

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Major setback to cease-fire proposal in Gaza

Hamas kills six hostages including one Israeli-American

Jerusalem: Israel on Sunday said it had recovered the bodies of six hostages in Gaza, including a young Israeli-American man who became one of the most well-known captives held by Hamas as his parents met with world leaders and pressed for his release. The military said all six had been killed shortly before the arrival of Israeli forces trying to rescue

them. Their recovery sparked calls for mass protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whom many families of hostages and much of the wider Israeli public blame for failing to bring them back alive in a deal with Hamas to end the 10-month-old war. Negotiations over such a deal have dragged on for months. Militants seized Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, and four of the other hostages at a music festival in southern Israel during Hamas' October 7 attack, which triggered the war.

Israel would hold Hamas accountable for killing them in cold blood. The killings prove that the militant group does not want a cease-fire agreement. Whoever murders hostages doesn't want a deal.

- Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister, Israel

The native of Berkeley, California, lost part of his left arm to a grenade in the attack. In April, a Hamas-issued video showed him, his left hand missing and clearly speaking under duress, sparking new protests in Israel urging the government to do more to secure his and others' freedom. The army said the bodies were recovered from a tunnel in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, around a kilometer from where another hostage, Qaid Farhan Alkadi, 52, was rescued alive last week. "According to prelimi-

Numbers Speak	
250	Hostages taken by Hamas on October 7, 2023
108	Hostages still held in Gaza. One-third of them believed to be dead
8	Hostages rescued by Israeli forces
100	Freed during a weeklong cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel
1200	People killed by Hamas on October 7
40,000	Palestinians killed in counter offensive by Israel

nary information, they were cruelly murdered by Hamas terrorists shortly before we reached them," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesperson, told reporters. Hamas has offered to release the hostages in return for an end to the war, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the release of a large number of Palestinian pris-



Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi protested against Mahayuti government for the second time in fortnight in Mumbai on Sunday. Pic: Rajesh Waradkar

MVA calls for BJP's ouster

By Correspondent
Mumbai: NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday led a march of Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi from the iconic Hutatma Chowk to Gateway of India to protest the collapse of Chhatrapati

Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Sindhudurg district. They slammed the Union and state governments for the collapse, with Thackeray calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apology as one "smacking of arrogance", while Pawar said the episode was an example of corruption.

Thackeray alleged that one Deputy Chief Minister was smiling when Modi apologised in Palghar for collapse of the statue. Though Thackeray did not name anyone his target was BJP leader Devendra Fadnis. Thackeray said he wanted BJP throw out of the country.

The statue of the 17th century Maratha warrior king at Rajkot fort in Malvan tehsil, some 480 km from here, fell on August 26. It was unveiled by PM Modi on December 4, 2023, on the occasion of Navy Day. (Detailed report on page 3)



People take part in a protest march against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata on Sunday. Pic-PTI

GST collections rise 10 pc

New Delhi: Gross GST collections in August grew 10 per cent to about Rs 1.75 lakh crore, reflecting higher domestic consumption. As per the government data released on Sunday, gross GST revenues from domestic transactions grew 9.2 per cent to about Rs 1.25 lakh crore. Revenues from import of goods were up 12.1 per cent to Rs 49,976 crore. In July, gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) mop-up was Rs 1.82 lakh crore, while in August last year it was Rs 1.59 lakh crore. M.S. Mani, Partner, Deloitte India, said a 10 per cent increase in collections on a year-to-month basis at the start of the festive season for the year indicates that consumption is robust. "This would give renewed confidence that the collection targets for the year would be achieved. There are some differences in the GST collection increases across major states which may need a deep dive," Mani said. -PTI

Change 'culture of adjournments'

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday said that efforts need to be made to change the "culture of adjournments" in courts to ensure swift justice. Addressing the valedictory event of the two-day National Conference of the District Judiciary here, she said that the pendency of court cases is a big challenge for "all of us". "All possible efforts need to be made to change the culture of adjournments in courts," she said. Murmu said all judges of the country have the responsibility to protect justice. -PTI

17,000 evacuated across AP

Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh): Unprecedented rainfall in the past two days paralysed life at several places in Andhra Pradesh, especially in Vijayawada and vicinity while 17,000 rain-affected people were evacuated across the state. Budameru, a rivulet on the outskirts of Vijayawada suffered a breach and overflowed at several points on Sunday, leading to flooding at many city localities such as Ajit Singh Nagar, Swathi Theatre area, Police Nagar area and west and central constituencies. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said massive amounts of rainfall rocked the state. "Due to the heavy rain, Vijayawada and Guntur cities have been completely marooned. Vijayawada-Guntur national highway at Kaza and Vijayawada-Hyderabad national highway at Jaggaiahpetta were totally marooned," said Naidu. -PTI

Three killed as car crashes into tanker

Mumbai: At least three persons were killed and as many others injured when a car carrying them overturned and hit a stationary water tanker in Chembur area of Mumbai on Sunday, police said.

The incident occurred in the afternoon when the driver of the four-wheeler lost his control over the vehicle, causing it to overturn, an official said, adding that the deceased and injured persons were friends.

The deceased men are identified as Harichandan Dilip Das (23), Pramod Shankar Prasad (35), and

Hussain Shaikh (40). A case has been registered against the driver Javed Saifula Khan (30), who also sustained injuries, and the investigation is underway.

Web series faces flak for changing terrorists' identity

Casting director says terrorists used false names

New Delhi: Amid demands by a section of social media users for boycott of the series "IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack" for allegedly hiding the real identities of the terrorists involved in the 1999 incident, casting director Mukesh Chhabra on Sunday claimed the perpetrators used nicknames for each other and proper research was done for the show. Directed by Anubhav Sinha, the series is based on the 1999 hijack of an Indian aircraft by five terrorists on December 24, 1999, 40 minutes after it took off from

Kathmandu. It started streaming on Netflix from August 29. Using hashtags #BoycottNetflix, #BoycottBollywood and #IC814, many X users shared posts claiming the makers changed the names of the hijackers to 'Shankar' and 'Bhola' to allegedly protect the terrorists who belonged to a certain community. A user accused Sinha of "deliberate distortion of facts" as well as termed the series "propaganda". ".... it's a vile attempt to rewrite history, downplay the terror inflicted by the

actual hijackers, and subtly glorify their actions. By reducing in tragedy of IC 814 to a farcical narrative, Sinha has shown where his loyalties lie—not with the victims or the truth, but with an insidious agenda that seeks to whitewash the brutality of terrorism and vilify the Hindu community," she wrote on X. "Names of IC814 Hijackers changed to Shankar & Bhola by @anubhavsinha. This is how Bollywood let the TERRORISTS WIN: #BoycottBollywood #IC814TheKandaharHijack," wrote another.



"IC 814 Terrorists names - Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, Masood Azhar and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar. In

Movie - Shankar & Bhola" read a post. Chhabra, a prominent casting director in the industry, said the terrorists used "nicknames or fake names" to address each other.

"I am reading so many tweets about the names of the hijackers. We did the proper research. They used to call each other by those names—nicknames or fake names, whatever you want to call them." "And thank you, everyone, for loving the ensemble cast. A big thank you to my team, and especially to Anubhav Sinha for trusting us and giving me the freedom to explore. #IC814 #Netflix," he wrote on X. Five terrorists Ibrahim Athar, Sunny Ahmed Qazi, Zahoor Ibrahim, Shahid Akhter and Sayed Shakir hijacked the IC-814 plane during its flight from Kath-

mandu to Delhi on December 24 that year. At least 154 passengers and crew were held hostage for eight days and the standoff ended when hardcore terrorists Masood Azhar, Omar Sheikh and Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar were released and the then external affairs minister Jaswant Singh took them on a special plane to Kandahar. "IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack" features an ensemble cast of Vijay Varma, Naseeruddin Shah, Pankaj Kapur, Manoj Pahwa, Kumud Mishra, Arvind Swamy, Dia Mirza and Patralekhaa, among others. -PTI

Won't sit quietly till govt is changed, says Pawar

By Correspondent

Mumbai: NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar on Sunday said the opposition won't sit quietly till the Mahayuti dispensation in Maharashtra is dislodged from power in the next two months and a new government is formed on the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

Addressing party workers at Ghatkopar in Mumbai, Pawar slammed the state government over the collapse of the statue of



the legendary warrior king in Sindhudurg district on August 26.

He said those in power in the state have no "faith" in Shivaji Maharaj.

"I assure you (party workers) that if you show your unity, then we will not sit quietly till the government in Maharashtra is changed in the next two months and a new government is formed on the ideals of Shivaji Maharaj that will safeguard the interests of people," Pawar said.

The collapse of the Shivaji statue at Rajkot fort in Malvan tehsil has

triggered a firestorm in the state, with the opposition targeting the BJP-led Mahayuti for "corruption" and "insult" to the icon.

Earlier in the day, Pawar joined a protest march by the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) from Hutatma Chowk to the Gateway of India in south Mumbai over the statue collapse.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will likely be held in October or November.

Audi driver booked for assault

Mumbai: The driver of an Audi involved in the assault of an Ola driver on August 18 was arrested by Parksite police late Saturday night. The accused, Rishabh Chakravorty, a journalist, was initially booked under bailable offences. A video of the horrific incident in which Chakravorty could be seen lifting the driver Kaimuddin Quereshi and throwing him violently in the compound of the upmarket housing complex "The Address", LBS Marg, Ghatkopar (W) had gone viral.

The video sparked public outrage and social media outburst, with many expressing shock that the police have not applied the relevant sections of law.

Mahayuti arrives at consensus on 173 seats

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar held seat-sharing talks in Nagpur for the upcoming state assembly polls, which are likely to be held in October-November. The meeting, which lasted for around three hours as per BJP sources, was held on Saturday.

"Yesterday's meeting was in line with the previous two-three rounds of initial discussions that took place. The final seat sharing will be sealed after another two to three



meetings," the sources said.

Sources from the NCP said consensus has been arrived for 173 seats, with BJP getting the maximum share, followed by Shiv Sena of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the

Ajit Pawar-led party.

The remaining 115 seats will be finalised soon in a meeting of Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekar Bawankule, CM Shinde as well as senior NCP leaders Sunil Tatkar and Praful Patel, they added.

Mandals ensure Ganeshotsav in Kashmir

Pune: The city, where the concept of 'sarvajanic Ganeshotsav' or largescale public celebrations of Ganesh festival was born, will continue its tryst with expanding its gaiety and fervour to Kashmir for the second year in a row.

The initiative of Pune's seven prominent Ganesh mandals will see public festivities being held in Srinagar, Anantnag and Kupwara in the northern Union Territory, organisers said here. The 10-day festival will begin with Ganesh Chaturthi on September 7.

Amid the beating of traditional instruments like 'dhol tasha' last week, replicas of three Ganesh idols, namely Tambdi Jogeshwari, Guruji Talim and Tulshibaugh Ganesh, were handed over to functionaries of mandals in

Srinagar, Kupwara, and Anantnag, they said.

"The replica of the second 'manacha' (revered) Ganapati from Tambdi Jogeshwari Ganesh Mandal was given to the Ganpatyar Trust from Lal Chowk in Srinagar.

The replica of the third 'manacha' Ganapati from Guruji Talim Ganesh Mandal's replica was handed over to the Kupwara Ganesh Mandal, while the replica of fourth 'manacha' Ganapati from Tulshibaugh Ganesh Mandal was given to the Anantnag Ganesh Mandal from south Kashmir," one of the organisers said.

This initiative to take Ganeshotsav to J-K was spearheaded by Punit Balan, the festival chief and trustee of Bhausaheb Rangari Ganesh Mandal, along with six other prominent Ganesh mandals,

namely Kasba Ganapati Mandal, Tambdi Jogeshwari Ganesh Mandal, Guruji Talim Ganesh Mandal, Tulshibaugh Ganesh Mandal, Kesariwada Ganesh Mandal and Akhil Mandai Ganesh Mandal.

Last year, the replica of Kasba Ganapati, the first 'manacha' idol in Pune, also known as the 'gram daivat' (village deity), was sent to the Valley and it was installed at the Ganpatyar Mandir in Srinagar's Lal Chowk for one-and-half days, Balan said.

