and southern parts of the country. -PTI

## No salary payment to Buch: ICICI

**New Delhi:** ICICI Bank on Monday said it has not paid any salary or granted ESOPs to Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch after her retirement on October 31, 2013, as alleged by the Congress.

Earlier in the day, the Congress alleged that Buch, who joined Sebi as a member in 2017 and subsequently became its chairperson, received Rs 16.8 crore from ICICI Bank as salary and other compensation.

"ICICI Bank or its group companies have not paid any salary or granted any ESOPs to Madhabi Puri Buch after her retirement, other than her retiral benefits. It may be noted that she had opted for superannuation with effect from October 31, 2013," the bank said in a statement.

During her employment with the ICICI Group, she received compensation in the form of salary, retiral benefits, bonus and ESOPs, in line with applicable policies, it added.

# Kumar Nitesh wins maiden Paralympics gold



**Paris:** India's Kumar Nitesh clinched his maiden gold medal at the Paralympics, defeating Great Britain's Daniel Bethell in a gripping men's singles SL3 badminton final here on Monday.

The 29-year-old from Haranya showcased incredible resilience and tactical brilliance, overcoming Tokyo silver medallist Bethell in a nail-biting contest that lasted an hour and 20 minutes, with the final scoreline reading 21-14 18-21 23-21.

"I still don't feel it. May be when I go to the podium and the national anthem is played, it will sink in," Nitesh said after the match. Competing in the SL3 category, which is reserved for

players with severe lower limb disabilities and requires to play on a half-width court, Nitesh's journey to gold was anything but ordinary.

At the age of 15, he lost his left leg in a train accident in Visakhapatnam in 2009. However, this devastating event didn't crush his spirit.

His victory on Monday not only marked a personal triumph but also ensured that India retained the SL3 gold, which Pramod Bhagat had won three years ago when badminton made its Paralympic debut in Tokyo.

Facing an opponent who had beaten him nine times in the past, Nitesh, an IIT

Mandi graduate, displayed immense mental fortitude as he recorded his first win over Bethell.

"I didn't think it this way. Thoughts were coming into my mind how I will win. But I was not thinking about what I will do after I win, I pushed that feeling away," he said.

The final was a test of endurance and skill, with both players engaging in excruciating rallies, including a nearly three-minute rally of 122 shots in the opening game.

Nitesh's sharp reverse hits, delicate dropshots, and polished net play kept Bethell on his toes throughout the match.

The opening game saw Nitesh trailing 6-9 at one point, but his rock-solid defense allowed him to claw back, entering the break with a two-point cushion. He then surged ahead to an 18-14 lead, eventually sealing the game when Bethell sent the shuttle wide.

In the final game, the tension was palpable as the two athletes matched each other point for point, moving from 8-8 to 19-19. Nitesh had the first championship point at 20-19 but couldn't convert it. Bethell, too, had a match point at 21-20 but faltered at the net. Finally, the Indian seized his opportunity, taking the match after Bethell hit long and wide.

A Navy officer's son, Nitesh had once dreamed of following in his father's footsteps and joining the defence forces. However, the accident shattered those dreams. It was a visit to the Artificial Limbs Centre in Pune, where he witnessed war veterans pushing their limits despite their injuries, that reignited his determination to overcome his own challenges.

Nitesh made his parabadminton debut at the 2016 Nationals in Faridabad, where he won a bronze. His rise continued on the global stage as well. He won three medals, including a silver in singles, at the Asian Para Games in 2022. -PTI

# Rane reprimands Nitesh for hate speech

## Opposition says BJP wants to engineer riots ahead of elections

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The opposition in Maharashtra on Monday targeted the BJP over provocative speeches made by its MLA Nitesh Rane and asserted the saffron party wants to engineer riots ahead of the state assembly polls.

A delegation of Mumbai Congress leaders led by its president Varsha Gaikwad met police commissioner Vivek Phansalkar and sought action against the Kankavli MLA and other BJP leaders for making provocative statements.

Rane's father and former Union minister and BJP MP Narayan Rane said he has reprimanded his son and told him not to drag any religion in the matter.

"There is no need to drag any religion but only those who are guilty of it. Not all Muslims are guilty of this, so don't drag the entire community. I have reprimanded him," Narayan Rane said.

The Congress delegation also demanded that the police security of Nitesh Rane and other BJP leaders be withdrawn.

"Inflammatory statements are made in Maharashtra and everyone knows that they enjoy (political) patronage. They keep saying our boss sits in Sagar bungalow," Gaikwad told reporters.

"The statement made by Nitesh Rane and (BJP MLC) Prasad Lad has reference to Sagar bungalow (the residence of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis) and Devendra Fadnavis Ji. It has to be probed whether they have any political patronage," she said.



Nitesh Rane addressed two public meetings in Shirirampur and Topkhana areas in support of Hindu seer Mahant Ramgiri Maharaj, who was in the news last month for making derogatory remarks about Islam and Prophet Muhammad.

MLA Rane said there would be repercussions if Ramgiri Maharaj is harmed.

In a viral video, Nitesh Rane can be heard saying if anyone says anything against Ramgiri Maharaj, "We will enter your mosques and hit you one by one. Keep this in mind."

A police official said on Monday that two FIRs have been registered against Nitesh Rane at Shirirampur and Topkhana police stations.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said, "You want riots in Maharashtra to win polls. Until they

don't engineer riots they cannot face polls."

BJP MP Narayan Rane said he has spoken to his son and reprimanded him. The former Union minister said he asked his son not to drag any community in this.

"I did encounters officially because those who were killed were criminals, traitors and on the list of the police. There was danger to the country from them," the former Maharashtra chief minister said.

NCP (SP) spokesperson Anish Gawande said Nitesh Rane's statement is not a one-off incident, adding the rot runs deeper.

"Contempt cases should be filed against the Maharashtra government itself for violations of Tehseen Poonawala judgment on mob lynching and hate speech. Enough is enough," he said.

## Will work with NCP: Khadse

**Jalgaon:** Former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse on Monday expressed his disappointment with being kept waiting in the wings for a formal acceptance into the BJP.

The veteran politician from north Maharashtra said he was welcomed into the BJP by its president J P Nadda a few months ago. "But a formal public announcement could not happen due to opposition from some people," Khadse said, without naming Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis.

"I think it is not alright to linger on in the BJP in such a situation," Khadse (72) told reporters at Jalgaon. "I will wait for a few more days and then take a decision," he added.

"I am still a member of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP and also its legislator. I had resigned from that party but Pawar hasn't accepted my resignation and also asked me to continue as a legislator," he said. Khadse left the BJP in October 2020 and joined the Sharad Pawar-led NCP owing to differences with BJP leader Fadnavis and his North Maharashtra pointsman Girish Mahajan.

After joining the Pawar-led party in 2020, Khadse had blamed Fadnavis for "trying to destroy his life" and political career.

Khadse belongs to the Leva-Patil community. He lives in Muktanagar in Jalgaon district and wields influence in North Maharashtra-Khandesh region.

## Contribution of cooperative sector incomparable: Murmu

**Pune:** The contribution of the cooperative sector in India's development is incomparable, President Droupadi Murmu said at a function in Maharashtra's Kolhapur on Monday.

Addressing the golden jubilee celebrations of Shri Varsha Women Cooperative Group in Warnanagar in the west Maharashtra city, the President said, "Trade and entrepreneurship have played a crucial role in economic development, but the role of cooperative sector in the development of the country is incomparable."

The President said cooperation was the best medium to make good use of the strength inherent in society. "Principles of cooperation follow the spirit of justice, unity, and fraternity envisaged in the Constitution. When people of different classes and ideologies unite for cooperation, they get the benefit of social diversity," she said.

Cooperatives have played an important role in the economic development of the country and household brands like Amul and Lijjat Papad are the examples of such cooperatives, Murmu added.

She said cooperative groups have made a significant contribution in making India the world's largest milk producer, adding that such cooperatives produce and distribute milk and milk products in almost all states. Not only milk, cooperative institutions are playing an important role in areas like fertilizer, cotton, handloom, housing, edible oil, and sugar, the President pointed out.

The President said cooperative institutions have made a significant contri-



but to poverty alleviation, food security, and management of natural resources.

"But in these rapidly changing times, they need to change themselves. They should use technology as much as possible and also make the management more professional," Murmu asserted. Many cooperatives are facing problems like lack of capital and resources, governance and management, and low participation, and connecting more and more youth to them can be important in this direction, she said.

"Youth can transform those institutions by incorporating technology in governance and management," she said while advising cooperative institutions to explore new areas like organic farming, storage capacity building, and eco-tourism.

The real secret of success of any enterprise is its association with the common people and that is why a democratic system and transparency are important for the success of cooperatives, the President said. There should be real cooperation in cooperatives rather than anyone's monopoly, she added.

"In cooperative institutions, the interests of their members should be paramount. It should always be

kept in mind that no cooperative institution should become a means of personal interest and profit-making for any individual. Otherwise, the very purpose of cooperative will be lost," Murmu said.

The President urged the gathering, comprising mostly women, to understand the importance of education, learn new technologies, give importance to environment conservation in daily life, help the needy, and always be ready to contribute to the development of the country.

"Our individual and collective efforts will make India reach a higher position on the world stage," President Murmu said.

On September 3, the President will grace and address the 21st convocation of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) at Pune, said the statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday.

On the same day, she will grace the centenary year function of the Maharashtra Legislative Council at Mumbai. The President will inaugurate the Buddha Vihar at Udgir, Latur, on September 4.

She will also address a gathering of beneficiaries of 'Shasan Aplya Dari' and 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojna' of the Maharashtra government at Udgir. -PTI

## Four dead as heavy rains lash Marathwada region

By Correspondent

**Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar:** Heavy rains pounded Marathwada region of Maharashtra over the last 24 hours ending at 9 AM on Monday, with Pathri village in Parbhani district recording the highest rainfall of 314 mm, leaving four people dead and affecting normal life in rural areas, officials said.

The wet spells affected people in at least 63 villages, damaging some houses and crops on 45 hectares of land, as per a preliminary assessment by Revenue authorities.

The gates of Vishnupuri dam in Nanded were lifted on Monday morning. An alert was sounded for downstream villages along the Godavari river as the Jayakwadi dam water level rose.

According to officials, 284 revenue circles in all eight districts of Marathwada received heavy rainfall exceeding 65 mm on Sunday.

At 314.50 mm, the highest rainfall in the last 24



hours was recorded in Pathri village, followed by Babhalgaon circle in Parbhani with 277 mm rainfall, officials said.

The heavy rains caused the submergence of a bridge connecting Hingoli and Sengao villages.

The water discharge began from Siddheshwar, Jayakwadi and Vishnupuri dams on Monday, while the water storage level in 11 major projects rose to 71.44 per cent.

Vishnupuri dam is full to the brim while the water storage in Jayakwadi reached 87.03 per cent.

Water is being discharged at 700 cusecs from the right canal of Jayakwadi dam. Ten gates of Vishnupuri dam were lifted in Nanded and water discharged at the rate of 1.01 lakh cusecs, officials added.

"At least four people and 88 animals lost their lives on September 1 amid rains. 29 pucca and 135 kuccha houses suffered damage. Similarly, crops on 45.20 hectares of land belonging to 74 farmers from 18 villages were also affected," officials said. -PTI

## Four held for ex-corporator's murder

By Correspondent

**Pune:** The Pune Police probing the brutal murder of former corporator Vanraj Andekar have arrested four persons, including his two sisters and their husbands, a senior officer said on Monday.

Prima facie, old rivalry, and family and property-related disputes are suspected to be the reasons for the murder. Andekar, who was in his late 30s, was associated with the Nationalist Congress Party (undivided) before the Pune civic body was brought under state administration.

A group of eight to nine people came on motorcycles and attacked Andekar in Nana Peth area at around 9:30 PM on Sunday. Some rounds were allegedly fired at Andekar.

He was also attacked with sharp weapons on his neck and head, police said. The accused have been identified as Jayant Komkar, Ganesh Komkar, Kalyani and Sanjivani.

## HC admonishes cops over "settlement" in dacoity case

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court expressed surprise with the "lackadaisical and lethargic manner" in which an attempt to murder and dacoity case was being handled by the police in Badlapur in Thane district and said this was a "mockery of the criminal justice system".

A division bench of Justices A.S. Gokhale and Neela Gokhale, in its order of August 23, said offences of attempt to murder and dacoity were serious in nature and were offences against the society at large and, hence, have to be probed properly.

The court was hearing petitions filed by two persons seeking to quash an attempt to murder and dacoity case lodged against them for allegedly attacking a man and his mother with a sword and an iron rod.

The police told court since the accused persons had given a letter to them claiming they intended to settle the matter, investigation in the case was curtailed.



The court expressed its surprise at this and said the offence in the case was for attempt to murder and dacoity.

"Prima facie, it appears the offence alleged against the accused persons is serious in nature. It is a settled position of law that an offence under section 307 (attempt to murder) and 397 (dacoity) is an offence against the society at large and, hence, the investigating officer ought to have completed the investigation, despite purported intent to settle as expressed by parties," the HC said.

The bench said this was yet another case wherein the investigation into an offence of attempt to murder was conducted in a "most lackadaisical and lethargic manner".

"According to us, this is a mockery of the criminal

justice system at the hands of the investigating officer of the present crime," the High Court said.

The state has to investigate serious offences and it cannot be a "silent spectator" to offences being committed and thereafter compromised by the parties for whatever reasons, the court said.

The court said the manner in which the investigation was done was sufficient to raise doubt on the integrity of the police.

"It appears the investigating officer of the present crime is reluctant to conduct investigation and is acting under the pressure and/or direction of the accused persons," HC said.

"In view of the disturbing facts, we deem it appropriate to bring this matter to the notice of the Commissioner of Police, Thane and direct him to file a detailed affidavit," the bench said.

The court posted the matter for further hearing on September 13 by when the affidavit shall be filed. -PTI

## Anup Jalota mesmerises audience

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Bhajan Samrat and Padma Shri awardee Anup Jalota mesmerized the audience with his soulful bhajans at the ISKCON temple in Mumbai. The program, titled 'Krishnarth', was organized by Studio Refuel and featured Anup Jalota's renditions of Lord Krishna's stories through his songs. Legendary singers Suresh Wadkar and Ghanshyam Vaswani were also present at the event.

Studio Refuel's CEO (India Chapter) Sachin Tailang and CEO (Dubai Chapter) Raman Chhibber honoured the two singers with bouquets. Anup Jalota's bhajans left the audience spellbound, and his songs like 'Aisi Lagi Lagan' and 'Itani Shakti Hamein Dena Data' forced everyone to hum along. Anup Jalota thanked Studio Refuel and its team for organizing the event in just one day, saying that such programs should continue to happen.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ajit Pawar, Deputy Chief Minister

"Some people tell me they feel they are in a different Baramati. When I asked why so, they said Pawars never used to come to the doorstep in the last 25-30 years but now all Pawars are reaching out and have started enquiring about their wellbeing. I told them it is good that Pawars from this side and that side have started to reach out for votes."

## VIP number plate fees hiked

**Mumbai:** The Maharashtra government has hiked fees for "choice numbers," commonly known as VIP numbers, for new vehicles, which will translate into revised Rs 6 lakh charge for the most sought-after '0001' number for four-wheelers in high-demand areas like Mumbai, Pune, and other cities.

Interestingly, the new fees mean that an out-of-series VIP number will cost up to Rs 18 lakh in major cities including Mumbai and Pune, which incidentally is the cost of new cars

in the mid-segment.

As per the transport department's notification dated August 30, the cost for the coveted number '0001' will rise to Rs 5 lakh for four-wheelers, up from the current Rs 3 lakh. For two and three-wheelers, the fee will increase to Rs 1 lakh, doubling from the existing Rs 50,000.

In high-demand areas such as Mumbai, Mumbai Suburban, Pune, Thane, Raigad, Aurangabad, Nashik, Kolhapur, and Nashik, the VIP fee for '0001' will be Rs 6 lakh, up from

Rs 4 lakh for vehicles with four or more wheels.

Many high net-worth individuals, top businessmen, politicians, and celebrities among others prefer VIP numbers for their expensive cars.

The revised 'three-time basic fees' will be Rs 15 lakh for four-wheelers and more-wheeled vehicles and Rs 3 lakh for two- and three-wheelers if the number '0001' is unavailable in the current series for that particular type of vehicle and if it needs to be given from another series as per the

rules, the notification stated.

The new fees mean that an out-of-series VIP number will cost up to Rs 18 lakh in major cities including Mumbai and Pune, comparable to the price of several mid-segment cars. Previously, the fee was Rs 12 lakh, a sum paid by entities like Reliance Industries for such numbers after opting for it "out of series" in the last few years.

Additionally, the state government has allowed the transfer of VIP numbers to immediate family

members, including spouses, sons, and daughters, a change from the previous restriction against such transfers.

Maharashtra has identified 240 VIP numbers in each registration series, with notable numbers like 0009, 0099, 0999, 9999, and 0786, apart from 0001, seeing a fee increase to Rs 2.5 lakh up from Rs 1.5 lakh for four-wheelers and more-wheeled vehicles and Rs 50,000 for two-wheelers and three-wheelers instead of the existing Rs 20,000. -PTI

# BJP searching for 'X' factor

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Even as the seat sharing among the Mahayuti partners seems to be in the last stage of finalisation, the BJP still appears to be in search for the 'X' factor to ensure a decisive victory in the forthcoming Assembly elections.

Though the alliance lost several seats in the Lok Sabha elections, its vote share has not taken a great beating. The opposition MVA could get only 0.3 per cent votes more than the Mahayuti during the Lok Sabha elections. If converted to real numbers, it counts to around two lakh votes. While the party leaders have been focusing on these statistics to tell party workers that they stand a fair chance of winning the assembly elections, the common worker on the ground still appears disillusioned due to popular perception. Hence, the party is currently hunting for that 'X' factor to change the people's perception.

The incident of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue collapse last week and the aggressive opposition thereafter have further compelled the BJP workers to go on a back foot. The party leadership feels one of the reasons for this is the 'opposition' mindset deeply ingrained in the workers.

According to a senior RSS functionary when he asked to write about Ladki Bahin scheme at a party workshop, 15 of the partici-



- ▶ BJP workers need to change mindset
- ▶ No certainty on collective leadership
- ▶ Booth level workers need recognition

pants wrote against and only five came up points in favour of the scheme. "How to put them into the ruling party's mind set is a big issue we are facing," the functionary said.

Even after the Lok Sabha debacle, the ruling alliance had an upper hand in 176 assembly segments. The BJP, that currently has its own 103 MLAs in the house and enjoys support of at least 15 independents, had earlier started preparations with an aim to win 125 assembly seats on its own. Now, after the seat sharing talks, the number has come down to 100.

According to a senior BJP functionary DCM De-

vendra Fadnavis recently said at an internal party meeting that if the party wins 100 seats on its own, no force can stop it from coming to power in the state again. With the help of the RSS, that is providing it with the crucial help to be able to rebuild the ground connect, the BJP, that has over 35 lakh members across the state, is planning to take the various schemes and its achievements to the masses. For that, the party has also started preparations to appoint around 98,000 new booth level leaders. Giving recognition to the grass root workers would certainly help the party as

that worker forms the real face of the party, said another senior BJP leader requesting anonymity.

Also all the three parties in the ruling alliance are conducting extensive surveys to ascertain winning merit of ticket seekers. BJP's thrust on building collective leadership within the state party unit too is likely bear fruits. Still the party leadership is looking for the 'X' factor - as the people's hopes rested in leadership qualities of Narendra Modi in 2014 Lok Sabha elections or the peoples' willingness for change during the assembly election the same year. Without that X factor, the common party worker does not appear to be confident to overcome the shortfall of 0.3 per cent votes to be able to emerge victorious.

# MVA re-energises with fresh attack

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: The silence of the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde is questionable. Putting on a brave face, the CM did the exercise of tendering the apology, but now he is turning his back towards the gloomy reality which the Mahayuti government is facing. The state government was forced to take the backseat over two recent incidents, the sexual abuse of Badlapur schoolgirls and the collapse of the Chhatrapati Shivaji statue in Sindhadurg district.

Looking at the public outcry after the Badlapur incident, swift action was expected from CM Shinde and his Deputy Devendra Fadnavis. But both of them preferred to keep safe distance from the crime sight. Especially after the Badlapur heinous crime it was expected Shinde and Fadnavis would visit the site. But suddenly both of them changed their plans. No reason was given for this, but the huge resentment among the people might be the reason.

The initial approach of the government was like 'who cares', I will see. The police department under Devendra Fadnavis is yet to nab sculptor Jaydeep Apte and Tushar Apte, the managing committee member of Badlapur school.

The government has started getting the heat of these incidents, with the political impact of the much-publicised Ladki Bahin scheme has been lost. And now the government will



- ▶ MVA is in no mood to relent
- ▶ MVA seems united against government
- ▶ Thackeray, Pawar lead from front

have to pay a heavy price in the forthcoming Assembly elections. In the absence of a strategic damage control exercise this government has failed and is now on backfoot.

On the other hand, the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is in no mood to relent and is all set to intensify its ongoing agitation against the Mahayuti government over the contentious issue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue collapse. The Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray who termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apology as "smacked of arrogance" has hinted that he and his party will not take

the backseat. As the Opposition parties marched towards the Gateway of India protesting the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot Fort, former CM and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray reminded the government that the people of Maharashtra would never forgive them. Reacting to the call for the protest, the BJP has questioned the relevance of an agitation, calling it politically motivated with an eye on the upcoming Assembly elections.

"Jode Mara" agitation of MVA has created ripples into the BJP camp. Against this backdrop the MVA is

planning the next course of action. However, the dates of future agitation is yet to be decided as the Ganesh Festival is on cards and during the festive season all the constituents of MVA are reluctant to start any stir which might create inconvenience to the people.

When contacted Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad said, "we have taken up these issues collectively and staged the protest under the MVA banner. Certainly, we are planning future action but I can't disclose this today. The talks for seat sharing are also on the cards and during Ganeshotsav we will not take up any agitation".

"So now the BJP leaders instead of starting a counter protest, they should reply to these queries of Uddhav Thackeray," Awahad added further.

## CRIME WATCH

### Siblings booked for ransacking

Thane: A brother-sister duo in their late 20s was booked for allegedly ransacking a chemist shop in Kalyan city in Thane district and attacking its owner, police said on Monday.

Prima facie, police suspect an old dispute with the medical shop owner as the trigger behind the incident occurred on August 29. Nobody has been arrested so far.

The accused duo allegedly damaged the glass doors of the medical store and the medicine bottles, besides furniture. One of the accused bit the hand of the complainant when he tried to retrieve important documents related to the shop from them, the official stated.

Police registered a case under sections 333 (House-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault, or wrongful restraint) 324 (mischief), 351 (criminal intimidation), 354 (Act caused by inducing person to believe that he will be rendered an object of divine displeasure), and 115 (Voluntarily causing hurt) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS).

### Four held for killing man

Thane: Four persons were arrested on Monday for allegedly murdering a 25-year-old man and then giving wrong information to police in Maharashtra's Thane district, a senior official said.

Prathamesh Chavan was allegedly assaulted in a 23rd floor room of a MMRDA rental building on September 1, after which one of the four accused called up police and gave wrong information, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone V) Amarsingh Jadhav told PTI.

The accused and the victim had an old enmity and they thought he had come to the building to commit a theft, the DCP said.

"We had initially registered an accidental death case at Chitalisar police station. However, after a probe based on the autopsy report, Rajesh Ramnaresh Yadav and Pramodkumar Ramnaresh Yadav, both watchmen, as well as Gangaram Yadav and Prakash Mohite were arrested on Monday," he said.

They have been charged with murder, giving false information to authorities, conspiracy and other offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Jadhav said. -PTI

## HC directs Waikar to respond

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Monday directed Ravindra Waikar, a member of the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde, to file an affidavit responding to a petition challenging his election as an MP in recent polls.

Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Amol Kirtikar, who lost the electoral contest against Waikar from the Mumbai Northwest Lok Sabha constituency by a margin of 48 votes, had filed the petition seeking to invalidate Waikar's election. Kirtikar requested the HC to declare him as the rightful winner.

Kirtikar filed a petition in July demanding that the HC set aside and declare as "null and void" Waikar's election as an MP, following which the high court issued a summons to Waikar.



Senior counsel Anil Sakhare on Monday appeared for Waikar before a single bench of Justice Sandeep Marne, which directed Waikar to file an affidavit responding to Kirtikar's petition.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on October 3.

In his plea, Kirtikar contended he had requested a recount of votes on the counting day due to discrepancies. Waikar polled 4,52,644 votes and Kirtikar

4,52,596 votes in the close contest.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader alleged serious lapses by Election Commission officials during the counting process, which he claims materially impacted the election results.

"The Election Petitioner (Kirtikar) is aggrieved on account of the improper reception of void votes cast by 333 impersonators in place of genuine voters, along with breach of rules/orders, pertaining to the counting process, by ECI officials, which has materially affected the outcome of the election results," the plea stated.

Kirtikar also accused the returning officer of displaying "high-handed hastiness and palpable arbitrariness" during the counting process.

## Man gets 20 years in jail

Thane: A special POCSO court in Thane on Monday sentenced a man to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for kidnapping a 13-year-old girl and repeatedly raping her.

Special Judge D.S. Deshmukh convicted the 29-year-old man, a driver from Kalwa, under Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and also fined him Rs 10,000, which will be paid to the victim.

The accused called the victim to his house between October 11 and 13, 2021 for help citing the pregnancy of his wife, after which he took her to Panvel and raped her several times, special public prosecutor Sandhya Mhatre said.

## E-governance conference today

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with the Maharashtra government, have organised the 27th National Conference on e-Governance (NCEG) on Tuesday in Mumbai. The theme for this year's conference is 'Viksit Bharat: Secure and Sustainable e-Service Delivery'.

Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik said, "Various successful e-Governance efforts from Maharashtra will also be showcased at the Conference." She listed the efforts as Smart PHC, digitisation through Adi

Setu, caste certification block chain, nutrition tracking and disaster management.

The two-day conference will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh. Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis will also be present at the event.

During the conference, the National Awards for e-Governance 2024 will be conferred upon 16 exemplary initiatives. These awards include nine gold, six silver, and one jury award- across five categories- awarded to Central, State, District authorities and Academic/ Research Institutions.

## Woman falls into platform gap

Thane: A 28-year-old woman who fell into the platform gap in Dombivli in Thane district on Monday had a miraculous escape after commuters immediately alerted the motorman and pulled the emergency chain, ensuring the train did not proceed, a police official said.

## Metro 3 Tenant Rehabilitation Delayed

Transit Rent From Rs 2.38 crore in 2017-18 shoots up to Rs 46.39 crore in 2023-24

By Anand Mishra

Mumbai: City's ambitious Metro Line 3 project, also known as the Aqua Line, is facing setbacks in the rehabilitation of tenants displaced by the construction, leading to a dramatic surge in costs and increased burden on public funds. According to information obtained through an RTI query filed by activist Jeetendra Ghadge, the rehabilitation process, originally slated for completion by now, has been delayed by at least a year and this delay is resulting in to significant cost escalations, with the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) struggling to meet its revised deadlines.

### 576 PAP

MMRCL, the nodal agency responsible for executing the entire Metro Line 3 project, initially planned to complete the construction



| Location   | Original Cost | Escalated Cost | Original Deadline | Revised Deadline |
|------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Kalba Debi | 131.53 Cr     | 3.70 Cr        | 10/12/2024        | 9/7/2025         |

of three residential high-rise buildings to house 576 Project Affected Persons (PAPs) from Girgaon and Kalbadevi. However, the project has missed its original deadline. As per the revised timeline, only one of these buildings is expected to be ready by July 9, 2025. The second building's completion is now projected for

November 26, 2026, while the timeline for the third building remains uncertain, as the tendering process is still ongoing, and construction has yet to begin.

### Burden on taxpayers

The delays in rehabilitation have forced MMRCL to continue paying transit rent to the displaced tenants, fur-

ther inflating project costs. RTI data reveals a stark increase in these expenses over the years. In the financial year 2017-18, MMRCL paid Rs 2.38 crore in transit rent to PAPs from Girgaon and Kalbadevi. By the financial year 2023-24, this figure had skyrocketed to Rs 46.39 crore, marking an astounding 1,800% increase. This surge in transit rent payments highlights the financial strain on MMRCL and the growing burden on taxpayers.

Jeetendra Ghadge, an RTI activist and founder of 'The Young Whistleblowers Foundation,' has expressed serious concerns over the prolonged delays and their impact on both the affected tenants and public resources. "The Metro 3 project continues to face setbacks, leaving the displaced tenants and Mumbai's taxpayers to bear the brunt. It's been seven years since the

PAP tenants vacated their homes, and with the current track record, further delays seem inevitable. MMRCL must streamline its processes to prevent this project from becoming an endless drain on public resources," said Ghadge.

The Mumbai Metro Line 3, spanning 33.5 km, is set to be the city's first fully underground metro line, connecting Cuffe Parade in the south to Aarey Colony in the north. The line, which will have 27 underground stations, is expected to significantly reduce road congestion and provide a faster, more efficient mode of transportation for commuters. While the first phase of the project, between Bandra and SEEPZ, is expected to open by the end of this month, the ongoing delays in tenant rehabilitation continue to cast a shadow over the project's overall timeline and budget.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ananya Panday, actor

"It's always been dark times for women. We are just speaking about it a lot more. There's one thing talking about it but the more important thing is doing something about it. More important step is actually laws changing, and government making actionable changes."

Bid to boost farmers' income

# Rs 14,000-cr outlay for seven new schemes



**New Delhi:** The Centre on Monday announced seven big programmes for the holistic growth of agriculture and allied sectors with a total outlay of nearly Rs 14,000 crore, as it aims to improve farmers' income.

The Union Cabinet approved seven big-ticket programmes related to the farm sector, including a Rs 2,817-crore digital agriculture mission and a Rs 3,979-crore scheme for crop science.

"The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved seven schemes to improve farmers' lives and increase

their incomes at a total outlay of Rs 13,966 crore," an official statement said.

Briefing reporters here, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted that these comprehensive programmes are aimed at enhancing farmers' income.

The focus of these programmes would be on research & education, climate resilience, natural resource management and digitisation in the agriculture sector along with emphasis on growth of horticulture and livestock sectors.

The Cabinet also approved an outlay of Rs 2,291 crore for strengthening ag-

**The Cabinet has approved crop science for food and nutritional security programmes with a total outlay Rs 3,979 crore. In this programme, six pillars have been included in the programme with a focus on preparing the farmers for climate resilient crop sciences and food security by 2047. These six pillars are -- Research and Education; Plant Genetic Resource Management; Genetic improvement for food and fodder crop; Pulse and oilseed crop improvement; Improvement of commercial crops; and Research on insects, microbes, pollinators.**

ricultural education, management and social sciences. This programme will be under Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

The aim is to modernise agri-research and education in line with New Edu-

cation Policy 2020. The use of latest technology like Digital DPI, AI, big data, remote, etc will be promoted and the programme includes natural farming and climate resilience.

The Cabinet also ap-

proved the Digital Agriculture Mission with a total investment of Rs 2,817 crore. There are two foundation pillars in the project -- Agri Stack and Krishi Decision Support System.

The minister said a Rs

1,702 crore scheme has also been cleared for sustainable livestock health and their production. The scheme aims to increase farmers' income from livestock and dairy.

Under this scheme, the focus will be on animal health management and veterinary education; dairy production and technology development; animal genetic resource management, production and improvement; and animal nutrition and small ruminant production and development.

Another major scheme cleared by the Cabinet re-

## SC committee on farmers

Observing that farmers' protest should not be politicised, the Supreme Court on Monday constituted a high-powered committee headed by former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Justice Nawab Singh to amicably resolve the grievances of farmers agitating at the Shambhu border. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the five-member committee to convene its first meeting within a week and reach out to the agitating farmers to persuade them to immediately remove their tractors, trolleys etc. from the Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana to provide relief to commuters.

Both the Punjab and Haryana governments will be free to give suggestions to the committee, it added.

The farmers are agitating over a plethora of demands including legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for their produce. The committee also comprises retired IPS officer B S Sandhu, Mohali resident Devinder Sharma, professor Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Dr Sukhpal Singh, agricultural economist from the Punjab Agriculture University.

Asking the panel to formulate the issues for consideration, the bench also directed its chairperson to invite professor B.R. Kamboj, Vice Chancellor of the Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, as special invitee as and when his expert opinion is needed.

lates to sustainable development for horticulture. "With a total outlay of Rs 860 crore the measure is aimed at increasing farmers' income from horticulture plants."

The programme comprises of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate horticulture crops; root, tuber, bulbous and arid crops; vegetable, floriculture, and mushroom

crops; and plantation, spices, medicinal, and aromatic plants

The Union Cabinet also gave approvals to a Rs 1,202-crore scheme for strengthening of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and a Rs 1,115-crore scheme for Natural Resource Management. There are more than 700 KVKs across the country. -PTI

## Cong levels fresh allegations against SEBI chief

**New Delhi:** The Congress on Monday levelled fresh conflict of interest allegations against SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come clean as the head of the appointments committee of the cabinet on her appointment. At a press conference, the Congress alleged that since the current SEBI chairperson took office in 2017, she has not only been

drawing a salary from SEBI but has also been holding an office of profit at the ICICI Bank, continuing to receive income from them to this very day.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said serious questions have been raised over the conflict of interest of the SEBI chairperson in the regulatory body's Supreme Court-mandated investigations

into violations of securities laws by the Adani Group.

"These questions seem to have been simply brushed aside by the Government of India. Now comes this fresh revelation of shocking illegality," Ramesh said in a post on X.

"The non-biological PM, who has been complicit in providing cover to the SEBI chairperson through his silence, must come clean" he said.



**Mumbai:** Capital markets regulator Sebi Chief Madhabi Puri Buch on Monday said a single disclosure by listed companies on

# Single filing with exchange soon: SEBI

one stock exchange will soon be automatically uploaded on the other bourse.

This comes after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) recently proposed sweeping changes to disclosure as well as listing requirements by listed companies based on recommendations from a

committee led by S K Mohanty, former whole-time member of Sebi.

Speaking at a CII event, Sebi chairperson said, "a single filing with the exchange will be a reality very soon".

As part of the proposed changes, a filing made on one exchange will automati-

cally collate on the other exchange, she said.

A filing made on one exchange will automatically collate on the other exchange. Additionally, Buch said soon investors will be able to start SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) with as low as Rs 250 per month.

"We are on the way of Rs

250 SIP becoming a reality," she said.

Buch avoided commenting on Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), but said there are regulations simplifying such entities. "If I utter a word on REITs, I will be accused of conflict of interest," she added.

-PTI

## Ramkrishna Forgings exits hospitality management

**Mumbai:** Ramkrishna Forgings Ltd has decided to sell its entire 100 percent stake in its hospitality management business for a cash consideration of Rs 128 crore and will set up an aluminum forging project for Rs 57.5 crore at Jamshedpur, the company said in its filing with the stock exchanges. The company's hospitality business was operated through its wholly-owned subsidiary called Globe All India Services Ltd

that had a diversified portfolio spanning corporate & leisure travel, conferences, exhibitions and car rental and will be sold to Yatra Online Ltd, as per the filing.

The proposed aluminum forging project will be set up with a total installed capacity of 3,000 tons per annum and is expected to be commissioned by Jul-Sept 2025. At the optimum capacity, the project will generate additional revenue of Rs 175 Crores per annum.

## Amara chosen for MD of SBI

**Mumbai:** FSIB, the head hunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, on Monday recommended Rama Mohan Rao Amara for the position of managing director of State Bank of India (SBI). Amara is currently Deputy Managing Director of the bank.

He will fill the vacancy created due to elevation of C.S. Setty as Chairman of the country's largest lender. The FSIB interviewed 9 candidates for the position of managing director of SBI.

# Techno Electric to develop 102 data centers

**By Correspondent**

**Mumbai:** Techno Electric and Engineering has been awarded a contract to develop edge data centers in 102 Indian cities by RailTel Corporation of India, as per the company filing with the stock exchanges.

The centers will be developed based on design, built, finance, operate and transfer over a 20-year concessional period extendable by five years.

"This is a major milestone for us and a testa-

ment to our commitment to building digital infrastructure for the people of India. We are bullish about digital empowerment in India, and this contract with RailTel will allow us to fulfil the needs of a rapidly growing digital population," said Mr. Ankit Saraiya, Director of Techno Electric & Engineering Company Limited.

An edge data center is a small data center that is located close to the edge of a network and provides the same device found in tradi-

tional data centers but is contained in a smaller footprint, closer to end users and devices.

With the establishment of Edge Data Centers, our data centre vertical is taking significant steps to enhance the digital experience and drive the widespread adoption of digital services among residents of rural and urban areas, thereby contributing to the country's Digital India mission, the company statement said.

According to a recent re-

port by Aventus, developers in India have a pipeline of over 3 GW to be delivered over the next 10 years, requiring capital expenditure of USD 25 billion. The Indian Data Center industry is maturing with the influx of long-term stable capital and the demand remains high on account of digitization and data localization themes and is expected to accentuate due to Artificial Intelligence implementation. According to the company statement filed with the stock ex-

changes, edge data centers in India will play a pivotal role in meeting the low latency and high bandwidth requirements that are essential for a range of applications, including digital skills, financial inclusion, digital health & literacy, AI, AR, Internet of Things (IoT), content delivery, and cloud gaming.