"Initially, people were sceptical and even critical, but we successfully celebrated the festival in J-K. This year, we received requests from Anantnag and Kupwara. Therefore, three replicas have been sent here this time. The members from the mandals there came to Pune to take the idols. The

festival in Anantnag and Kupwara will last for five days," he said.

These celebrations will have a positive impact on the Valley and bring about peace, and there are plans to introduce other festivals like Dussehra, Navratri and Diwali, Balan added.

Sandip Kaul, a member of a Ganesh mandal in Srinagar, said the festival returned to Kashmir Valley last year after 35 years.

"This year, the festival is being extended to Anantnag and Kupwara in the south and north of Kashmir, respectively. It will be a five-day festival. We are receiving good support and cooperation from everyone in the Valley regarding Ganeshotsav. We are thankful to the Pune mandals for their cooperation in this initiative," Kaul said.

Sandip Raina, a youth from Kashmir, said the festival was once known for militancy, was now changing with both Muslims and Hindus supporting the Ganeshotsav initiative.

Srinagar's Ganpatyar Ganesh Mandal's Mohit Bhan said the festival will foster peace and social harmony, while Shrikant Shete from Kasba Ganapati Mandal claimed Ganeshotsav there was "like bringing Pune's tradition to Kashmir".

The massively-patronised festival holds special significance for Pune since the concept of Sarvajanic Ganeshotsav was launched here by 'Lokmanya' Bal Gangadhar Tilak to mobilise the masses against the British and instil a spirit of patriotism.

-PTI



Devotees carry a Ganesh idol in Mumbai on Sunday.

Pic: Anil Panaskar

HC orders man to pay Rs 2 lakh to Uddhav

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court has imposed a cost of Rs 2 lakh on a Nanded resident for filing a frivolous plea against Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and has directed him to personally hand over the amount in the form of a demand draft to the former Maharashtra chief minister.

Mohan Chavan, who claims to be a doctor in philosophy and belongs to the Banjara community, had contended that his religious sentiments were hurt by Thackeray who did not apply sacred ash (vibhuti) given to him by Chavan's priest during a function.

A single bench of Justice S G Mehare, in the order of August 29, said prima facie even a person with little knowledge of law would said this was nothing but "abuse of process of law or using the judicial system to become famous and



celebrity".

"Such petitions lower the image of respected members of the society. Most of the times, petitions like these are filed with ulterior motive," the HC said. It added the allegations levelled against Thackeray appeared basically without any foundation.

This was a fit case to impose cost for abusing the process of law, the bench said while permitting Chavan to withdraw the petition.

It, however, imposed a

cost of Rs 2 lakh that Chavan has to give Thackeray within three weeks and warned of stringent action if the amount was not paid.

"The petitioner (Chavan) should purchase a DD (demand draft) in the name of the former chief minister Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray, go personally to his home and deliver it to his hand or to the person whom he directs," the HC ordered.

In his plea, Chavan claimed his 'mahant' (priest) went to Thackeray's residence for a function, during which the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader was offered a sweet as 'prasad' as well as sacred ash (vibhuti).

After accepting the sweet (prasad) and ash (vibhuti), Thackeray gave it to the another person standing beside him instead of applying the sacred ash on his own forehead, Chavan said in the plea, adding this act had hurt his religious feelings.

IndiGo flight diverted to Nagpur

Nagpur: An IndiGo flight from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh to Hyderabad in Telangana was diverted on Sunday to Nagpur following a bomb threat.

In a statement, IndiGo said its flight 6E-7308, scheduled from Jabalpur to Hyderabad, got diverted to Nagpur International Airport on Sunday morning due to a bomb threat message on board the aircraft.

"Upon landing, all passengers were disembarked, and mandatory security checks were promptly initiated. Passengers were provided with assistance and refreshments," the statement added.

A police official said the bomb threat message was written on a piece of paper, which was found in the bathroom of the aircraft. However, nothing suspicious was found after a thorough check by security agencies, the official added.

An airport official said the flight is expected to resume its journey at 2pm.

-PTI

Couple held for killing, decapitating woman

By Correspondent

Pune: A couple has been arrested in connection with the death of a woman, whose headless body was found on the banks of a river in Pune city earlier this week, police said on Sunday.

The police on Saturday arrested Ashfaq Khan and his wife Hamida for allegedly killing his 48-year-old

sister in a dispute over ownership of a room in a slum, an official said.

The police found the body of a woman, who had been decapitated with her hands and legs severed, on the banks of the Mutha River in the Kharadi area on August 26.

Following a probe, the woman was identified as Sakina Khan (48), the official said.

Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjankumar Sharma said, "The Pune city police recovered a woman's torso from the banks of the Mutha River. There were no clothes on the body, and the accused had dismembered it to destroy evidence before throwing it in the river."

Investigations revealed that the victim, Sakina, had a dispute with her brother

over the ownership of a room in a slum in the Shivaji Nagar area, he said.

Sakina had been reported missing, and her brother Ashfaq and sister-in-law Hamida were detained in connection with her disappearance, the official said.

The duo allegedly strangled the victim, decapitated her and dismembered the body to destroy the evidence, he said.

Rickshaw driver molests girl

Mumbai: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly molested by a rickshaw driver in the Borivali area of Maharashtra's Mumbai, police said on Sunday.

According to MHB Colony Police Station officials, the girl was on her way to school when the incident took place.

The accused rickshaw driver suddenly stopped the vehicle and attempted to touch the girl.

President on three-day visit

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Maharashtra for three days beginning Monday to attend a host of programs, according to an official statement.

She will grace the golden jubilee celebration of Shri Warana Women Co-operative Group at Warananagar, Kolhapur, on Monday, it 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'.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Jonty Rhodes, former cricketer

"My flying bad luck continues. Not only my Air India flight from Mumbai to Delhi over 1.5 hours delayed, but now I just signed a waiver as I board stating I accept my seat is broken. Why me? Not looking forward to the next 36 hours with a return to Mumbai from Delhi and straight onto to my return flight to Cape Town."

Picking inexperienced sculptor was wrong

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Entrusting the construction of Shivaji Maharaj's statue to an inexperienced sculptor was a wrong call, Union minister and NDA ally Ramdas Athawale said on Sunday, days after the structure collapsed at Rajkot fort in the coastal Sindhudurg district.

After visiting the fort in Malvan taluka, the Union Minister of State for Social Justice demanded a detailed probe into the incident.



"There is no dearth of experienced sculptors; why the responsibility was given to a novice?" Athawale asked while speaking to reporters.

Stating that the incident was unforgivable, the RPI (A) chief said the concerned officials of the Public Works Department and the Navy should also be investigated.

He asked opposition parties not to politicise the statue incident given the apologies tendered by PM Narendra Modi and Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde.

Athawale also appealed to the state government to rope in experts and opposition leaders to finalise the construction of a new statue

of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Athawale's comments are perceived as an indirect criticism of the Mahayuti government, which is already facing an ire from the Opposition parties for shielding the culprits. Since Athawale's party is a member of the ruling National Democratic Alliance his comments carry weightage. He is the second Dalit leader after Chirag Paswan who has openly taken a stand against his own government.

BJP MLAs meet RSS leaders

Mumbai: Ahead of the Maharashtra assembly elections, likely to be held later this year, BJP legislators from Mumbai had a closed-door meeting with RSS leaders on Sunday.

The meeting at Yashwant Bhavan in Lower Parel in central Mumbai lasted over six hours. As they came out after the meeting, BJP legislators and office-bearers of the party's Mumbai unit were tight-lipped about what they discussed. A functionary of the RSS, BJP's ideological mentor, called the meeting a "routine" one.

Collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Statue

They are arrogant. We have gathered here to demand 'BJP get out of India'

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday lambasted at the BJP over the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in Malvan on August 26. He and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar led a protest march organised

Addressing a gathering at Gateway of India, where the protest march culminated, Thackeray said, "Did you notice the arrogance in the (Prime Minister Narendra Modi's) apology? It smacked of arrogance. One deputy Chief Minister was smiling."

"The mistake (collapse) cannot be forgiven. We have all gathered here to demand 'BJP get out of India'," he said at the well-attended protest march.

Asserting that people of Maharashtra will never forgive the insult to the legendary warrior king, Thackeray cited the statue collapse, leakages in the Ram Temple and the new Parliament complex to mock Modi's "guarantees".

"For what was the PM apologising? For the statue he inaugurated eight months ago? For the corruption involved? The MVA cadre must work together to defeat the forces that have insulted Shivaji Maharaj. The collapse of the statue is an insult to the soul of Maharashtra," he asserted.



During his address in Palghar on Friday, PM Modi had said Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is not just a name or a king but a deity. "Today, I bow my head at his feet and apologise to my deity," he had said.

'Example of corruption'
Speaking at the protest march, Pawar said, "The collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Sindhudurg is an example of corruption. It is an insult to all Shiv premis (followers of the warrior king)." Maharashtra Congress

Chief Nana Patole said, much before the PM, the opposition had sought forgiveness from the emperor for allowing such a "Shiv drohi" (those betraying the principles of Chhatrapati Shivaji) government to come to power. "We have taken a pledge to never let it happen again," he said, adding the PM's apology was with an eye on the upcoming state polls.

'Jodo Maro Andolan'
During the agitation, called 'jodo maro andolan'

(hitting with slippers), Thackeray joined Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress leaders to hit a poster of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar with footwear. Kolhapur Congress MP Shahu Chhatrapati, a descendant of the Emperor, said the latter's dignity must be maintained at all cost.

The protesters began the protest march by laying wreaths at Hutatma Chowk, a memorial to those martyred in the

'Samyukta Maharashtra' agitation.

Among those who took part in the march, which began sometime after 11 am and concluded at noon, included NCP (SP) Barabati MP Supriya Sule and MLA Anil Deshmukh.

A bust of the legendary warrior king was placed at Hutatma Chowk, while those taking part in the protest march carried placards denouncing the statue collapse and shouted slogans against the Eknath Shinde government.

NCP (SP) chief Pawar



walked some distance as part of the protest march before getting into his vehicle

The protest march is to

give voice to the anger of the people of Maharashtra over the statue collapsing just eight months after it

said NCP (SP) leader Rajesh Tope and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sunil Prabhu.

The protest was peaceful, Prabhu told reporters.

Uddhav emulates deeds of Aurangzeb, Afzal Khan: Shinde

Mumbai: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday launched a searing attack at his rival and predecessor Uddhav Thackeray and accused him of doing politics in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj while emulating the deeds of Aurangzeb and Afzal Khan.

Talking to reporters, Shinde also slammed the opposition for indulging in politics over the collapse of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Sindhudurg's Malvan area on August 26.

It is unfortunate that the opposition is playing politics despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar



and he himself apologising for the "painful" incident, Shinde asserted.

He said in Congress-ruled Karnataka, a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was uprooted with two JCBs (generic term used for construction equipment).

"People of Maharashtra have shown him (Thack-

eray) his place two years ago. You take the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj but deeds are Aurangzebi and Afzal Khani," Shinde said, adding the people of Maharashtra will teach the opposition a lesson.

Aurangzeb, the last of the Great Mughals, was a rival to Shivaji and had im-

prisoned him through deceit. He also executed Shivaji's son and successor Chhatrapati Sambhaji.

Afzal Khan, the Bijapur general, was killed by the Maratha emperor.

Aurangzeb and the Bijapur general are polarising figures in Maratha history and in the state.

The CM said the opposition is seeing its defeat as the Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana has reached beneficiaries in cities as well as villages.

Women were not safe under MVA rule, he said and pointed to arrest of then MP Navneet Rana and demolition of actor and now BJP MP Kangana Ranaut. Both are bitter critics of Thackeray.

Jarange-Patil says don't do politics

Mumbai: Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Sunday told the Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti government and the opposition not to do politics in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and demanded strict punishment against those involved in insulting state and national icons.

Jarange-Patil visited the Rajkot Fort in Malvan. The incident caused outrage across the state, with the prime minister apologising for the event.

Talking to reporters, Jarange said, "There should be no politics over it, both the opposition and the government. The government should conduct a detailed probe into the matter. The contractors should not be spared."

MVA politicising issue, says Bawankule

Nagpur: The BJP on Sunday staged protests across Maharashtra against the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi for allegedly politicising the collapse of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in Sindhudurg.

Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Bawankule, while taking part in a protest here, said PM Modi had apologised to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as well as the legendary warrior-king's followers in connection with the collapse.

"Despite his apology, the MVA is politicising the issue for vote bank politics. The MVA is trying to spread anarchy in the state ahead of the assembly



polls," Bawankule said.

During his address in Palghar on Friday, PM Modi had said Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is not just a name or a king but a deity.

"Today, I bow my head at

his feet and apologise to my deity," he had said with regard to the statue collapse. BJP party workers held protests in Nagpur, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and other parts of the state, targeting the MVA.

School kids enact 'Janata Raja'

By Correspondent

Mumbai: At least 140 students of Shishuvan School, Matunga embraced the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by enacting a play. On Thursday, they presented the play 'Janata Raja', based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and written by Shiv Shahir Basaheb Purandare.

The students created scenes of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj era. One of them was the coronation event. Raju Desai, who has visited Raigad, the Capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, 500 times, was the chief guest. "After looking at the presentation by the kids I was dumbstruck."

Man held for keeping firearm

Thane: A man was arrested in Kalyan in Thane district for allegedly possessing a firearm without a licence, a police official said on Sunday. Santosh Goswami, who is part of the security set up of a residential complex, was held on August 29 with a .12 bore rifle and six bullets.

Dharavi Redevelopment Project NGOs say opposition only by non-locals

Mumbai: Several non-government organisations working in Dharavi have pledged their support to the ongoing state government-led survey of informal tenants in Asia's biggest slum and accused non-locals of trying to stall redevelopment by spreading misinformation, according to letters they wrote to state government authorities.

The NGOs have written to Dharavi Redevelopment Project/Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP/SRA), a government of Maharashtra body overseeing the USD 3-billion redevelopment project being executed by the Adani group, extending support for the survey.

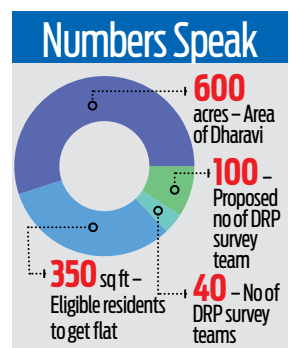
A total of eight NGOs and citizen welfare associations involved in diversified welfare activities ranging from health, education, women empowerment amongst others, met with

DRPPL CEO and extended support of Dharavikars to the state-government-led survey currently being conducted in the area.

While extending support to the survey, Noor Mohammed Khan of Global Giving Foundation and All India Police Jan Seva Sangathana asked the authority 13 questions ranging from the period of free maintenance Adani group entity will provide to flats that it will construct to rehabilitate the Dharavi and what would happen to those who came to reside in the slums posts January 2000 -- the cutoff date for determining eligibility for getting a flat.

Reached for comments, he confirmed to PTI that he has written the letter and asked the questions to which the authority has promised a response.

Extending support to the survey, Enlighten Foundation on August 20 wrote to



Rajeshkumar Panirselvam, founder and president of Enlighten Foundation.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj CHS, a resident association from Dharavi, in its letter sought "going ahead with the survey and also the redevelopment project that has been halted for decades together. Many generations have passed by, waiting for the area to be redeveloped but only now we are witnessing a positive step".

Last month, Dharavi redevelopment project received a shot in the arm after a newly formed association of residents of Dharavi approached Srinivas and lent its support to the survey of informal tenements.

The survey, which began on March 18, 2024, has so far completed over 11,000 tenements via door-to-door visits, while numbering has been done on more than 30,000 tenements. This in-

cludes residential, commercial tenements and religious structures as well across Dharavi.

The Thevar Samajam which represents the largest Tamil community within Dharavi assured the DRPPL that local residents and commercial establishments are keen to see redevelopment and look forward to conducting business in Dharavi.

Dharavikar Iron Group and Om Shri Gauri Mitra Mandal in their letters offered to volunteer as facilitators for the survey.

The All India Police Jan Seva Sanghatana, which represents the interests of police and other government residences in Dharavi, requested the Dharavi administration to help clear the false propaganda against the project by means of a direct dialogue with the people.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Abhay Oka, Justice, Supreme Court

"We have created a mob rule. When an incident happens, political people capitalise on it. Political leaders visit that particular place and assure people that the death penalty will be given to the accused, but the decision power rests with the judiciary."

'Infant attrition' on rise, says TeamLease

Sectors like consumer durables, IT, software, and BFSI mainly affected

Mumbai: Poor work-life balance, flexibility, and job dissatisfaction are leading to 4-5 per cent annual increase in 'infant attrition' -- employees quitting within six months of joining -- mainly in sectors like consumer durables, IT, and software, and BFSI, a senior executive of TeamLease Services said.

"Infant attrition in India, mainly seen in the 22-32 years age group, is growing annually at 4-5 per cent and is mostly driven by factors like poor work-life balance and flexibility, which is particularly important to younger workers, job dissatisfaction, inadequate onboarding, insufficient compensation, making employees seek better opportunities," TeamLease Services Chief Strategy Officer Subburathinam P told PTI.

Lack of career development opportunities, culture of the organisation, work environment, managerial impact, and changes happening in the family are also prompting new

What is infant attrition?

Infant attrition refers to the phenomenon where employees leave an organisation within a short period after joining, typically within the first six months or during the probation period, some companies also consider three months as infant attrition.



hires to leave in search of environments where they can grow and advance, he said.

Infant attrition can also imply that there are more job opportunities, allowing people to switch, he said.

"In India, the concept of infant attrition gained significant attention in the early 2000s, particularly within the IT sector. The rapid growth of the IT industry led to high demand for skilled professionals, and companies faced challenges in retaining new hires," Subburathinam said.

This phenomenon, he said, can have a significant financial impact on companies in the country and it is estimated that infant attri-

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana are the states with the highest infant attrition rates.

tion accounts for about 10-15 per cent of annual labour movement.

"It can lead to substantial costs, including recruitment, training, and lost productivity," Subburathinam added.

Subburathinam further said, with 49 per cent consumer durables sector is witnessing highest infant attrition, where new hires leave within the first six months.

Other sectors, like IT and software, Banking, Finan-

Numbers Speak

84.5 per cent Male attrition

15.5 per cent Women attrition

cial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) and telecom, retail and manufacturing are the other sectors that are witnessing this phenomenon, he added.

This trend is particularly pronounced in south India, where the infant attrition rate is as high as 51 per cent, he noted.

-PTI

Eating out may be costlier as LPG goes up

New Delhi: Jet fuel, or ATF, price was on Sunday reduced by 4.6 per cent while the rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants was hiked by Rs 39 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 4,495.5 per kilolitre, or 4.58 per cent, to Rs 93,480.22 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers. The price reduction will help ease the burden on airlines for whom fuel makes up for almost 40 per cent of the operating cost. Oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG by Rs 39 to Rs 1,691.50 per 19-kg cylinder.

This is the second straight monthly increase. Prices were hiked by Rs 6.5 per cylinder on August 1. The two rounds of increase follow four monthly price reductions. In four price reductions, rates were cut by Rs 148 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,644 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,802.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,855 in Chennai.

Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.

-PTI

MONEY MATTERS

Effective use matters not the tools



By Kaustubh Kale

Derivatives (futures and options) are powerful tools for creating and protecting wealth. However, many casual investors struggle to use them effectively, leading to significant losses.

According to a SEBI study, nine out of 10 individual traders in the futures and options segment end up with net losses, averaging around INR 50,000. Such warnings are frequently displayed when logging into trading accounts.

So where exactly is the casual retail investor going wrong?

Here are five key strategies for trading derivatives profitably:

Don't simply Buy Options. Don't make buying options your primary strategy. Many casual traders buy options as a lottery ticket, which isn't a sustainable approach. Instead, focus on a balanced strategy. So what should you do instead?

Implement a Hedged Strategy

Hedging is crucial in derivatives trading. Use a combination of instruments to manage risk. For instance, you could buy futures and hedge with put options. This way, futures serve as your primary instrument,

while put options act as insurance. I personally trade using this strategy. Another approach is to use option combinations where you buy and sell options in tandem. The key is to diversify and hedge your positions.

Define Entry and Exit Points

Write this on a piece of paper! Your entry and exit has to be based on some data or technical analysis. Your strategy should be well-defined and planned in advance, not left to chance or intuition. It should not be ad hoc or haphazard, based on discretion/feelings.

Maintain Idle Cash as a Cushion

Avoid using your entire trading capital. If your strategy requires INR 1 lakh as margin but you have INR 10 lakhs available, don't use all of it. Keep some funds unutilized as a buffer.

Stick to positional trading only

Choose positional trading over intraday or BTST (Buy Today, Sell Tomorrow) strategies. Positional trading is more sustainable and less volatile compared to intraday trading and BTST trading.

By following these guidelines, you can improve your chances of success in trading derivative

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant and CFA (USA). Financial Advisor. Views personal.)

PVR to close 70 non-performing screens

New Delhi: Leading multiplex operator PVR INOX plans to close 70 non-performing screens in FY25 and will go for potential monetisation of non-core real estate assets in prime locations such as Mumbai, Pune, and Vadodara, according to its latest annual report.

Though the company will add 120 new screens in FY25, it will also close almost 60-70 non-performing screens, as it chases for profitable growth.

About 40 per cent of new screens addition will come from South India, where it will have a "strategic focus" on this lesser penetrated region as per its medium to long-term strategy.

Moreover, PVR INOX is redefining its growth strategy by transitioning towards a capital-light growth model to reduce its capex on new screens addition by 25 to 30 per cent in the current fiscal.

Now, PVR INOX will partner with developers to jointly invest in new screen capex by shifting towards a franchise-owned and company-operated (FOCO)



model.

It is also evaluating monetisation of owned real estate assets, as the leading film exhibitor aims to become "net-debt free" company in the foreseeable future.

"This involves a potential monetisation of our non-core real estate assets in prime locations such as Mumbai, Pune, and Vadodara," said Managing Director Ajay Kumar Bijli and Executive Director Sanjeev Kumar addressing the shareholders of the company.

During the year, PVR INOX opened 130 new screens across 25 cinemas

and also shut down 85 under-performing screens across 24 cinemas in line with its strategy of profitable growth.

PVR INOX's net debt in FY24 was at Rs 1,294 crore. The company had reduced its net debt by Rs 136.4 crore last fiscal, said CFO Gaurav Sharma.

In FY24, PVR INOX had a 10 per cent growth in ticket prices and 11 per cent in F&B spend per head, which was "higher-than-normal". This was primarily on account of merger synergies on the integration of PVR and INOX, said Sharma.

-PTI

Most of pesky calls from two sectors

New Delhi: Vast majority of mobile subscribers who took part in a survey have said they receive pesky calls every day with most calls coming for financial services and real estate, online survey firm LocalCircles said on Sunday.

According to the survey, 95 per cent mobile subscribers confirmed receiving pesky calls every day with 77 per cent getting three or more such calls daily.

Besides, vast majority confirmed receiving calls in the last 12 months despite being registered in the Do Not Disturb (DND) list.

As per the survey report, "96 per cent of mobile subscribers surveyed who registered on Do Not Disturb (DND) list say they have been getting pesky calls on their number in the last 12 months. Effectiveness of Do Not Disturb (DND) services also reduced as 96 per cent confirmed receiving such calls despite being registered for DND as compared to 90 per cent who said so six months back in the survey done by LocalCircles," the survey report said.

-PTI

Power consumption declines

New Delhi: India's power consumption declined 4.7 to 144.21 billion units (BU) in August compared to the year-ago period, mainly due to the above normal rainfall across the country which reduced the use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers.

According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the country recorded 287.1 mm of rainfall in August, which is about 16 per cent higher than the normal 248.1 mm.

In August 2023, the power consumption stood at 151.32 BU, according to official data.

The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also contracted to 216.68 GW in August 2024 against 236.29 GW in the year-ago month.

The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250GW in May this



year. The previous all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023.

Earlier this year, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during the day and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW in the evening hours for June.

The ministry also estimated that peak power demand may hit 260 GW this summer.

Experts said the widespread above normal rainfall in the country reduced

the use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers.

This led to decline in power consumption as well as growth in power demand in the country in August, they said.

The demand for power as well as consumption will continue to be steady in the coming days due to improvement in commercial and industrial consumption in the country with the onset of festival season from Ganesh Chaturthi this month, they added.