This infrastructure will ensure that customers receive optimal digital experiences, driving innovation and progress in various sectors.

| BSE SENSEX        |                  | TOP GAINERS       |        |               |         |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|---------|
| September 2, 2024 |                  | September 2, 2024 |        |               |         |
| %                 | POINTS           | %                 | POINTS |               |         |
| +3.23             | Bajaj Finserv    | 1840.10           | +1.57  | NTPC          | 409.85  |
| +3.19             | Bajaj Finance    | 7435.70           | +1.52  | Tata Motors   | 1092.50 |
| +3.13             | HCL Tech         | 1807.05           | +1.04  | M&M           | 2776.95 |
| +1.60             | ITC              | 509.90            | +0.97  | Bharti Airtel | 1573.50 |
| +1.55             | Indusind Bank    | 1448.60           | +0.61  | Power Grid    | 335.35  |
| +1.12             | Axis Bank        | 1188.65           | +0.59  | LT            | 3681.15 |
| +1.10             | UltraTech Cement | 11425.00          | +0.50  | TCS           | 4528.90 |
| +1.07             | Infosys          | 1964.10           | +0.42  | HDFC Bank     | 1626.15 |
| +0.80             | Adani Ports      | 1494.50           | +0.35  | Sun Pharma    | 1814.35 |
| +0.79             | SBIN             | 822.10            | +0.13  | Nestle India  | 2501.05 |

| BSE SENSEX        |               | TOP LOSERS        |        |              |         |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|--------------|---------|
| September 2, 2024 |               | September 2, 2024 |        |              |         |
| %                 | POINTS        | %                 | POINTS |              |         |
| -1.57             | NTPC          | 409.85            | -0.50  | TCS          | 4528.90 |
| -1.52             | Tata Motors   | 1092.50           | -0.42  | HDFC Bank    | 1626.15 |
| -1.04             | M&M           | 2776.95           | -0.35  | Sun Pharma   | 1814.35 |
| +0.97             | Bharti Airtel | 1573.50           | -0.13  | Nestle India | 2501.05 |
| +0.61             | Power Grid    | 335.35            |        |              |         |
| +0.59             | LT            | 3681.15           |        |              |         |
| +0.50             | TCS           | 4528.90           |        |              |         |
| +0.42             | HDFC Bank     | 1626.15           |        |              |         |
| +0.35             | Sun Pharma    | 1814.35           |        |              |         |
| +0.13             | Nestle India  | 2501.05           |        |              |         |

## Exclusive terminal for private users

**Hyderabad:** Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here run by GMR group on Monday announced the launch of a new state-of-the-art general aviation terminal tailored exclusively for private jet owners and users. A press release from the aerodrome operator said the new terminal aims to facilitate the diverse needs of passengers flying through chartered flights meant for business or personal travel from Hyderabad Airport. Speaking on the occasion, Pradeep Panicker, CEO of GMR Hyderabad Interna-

tional Airport said the city is one of the thriving economic powerhouses with the second highest concentration of ultra-high net worth individuals (HNI), thriving pharmaceutical and IT industries and development of Global Capability Centres in the region by MNCs have boosted private jet movements. "Redefining the flying experience, this new facility will set a new standard for an extraordinary travel experience. The terminal will serve as an extension of luxury for many of our frequent HNI travellers. -PTI

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



**V. Anantha Nageswaran,**  
Chief Economic Advisor

**"Unprecedented levels of public and private sector debt, some visible to regulators and some not, economic growth dependent on continued increase in asset prices to offset the leverage that have built up and hence a massive surge in inequality. India must be wary of these outcomes and avoid this trap."**

# Mixed day for Kejriwal, AAP



Amanatullah arrested



Bail to Vibhav Kumar



Bail to Vijay Nair



Plea rejected

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate on Monday arrested AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan as part of a money laundering investigation against him and some others linked to him. A court sent him in 10 days ED custody later in the evening.

Khan was taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after the agency conducted a search at his residence in Okhla area of the national capital that was launched just after 6 am.

They said some questions were put to Khan during the searches but he remained "evasive" and hence was arrested. He was then taken away from his home to the ED office in an official vehicle. The MLA may be produced before a court on Monday where the federal agency will seek for his custody to put him under sustained interrogation. Reacting to the arrest, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the more the BJP tries to suppress us, the more vocal we will be. A security team of the CRPF and Delhi Police was present inside and outside Khan's house during the action. A purported video showed Khan sitting on a bed near his mother-in-law, who he said, had recently undergone a surgery.

The money laundering case

against the 50-year-old legislator stems from two FIRs, one by the CBI in the Wakf Board related alleged irregularities and another by the Delhi ACB related to an alleged possession of disproportionate assets. Sources claimed Khan evaded at least 10 ED summons since he was last questioned by the agency in this case in April.

He kept deferring the summons on one pretext or the other like a pending law exam or the medical condition of his mother-in-law, the sources said. An unconfirmed video showed Khan telling an ED officer standing outside his locked gate that he knows they want to arrest him.

"You have come to arrest me one thousand per cent, I have sought four weeks time due to my mother-in-law's operation...I do not have money even for expenses," he is heard as saying in the said video in which a woman is also seen questioning the ED official's motive.

The legislator and his party broke the news first with Khan posting at 6:29 AM on his X handle that an ED team has reached his house in Okhla area to arrest him. On X, AAP leader Manish Sisodia said the only work left for the ED is to "suppress every voice raised against the BJP and break it". Those who do not break, are arrested

and put in jail, he alleged.

## Bail to Vibhav Kumar

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar in the Swati Maliwal assault case.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed that Kumar will not be reinstated as a personal assistant to Kejriwal or given any official assignment in the chief minister's office.

The top court also restrained Kumar from entering the chief minister's residence till all witnesses have been examined.

Kumar allegedly assaulted Maliwal, a Rajya Sabha MP, on May 13 at Kejriwal's official residence.

An FIR was registered against Kumar on May 16 under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code, including those related to criminal intimidation, assault or using criminal force on a woman with the intent to disrobe, and attempt to commit culpable homicide. He was arrested on May 18.

While denying him bail, the high court had said the accused enjoys "considerable influence" and no ground has been made out to grant him the relief. It cannot be ruled out that witnesses may be influenced or evidence tampered with in case

the petitioner is released on bail, it had said.

## Bail to Vijay Nair

The SC on Monday granted bail to former AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

## Kejriwal's plea rejected

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to quash the proceedings against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders in a defamation case over their remarks about alleged deletion of the names of 30 lakh voters belonging to some communities from electoral rolls here, saying the imputations prima facie lowered down the reputation of BJP. The high court said the imputations were prima facie "defamatory" with an intention of vilifying the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and gaining undue political mileage.

Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta dismissed the plea by Kejriwal and three others -- Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) former Rajya Sabha member Sushil Kumar Gupta, Minister of Education Atishi and party leader Manoj Kumar -- challenging the defamation proceedings pending before the trial court.

The high court, which had on February 28, 2020 stayed the

proceedings, vacated the interim order and asked the parties to appear before the trial court on October 3.

The AAP leaders had challenged a sessions court order which upheld a magisterial court's decision to summon them as accused in the complaint filed by BJP leader Rajeev Babbar. The high court said a political party cannot be allowed to engage in mud-slinging and making "mischievous, false and defamatory" imputations against rival political parties.

"Under the constitutional schemes, the citizens have a right to know truthful and correct information in order to form an appropriate opinion about the social processes.

"However, at the same time, a political party cannot be permitted to sponsor the print media for political purposes, thereby slinging mud and making mischievous, false and defamatory imputations on the rival political parties," the high court said. It further said, "The imputations in the present case are prima facie defamatory with an intention of vilifying BJP and gaining undue political mileage by attributing that BJP was responsible for deletion of names of about 30 lakh voters belonging to particular communities."

The court said prima facie the tweets and press confer-

## Timeline

- September 27, 2022: CBI arrests Nair
- November 13, 2022: ED arrests Nair
- November 14: Trial court grants Nair bail in CBI's case
- July 3, 2023: Delhi HC refuses bail to Nair
- Aug 12, 2024: SC seeks a response of ED on bail plea of Nair
- September 2, 2024: SC grants bail to Nair, says liberty is "sacrosanct" and needed to be respected even in cases involving stringent provisions.

ences appear to be malicious and defamatory to the BJP and specifically to its Delhi unit and the office bearers of the party.

The court said it is of the considered opinion that there is a fine distinction between legitimate criticism of the policies of a political party or the government or an organisation and intentional malicious imputations which may be defamatory. -PTI

## RSS demands swift justice for women

**Palakkad:** A national coordination conclave of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has condemned the incident of violence against a female doctor in West Bengal, describing it as 'very unfortunate', Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, said here on Monday.

Addressing a press conference after concluding the three-day conclave called 'Samanway Baithak', he said there was a necessity for revisiting laws and penal actions to expedite swift justice for women who suffer atrocities.

The incident of the rape and killing of the 31-year-old female doctor at the Kolkata hospital was discussed in detail in the Baithak, he said.

Ambekar said it was a "very unfortunate incident" and "everybody is worried about it".

Observing that similar incidents were increasing in the country, he said that the meeting discussed the role of the government, official mechanism, laws, penal actions and procedures.

"All they find that there is a need for revisiting all these so that we can have proper procedure, fast-track procedures and we can deliver justice to the victim," Ambekar said.

A woman doctor was allegedly raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, and a civic volunteer was arrested.

-PTI



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu during his visit to the flood affected areas. Naidu visited Krishna Lanka and Jakkampudi areas. Pic-PTI

## Withdraw central forces, says MLA

**Imphal:** Manipur BJP MLA Rajkumar Imo Singh on Monday requested Union Home Minister Amit Shah to withdraw central forces and allow state security personnel to take charge in an effort to restore peace in the ethnic strife-hit state.

In a letter to Shah, Singh, who is also the son-in-law of Chief Minister N

Biren Singh, argued that the presence of around 60,000 central forces in Manipur has not resulted in peace.

"The presence of around 60,000 central forces in Manipur is not yielding peace, thus it's better to remove such forces which are mostly present as mute spectators," he wrote.

He acknowledged the re-

cent action taken to withdraw certain units of the Assam Rifles for their lack of cooperation with the state government and the public.

"We are pleased with the action to remove certain units of Assam Rifles who were not cooperating with the state government and the public, but if the presence of these and other

central forces cannot halt violence, it is better to remove them and allow the state forces to take charge and bring peace," he added.

Singh proposed that the central government transfer the Unified Command authority to the state government, under the leadership of the Chief Minister. -PTI

## Highest traffic fatalities are bikers

**New Delhi:** The highest traffic fatalities in India are among two- and three-wheeler riders, according to a latest WHO report. The report states that 63 per cent of road traffic deaths in Southeast Asia are of pedestrians, motorised two-wheeler riders and cyclists.

The "WHO South-East Asia Regional Status Report on Road Safety" was launched during "Safety 2024", the 15th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, 2024.

According to the WHO, globally, 30 per cent of reported road traffic deaths involved users of powered two- and three-wheelers. Occupants of four-wheeled vehicles make up 25 per cent of the deaths and pedestrians account for 21 per cent. Cyclists represent 5 per cent of the deaths. The remaining 20 per cent include occupants of large vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, and other or unknown user types.

Drivers or riders of two and three-wheelers constitute the highest proportion among all road user categories in India. -PTI

## Capital punishment for rape convict proposed



BJP workers during a protest march to the District Magistrate's office over the alleged sexual assault and murder of a Kolkata based trainee doctor, at Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur district on Monday. Pic-PTI

**Kolkata:** The draft of the anti-rape Bill, scheduled to be tabled by the Mamata Banerjee government in the West Bengal Assembly on Tuesday, proposes capital punishment for persons convicted of rape if their actions result in the victim's death or cause her to become vegetative.

Additionally, the draft stated that persons convicted of rape and gang-rape would receive a life sentence lasting for the rest of their natural lives.

Titled 'Aparajita Woman and Child Bill, (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) Bill 2024,' the legislation aims to enhance protection for women and

children by amending and introducing new provisions related to rape and sexual offences.

The draft Bill proposes to amend the newly passed Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 laws and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 "in their application to the state of West Bengal to enhance punishment and to constitute the framework for... expeditious investigation and trial of the heinous act of violence against women and children."

In its statement of purpose the draft Bill proposes "to create a safer environ-

ment for women and children" in the state.

"It is a testament to the State's unwavering commitment to uphold the fundamental rights of its citizens, particularly women and children, and to ensure that heinous acts of rape and sexual offences against children are met with the full force of the law", the draft Bill states.

A two-day special session of the Assembly has been summoned in the wake of the rape-murder of a woman medic at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last month and the Bill is scheduled to be tabled by state law minister Moloy Ghatak. -PTI

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



Mehbooba Mufti, Chief, People's Democratic Party

"Omar was a minister in a BJP government. They brought POTA here, banned shahtoosh (shawls). They were advocating for an attack on Pakistan. When we formed the government with BJP our government withdrew 12,000 FIRs, we brought a high-level delegation from Delhi to have a dialogue with the Hurriyat. We had a ceasefire."

## Book narrates Lata, Rafi's rare anecdote

**New Delhi:** Legendary singers Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammad Rafi played an instrumental role in the liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, says a new book as it narrates in detail the little-known 1954 concert by the two iconic singers to raise funds for the movement.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli, now a Union Territory, were occupied by the Portuguese in 1783 and 1785, respectively. They continued to be ruled by the Por-

tuguese till an armed revolution liberated them, and the Tricolour was unfurled at Silvassa on 2 August 1954.

The two enclaves were formally recognised as an integral part of India in 1961 along with Goa and Daman and Diu but unlike Goa's liberation, there was no direct intervention by the Indian armed forces in the case of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Recounting what led to the singers' participation

for the liberation of the territory, "Uprising", written by author Neelesh Kulkarni, says it all started when music director and freedom fighter Sudhir Phadke decided to meet Mangeshkar for help to help raise funds for an armed revolution.

According to the book, Mangeshkar, who first seemed unconvinced with the plan, agreed after Phadke and his friends mentioned that the liberation of Dadra and Nagar

Haveli was only a "prelude to the freedom of Goa".

Mangeshkar had an emotional connection with Goa and the Portuguese were harassing devotees coming to the temple of her family presiding deity, 'Lord Mangesh', in the village of Mangeshi in north Goa.