-PTI

Shankar IAS Academy fined

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority has imposed a Rs 500,000 fine on Shankar IAS Academy for misleading advertisements related to the 2022 civil service exam, the regulator said on Sunday.

The CCPA, led by Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare, found that the coaching institute made false claims about its success rate.

The academy claimed "336 selections out of 933 at All India Level", "40 candidates in Top 100", and "2 candidates have cleared from Tamil Nadu, of which 37 studied at Shankar IAS Academy". The institute advertised itself as the "Best IAS Academy in India".

CCPA discovered that the academy "deliberately concealed" information about the specific courses taken by the successful candidates.

Discussion on ways to promote industry

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal would chair a meeting of state industry ministers on September 5 to discuss ways to promote industrial growth of the country, an official said.

As industry is a state subject, they are key stakeholders in promoting the sector, the official said.

"Issues like ways to promote manufacturing, promotion of industries and state issues may come up for deliberations on September 5 here," the official added.

The Centre is already tak-



ing a number of measures in this direction and that includes reducing compliance burden, promoting ease of doing business and setting up of industrial townships. Recently, the Government

of India approved 12 new industrial cities in 10 states on the lines of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh and Dholera in Gujarat to boost domestic manufacturing with an estimated investment of Rs

28,602 crore.

These industrial areas will be in Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in UP, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Koppurthy in AP, and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan, and one in Haryana.

Eight such cities are already under different stages of implementation. Trunk infrastructure has been created in four cities -- Dholera (Gujarat), Auric (Maharashtra), Vikram Udyogpuri

(Madhya Pradesh) and Krishnapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and allotment of land plots is underway for the industry.

Similarly, in the other four -- Tumakuru in Karnataka, Krishnapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Nangal Chaudhary in Haryana, and Dadri, Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh -- the government's special purpose vehicle (SPV) is in the process of constructing the basic infrastructure like road connectivity, water and power supply.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Anjanmoy Chatterjee, CMD, Speciality Restaurants Ltd

"It should be clear that India not eating out or inflation not settling down is something which I don't believe in. India is better than many more countries. It is a short-term phenomenon. It will settle down once the food inflation comes down."

Jayasurya breaks silence, refutes allegations

Thiruvananthapuram: Breaking his silence over the sexual harassment allegations against him, actor Jayasurya on Sunday refuted the accusations and said that they have "shattered" him, his family and everyone close to them.

The actor, who has been in the US with his family for the past one month, said he will face the allegations legally and his lawyers will take care of the proceedings in the cases against him till he returns.

"Due to my personal commitments, my family and I have been in America for the past one month, and during this time, two false allegations on the grounds of sexual harassment were made against me.

The first FIR against the actor was registered on August 28 under section 354 (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her mod-

esty) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Cantonment police station here on a complaint by a female actor who has appeared in a handful of movies.

She had levelled sexual abuse allegations against prominent actors M. Mukesh, who is also an MLA, Jayasurya and Maniyanpilla Raju, as well as small-time actor Idavela Babu, who held a prominent role in the actors' association, AMMA.

"In 2013, I was subjected to physical and verbal abuse by these individuals while working on a project. I tried to cooperate and continue working, but the abuse became unbearable," the woman had alleged in her Facebook post.

The second case was lodged at Karamana police station here under sections 354 and 354 C (voyeurism) of the IPC on a complaint by another female actor who had alleged that Jayasurya mo-



UDF to protest today

Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) will hold a protest on Monday in front of the Secretariat, the administrative hub here, accusing the Left government of protecting culprits reportedly mentioned in the Justice K Hema Committee report.

The opposition would also protest against the alleged protection given by the Pinarayi Vijayan government to those who had created and propagated the controversial "kafir" screenshot in Vadakara constituency during the time of the recent Lok Sabha polls.

lest her at a movie set near Thodupuzha during 2012-2013.

Reacting to the cases against him, Jayasurya, in his note, said, "False allegations are easy to make for anyone who lacks a conscience. I only hope one realises that facing a false accusation of harassment is just as painful as the harassment itself.

"A lie always travels faster than the truth, but I believe truth will prevail."

He said that he will return to Kerala as soon as his work in America is over and meanwhile, all the legal proceedings to

prove his innocence will continue.

"I have complete faith in our judicial system," he said and sarcastically thanked "those who contributed to making this birthday the most painful one".

Jayasurya is not the only one facing sexual harassment allegations in the wake of the Justice K Hema Committee report that was made public on August 19.

Multiple FIRs have been registered against many high-profile Malayalam film personalities following allegations of sexual

“Quite naturally, it has shattered me, my family and everyone who has held me close. I have decided to move forward with this legally.”

harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the committee report.

Besides Jayasurya, the film personalities who are accused in cases of sexual assault or harassment include actors Sidhique, Mukesh, Maniyanpilla Raju, Idavela Babu and director Ranjith.

The Justice K Hema Committee was constituted by the Kerala government after the 2017 actress assault case, and its report revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry.



J&K Director General of Police R.R. Swain along with his wife Rasmitha Das and IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdhi meets Kirti Chakra awardee Dy SP Humayun Bhat's wife Fatima Humayun and their son on Sunday. Bhat was killed during an encounter with terrorists.

Pic-PTI

Infiltrators held Kingpin of gambling racket nabbed in UAE

Agartala: Five Bangladeshis and two Rohingyas, who entered Tripura without valid documents, were arrested from two separate areas in the northeastern state, police said on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel detained two persons from Agartala station on Friday, a senior officer said.

During interrogation, the two persons admitted that they were inmates in Cox's Bazar Rohingya camp in the neighbouring country, he said.

"Ramzan Ali and Azida Begum crossed the international border and planned to go to Kolkata by train," Agartala GRP Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Tapas Das said.

-PTI

Ahmedabad: In a coordinated effort, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Gujarat police and Interpol NCB-Abu Dhabi on Sunday brought back the alleged kingpin of an over Rs 2,273 crore gambling racket apprehended in the UAE, an official said.

A Red Notice was issued against the accused, Dipakumar Dhirajlal Thakkar, wanted by the Gujarat police for cases of criminal breach of trust, cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy, causing disappearance of evidence and offences under the Information Technology Act and Prevention of Gambling Act, the CBI said in a statement.

Thakkar is an accused in a criminal case registered on March 25, 2023, at Mahavpura police station, Ahmedabad, for operating an international gambling racket. According to the

CBI, he is allegedly a kingpin of an international illegal criminal gambling racket, operating through special software applications and using hawala channels for the dispersal of proceeds of crime reported to be more than Rs 2,273 crore.

The probe agency had a Red Notice issued against Thakkar from the Interpol General Secretariat on December 15, 2023, based on the request of Gujarat police, it said.

A Red Notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

"A security mission from the Gujarat Police travelled to the UAE and returned with a Red Notice subject to India on September 1," the statement said.

-PTI

Strong alliances there in film industry

B Unnikrishnan, general secretary of the Film Employees Federation of Kerala (FEFKA), on Sunday said there were "strong alliances" in the cinema industry, but he was not aware of any "power group" as mentioned in the Justice K Hema Committee report.

Unnikrishnan, speaking to a TV channel, said that it was an "undeniable fact" that there were "strong alliances" of some production houses with certain directors, writers and actors to make big films.

"They often work together on several projects back-to-back and naturally, everyone would try to align themselves with them to get opportunities. However, such alliances are based on commercial interests," he said.



Warriors of Bald Eagle Brigade conduct Mission Oriented Training integrating mechanised forces & specialist mobility vehicles, in Rann of Kutch.

Pic-PTI

Cop, lifeguard arrested for trying to kidnap toddler

Panaji: A police constable and a lifeguard were arrested for allegedly trying to kidnap a one-and-a-half-year-old boy for ransom in Pernem in North Goa, an official said on Sunday.

Constable Nikesh Chari, attached to the India Reserve Battalion of the state

police, and Sanjay Narvekar, lifeguard with Drishti Marine, were held in Kargao village on Saturday, Deputy Superintendent of Police Jivba Dalvi said.

"They attempted to kidnap the toddler while he was playing in the gallery of

his house on Friday night. The duo arrived on a two-wheeler and Chari picked up the child. However, the child's grandfather raised an alarm, prompting neighbours to rush there. They caught Chari but Narvekar managed to flee," Dalvi said.

-PTI

Tyagi resigns as JDU spokesperson

New Delhi: Janata Dal (United) spokesperson K C Tyagi, whose stand on different issues often highlighted his party's differences with ally BJP, has resigned, the regional party said on Sunday. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has appointed Rajiv Ranjan Prasad as national spokesperson.

-PTI

Southampton University plan for India campus 5,000 students, 30 courses in 8 years

Fees will be around 60 per cent of that of to Southampton

By Gunjan Sharma

New Delhi: The UK's Southampton University plans to offer 30 courses and enrol more than 5,000 students in the next eight years at its offshore campus in India, the first ever in the country by a foreign university, according to top officials.

Elaborating on the university's agenda in an interview with PTI, Andrew Atherton, Vice President International and Engagement, said the operations of the campus coming up in the Delhi-National Capital Region will begin next year.

The fees at the Indian campus are likely to be around 60 per cent of the tuition fees at the Southampton campus but the admission requirements will be the same, he said.

The renowned university was granted a Letter of Intent earlier this week by the Indian government to set up its campus in the country.

While Australia's Deakin University and the University of Wollongong have



already set up campuses in GIFT City in Gujarat, the University of Southampton will be the first foreign university to set up an India campus under the UGC norms.

"The aim is to grow up to 5,500 students in the first eight to 10 years. So the first year will start small. We will start with six courses, including four undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes. The four UG programmes will be in computing with a focus on AI and data science and also in business because we believe there is

neurship. The postgraduate programs will be in computing as well as technology," Atherton said.

Atherton said the plan is to grow from six courses in the first year, which the university aims to launch in August 2025, to over 30 courses by the eighth year.

"The fees will be around 60 per cent or so of the fee students have to pay to come to Southampton. So it will be a lower fee to study for a University of Southampton degree in India at our campus than it would be to go overseas because we believe there is

a large segment of families and students who would like an international degree and would invest but at a price point that works in India itself.

At present, the university has six closely connected campuses in the city of Southampton, one in the nearby city of Winchester and one in the Malaysian city of Iskandar Puteri. Over 700 Indian students are at present enrolled in different courses at the UK campus.

The Indian campus will be open to international students as well.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition

"There is one crucial aspect I wish to highlight that will greatly aid the people of Wayanad - tourism. Once the rains cease, it is imperative that we make a concerted effort to revitalise tourism in the area and encourage people to visit."

Two vacated BSF camps become school, hostel

Kanker: Two Border Security Force (BSF) camps have now turned into a school and hostel facility for children after the paramilitary force vacated them in Chhattisgarh's Naxalite-hit Kanker district, officials said on Sunday.

The BSF, which is extensively deployed in the district to curb Left Wing Extremism, vacated two camps, also called company operating bases, in Bondanar and Kadhai Khodra villages in Antagarh area and

relocated to the interiors, they added.

"The BSF shifted its Bondanar COB to Padar village in Rowghat area (Kanker) and the one at Kadhai Khodra to adjoining forests in neighbouring Narayanpur district, advancing further into core areas of Maoists," an official said.

The Bondanar COB was established in 2010 and shifted in February last year, while the one at Kadhai Khodra, which was set up in 2015, was shifted in

February this year, he said.

"Of the two vacated camps, one in Kadhai Khodra village is being used as a government high school from the ongoing academic session, while another has been made into a pre-matric hostel for boys since last year. Kadhai Khodra school has 33 students, including 16 girls, studying in class IX and X. A total of 75 boys from class 6th to 12th are residing in Bondanar hostel," Additional Collector (Antagarh) BS Uike said on

Sunday.

The government has already been using pre-fabricated structures for schools at various places in all districts of Bastar region, and these BSF camps, with pre-fabricated structures, were ideal for use as education facilities, he added.

Children have all the facilities in both the camps including playground, potable drinking water, washrooms for males and females, Uike informed.

Additional Superinten-

dent of Police (Antagarh) Jaiprakash Barhai said relocation of two COBs was a result of security personnel consolidating their hold in areas around existing installations and facilitating development works by pushing Naxalites on the backfoot.