"Her eyes suddenly welled up with tears... The family derived their surname from the name of the village. The Portuguese had been regularly harass-

ing devotees who came to the temple, and the frustration of not being able to do anything about that brought her over to their side in an instant.

"You will allow me to serve my Lord Mangesh," she said tearfully. 'I wish I could come and fight by your side, but since I cannot, I will help you raise resources. You tell me the date and I will be there,'" reads the book, quoting Mangeshkar. -PTI

# The Great Nicobar infra project faces concerns

By Esha Lodha

**Mumbai:** Among the many issues on which the Opposition parties are contesting the government's decisions is The Great Nicobar project, a mega infrastructure project that promises to bring modern development to the scenic Nicobar Island but, possibly at the cost of the environment and local communities.

Pegged at a cost of Rs 72000 crore, the project plans include a transshipment port, a green field airport, township and a 450 MW gas and solar power plant with development over 130 square kilometers that is expected to boost tourism and the economy. The project, predictably, will have long lasting implications on the ecological balance, displacing indigenous flora and fauna and also the livelihood of the local tribal communities.

Apart from private land, the project will entail clearing forest land and felling of over a million trees. Such deforestation will, in turn, disturb the natural habitat of animals, mammals, birds and insects who are dependent on the flora. The indigenous tribes, the Shompen and Nicobarese are dependent on the resources of the riparian and forested areas of the island. The project, therefore, stands to disrupt the livelihood of these local communities. The Nicobar island is home to a huge tropical

rainforest with over 2500 recorded flowering plant species and has often been described as a "veritable storehouse of plant biodiversity".

In late June this year, the government organised a public hearing to draft the Social Impact Assessment of this project, particularly, the Shompen and Nicobarese. Members of the project affected community who live in Gandhi Nagar and Shastri Nagar, the two Gram Panchayats of Campbell Bay taluk of Nicobar district which will be affected. However, there are allegations that the Shompen and Nicobarese communities will be left out.

India's former minister for environment Jairam Ramesh has been leading the charge against the government's ambitious Great Nicobar project. This week, leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the government had not chosen the site with the least environmental impact. He raised concerns about how the Shompen tribe would navigate social implications with the influx of tourists on the island. Earlier in August, he took to X (formerly Twitter) to post a news article that cites "irregularities and malpractice" in the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project. The report in the Indian Express which he quoted said that the residents of Great Nicobar Island who would be affected



## NUMBERS SPEAK

Rs 72000 crore - Cost of the project

130 sq km - Area to be developed

2500 - Recorded flowering plant species

by land acquisition for the greenfield international airport project had raised demands for a fair and comprehensive compensation package after a social impact assessment report was submitted before the Union Territory administration last month. The locals who will be affected are among the ones opposing this pro-

ject which has been proposed by the NITI Aayog. "The terms of exchange are yet unclear from the concerned authorities with regards to the alternate land for relocation, compensatory amount, increment of circle rates and so on. The unnecessary suspense created from the administration and government is a

matter of deep concern of fear and uncertainty amongst the settlers," says E.S. Rajesh, Pramukh and Samiti member of Laxmi Nagar Gram Panchayat. "We demand land in lieu of land, a minimum reimbursement of Rs 50,000 for coconut tree that we lose, government employment for every affected family, and proper resettlement plans. Additionally, the current circle rates for the lands are insufficient and need to be revised," he says, highlighting the demands of the locals. The locals are opposed to current rates of compensation which are Rs 131 per square meter of

land in Gandhi Nagar and Rs 113 per square meter of land in Shastri Nagar. These rates were calculated to the locals by the additional commissioner of Campbell Bay for agricultural land.

The GNI project was granted final environmental clearance on November 4, 2022. It will take up 834.6 hectares of land of which, nearly 400 hectares is private land and the rest belongs to the government. In August, the government stated that the project has been cleared after careful consideration of potential environmental impacts, including on coral reefs and

marine species and emphasised that the project is of significant strategic, defence, and national importance.

Critics of the project say that the social impact assessment fails to address the impact on greater population and tourist burden on the island's strained water resources. "It does not adequately capture the economic and social effects of displacement on at least 263 families, mostly descended from ex-servicemen, who have been living on the island for many generations now," said Ramesh in a social media post.

The social impact assessment report states that nearly all of the coconut, betel nut, guava, banana and mango plantations will be acquired for the project. The affected families, mostly ex-servicemen, rely on coconut and betel nut farming as their source of income. The proposed project will destroy nearly 30,000 coconut trees, 60,000 betel nut trees, 450 mango trees and other fruit trees such as guava and banana to land acquisition. The stakeholders had also demanded compensation for cattle as well during the public hearing.

While the economic impact on the communities may find a solution, environmentalists are raising the red flag over the ecological impact and the need to tamper with the natural habitat of the region.

## Storm floods northern Philippine



**Manila:** A slow-moving storm unleashed pounding rains that flooded many northern Philippine areas overnight into Monday, prompting authorities to suspend classes and government work in the capital region and warn thousands of residents to prepare to evacuate from flood-prone villages along a key river.

Tropical Storm Yagi was blowing over the coastal waters of Vinzons town in Camarines Norte province, southeast of Manila, on Monday with sustained winds of up to 75 kilometers (47 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 90 kph (56 mph), according to the weather bureau.

The storm, locally called Enteng, was moving north-westward at 10 kph (6 mph) near the eastern coast of the main northern region of Luzon, where the weather bureau warned of possible flash floods and landslides in mountainous provinces.

A resident died after being electrocuted in Naga city in eastern Camarines Sur province, where floodwaters swamped several communities, police said. Authorities were verifying if the death was weather-related. -AP

## Mobile vehicle units for Ganesh idol immersion

By Correspondent

**Thane:** In a bid to enhance convenience and reduce crowding during Ganesh Chaturthi festivities, the Thane Municipal Corporation has decided to introduce mobile vehicles fitted with water tanks for facilitating the immersion of Lord Ganesh's idols.

This initiative by TMC commissioner Saurabh Rao aims to provide a more accessible and streamlined immersion experience for residents, as per an official statement.

The new mobile vehicle units will travel to various localities, allowing citizens to immerse the idols after performing religious rituals, eliminating the need to visit crowded immersion spots.

The ten-day Ganesh festival, which commences on September 7, sees the consecration of idols in homes and public places across Maharashtra.



Six vehicles will be operated on the key immersion days: September 8, 12, and 14. Each mobile unit is fitted with a water tank where devotees can perform the immersion before the idol's remnants are transferred to designated artificial lakes and other immersion

sites, as per the release. In addition to the mobile units, the TMC has set up nine ghats (steps that lead down to a riverbank), 15 artificial ponds, 10 idol acceptance centres, and 49 tank immersion systems across the city to accommodate idols.

## Women dead in landslide

**Katra/Jammu:** Two women pilgrims died while a girl was grievously injured in a landslide on the new track to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Monday, officials said.

According to them, the landslide hit the route near Panchi, three kilometres ahead of Bhawan around 2.35 pm. A portion of an overhead iron structure was also damaged, the officials said. The pilgrims were heading for the shrine when they got trapped under the iron structure following the landslide, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Reasi Vishesh Paul Mahajan quoted the preliminary information report to say that two women have died and a girl has been grievously injured in the incident.

Senior police and civil administration officers have rushed to the spot, and further details are awaited, he told PTI.

Mahajan is heading to Katra - the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the shrine atop Trikuta hills. -PTI

## 15 die in rain-related incidents

**Amaravati:** As many as 15 people died in Andhra Pradesh due to rain-related incidents in the past three days, following unprecedented rainfall caused by a depression in the Bay of Bengal, the government said on Monday.

According to an official

release, five persons died at Mogalrajapuram in Vijayawada due to landslides and one person each at Vijayawada Rural, G Kondru mandal and Reddygudem mandal. They all belong to NTR district.

"Five deaths in Guntur district. One teacher and

two students travelling from Uppalapadu to Namburu were washed away in a local stream and an 80-year-old woman died when boulders fell on her in the first ward of Mangalagiri town," the release said.

Further, it said that an

other person was washed away in Kondaveedu stream at Ponnekallu village in Guntur district.

Besides rain-related deaths, three children drowned in Prakasam district's Markapuram division when they went swimming, the release said. -PTI



People cross a waterlogged street at the Bhavanipuram Sitara Center flood affected area, in Vijayawada on Monday. Pic-PTI

## UP uses children's urine to catch wolves



**Bahraich (UP):** In a bid to catch wolves, the forest department here has initiated an innovative effort of using colourful teddy dolls soaked in children's urine as a bait to capture them, a senior forest official said.

Over the past few months, the Bahraich region has been plagued by a series of attacks by man-eating wolves targeting the

children and villagers. The forest department now has initiated an innovative effort by using brightly coloured "teddy dolls" as a false bait to capture these predators.

These dolls have been strategically placed near the riverbanks, close to the wolves' resting places and dens, and are being soaked in children's urine to simu-

late the natural human scent. "The wolves are constantly changing their locations. Typically, they hunt at night and return to their dens by morning. Our strategy is to mislead them and lure them away from residential areas towards traps or cages placed near their dens," Divisional Forest Officer Ajit Pratap Singh told PTI.

"We are tracking them using thermal drones and then attempting to drive them towards deserted areas near the traps by setting off firecrackers and making noise. Since these animals have primarily been targeting children, we have introduced large ted-

The British had attempted to eliminate wolves from this area, even offering rewards for killing them. However, despite these efforts, the wolves managed to survive and continue to inhabit the riverbank areas.

dy dolls dressed in colourful clothes, soaked in children's urine, to create a false sense of human presence near the traps. The natural human scent may attract the wolves closer to the traps," the officer added. Senior IFS officer Ramesh Kumar Pandey, who has extensive experience working in the Terai

forests and is currently serving as the Inspector General of Forests in the Ministry of Environment, said that wolves, jackals, foxes, coyotes and both domestic and wild dogs belong to the canid species.

Pandey further explained that various types of bait are used to capture animals, including live bait,

dead bait and false or masked bait. The teddy dolls being used by the forest department can be considered a form of false bait, similar to how scarecrows are used in fields to protect crops from birds, he said.

Though there is no proven record of such methods being successful, Pandey believes that innovative efforts should be encouraged, as they offer a potential solution to the human-wildlife conflict. In recent months, a pack of wolves in the Mahsi Tehsil of Bahraich has become increasingly aggressive, with attacks intensifying since July.

-PTI

# Bangladesh wants dialogue on Teesta water

By Pradipta Tapadar

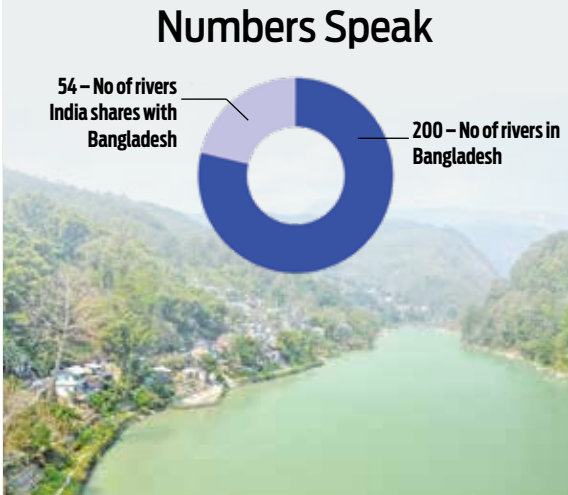
**Dhaka:** Bangladesh's interim government wants to restart with India the dialogue on the Teesta water sharing treaty, adviser on water resources Syeda Rizwana Hasan has said, asserting that upper-riparian and lower-riparian countries should adhere to international principles on the distribution of water.

Speaking to PTI in Dhaka, Hasan expressed confidence that the Teesta treaty and other water-sharing agreements with India would be resolved amicably through dialogue but suggested that Bangladesh might consider international legal documents and principles if an agreement cannot be reached.

"I have discussed the issue of Teesta water sharing with all relevant stakeholders (in Bangladesh). We have discussed that we need to restart the process and dialogue regarding the Teesta treaty. We also have to work on the Ganges treaty, which is coming to an end in two years," she told PTI in an interview on Sunday.

"Both sides agreed, and a draft of the Teesta water-sharing agreement was prepared, but the agreement was not signed due to the opposition of the West Bengal Chief Minister. The fact remains that we have not been able to finalise the agreement. So, we will start from that point with

**India and Bangladesh were set to ink a deal on Teesta water sharing during then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit in 2011, but West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declined to endorse it, citing scarcity of water in her state.**



the draft of the agreement and urge India to come forward and restart the dialogue process," she said.

The 56-year-old adviser to Bangladesh's Department of Water, Forest, Environment, and Climate Change said the interim government has not yet discussed taking the issue of water sharing with India to the international forum.

"I don't think we have discussed that yet. I think the first step for Bangla-

desh will be to address it with India and Nepal. We haven't discussed taking this matter to any other country at this stage," she said, asserting that the "issue can be resolved amicably with India."

When asked about the erstwhile Awami League regime's failure to seal the Teesta deal with India, Hasan said, "It did not work all these years because of the political context that Bangladesh had."

## RSS wants talk for Hindus' safety

**Palakkad (Kerala):** A national coordination conclave of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has urged the Narendra Modi government to engage in dialogue with the Bangladesh government to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and other minority communities.

The three-day conclave, called Samanway Baithak, which concluded here on Monday, termed the Bangladesh situation a "very sensitive issue," said Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, at a press conference.

He said that various organisations presented detailed reports on the situation in Bangladesh during the Samanway Baithak.

"Of course, it is a very sensitive issue. Everybody is worried about the Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh," Ambekar said.

He added that different organisations, through their delegates and statements, have requested the central government to engage with the Bangladesh government "to ensure the safety of Hindus and other minorities there."

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses were vandalised in violence in Bangladesh when prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

-PTI



Presidential candidate Namal Rajapaksa, left, presents a copy of his election manifesto to his father and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Monday. Pic-AP/PTI

## Imran's military trial possible

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that a military trial of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan was "possible" in the cases concerning the violence on May 9 last year.

"Yes, it is possible," Asif replied when asked during the Geo News programme 'Naya Pakistan' Sunday if a military trial of the former premier was possible.

He said that during the Imran Khan-led government, military trials of the civilians were held and he "remembers cases of 24 civilians" who went through the process of facing military court.

-PTI

## Helicopter crashes, 22 dead in Russia

**Moscow:** Russian emergency officials said on Monday they had recovered all 22 dead from a helicopter that crashed with tourists on board in Russia's Far East.

The crash occurred in Kamchatka — a pristine peninsula with numerous volcanoes, known for its rugged beauty and rich wildlife. A Mi-8 helicopter with 19 passengers and three crew members on board took off close to the Vachkazhets volcano on Saturday and rescuers located the wreckage the following day.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said, citing the Emergencies Ministry, that it likely crashed due to poor visibility in bad weather conditions. The lo-

cal branch of the Investigative Committee, Russia's top law enforcement body, said in a statement Monday that an investigation has been launched into a possible pilot error or a technical malfunction. The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. It is widely used in Russia, where crashes have been frequent, as well as in neighbouring countries and many other nations.

Russian media described the flight operator Vityaz-Aero as one of the largest carriers in the Kamchatka region. After a helicopter crash in 2021, in which eight people were killed, authorities had banned the company from transporting passengers pending an investigation.

-AP

## Indian Navy's exercise with French

**New Delhi:** A P8I aircraft of the Indian Navy has reached France to participate in 'Exercise Varuna', scheduled from Sep 2 to 4 in the Mediterranean Sea, will include advanced tactical exercises underscoring the deepening synergy and interoperability between the two navies, a spokesperson of the Indian Navy said in a statement.

The 2024 edition of Indo-French bilateral naval 'Exercise Varuna', scheduled from Sep 2 to 4 in the Mediterranean Sea, will include advanced tactical exercises underscoring the deepening synergy and interoperability between the two navies, a spokesperson of the Indian Navy said in a statement. The Indian Navy's P8I aircraft touched down at Air Base 125 Istres-Le Tube, France, marking its first-ever deployment in Europe, it said.

-PTI

## Million Hanuman Chalisas proposed in South Africa

**Johannesburg:** A prominent Hindu organisation in South Africa has launched a programme to distribute for free one million pocket-sized copies of the Hanuman Chalisa within the next five years.

The launch and distribution of the first 10,000 copies, believed to be the smallest printed edition of the Hanuman Chalisa globally, took place during an 'Utsav of Devotion' day on Saturday at the Vishnu Temple here.

"We hosted the event, attended by representatives of over a dozen religious organisations across South Africa, to celebrate spiritual growth, community service, and cultural preservation," said Pandita Lucy Sigaban, the founder of the SA Hindus.

Niran Singh, the owner of Shereno Printers, was honoured at the event for his company's contributions to the project, which involved a lot of manual work. The Hanuman Chalisa can easily fit into a purse or wallet. "Despite its tiny size, the text is still large enough to be read easily by people," Sigaban said. -PTI



In this photo released by Malaysia's Department of Information, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, right, talks with New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon after a welcoming ceremony in Putrajaya, Malaysia on Monday.

## India-Singapore relations poised for bigger take-off

**New Delhi:** Building on "new anchors" of partnership identified under the India-Singapore ministerial roundtable framework, the relations between the two countries is poised for an even bigger take-off, the MEA said on Monday ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Singapore.

Prime Minister Modi is slated to visit Singapore on September 4-5 at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong. Prior to that he is scheduled to visit Brunei on September 3-4 which seeks to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in all existing sectors.

Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Jaideep Mazumdar, at a media briefing here said India and Brunei are working towards setting up a "joint working group in defence". He said Prime Minister Modi is visiting Singapore after nearly six years.

His last visit to Singapore was in his first term. And an early visit on his third term is something that has been "welcomed by the Singaporean side".

"Also, this comes at a time when a new leader is in Singapore and this is an opportune time to set the stage for the next stage of our vibrant bilateral relations," Mazumdar said.

The Secretary (East) said India-Singapore ties have

"evolved" and there is a "dynamic strategic partnership" encompassing various areas from shared history and people-to-people ties which form an important link between the two countries.

"Our trade and investment flows have shown a steady growth, we have a robust defence cooperation and growing exchanges in culture and education. We have identified new anchors of our partnership under the India-Singapore ministerial roundtable framework," he said.

Four Indian ministers had participated in the recently-held second India-Singapore ministerial roundtable. -PTI

## Russia fires a barrage of drones, cruise

**Kyiv:** Russia launched an overnight barrage of drones and cruise and ballistic missiles at Kyiv, officials said on Monday, as children prepared to return to school across Ukraine. Some pupils found classes cancelled because of damage from the attack.

Several series of explosions rocked the Ukrainian capital in the early hours. Debris from intercepted missiles and drones fell in every district of Kyiv, wounding three people and damaging two kindergartens, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said. City authorities reported

multiple fires. After more than 900 days of the war, Russia and Ukraine show no sign of letting up in the fight or moving closer to the negotiating table. Both sides are pursuing ambitious ground offensives, with the Ukrainians driving into Russia's Kursk re-

gion and the Russian army pushing deeper into the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine that is part of the industrial Donbas region. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that Ukraine's Kursk assault won't prevent Russian forces from ad-

vancing in eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian forces haven't achieved their goal of diverting Russian troops from the fighting there, he said. "The main task that the enemy set for themselves — to stop our offensive in Donbas — they haven't achieved it," Putin told

school students during a trip to southern Siberia. However, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last month that the aim of the Kursk incursion is to create a buffer zone that might prevent further attacks by Moscow across the border. -PTI

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



Imran Khan, former Prime Minister, Pakistan

**"Sharif aligned with all four umpires (four military dictators) and still lost the match. Whenever the topic of negotiations arises, they start making noise about May 9 violence. We are always ready for talks. We will speak with those who make the decisions."**

## Titanic expedition yields lost bronze statue

**Washington:** A bronze statue from the Titanic — not seen in decades and feared to be lost for good — is among the discoveries made by the company with salvage rights to the wreck site on its first expedition there in many years.

RMS Titanic Inc., a Georgia-based company that holds the legal rights to the 112-year-old wreck, has completed its first trip since 2010 and released images from the expedition on Monday. The pictures show a site that continues

to change more than a century later. The trip to the remote corner of the North Atlantic Ocean where the Titanic sank happened as the U.S. Coast Guard investigates the June 2023 implosion of the Titan, an experimental submersible owned by a different company. The Titan submersible disaster killed all five people on board, including Paul-Henri Nargeolet, who was director of underwater research for RMS Titanic.



The findings from this summer's trip "showcase a bittersweet mix of preservation and loss," RMS Titanic said in a statement. A highlight was the rediscovery of the statue "Diana of Versailles," last seen in 1986, and the statue now has a clear and updated image, the company said.

On a sadder note, a significant section of the railing that surrounds the ship bow's forecastle deck has fallen, RMS Titanic said. The railing still stood as recently as 2022, the company said. The crew spent 20 days at the site and returned to Providence, Rhode Island, on Aug. 9. They captured more than 2 million of the highest resolution pictures of the site ever to exist, the company said.

The team also fully mapped the wreck and its debris field with equipment that should improve understanding of the site, RMS Titanic said. The next step is to process the data so it can be shared with the scientific community, and so "historically significant and at-risk artifacts can be identified for safe recovery in future expeditions," the company said in a statement. -PTI

## EDITORIAL

Crisis  
Advantage

In Maharashtra's fractious political landscape, the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has once again found a moment to seize the initiative, this time in the wake of the Badlapur molestation case and the collapse of the Shivaji statue in Sindhudurg. While the MVA, a coalition of unlikely bedfellows — Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and the Congress — has often appeared more fragile than formidable, recent events have provided it with a rare opportunity to set the agenda and rally public sentiment against the ruling Mahayuti alliance in the state.

Till recently, the opposition MVA had gone on the back-foot owing to the Mahayuti's high-decibel promotion of the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme for women's welfare.

Thackeray and Pawar have swiftly mobilized their cadres, holding two high-profile rallies together the past fortnight that have not only castigated the BJP for governance failures but also sought to reassert the MVA's claim as the moral and political alternative in Maharashtra.

This was a far cry from Pawar taunting Thackeray in the former's revised autobiography wherein the NCP (SP) chief had chastised the Sena (UBT) leader for visiting the 'Mantralaya' only twice during the Covid-19 pandemic when he was Chief Minister. The Badlapur molestation incident, which saw two minor girls sexually assaulted, is being used by the MVA to highlight the Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti government's failure to ensure safety and order - a potent issue ahead of the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly election.

Adding to the BJP's woes is the collapse of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in Sindhudurg, an incident that has been milked for its symbolic value. By juxtaposing the statue's collapse with the BJP's perceived disregard for cultural icons, Thackeray and the MVA is attempting to recapture the emotive nationalist rhetoric usually associated with the ruling BJP. The internal strife within the MVA, particularly over Uddhav Thackeray's unilateral projection as the Chief Ministerial face for the 2024 Assembly elections, had raised questions about the coalition's coherence. Sharad Pawar's response to Thackeray's overtures had been characteristically cryptic, balancing tacit support with his own party's ambitions while the Congress, which won the largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha election this year, had openly opposed Thackeray's pretensions.

The MVA is rallying towards a strategic alignment that contrasts sharply with the coalition's earlier stumbles. In doing so, they have not only found a way to temporarily paper over their differences but also posed a serious challenge to the BJP's monopoly on public discourse. By pivoting towards issues that resonate deeply with the electorate — safety, cultural respect, and accountability — the coalition has found a way to reinvigorate itself. The deft handling of the Badlapur and Sindhudurg incidents demonstrates a strategic maturity, implying that the MVA parties are willing to set aside personal ambitions, however temporarily, in favour of collective gains.

CONSCIENCE CALLING  
Kolkata's Unified Call for JusticeBy  
Romita Datta

Never has Kolkata's conscience been so loud and clear, paying urgent attention to its inner voice. Never before have the sedate Bengali Bhadrakols from all walks of life realised the exigency of stirring out of their comfort zone and saying, "Enough is enough." Elites, busy professionals, marginalised people, outliers, vulnerable individuals, transgenders, sex workers, and the physically challenged have all come out in unprecedented numbers, sloganeering and lending their voices to the cause. The muffled cry of a rape and murder victim, seeking help through the soundproof walls of a seminar room where she rested after 36 hours of back-

**Kolkata's conscience has awakened with unprecedented urgency following a rape and murder. Citizens from all walks of life, including elites and marginalised groups, have united in massive protests demanding justice. Despite political attempts to manipulate the narrative, the city's collective outcry reflects a profound demand for genuine change.**

breaking duty.

The cry that got silenced forever on August 9th at midnight has returned to reverberate through millions of voices, screaming and demanding justice for her. The onus of having failed a young life and of remaining apathetic and quiet to the rot in the system for so long lies with the city and citizenry as well. Tilotama (beautiful lady), as Kolkata is often called, feels the day of reckoning has arrived. The danger is right at the doorstep, and if left unattended, it would devour everything.

An unprecedented call of conscience is sweeping through Bengal, courtesy of the crime and a deliberate attempt at cover-up. As time passes and suspected perpetrators remain at large, patience is wearing thin, ready to explode at any moment. Citizens have taken to the streets in force, challenging an administration that views the crime as an isolated case. Mamata Banerjee and the party's second-in-command, Abhishek Banerjee, are reeling out statistics from NCRB to depict the city's safety compared to other metros. They are also alluding to other states where rapists come in distinct political stripes and get protection instead of punishment. Yet the collective consciousness, which has seen a mass awakening, is not ready to be trapped in the jugglery of justifications. Dry data is irrelevant to a society where 18.08% of the workforce are women who face daily fear and panic just going to work. After all, the rape and murder occurred at the victim's alma mater, which she considered her second home.