Using vacated camps as educational facilities will help in winning confidence of local tribals as it would connect children to security personnel, he said.

-PTI

Are People Welcoming Green Ganesh?

By Esha Lohia

Mumbai: As the city gears up for the Ganeshotsav, many are out on the streets or at the comfort of their homes, picking and choosing the most appealing Ganesh idol. Unable to quantify it to number, several are shifting their way to a more sustainable way of welcoming Ganesh by going eco-friendly with their idols. Traditionally, these idols were made of plaster of Paris, a non-biodegradable material that posed a significant threat to the environment. However, in recent years, there has been a growing trend towards the use of eco-friendly Ganesh idols, made from natural materials like different types of clay, paper, and natural dyes.

In 2023, according to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), over 39,000 idols of Lord Ganesh were immersed in various water bodies on the last day, and more than 2,05,722 idols were immersed across Mumbai over ten days. However, there was a significant decline in the quantity of non-biodegradable Ganpati idols washing ashore in 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic years.

Environmental Impact Plaster of Paris, a common material used for making Ganesh idols, is a harmful pollutant. When immersed



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesh to the pandal from a workshop ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Mumbai on Sunday. Pic-PTI-Kunal Patil

in water bodies during the immersion rituals, it releases toxic chemicals that contaminate the water and harm aquatic life. Nishant Thakare, founder of Praying Soul, who has been in the eco-friendly Ganesh idol making business for seven years, says, "Seven years ago, when we started making eco-friendly Ganesh idols, people would often question us as plaster of Paris was the most commonly used material for making idols. Over the years, we were determined and even, ventured into different variants in terms of environment friendly raw materials like khet mitti, shadu mitti (clay), red soil,

panchgavya soil (a mixture of cow dung with other ingredients like ghee, honey), etc." Thakare has also started with a greener concept of metal bappa aiming for people to reuse them over the years.

Rise of Eco-Friendly Ganesh Idols

The increasing awareness of environmental issues has led to a surge in demand for eco-friendly Ganesh idols. These idols are made from natural materials that are biodegradable. Clay idols, in particular, have gained popularity as they are easily soluble in water and decompose naturally, leaving no harmful

residue. Surbhi Bambulkar, owner of Soham Arts, Lalbaug, says, "Last year, we nearly sold 125 mitti Ganpati idols and this year we have a stock of 150 eco-friendly ganesh idols out of which 130 have been pre booked already. One and a half feet tall mitti ganesh idol costs around Rs 5,500-6000 whereas the same in POP costs somewhere between Rs 4500-5000."

Thakare says, "Future of eco-friendly Ganesh idols is definitely bright. There are two key aspects to this- people themselves want to turn into becoming green and second, the government is also pushing

through, trying to eliminate the polluting products to go out. In comparison to the last few years, it has been an incremental growth however, regarding 2024, it is only a matter of few days when we'll get to know whether it will be an exponential or incremental growth."

Modern Day Solution

In a pioneering move towards promoting eco-friendly practices during the festive season, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) had announced an app, Eco Bappa, this year to facilitate the procurement of environmentally sustain-

able Ganesh idols. The app helps citizens in accessing information about eco-friendly sculptors across the state, encouraging them to adopt a greener alternative for celebration. Sanjay Bhuskute, PRO, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, says, "Citizens' response is really good however it will take some time to give any credible data as to how many citizens are using the app to locate eco-friendly Ganesh idols." The app also serves as a platform for the vendors and manufacturers to display their offerings.

Persisting Challenges

Despite the growing popularity of eco-friendly Ganesh idols, several challenges remain. Surbhi shares that the videos that showcase the ugly side of Ganesh immersion i.e indissolubility of POP based Ganesh idols, had gone viral, making people aware to opt for environmentally conscious options. "There is no denying that people are shifting toward eco-friendly (mitti) Ganpati idols; however, it's extremely delicate to handle. Often there have been customers who had earlier purchased a clay-based idol but pivoted towards buying a POP idol next time for its durability and rigidity," says Surbhi.

Space travel might affect immune system



New Delhi: Space travel can cause shifts in the gut that might suppress the immune system of astronauts and affect their metabolism, according to a study. The findings help understand how space missions of long durations could affect health of astronauts, researchers said.

Using genetic technologies, a team of researchers, led by those at Canada's McGill University, analysed changes in the guts, colons and livers of mice onboard the International Space Station or the ISS over a period of three months. An international collaboration of NASA and other space agencies, the ISS is a spacecraft in the Earth's orbit. It is a unique science lab and serves as a "home where crews of astronauts" live, according to the NASA. The authors found significant shifts in gut bacteria that indicated changes in the mice's liver and intestinal genes, suggesting that spaceflight might suppress the immune system and alter metabolism. "These interactions suggest disruption of the signals, metabolites,

and immune factors exchanged across the gut-liver axis which are likely to drive glucose and lipid (fat) dysregulation," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal *npj Biofilms and Microbiomes*. "Collectively, these multiomic findings suggest host-gut microbiome interactions during spaceflight are likely to underlie widespread changes to host physiology which could pose a risk to health," they wrote. The researchers said the study's results can help develop safeguards and ensure success of future space missions, from establishing a long-term presence on the Moon to sending humans to Mars.

"Spaceflight extensively alters astronauts' bodies, yet we still don't fully understand why. By using advanced techniques to study both gut bacteria and genes at the same time, we're beginning to see patterns that could explain those changes and help us develop safeguards for future missions," lead author Emmanuel Gonzalez from the McGill University said. -PTI

Delhi's Pollution Woes

Teamwork with Centre, neighbours key



New Delhi: The problem of pollution in Delhi can only be solved through teamwork, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Sunday as he urged the Centre to give permission for artificial rain during winter, when air quality levels in the city plummet. Addressing a press conference, Rai said though the Delhi government has taken several steps to address the problem, pollution levels in and around

the national capital spike in November.

"An emergency situation arises in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The Kejriwal government is working to reduce the pollution levels. Ever since our government came to power, the pollution levels have declined," he said. But November witnesses a spike in pollution levels, he said. "Last year, IIT-Kanpur submitted a proposal that

artificial rain or a cloud seeding experiment could be done in Delhi. They said that financial management and security permissions were needed. Last year, there was very little time so permissions could not come through. "We held a meeting with experts and I wrote to Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav and sought the Centre's help," he added.

Rai said he has requested a meeting with central agencies and IIT Kanpur experts to discuss the proposal for artificial rain. The BJP had on Saturday slammed the Delhi government, accusing it of indulging in "political gimmicks" and "letter game" with the Centre on the issue of air pollution, instead of taking concrete steps to tackle the health hazard. The ruling AAP had rejected the charge. -PTI



People makes his way through a flooded street as the city was hit by heavy rain in Ogaki, central Japan on Saturday following a tropical storm in the area. Pic-APPTI

Crocodiles rescued from residential areas

Vadodara: A total of 24 crocodiles were rescued from residential areas in Gujarat's Vadodara amid very heavy rains between August 27 and 29, which led to the water level in the Vishwamitri river that flows through the city rising, a forest department official said on Sunday.

The river is home to 440 crocodiles, many of which move into residential areas during flooding caused by

water release from the Ajwa dam, Vadodara Range Forest Officer Karansinh Rajput said.

"Apart from 24 crocodiles, we also rescued 75 other animals, including snakes, cobras, five large turtles weighing nearly 40 kilograms and a porcupine during these three days. There are many residential areas close to Vishwamitri river," he said. "The smallest crocodile

we rescued was two feet long, while the largest was 14 feet long, which was caught on Thursday from Kamnath Nagar situated along the river. Local residents alerted us about this huge crocodile. Two other crocodiles, 11 feet long, were also rescued on Thursday from EME Circle and an open area near the Zoology Department of MS University," Rajput informed. -PTI

Minister invites ideas for preserving nature

Mumbai: Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav on Saturday said there is a need to balance economic development of the country with ecology, as both are interconnected. Human-centric approach to development is insufficient, he said, speaking at an event at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay -- Ideas4LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment' -- that aims to inspire innovative environmental solutions. "A developed economy should be a developed ecology too...there is interconnectedness between all life forms. Life extends beyond human needs, therefore, there should be harmonious coexistence of all living beings and the environment," the minister said. Ideas4LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment' has been organised in collaboration with the Maharashtra Environment Department to engage students, faculty and researchers nationwide in generating ideas promoting an eco-friendly lifestyle. The minister said, "We



should be citizens with environmental sense." Human-centric approach to development is insufficient and instead there is a need for an "ecologically conscious model", Yadav added. Around 50,000 species are used for human consumption, he said, underlining the importance of preserving at least one-third of the Earth for biodiversity. The Indian government, he said, has accomplished its renewable energy targets nine years ahead of schedule, and introduced the Soil Health Card initiative to reduce the use of chemicals in agriculture. Talking about food waste, Yadav said 15 billion tonnes of food is sent to landfills each year, and invited ideas and suggestions from the students for preserving nature and reducing waste. -PTI

Robot waiters in Kenya create a buzz



Nairobi: Children giggle as young people flash their smartphones to film robots carrying plates of freshly prepared meals on their in-built trays to deliver to diners in a busy eatery in Kenya's capital.

Nairobi has a vibrant tech industry with various startups and innovations in operation and has positioned itself as a tech hub in the East African region bearing the nickname The Silicone Savanna. This is the Robot Cafe, believed to be the first of its kind in Nairobi and East Africa, where three robots glide among human waiters serving food to mesmerized customers.

These preprogrammed robots were acquired for entertainment. Cafe owner Mohammed Abbas says he experienced robot service in Asian and European countries and decided to invest in them.

"It was very expensive to import the robots," he says, but adds that the investment has borne fruit, because the restaurant is "often busy with curious customers" who come to experience robot service.

One customer, Packson Chege, picks up a plate of fries from the robot tray as his friend films the experience across the table.

"I can say it is something unique because here in our

country Kenya, I have never seen a restaurant like this one so I think for me, it is a good idea from the owner of this restaurant," he said.

The three robots, which are named Claire, R24 and Nadia, aren't programmed to have a full conversation with customers, but they can say "Your order is ready, Welcome" and then people have to press an exit button after picking up their food from the tray.

They are commanded by waiters through an application on an iPad.

Human waiters are still important in the operations of the cafe, because they take orders from customers who don't use the online or-

dering option. The waiters then place the food on the robot tray when it's ready and deliver drinks in person.

The technology is predicted to disrupt the future workforce globally, and especially in Africa, where there is a youthful population with a median age of 19 years. But the cafe's manager says the robots aren't a replacement for human waiters as they can't offer all services.

"At no point are the robots able to fully function in all the services that are supposed to be ongoing in the restaurant without the human touch," John Kariuki said. "The robots are actu-

ally way too expensive for us to acquire, so if you are trying to save money, it is not going to work if you choose to go the robotic way."

A hospitality industry expert, Edith Ojwang, said that there's room for robotic and human service to coexist in the industry.

"The hospitality industry is very diverse. We have clients who will prefer robotic service and full automation, while we also have clients who will prefer human service, the human touch and warmth that comes with human service so it is not entirely a threat to human labour because of the diverse nature of the hospitality client base," she said. -AP

In Bangladesh 49 minority teachers forced to resign



Dhaka: At least 49 teachers belonging to minority communities were forced to resign in Bangladesh after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, according to a minority organisation in the violence-hit nation.

The Bangladesh Chhatra Oikya Parishad, the student wing of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, said this at a press conference on Saturday. The Daily Star newspaper reported.

The organisation's coordinator, Sajib Sarkar, said in the students' violence that ensued for days following the ouster and fleeing of 76-year-old prime minister

Hasina, minority teachers across the country faced physical assault, and at least 49 of them were forced to resign.

However, 19 of them were reinstated later, the report quoted him as saying.

Sarkar added that religious and ethnic minorities have also faced attacks, looting, assault on women, vandalism of temples, arson attacks on homes and businesses, and killings during this period.

Bangladesh saw several incidents of violence against members of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities following the fall of the Hasina-led Awami League government last

month.

Hasina resigned and fled to India on August 5 following unprecedented anti-government student-led protests over a controversial quota system in government jobs.

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, 84, who is leading the interim government as its Chief Advisor, met the country's Hindu community leaders at a reception he hosted for them last week.