Every other day, the city and its suburbs witness processions, protest marches, and candlelight vigils. Interesting slogans like "Amar ghar, tomar ghar/ R. G. Kar, R. G. Kar (My home, your home/ R. G. Kar), and Shok noi Droho (Revolution, not Grief), have flooded social media. Artists like Arijit Singh and Aysulman Kharana have added their voices, creating songs and poems that reflect the collective outrage.

Even school-going teenagers are waking up to the need to raise their voices. A Howrah headteacher recounted how she was in two minds as to what should be her response to the heinous incident. She



was dithering to involve the students in a protest due to government strictures and show cause notices, but thankfully they came forward to help the victim get justice. She expressed pride in their commitment to fighting for justice, regardless of age.

Apart from medical students and junior doctors of R.G. Kar, who had been on a sit-in demonstration since the incident, the first call of protest from society, "Reclaim the Night," came from a 29-year-old independent researcher, Rimjhim Sinha. The call captivated thousands and challenged both the patriarchal mindset and the college principal's victim-shaming of the young lady for being in the seminar room late at night. The slogan had an electrifying effect on women across socio-economic demography, prompting them to flood the streets and reclaim the night. At midnight on Independence Day, the women in Bengal were asserting their rights to have a safe and secure environment.

The city witnessed similar rallies over the Nandigram police firing in 2007 and rape cases in 2012, 2013, and 2022. Political analysts and social scientists see a marked change in how people have reacted this time. They say that conscience-keepers from all walks of life are leaving behind their political preferences or identities. Apart from the Left student and youth wings' intervention to prevent a hasty cremation of the victim, the up-

rising has consciously barred political banners, festoons, and party slogans. The aim was to keep the movement from becoming a political slugfest. Political banners that appeared occasionally faced backlash from the crowds seeking justice.

It was a conscious decision to let people decry the incident and denounce the authorities, rather than politicians doing so. Bringing in political parties would have undermined the sole aim of delivering justice to the parents, who struggled hard to see their daughter become a doctor. Realising that politics divides rather than unites, diverges rather than converges, and disbands rather than combines, politicians chose to wait to see the movement coalesce and consolidate into a cohesive whole. Of course, they had been on the sidelines and throwing their weight behind the logistics, personnel, and even financial support. But that was that! Incidentally, on 'Reclaim the Night' events, a band of lumens, allegedly from the ruling party, had a free run in the hospital premises, vandalising it and wiping off vital evidence of the crime. Mamata blamed her political adversaries, the BJP and the Left. But people could see through the dubious design of divide and rule.

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

## GLOBAL WATCH

Elon Musk and Brazil: A  
Controversial High-Tech Tango

In a dramatic turn of events, a Brazilian Supreme Court judge has taken the extraordinary step of banning Elon Musk's social media platform, X (formerly Twitter), from operating in the country. This bold move by Judge Alexandre de Moraes escalates a months-long standoff over disinformation and the platform's role in Brazil's political landscape, where tensions have run high following the contentious 2022 elections. Moraes, a formidable figure in Brazil's judiciary, ordered the immediate suspension of X, directing the national communications agency to enforce the ban and warning of fines for those attempting to bypass the restriction through technological means like VPNs.

The roots of this controversy trace back to the aftermath of Brazil's 2022 elections, in which Jair Bolsonaro, the far-right incumbent, was defeated by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Allegations of electoral fraud and attempts to discredit Brazil's voting system became rampant, particularly among Bolsonaro's supporters on social media. Moraes, who played a pivotal role in investigating these claims, had ordered the suspension of several accounts on X belonging to Bolsonaro loyalists.

Now, Musk reinstated some of the previously banned accounts, prompting Moraes to launch an investigation into the billionaire's actions. Musk, known for his advocacy of unfettered free speech on his platforms, responded defiantly, accusing Moraes of censorship and labelling him an "evil dictator cosplaying as a judge." In a characteristically confrontational tone, Musk claimed that

**The standoff between Musk and judge Moraes may set a precedent for how nations grapple with the power of social media giants.**



Moraes was undermining democracy in Brazil by targeting X, which Musk described as the "number one source of truth" in the country.

To enforce his orders, Moraes imposed fines totalling 18.5 million reais (\$3.28 million), froze Starlink's assets, and demanded that X comply with court orders and appoint a local representative.

Moreover, Musk's partnership with Bolsonaro raised eyebrows due to the latter's controversial track record on the environment and indigenous rights. Bolsonaro's administration has been criticized for rolling back environmental protections and emboldening illegal loggers and miners in the Amazon. By aligning himself with Bolsonaro, Musk risked tainting his image as a futuristic innovator with that of a politically expedient businessman willing to overlook inconvenient truths for the sake of market access.

Musk's Brazil foray, ostensibly to solve the country's deforestation woes and boost internet connectivity, had sparked a storm of criticism and raised questions about the true motives behind it.

Musk had met with Bolsonaro in May 2022 to discuss a partnership that would see Musk's satellite inter-

net service, Starlink, provide connectivity to rural schools and monitor the Amazon rainforest. Musk had framed the initiative as a tech-driven solution to Brazil's long-standing problems: deforestation and digital exclusion. The Brazilian government, grappling with global criticism over its environmental record, had embraced Musk's offer as a public relations coup, a way to counter accusations of neglecting the Amazon.

Environmentalists and indigenous leaders were quick to voice their scepticism, with progressives branding it a 'neocolonial endeavour' pointing out that Starlink, a subsidiary of SpaceX, was a commercial venture seeking to dominate the global satellite internet market and not a philanthropic endeavour. The backlash intensified as reports surfaced that the Brazilian military was also interested in using Starlink's capabilities.

Brazil, while a democracy, has struggled with political instability and governance challenges, and Musk's arrival has sparked fears of a new form of digital colonialism, where foreign companies wield disproportionate power over critical infrastructure.

## STATES WATCH

Battling Nature's Wrath  
Amid Cyclone Asna

The state of Gujarat, India's western powerhouse known for its vibrant industry and commerce, is reeling from the ravages of unprecedented flooding. Torrential rains have inundated vast swathes of the state, with Saurashtra bearing the brunt of nature's fury. The floods have exposed the vulnerabilities of the administration's disaster management apparatus. As the spectre of Cyclone Asna looms on the horizon, the state braces for a potential escalation of the crisis.

Saurashtra, a region accustomed to erratic weather patterns, has been pummeled by relentless downpours, receiving rainfall levels well above the seasonal average. Cities like Rajkot and Jamnagar have been submerged, with rainfall in some areas exceeding 500 millimetres in just a few days—a deluge not seen in decades. This inundation has turned urban streets into rivers, while rural areas face landslides and overflowing reservoirs. The floodwaters have displaced thousands, swept away homes, and left a trail of destruction that will take months, if not years, to fully repair.

While other parts of Gujarat have also experienced heavy rainfall, Saurashtra's woes are particularly severe. In southern Gujarat, regions like Surat and Valsad have seen substantial flooding, but their flood con-

trol systems, improved after the devastating floods of 2006, have largely held up. Meanwhile, in central Gujarat, cities such as Ahmedabad have contended with heavy showers, though not on the scale seen in Saurashtra.

The Gujarat government, led by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, has launched a multi-pronged

response, deploying the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and the Indian Army in rescue and relief operations. Helicopters have been dispatched for airlifting stranded residents, while boats navigate the submerged streets to deliver essentials to those marooned. However, the scale of the crisis has tested the limits of the state's disaster management machinery. Evacuation efforts have been hindered by blocked roads and overwhelmed infrastructure.

Waterlogging has disrupted electricity and communication lines, complicating coordination efforts. Hospitals are overflowing, not only with flood victims but also with cases of waterborne diseases, as clean drinking water becomes scarce. The influx of displaced people has strained resources, with reports of food and medicine shortages emerging.

Adding to Gujarat's woes is Cy-

clone Asna, gathering strength in the Arabian Sea and threatening to exacerbate an already dire situation. Forecasts suggest that Asna could make landfall near the Saurashtra coast, bringing with it fierce winds and heavy rains. The cyclone's potential impact could be catastrophic,

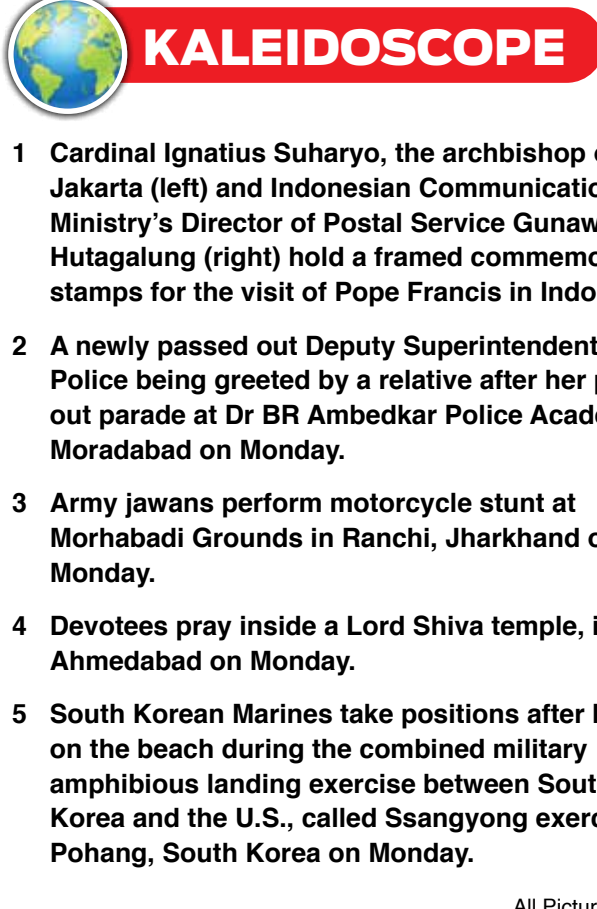
compounding the challenges posed by the current floods. Authorities



have issued warnings, advising residents in vulnerable areas to evacuate, but with many communities already in disarray, the logistics of a large-scale evacuation present a daunting task.

The possible effects of Cyclone Asna extend beyond immediate flood damage: it could disrupt supply chains, halt industrial production, and lead to further power outages. The agriculture sector, already hit hard by the monsoon, may see additional crop losses and have a ripple effect on food prices and the livelihoods of farmers. Coastal areas, particularly those involved in fishing, face severe disruptions as high tides and strong winds threaten both infrastructure and the safety of residents.





### KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo, the archbishop of Jakarta (left) and Indonesian Communication Ministry's Director of Postal Service Gunawan Hutagalung (right) hold a framed commemorative stamps for the visit of Pope Francis in Indonesia.
- 2 A newly passed out Deputy Superintendent of Police being greeted by a relative after her passing out parade at Dr BR Ambedkar Police Academy, in Moradabad on Monday.
- 3 Army jawans perform motorcycle stunt at Morhabadi Grounds in Ranchi, Jharkhand on Monday.
- 4 Devotees pray inside a Lord Shiva temple, in Ahmedabad on Monday.
- 5 South Korean Marines take positions after landing on the beach during the combined military amphibious landing exercise between South Korea and the U.S., called Ssangyong exercise, in Pohang, South Korea on Monday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

### FORENSIC MATTERS

## Psychology Key in Tackling Crime Surge



By

Keshav Kumar and Hemant Reddy

Crime rates in India have surged significantly, creating an ever-growing backlog of cases. Modern crimes differ markedly from the past, often leaving minimal physical evidence at crime scenes. Such challenges pose a hurdle for investigating agencies trying to link perpetrators to their crimes. While suspects can be identified, proving their involvement in the courts remains a complex task. Forensic psychology plays a crucial role in addressing these issues.

Forensic psychology integrates principles from psychology, forensic science, and law to enhance the justice delivery system.

Crime rates in India have surged, posing challenges for investigating agencies, as modern crimes often leave minimal evidence. Forensic psychology, integrating principles from psychology, forensic science, and law, plays a crucial role in addressing these issues.

Its application within the Indian criminal justice system has expanded over recent decades. Forensic psychology encompasses a range of techniques, collectively referred to as Forensic Psychological Investigative Techniques (FPITs). These include Deception Detection Technologies (DDTs) like polygraphs, narco-analysis, Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature Profiling (BEOS), Layered Voice Analysis, and Suspect Detection Systems, as well as methods such as Psychological Autopsy and Offender Profiling.

These FPITs combine psychophysiological principles with technology, serving as valuable tools in investigations. They are employed to screen suspects, detect deception, and determine a suspect's knowledge or involvement in a crime. Despite their utility, the legal status of these techniques in India remains contentious.

The right to remain silent, a cornerstone of legal protection in India, is enshrined in Article 20(3) of the Indian Constitution and Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Section 161(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) reinforces this right, stating that individuals are not obliged to answer questions that could incriminate them. This right was further upheld by the Supreme Court in the landmark case of Nandini Satpathy vs. Dani.

However, the use of forensic psychological techniques such as polygraphs and narco-analysis have been contested. In the 2010 case of Selvi & Ors vs. the State of Karnataka, the Supreme Court addressed the issue of involuntary administration of these tests. The Court ruled that such tests cannot be administered without the subject's consent, as they would infringe on the right to remain silent. Nevertheless, if these tests are administered voluntarily, their results may be admissible under Section 27 of the Indian Evidence Act, which permits the use of evidence obtained voluntarily in cer-

tain contexts.

One notable case where forensic psychological techniques played a significant role was the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Narco-analysis was used on the suspects to extract information about the planning and execution of the attacks. The technique provided critical leads that aided in piecing together the sequence of events and provided crucial information regarding terrorist training camps in Pakistan.

Another important case is the 2009 Aarushi Talwar murder case. In this case, polygraph tests were administered to various suspects, including the parents of the victim. While the results were not directly admissible in court, they were instrumental in narrowing down the list of suspects and guiding the investigation.

The hit-and-run case of the Dhanbad judge involved the use of BEOS and narco-analysis to extract information from the suspects. The technique was employed to confirm the identities of those involved and their roles in the crime. Although controversial, these techniques provided crucial leads for the investigation.

In 2022, Ashraf Ali, an ISI agent, was caught by the Delhi Crime Branch. BEOS and narco-analysis were used to interrogate him. The use of these techniques was crucial in uncovering hidden details about the suspect's involvement and motivations.

Forensic psychology is vital in addressing complex crimes in India and offers essential tools like polygraphs and narco-analysis. While these methods have proved valuable in investigations, their use remains legally contentious. Balancing their application with constitutional rights is crucial for advancing justice and ensuring ethical practices in the future.

(Keshav Kumar, IPS (Retd.) is a consultant to Assam Government. Hemant Reddy is forensic Psychologist. Views personal)

### EXPLAINER

## 'Miya': Who Are They and Why the Tensions?

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's recent controversial remarks against Miya Muslims taking over large swathes of the northeastern Indian state have again turned the spotlight on this group. Sarma, who has often positioned himself as a protector of Assamese identity, minced no words when he dubbed them as "illegal immigrants."

Who are the Miya Muslims of Assam? They are a group primarily consisting of Bengali-speaking Muslims who migrated from present-day Bangladesh, and have long been caught in the crosshairs of Assam's fraught identity politics. Often given the accusing label of 'illegal immigrants,' these communities settled in Assam during British rule and later, in waves of migration that intensified after the Partition of India in 1947 and the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Today, they form a significant portion of Assam's Muslim population, which stands at about 34% according to the 2011 Census, making it one of the highest Muslim-populated states in India.

Miya Muslims are predominantly concentrated in Assam's riverine "Char" areas — fertile but flood-prone sandbanks of the Brahmaputra River. Despite contributing significantly to the state's agricultural output, they often face socio-economic marginalization and are stereotypically portrayed as encroachers on land, resources, and jobs.



The socio-political narrative surrounding them is often tinged with xenophobia, fuelled by fears of demographic changes and cultural erosion among the indigenous Assamese population.

In a recent statement, Sarma referred to the Miya community as a threat to the state's cultural fabric, alleging that they have "invaded" Assam and are altering its demographic character. He controversially asserted that Assam is in danger of losing its "identity and culture" if the growth of the Miya population is not curtailed.

The tension surrounding the Miya Muslims can be traced back to the colonial era when British administrators encouraged migration to cultivate Assam's fertile plains. By 1947, this migration had already

altered the region's demographic composition, setting the stage for post-Independence tensions. The Assam Movement of 1979-1985, which culminated in the Assam Accord, was a significant turning point. This movement sought to identify and deport illegal immigrants, primarily targeting Bengali Muslims and Hindus. The accord set 1971 as the cut-off year for citizenship, but implementing these provisions has been contentious and complicated, leading to waves of resentment and sporadic violence.

In recent years, the tensions have been exacerbated by the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise, which identifies Miya Muslims as 'illegal immigrants.' The 2019 NRC update excluded over 1.9 million people, many of whom are Miya Muslims.

Critics argue that Sarma's strategy may bolster political support among Assamese voters but risks deepening the communal divide while the Assam CM believes in calling a spade a spade.

The narrative surrounding Miya Muslims and their place in Assam is emblematic of a broader struggle over identity, belonging, and the rights of minorities. As Assam gears up for its next electoral cycle in 2026, these tensions are likely to be at the forefront of political discourse.

US Open

# Bopanna-Ebden ousted



**New York:** India's challenge in the men's doubles event of the US Open ended with the defeat of Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden in the third round, here.

The second seeded Bopanna-Ebden pair lost 1-6 5-7 to the 16th seed Argentine combo of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni in 66 minutes on Sunday night.

Bopanna and Ebden had won the Australian Open early this year.

The 44-year-old Bopanna has already announced retirement from Davis Cup and it will be interesting to see if he will return to de-

fend his Australian Open crown in January 2025.

Sumit Nagal had exited the men's singles with an opening round defeat while Yuki Bhambri and N Sriram Balaji earlier lost in men's doubles at different stages of the tournament.

Bopanna's challenge is still alive in the mixed doubles event with Indonesian partner Aldila Sutjiadi and interestingly, he and Ebden will now be up against each other.

Ebden and Czech Republic's Barbora Krejčíková are seeded fourth in the mixed doubles.

-PTI

# Dhanush breaks world record

**New Delhi:** India dominated the men's 10m air rifle event on day two of the second World Deaf Shooting Championship in Hanover, Germany, with Dhanush Srikanth, Shourya Saini, and Mohammed Murtaza Vania making a clean sweep of the medals.

Dhanush set two world records in a single day, first by scoring 632.7 in the qualification round, followed by a stunning 251.7 in the final. His performance left Shourya, who secured the silver with a score of 249.9, trailing by a significant margin. Mohammed Murtaza Vania claimed the bronze with a score of 226.2.

In addition to their success in the men's event, India also shone bright in the women's category with Mahit Sandhu and Natasha Joshi winning silver and bronze respectively, adding to the country's medals tally. The Indian contingent had already secured four medals on the first day of the competition.

-PTI



Diya Chitale of Dabang Delhi TTC returns a shot to Manika Batra of PBG Bengaluru Smashers during their match at the Ultimate Table Tennis 2024 tournament at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium, in Chennai on Sunday.

Pic-APPTI

# KATHUNIYA bags second consecutive SILVER



**Paris:** India's Yogesh Kathuniya clinched his second consecutive Paralympic silver medal in men's discus throw F-56 event with a season's best effort 42.22m at the ongoing Games here on Monday.

The 27-year-old hurled the discus to the podium-clinching distance in his very first attempt to add to the silver he won in the Tokyo Paralympics three years ago.

Brazil's Claudiney Batista dos Santos registered a hat-trick of Paralympic gold medals, creating a new Games record with an effort of 46.86m in his fifth attempt. Greece's Konstantinos

Tzounis won the bronze with 41.32m.

The F-56 classification covers limb deficiency, leg length difference, impaired muscle power and impaired range of movement.

At the age of 9, Kathuniya developed the Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare autoimmune condition which causes numbness, tingling and muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis.

He was bound to the wheelchair during his childhood but overcame the odds with the help of his mother Meena Devi, who learnt physiotherapy to help him regain muscle strength to walk again. His father has served in the Indian Army.

Kathuniya is a commerce graduate from Delhi's prestigious Kirori Mal College.

## Want to break jinx by clinching gold

Yogesh Kathuniya is too happy about as he feels he is stuck with second-place finish in a series of major events. But he wasn't satisfied with his performance and he vowed to better the colour of his medal in the next major tournament.

"Event was okay. I got a silver. I will work harder to change the colour of the medal," a rather disappointed Kathuniya said after his event.

"For some time, I'm winning silver only be it Tokyo (Paralympics) or today, World Championships or Asian Games...everywhere I'm winning silver. Gaadi atak gayi hai (I'm stuck on silver). I think I need to work harder. Now I want gold."

The silver on Monday is Kathuniya's fifth consecutive second place finish since the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021.

He had picked up silver medals at the 2023, 2024 World Championships as well as in the Asian Para Games last year.

Kathuniya's performance at the Stade de France was inferior to the 44.38m effort he produced at Tokyo three years back and also below his personal best of 48m which he produced at the Indian Open, which is, though, not a World Para Athletics event.

"Today was not my day, my performance is consistent but today I don't feel that happy. My family will be happy, they must be celebrating."

"My coach has helped me a lot. I did very well in training but unfortunately I wasn't able to replicate it today," he said.

The F56 category is meant for athletes who compete in field events from a seated position. Different athletes, including those with amputations and spinal cord injuries, compete in this class.



# CARROM CRAZE

Maharashtra leads the way in South Asia's growing passion for the game. In fifth part today we are presenting another champion. **By Anand Mishra.**

**A RISING STAR IN THE WORLD OF CARROM: AYESHA SAJID KHAN**

Ayesha Sajid Khan has swiftly ascended to become one of India's most talented carrom players. Born in a small town in Maharashtra, Ayesha was introduced to the game at the tender age of seven by her father, a passionate carrom player himself. Growing up in a family where the sport was cherished, she developed a natural flair for the game. By the age of 10, Ayesha was already a formidable player, frequently competing and winning in local tournaments against much older opponents. Her first major breakthrough came in 1992 when she participated in the Asian-Indian National Championship and secured a bronze medal. This early success paved the way for her participation in various sub-junior, junior, and senior-level matches. At just 16, Ayesha won her first state-level championship, marking the beginning of her rise in the national carrom scene.



milestone. She secured second place, a remarkable achievement that highlighted her potential on the global stage. Her career reached new heights when she won three gold medals in the SAARC Games, further solidifying her status as a top competitor. However, Ayesha considers the turning point

of her career to be the silver medal she won at the ICF Cup in 2019, held in Pune. Reflecting on the match, she says, "I know I lost in the final, but I learned a lot from this game." Over the years, Ayesha's list of achievements has continued to grow. She has consistently performed well in national championships, showcasing her exceptional precision and tactical prowess. One of her most notable victories came when she clinched the National Carrom Championship, defeating several top-ranked players and former champions along the way.

## Honored with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Award

Ayesha's success has not gone unnoticed. In 2004, she was honored with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Award, and she has also received the prestigious "Best Emerging Player" award from the Carrom Association of India. Her consistent performance has earned her a spot on the Indian national team, where she continues to represent the country in international competitions.

## International debut proved to be milestone

Ayesha's international debut at the World Cup in 2000, held in New Delhi, was another significant

## Paris Paralympics

# Thulasimathi claims silver



Thulasimathi Murugesan

**Paris:** Indian shuttlers Thulasimathi Murugesan and Manisha Ramadass signed off with maiden silver and bronze medals respectively in women's singles SU5 category at the Paralympics here on Monday.

The 22-year-old Thulasimathi, the number one seed, put up a fight before going down 17-21 10-21 against China's defending champion Yang Qiuxia in the final.

Second seed Manisha, playing at the adjacent court, outplayed Denmark's Cathrine Rosenren, seeded third, 21-12 21-8 to claim the bronze medal. The SU5 category is for athletes with impairment on the upper limbs, which could be in the playing or the non playing hand.

The two medals added to India's first badminton gold in the Paris Paralympics won by Nitesh Kumar in the SL3 category.

Only six athletes are competing the women's singles SU5 category at the Paris Paralympics.

Having started at a tender age of seven, Murugesan has gone on to become

an accomplished para-athlete. She won three medals at the 2022 Para Asian Games including a gold in women's singles.

She was born with a congenital deformity in her left hand resulting in the loss of her thumb finger. A major accident further limited the mobility of her left hand.

-PTI

## Nagal pulls out of Davis Cup tie

**New Delhi:** India's top singles player Sumit Nagal on Monday pulled out of the upcoming Davis Cup tie against Sweden due to a back injury.

Nagal recently lost his first-round singles contest to Tallon Griekspoor at the US Open. The indoor hard-court contest in Stockholm will be played on September 14-15. "I was really looking forward to representing in the upcoming Davis Cup tie against Sweden," Nagal wrote on social media.

"However, due to a back issue that's been bothering me for the past few weeks, doctors have advised me to rest for the next two weeks, leaving me without enough time to prepare and compete in Sweden. This same issue also led to my withdrawal from the US Open doubles."

-PTI

## Mohun Bagan beat East Bengal

**Lucknow:** Mohun Bagan beat East Bengal in penalty shootout in the Chief Minister's Cup charity derby match after the two sides were locked 1-1 at regulation time at the KD Singh Babu Stadium here on Monday. After Suhail Ahmad Bhat's first-half (18th minute) goal for Mohun Bagan was cancelled out by East Bengal's Muhammed Ashique in the second-half (71st), the Green and Maroon Brigade won 3-2 on penalties to win the first ever Kolkata derby here.

In the penalty shoot-out, Mohun Bagan converted three of their kicks via Serto Worneilen Kom, Adil Abdulla and Ravi Bahadur Rana. Despite Aditya Patra saving two penalties and Ashique and Chiku Mandi scoring for East Bengal, it wasn't enough.

-PTI



Ruhaan Alva of Sharchi Rarh Bengal Tigers being presented a trophy after the Formula 4 night street car race in Chennai on Sunday.

Pic-APPTI