Yunus vowed to promote interfaith harmony and said he wanted to build a Bangladesh where everyone can practice their faith without any fear and where no temple needs to be

guarded.

According to the data compiled by the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council and the Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad organisations, members of minority communities in the country faced at least 205 incidents of attacks in 52 districts since the fall of the Hasina-led government.

Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government, taking the death toll to more than 600 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July. -PTI

Anniversary of German invasion marked

Warsaw: Solemn ceremonies started early Sunday in Poland to mark the 85th anniversary of German Nazi forces invading and bombing Polish territory at the start of World War II. President Andrzej Duda attended observations in Wielun, the first civilian town targeted by German bombs in the small hours of September 1, 1939.

Meanwhile, at a monument on the Baltic Sea's Westerplatte peninsula, where a military outpost was shelled by a German warship just minutes after Wielun was attacked, Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz laid wreaths and attended a memorial roll call for fallen soldiers.

At the time, the outpost's outnumbered troops fought for seven days before surrendering to the Germans, becoming a symbol of heroism and patriotism.

In more than five years of war and brutal German occupation, Poland lost 6 million citizens or a sixth of its population, of which 3 million were Jewish.

The country also suffered huge losses to its infrastructure, industry and agriculture.

Poland's previous right-wing government demanded USD 1.3 trillion in damages from Germany, while Tusk's current Cabinet has toned the demand down to some form of compensation that could serve to strengthen the ties between the two neighbors. -AP

Ruling PML-N opposes talks with PTI



Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif

Islamabad: Amid reports of an "indirect dialogue" with the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has strongly opposed talks with their political nemesis.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday conditioned the holding of any dialogue with the PTI with an apology by party founder and former prime minister Imran Khan for allegedly staging May 9 violence last year.

The protests saw attacks on public properties including military installations following 71-year-old Khan's arrest in a corruption case, Dawn News reported.

Defence Minister Kha-

waja Asif also opposed the talks with the former ruling party, saying he is not in favour of any such dialogue.

Previously, the ruling parties extended an olive branch to the Khan-founded party several times but to no avail as the latter said he will only hold talks with those wielding real power in the country.

The ruling party leaders' statements came amid reports that the PML-N had reportedly approached Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai for holding talks with the PTI.

Achakzai, who also heads the opposition alliance Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ain-e-Pakistan, was nominated

by jailed Khan to hold talks with the ruling parties.

Responding to the report, Asif told journalists that he was not part of the "team assigned to talk to the PKMAP chairman".

When asked whether talks should be held with the former ruling party, the PML-N stalwart said: "I'm not in favour of negotiations."

Iqbal also opposed dialogue with PTI until Khan "apologises for the violence carried out on May 9".

Criticising the PTI, the minister accused the party of causing more damage than terrorists and questioned the possibility of dialogue with such individuals. Earlier on August 3, Khan said he was open to talks but only within the "ambit provisioned by the Constitution".

The cricketer-turned-politician had clarified that he asked Achakzai to negotiate with political parties.

Meanwhile, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif proposed an across-the-board dialogue involving all political parties, including the PTI.

Comoros' President Azali Assoumani waves as he is escorted by Chinese officials upon arrival at the Beijing Capital International Airport, in Beijing on Sunday.



Pic-APPTI

Plan To Vaccinate Gaza's Young Against Polio Three days, 640,000 children, 1.3M doses

Jerusalem: The UN health agency and partners are launching a campaign starting Sunday to vaccinate 640,000 Palestinian children in Gaza against polio, an ambitious effort amid a devastating war that has destroyed the territory's healthcare system.

The campaign comes after the first polio case was reported in Gaza in 25 years — a 10-month-old boy, now paralyzed in the leg. The World Health Organization says the presence of a paralysis case indicates there could be hundreds more who have been infected but aren't showing symptoms.

Most people who have polio do not experience symptoms, and those who do usually recover in a week or so. But there is no cure, and when polio causes paralysis it is usually permanent. If the paralysis affects breathing muscles, the disease can be fatal.

The vaccination effort will not be easy: Gaza's roads are largely destroyed, its hospitals badly damaged and its population

spread into isolated pockets.

WHO said Thursday that it has reached an agreement with Israel for limited pauses in the fighting to allow for the vaccination campaign to take place. Even so, such a large-scale campaign will pose major difficulties in a territory blanketed in rubble, where 90% of Palestinians are displaced.

On Saturday, Gaza's Health Ministry announced a soft start to the vaccination campaign, with a small number of children receiving doses in the southern city of Khan Younis.

How long will it take? The three-day vaccination campaign in central Gaza will begin Sunday, during a "humanitarian pause" lasting from 6 a.m. until 3 p.m., and another day can be added if needed, said Dr. Rik Peepkorn, WHO's representative in the Palestinian territories.

In coordination with Israeli authorities, the effort will then move to southern Gaza and northern Gaza

during similar pauses, he said during a news conference by video from Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

Who will receive the vaccine?

The vaccination campaign targets 640,000 children under 10, according to WHO. Each child will receive two drops of oral polio vaccine in two rounds, the second to be administered four weeks after the first.

The Gaza Health Ministry released a list of roughly 160 sites across the territory — including medical centers, hospitals and schools — where the vaccinations will take place. Most of the sites are in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah, where the population density of children under 10 is the highest.

What challenges lie ahead?

Mounting any sort of campaign that requires traversing the Gaza Strip and interacting with its medical system is bound to pose difficulties. -AP

Azerbaijan holds parliamentary election

Baku: Azerbaijan on Sunday is holding a snap parliamentary election that is the first for the country since it regained full control of a former breakaway territory in a lightning offensive last year.

Previous elections since independence from the Soviet Union have not been regarded as fully free or fair, and the vote for the Milli Mejlis parliament is not expected to bring significant changes to the body that is dominated by the New Azerbaijan party of President Ilham Aliyev.

Under the constitution, the election would have been held in November, but Aliyev decreed it to take place two months early because the capital of Baku will host United Nations climate talks known as COP29 that same month.

Aliyev and his late father, Heydar Aliyev, have led Azerbaijan with their heavy-handed rule since 1993, suppressing dissent as the country of almost 10 million people on the shores of the Caspian Sea basked in growing wealth from its huge oil and natural gas reserves. -AP

Families of Israeli hostages call for a complete halt of nation



ISRAELI OFFICERS KILLED

In a separate development Sunday, Palestinian militants killed three Israeli police officers when they opened fire on their vehicle in the West Bank, according to Israeli officials. Israel has been carrying out large-scale military raids across the occupied territory in recent days.

firmed the report and said three of the hostages — Goldberg-Polin, Yerushalmi and Gat — had been slated to be released in the

Goldberg-Polin's parents, US-born immigrants to Israel,

A HIGH-PROFILE CAMPAIGN

became perhaps the most high-profile relatives of hostages on the international stage. They met with

first phase of a cease-fire proposal discussed back in July. The official was not authorized to brief media about the negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"In the name of the state of Israel, I hold their families close to my heart and ask forgiveness," Gallant said Sunday after the remains were recovered. He later called for the Cabinet to reverse its decision.

A forum of hostage families called for a massive protest on Sunday, demanding a "complete halt of the country" to push for the implementation of a cease-fire and hostage release.

Biden, Pope Francis and others and addressed the United Nations, urging the release of all hostages. On August 21, his parents addressed a hushed hall at the Democratic National Convention — after sustained applause and chants of "bring him home".

"A deal for the return of the hostages has been on the table for over two months. Were it not for the delays, sabotage, and excuses those whose deaths we learned about this morning would likely still be alive," it said in a statement.

US President Joe Biden, who has met with Goldberg-Polin's parents, said he was "devastated and outraged".

"It is as tragic as it is reprehensible," he said. "Make no mistake, Hamas leaders will pay for these crimes. And we will keep working around the clock for a deal to secure the release of the remaining hostages." -AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Gautam Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, Raymonds

"Bangladesh does not have a fabric supply. India has got a great opportunity to take advantage of this fabric supply because we have the fabric base here. They have (only) garmenting base."

Iran's president appeals for investment

Tehran: Iran's president said Saturday his country needs some \$100 billion in foreign investment to achieve an annual target of 8 per cent economic growth up from the current rate of 4 per cent.

The remarks by Masoud Pezeshkian, who was elected in July, came in his first live televised interview by state TV.

Pezeshkian said Iran needs up to \$250 billion to reach its goal but more than half is available from domestic resources. Ex-

perts say growth in GDP of 8 per cent would reduce double-digit inflation and unemployment rates.

Hundreds of entities and people in Iran — from the central bank and government officials to drone producers and money exchangers — are already under international sanctions, many of them accused of materially supporting Iran's Revolutionary Guard and foreign militant groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis.



Pezeshkian in his interview complained about the

sanctions and said his administration plans to re-

duce inflation, which is running at more than 40 per cent annually, "if we solve our problems with neighbours and the world." He did not elaborate.

Iran's economy has struggled since 2018 after then-President Donald Trump pulled the US out of the deal to constrain Tehran's nuclear programme and imposed more sanctions. Pezeshkian said during his presidential campaign that he would try to revive the nuclear deal. -AP

EDITORIAL

Ganesha's Roadblocks

As the Ganesha festival unfolds across Mumbai and Pune, the enthusiasm of devotees and pandal workers is often marred by a predictable antagonist—poor civic infrastructure. The streets, riddled with potholes and debris, bear testimony to the chronic inefficiencies of municipal bodies that repeatedly fail to rise to the occasion. For organizers and workers of Ganesha pandals, the festival is less a celebration and more an obstacle course, navigating the pitfalls left behind by years of municipal neglect.

The recurring problem of unfilled potholes during the monsoon season is emblematic of a larger governance issue. Despite hefty municipal budgets and public assurances, the civic bodies of Mumbai and Pune consistently fall short in providing basic infrastructure maintenance. Potholes are not merely an inconvenience; they are a symbol of bureaucratic inertia and corruption. Road repair contracts are often shrouded in controversy, marred by allegations of kickbacks and substandard work that fails to withstand even a single downpour.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), responsible for maintaining Mumbai's roads, has long been exemplifying this pattern of delay and excuse despite promises by the State's politicians. Officials usually blame continuous rainfall for the disruptions in repair work.

In a system that perpetually lags behind its commitments, these half-hearted government and civic body measures translate into real challenges for Ganesha pandal workers. The lack of proper drainage and the proliferation of potholes complicate the logistics of transporting idols, erecting pandals, and ensuring the safety of devotees. Workers face delays, additional costs, and even injuries—all for want of a basic civic service that is perennially undelivered. Organizers are left to take extraordinary precautions, such as using gunny bags to cover potholes and transporting idols at a painstakingly slow pace to avoid damage—an ominous prospect given the belief that any damage to idols is considered inauspicious.

Yet, the inefficiency of civic bodies does not deter politicians from exploiting the festival for electoral gain. Ganesha pandals, which serve as focal points for community gathering, have long been viewed as fertile ground for vote banks. Leaders often make grand promises to pandal organizers, pledging funds, permits, and infrastructure support—pledges that rarely translate into lasting improvements. These commitments are tailored to coincide with the festival season, their temporary nature serving political rather than public.

In Mumbai and Pune, where open spaces are at a premium, Ganesha pandals often spill onto streets, further exacerbating traffic snarls and public inconvenience. While municipal corporations are quick to issue directives and promise repairs, the actual on-ground impact remains negligible, leaving pandal organizers to grapple with the consequences of civic apathy. Critics of the festival cite it as a public nuisance, pointing to the congestion and noise that accompany the celebrations. Yet, it is not the festival itself but the inadequate public infrastructure that exacerbates these problems. While we celebrate Lord Ganesha as the remover of obstacles, it appears that the civic hurdles erected by human hand are ones that only honest governance, not divinity, can clear.

NATIONAL INTEREST

Modi: Changed Leader or Politics as Usual?

By
Kiran D. Tare

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections delivered a jolt to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's otherwise unshakable political standing. For the first time since taking office in 2014, Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were forced to reckon with a stark electoral setback, prompting speculation about whether the Prime Minister is genuinely altering his approach or merely navigating the necessities of coalition politics. As Modi grapples with a diminished majority, his recent actions suggest a blend of flexibility and pragmatism, leaving observers to wonder whether these are signs of a new modus operandi or tactical manoeuvres in response to political headwinds.

Modi's BJP, which once rode a wave of nationalist fervour and economic promises, now finds itself in a more precarious position, needing to accommodate the interests of coalition partners and regional satraps.

Take, for instance, the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) attempt to overhaul the regulations governing Waqf Board properties. The proposed Waqf

Are PM Modi's recent statements and the BJP-led Centre's 'flexibility' on key schemes tactical adjustments driven by coalition compulsions or a transformation of the Prime Minister's leadership style?

(Amendment) Bill, introduced by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, aimed to reform Waqf board operations, correcting perceived flaws in the original Waqf Act of 1995. Rijiju assured Parliament that the amendments would respect religious freedoms while enhancing oversight and governance. However, the bill faced resistance, not only from the opposition but also from BJP allies, who advised caution and broader consultations before proceeding. The government's decision to refer the bill to a parliamentary committee for detailed discussions was a concession to coalition partners and an unusual display of deference from a leader known for his unilateral decision-making style.

This move underscored the broader challenges Modi faces in maintaining the delicate balance between his party's core agenda and the diverse demands of his coalition partners. Unlike previous years when the BJP's brute majority allowed for swift passage of contentious bills, the new political reality has forced Modi to adopt a more consultative approach, particularly on sensitive issues that risk alienating key allies. The Waqf Board amendments, a seemingly technical issue, have broader implications for the BJP's outreach to minority communities and its image as a party willing to listen.

Similarly, Modi's response to the collapse of a 35-foot statue of the Maratha king Shivaji in Maharashtra marked a rare moment of public apology from a Prime Minister typically loath to admit mistakes. Speaking in Palghar, Modi not only laid the foundation stone for a massive port project but also apologized to those offended by the statue's collapse, a symbolic gesture aimed at placating sentiments in a politically sensitive state. "For me, my colleagues, and everyone, Shivaji Maharaj is not just a king but a revered figure," Modi said. "I bow my head at his feet and apologize to my deity." This act of contrition, unusual for a leader who has often projected a resolute, even infallible image, raised questions about whether Modi is becoming more attuned to the complexities of coalition governance and regional sensitivities.

Modi's newfound pliability is also evident in the introduction of a Unified Pen-



sion Scheme (UPS), promising government employees a guaranteed 50% of their salary as pension along with inflation adjustments. This move is a direct counter to the Congress party's push for a return to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), which had gained traction among the workforce, particularly in states like Himachal Pradesh. The Congress's OPS rhetoric had struck a chord with government employees, a demographic traditionally aligned with the BJP, but the new UPS seeks to offer a sustainable alternative while bolstering the BJP's appeal ahead of crucial assembly elections in states like Haryana, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand.

Yet, despite these instances of seeming adaptability, the point remains whether Modi's actions reflect a genuine shift in leadership style or are simply pragmatic responses to political challenges. While the BJP's new pension proposal took 18 months to finalize, it appears timed to coincide with electoral necessities rather than a fundamental policy overhaul. The UPS, set to take effect from the next financial year, offers a stable retirement income for government employees, a strategic carrot to counter the Congress's promises and maintain the BJP's voter base.

Critics argue that Modi's core governing philosophy—marked by centralization, a strong personal brand, and a focus on nationalist themes—remains largely

unchanged. His concessions, they contend, are less about altering his approach and more about managing the coalition dynamics that have become critical in the wake of the 2024 electoral results. The BJP's need for allies has never been more pronounced, as demonstrated by the party's concessions on issues like the Waqf board amendments and pension schemes. Allies such as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena Party (JSP), and Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) have all signalled the limits of their support, pushing Modi to adapt, at least superficially, to their demands.

The coalition's growing assertiveness reflects a broader trend in Indian politics where regional voices are increasingly unwilling to be mere appendages to national parties. Modi's decisions henceforth will be scrutinized by allies who can sway the fate of his government.

As India heads towards the next set of elections, Modi's flexibility, whether real or perceived, will face further scrutiny. His ability to navigate coalition pressures while retaining his party's distinctive ideological stance will be crucial in shaping the BJP's electoral fortunes in forthcoming Assembly polls, especially in Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jammu & Kashmir. For now, Modi appears to be playing a careful game, one that blends the necessity of political pragmatism with the imperatives of preserving his legacy.

TURNING POINT

What if Joseph Stalin had become a priest?

By
Shoumojit Banerjee

Had Stalin embraced the priesthood, his intellect and charisma could have propelled him to prominence within the church, perhaps even as a reformer or a nationalist leader rallying against the Tsarist regime.

Imagining a world where Stalin never left the seminary, one might envision a Russia where the Bolshevik Revolution still occurs, but without the brutal efficiency and paranoid purges that Stalin brought to the Soviet leadership.

Leon Trotsky, who Stalin would later exile and hunt down, might have steered the Soviet Union towards a different kind of socialism—one less steeped in the terror and cult of personality that Stalin cultivated. There would have been no Great Purge (1936-38) and no Gulags where millions of innocent Soviet citizens perished in the name of political consolidation.

On the international stage, Stalin's absence could have dramatically altered the dynamics of World War II. A Soviet Union led by someone less ruthless than Stalin might have responded differently to Hitler's advances.

Perhaps a less iron-fisted leader might have sought peace with Nazi Germany sooner, leading to a drastically different outcome in Europe.

The Cold War, too, might have unfolded with less intensity, devoid of Stalin's paranoia-driven policies that shaped the Iron Curtain and defined the East-West divide.

The trajectory of global communism without Stalin's iron grip would likely have been less monolithic and more fragmented. Stalin's dogmatic imposition of Marxism-Leninism shaped not only Soviet



policy but also the trajectories of countless communist movements worldwide.

His influence extended from Mao's China to Castro's Cuba, setting a template for authoritarian socialism that would not have taken root without him. Stalin's spirit continues to influence authoritarian leaders in the world even today in the form of personages like Vladimir Putin.

The absence of Stalin's personality cult could have allowed for a more pluralistic form of international communism.

Until his death at age 74 in 1953, Stalin pretty much dominated world history and his geopolitical policies continue to reverberate even today. Had he remained a priest in that Georgian seminary, the world would have been spared a dictator whose butcher's bill exceeded that of Hitler's or Mao's.

STATES WATCH

A State in Perpetual Strife

Ethnic strife continues to haunt the northeastern Indian state of Manipur as evidenced by the recent torching of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson's house. On August 31, unidentified attackers set fire to the residence of Michael Lamjathang Haokip's parents in Peniel village, Churachandpur district, amid protest rallies led by Kuki-Zo tribal people demanding a separate administration. Haokip, a spokesperson for the BJP and leader of the Thadou tribe, has faced this violence three times in the past year, highlighting the persistent volatility in the state.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was quick to condemn the attack, expressing concern over the repeated targeting of individuals under the guise of peace rallies. "Such acts of provocation will not be tolerated," he declared on social media platform X, vowing accountability and action against officials who failed to prevent the arson despite prior warnings. Yet, his words may ring hollow for many in Manipur where ethnic tensions have

spiralled into a near-civil war.

The conflict, which erupted in May last year has claimed at least 226 lives and displaced around 60,000 people who re-



MANIPUR

main stranded in relief camps with scant hope of returning to their homes. At the heart of the unrest lies the long-standing friction between the Meitei community, dominant in the Imphal Valley, and various hill tribes, including the Kuki-Zo. The recent protests, organized by Kuki Inpi Manipur and the Kuki Students' Organisation, reflect the deep-seated frustrations of these groups. Demonstrators gathered in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Tengnoupal, Jiribam, and Tamenglong districts, wielding banners that called for "Kukiland," a proposed new state, as essential for peace in Manipur.

The participants also directed their ire at Chief Minister Singh, particularly after an audio clip surfaced in which he allegedly admitted to his involvement in the ethnic violence. Although the police have dismissed the audio as doctored, the damage to

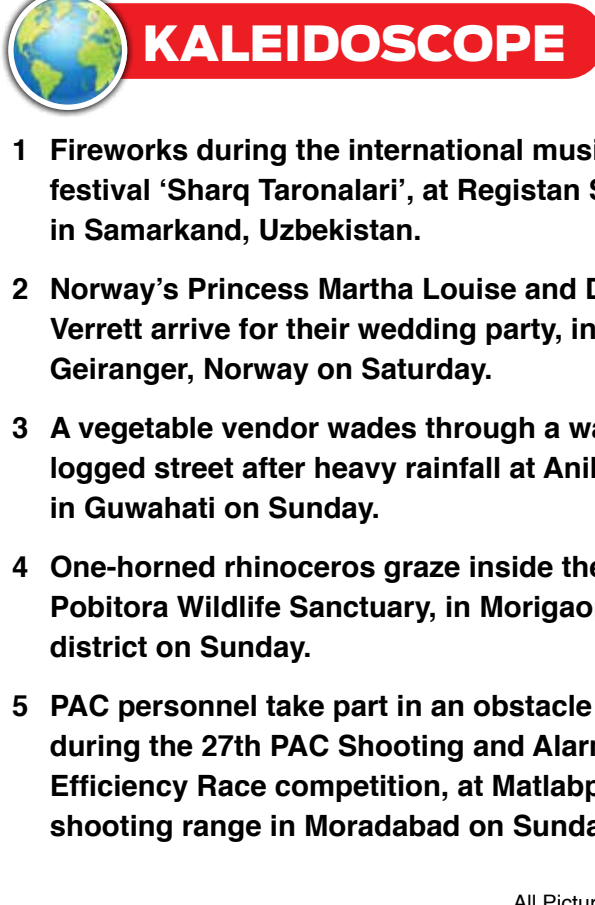
Singh's reputation was already done. Singh has consistently rejected the Kuki-Zo demand for a separate administration, arguing that "Manipur is a small state and it is not to be disintegrated." He suggested that enhanced autonomy for the region's autonomous councils, with a focus on development, could be a more viable solution.

Manipur's history is as complex as its present turmoil. The Meitei community, which comprises 53% of the population and dominates the political and economic landscape, has a long lineage tracing back over 2,000 years to the royal Ningthouja dynasty, one of the world's oldest continuous dynasties. Their kingdom, originally known as Kangleipak, was renamed Manipur—"abode of jewels"—in 1724 by King Meidingu Pamheiba after his conversion to Hinduism, a transformation that was often coercive and marked a shift from the indigenous Sanamahi faith to Vaishnavism.

While Chief Minister Singh has promised a return to peace within six months, aided by the Centre and facilitated by emissaries holding talks between Kuki-Zo and Meitei leaders, scepticism remains high.

The appointment of an emissary to facilitate talks between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities is a step in the right direction, but it could come a cropper unless backed by concrete actions and a willingness to confront the deeper causes of discord.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the issue further complicates the picture. The government's reluctance to fully engage with the crisis in Manipur raises uncomfortable questions about its commitment to addressing the challenges facing India's northeastern states.



KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Fireworks during the international music festival 'Sharq Taronalari', at Registan Square, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
- 2 Norway's Princess Martha Louise and Durek Verrett arrive for their wedding party, in Geiranger, Norway on Saturday.
- 3 A vegetable vendor wades through a water logged street after heavy rainfall at Anil Nagar, in Guwahati on Sunday.
- 4 One-horned rhinoceros graze inside the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, in Morigaon district on Sunday.
- 5 PAC personnel take part in an obstacle race during the 27th PAC Shooting and Alarm Efficiency Race competition, at Matlabpur shooting range in Moradabad on Sunday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

EXPLAINER

Why is Pope's longest Asia trip challenging too?



If any evidence were needed to underscore that Pope Francis' upcoming trip to Asia and Oceania is the longest, farthest and most challenging of his pontificate, it's that he's bringing along his secretaries to help him navigate the four-country program while keeping up with work back home. Francis will clock 32,814 kilometers (20,390 miles) by air during his Sept. 2-13 visit to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singa-

apore, far surpassing any of his previous 44 foreign trips and notching one of the longest papal trips ever, both in terms of days on the road and distances traveled. That's no small feat for a pope who turns 88 in December, uses a wheelchair, lost part of a lung to a respiratory infection as a young man and had to cancel his last foreign trip at the last minute (to Dubai in November to participate in the U.N. climate conference) on doctors' orders.

But Francis is pushing ahead with this trip, originally planned for 2020 but postponed because of COVID-19. He's bringing along his medical team of a doctor and two nurses and taking the usual health precautions on the ground. But in a novelty, he's adding his personal secretaries into the traditional Vatican delegation of cardinals, bishops and security. The long trip recalls the globetrotting travels of St. John Paul II, who

visited all four destinations during his quarter-century pontificate, though East Timor was an occupied part of Indonesia at the time of his landmark 1989 trip. By retracing John Paul's steps, Francis is reinforcing the importance that Asia has for the Catholic Church, since it's one of the few places where the church is growing in terms of baptized faithful and religious vocations. And he is highlighting that the complex region

also embodies some of his core priorities as pope - an emphasis on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, care for the environment and insistence on the spiritual component of economic development. Here is a look at the trip and some of the issues that are likely to come up, with the Vatican's relations with China ever-present in the background in a region where Beijing wields enormous influence. -AP



Indonesia
 Francis loves gestures of interfaith fraternity and harmony, and there could be no better symbol of religious tolerance at the start of his trip than the underground "Tunnel of Friendship" linking Indonesia's main Istiqlal mosque to the country's Catholic cathedral. Francis will visit the underpass in central Jakarta with the grand imam, Nasaruddin Umar, before both partake in an interfaith gathering and sign a joint declaration. Francis has made improving Christian-Muslim relations a priority, and has often used his foreign travels to promote his agenda of committing religious leaders to work for peace and tolerance, and renounce violence in God's name. Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population and has enshrined religious freedom in its constitution, officially recognizing six religions -- Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Protestantism and Catholicism. Francis is likely to highlight this tradition of religious tolerance and celebrate it as a message for the broader world. "If we are able to create a kind of collaboration between each other, that could be a great strength of the Indonesian nation," the imam said in an interview.



Papua New Guinea
 Francis was elected pope in 2013 largely on the strength of an extemporaneous speech he delivered to his fellow cardinals in which he said the Catholic Church needed to go to the "peripheries" to reach those who need God's comfort the most. When Francis travels deep into the jungles of Papua New Guinea, he will be fulfilling one of the marching orders he set out for the future pope on the eve of his own election. Few places are as remote, peripheral and poverty-wracked as Vanimo, a northern coastal town on the main island of New Guinea. There Francis will meet with missionaries from his native Argentina who are working to bring Christianity to a largely tribal people who still practice pagan traditions alongside the Catholic faith. "If we suspend our preconceptions, even in tribal cultures we can find human values close to Christian ideals," Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, who heads the Vatican's missionary evangelization office and is part of the Vatican delegation, told the Fides missionary news agency. Francis will likely reflect on the environmental threats to vulnerable and poor places like Papua New Guinea, such as deep sea mining and climate change.



East Timor
 When John Paul visited East Timor in 1989, he sought to console its overwhelmingly Catholic population who had suffered under Indonesia's brutal and bloody occupation for 15 years already. "For many years now, you have experienced destruction and death as a result of conflict; You have known what it means to be the victims of hatred and struggle," John Paul told the faithful during a seaside Mass in Tasi-Toli, near Dili. It would take another decade for the United Nations to organize a referendum on Timor's independence, after which Indonesia responded with a scorched-earth campaign that left the former Portuguese colony devastated. East Timor emerged as an independent country in 2002, but still bears the trauma and scars of an occupation that left as many as 200,000 people dead - nearly a quarter of the population. Francis will literally walk in John Paul's footsteps when he celebrates Mass on the same seaside esplanade as that 1989 liturgy, which some see as a key date in the Timorese independence movement. Another legacy that will confront Francis is that of the clergy sexual abuse scandal.



Singapore
 Francis has used several of his foreign trips to send messages to China, be they direct telegrams of greetings when he flies through Chinese airspace or more indirect gestures of esteem, friendship and fraternity to the Chinese people when nearby. Francis' visit to Singapore, where three-quarters of the population is ethnically Chinese and Mandarin is an official language, will give him yet another opportunity to reach out to Beijing as the Vatican seeks improved ties for the sake of China's estimated 12 million Catholics. "It's a faithful people, who lived through a lot and remained faithful," Francis told the Chinese province of his Jesuit order in a recent interview. The trip comes a month before the Vatican is set to renew a landmark 2018 agreement governing bishop nominations. Just last week, the Vatican reported its "satisfaction" that China had officially recognized Tianjin Bishop Melchior Shi Hongzhen, who as far as the Vatican is concerned had actually taken over as bishop in 2019. The Holy See said China's official recognition of him under civil law now was "a positive fruit of the dialogue established over the years between the Holy See and the Chinese government."



Daniil Medvedev, of Russia, runs to return a shot to Flavio Cobolli, of Italy, during the third round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York on Saturday. Pic-APPTI

US Open Bopanna-Sutjiadi enter quarterfinals

New York: India's Rohan Bopanna and his Indonesian partner Aldila Sutjiadi moved into the mixed doubles quarterfinals of the US Open here.

Bopanna and Sutjiadi, seeded eighth, beat the Australian duo of John Peers and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 0-6 7-6(5) 10-7 in a second-round match that lasted one hour and 13 minutes.

Bopanna and Sutjiadi will next play fourth seeds Matthew Ebden and Barbora Krejickova.

Bopanna and his partner had won 7-6(7) 7-6(5) against Germany's Tim Puetz and Dutch player Demi Schuurs in the opening round.

Bopanna had also moved into the third round of men's doubles along with Ebden with a 6-2 6-4 win over Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena and Federico Coria from Argentina.

-PTI

Poor water quality in Seine River Paralympic triathlon events postponed



Paris: Paralympic triathlon competitions in Paris scheduled for Sunday have been postponed because of concerns about water quality in the Seine River after heavy rainfall, organizers said.

The 11 para triathlon events are now scheduled for Monday, if upcoming water testing allows, the Paris 2024 organizing committee and World Triathlon said in a joint statement.

Rainstorms hit the French capital Friday and Saturday. Heavy rains cause wastewater and runoff to flow into the river, leading to a rise in bacteria levels including E. coli.

This is the second scheduled change for the para triathlon events. They had initially been scheduled to take place over two days, Sunday and Monday, but were moved to Sunday because of rain forecasts.

The disruption is another hiccup for the city's efforts to clean up the river for future public swimming, one of Paris' most ambitious promises ahead of hosting the Olympics and Paralympics this summer. The men's individual triathlon event during the Paris Olympics was delayed and several test swims were canceled because of high E. coli levels.

Paris Paralympics

Manisha advances to semifinal

Paris: Shuttler Manisha Ramdass kept India's medal hopes alive by progressing to the women's single semifinals in SU5 category but Mandeep Kaur and Palak Kohli were eliminated from the Paris Paralympics following contrasting defeats in their respective quarterfinals here on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Manisha, who was born with Erb's palsy which affected her right arm, had no trouble in dispatching Japan's Mamiko Toyoda 21-13 21-16 in the quarterfinal.

The second seed Indian



left-hander needed 30 minutes to down her unseeded rival.

In SU5 category, the players have impairment of the upper limbs. The impairment could be on the playing or non-playing hand.

Competing in SL3 category,

Mandeep hardly posed a challenge to Nigeria's third seed Bolaji Mariam Eniola, losing the contest 8-21 9-21 in 23 minutes.

It was the second consecutive defeat for Mandeep against Eniola, having lost to the Nigerian in the Group stage as well.

SL3 category is for players with severe lower-limb disability competing on a half-width court. Para world championship bronze medalist Palak went down fighting 19-21 15-21 to Indonesia's Khalimatus Sadiyah.

-PTI

No finals for shooters

Chateauroux: Indian shooters Avani Lekhara finished 11th while Sidhartha Babu ended 28th and were unable to make the final of the mixed 10m air rifle prone (SH1) event at the Paralympic Games here on Sunday.

In the mixed 10m air rifle prone (SH2) qualification, Sriharsha Devaraddi Ramakrishna ended in 26th place with a total score of 630.2.

In the Paralympics mixed event, both men and women compete on the line against each other.

Saptak Talwar in sight of Top-10 finish

Jakarta: Saptak Talwar was in sight of his first Top-10 finish on the Asian Tour after carding 3-under 68 to be placed tied-13th in the Mandiri Indonesia Open here.

Talwar, who plays regularly on the PGTI, is now 9-under 204 for three rounds.

Among the other Indians, Veer Ahlawat (69) was T-23, Khalin Joshi (70) was T-41, SSP Chawrasia (73) was T-48 and Gaganjeet Bhullar (70) was T-57. Indian-American Manav Shah, a winner on the PGA Tour



Latin American, was also T-41.

Australian Aaron

Wilkin kept his hopes alive of clinching his maiden title on the Asian

-PTI



CARROM CRAZE

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

STRATEGIC THINKER:

PRAKASH GAIKWAD

Prakash Gaikwad may have born in Nagpur and have honed his skills there, but he achieved his career goals playing in Pune. He is a highly acclaimed Indian carrom player who has made a significant impact on the sport. With his exceptional skills and dedication, he has secured numerous titles and accolades, cementing his position as one of the best carrom players in the world. He started his fate and fondness playing with his brother in early childhood, but excelled very soon, drawing accolades from peer groups. He became Junior Vidarbha Champion and played first national level match in 1987 and in 1993, Gaikwad found a job in LIC under sports quota. He played his first ever international level match in 1999 in Malaysia bagging bronze medal. Gaikwad's success can be attributed to his mastery of the game, strategic thinking, and mental toughness.

Winner of ICF and Asian Championship

Year 2008 proved to be a landmark year for Prakash Gaikwad when



he emerged as Champion in the 5th International Carrom Federation (ICF) in 2008. Moreover, he also bagged the championship in Maldives in 2011 in the Asian Championship games.

Non-stop participation

Prakash is possibly the only player, who has been taking part in the National Championship for the last 37 years, without fail. Though Gaikwad has never won

any national championship, still he has been an inspiration to many aspiring carrom players, and his achievements have contributed significantly to the growth and popularity of the sport in India. Gaikwad's journey is a testament to his hard work, national championship. He continues to be a dominant force in the carrom world, and his achievements serve as a motivation for future generations of players.

Theegala calls penalty on himself

Atlanta (USA): Indian-American golfer Sahith Theegala moved up one more place, into third spot, at the Tour Championship here despite calling a two-shot penalty on himself in the third round.

As world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler birdied four of his last five holes in the third round for a 5-under 66, which brought him closer to finishing the season with a USD25 million FedExCup prize, the conversation centred around Theegala who called a two-shot penalty on himself for touching the sand on the third with his club while coming out of the bunker.

The video was not clear but Theegala decided to inform the officials about the infraction, and his partner turned into a double bogey. Had the Indian-American not informed the officials, he could have been two shots closer to the golfers ahead of him.

Asian body votes in favour of IBA

Boxing's future hangs in balance

Al Ain (UAE): Boxing's already uncertain Olympic future was thrown into further jeopardy after the sport's Asian governing body voted against leaving the suspended International Boxing Association (IBA) to join the rival association.

The polling was held via a secret ballot with 21 countries voting in favour of continuing with IBA, while 14 cast their ballot in favour of joining World Boxing, the new body constituted to run the affairs of the sport. There was one invalid vote.

Besides India, which participated as an observer, the other countries whose names figured on the roll call included, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Chinese Taipei, Timor Leste, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Pal-

estine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen.

The IBA has been at loggerheads with the IOC, with the latter managing the Olympics qualification process for the Tokyo and Paris Games.



With the Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) refusing to join World Boxing, which is being pushed as an alternate to IBA, the future of the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games hangs in a balance.

Following the voting, IBA hit out at World Boxing, saying the new body lacked the wherewithal to organise major international events.

Where does India stand?

The Boxing Federation of India had in May agreed to become a member of World Boxing. The membership application was approved by the BFI's General Assembly.

Senior BFI office-bearers had also met with World Boxing president and secretary-general to discuss ways in which India could support the international federation in growing its membership base in Asia.

IBA also hit out at some of the national federations that had voted against it during the secret ballot. "Politically motivated intentions to join World Boxing backed by some members are reckless.

-PTI



IRL-DRIVER A racers during practice at the Formula 4 night street car race, in Chennai on Saturday. Pic-APPTI