

THE PERFECT VOICE



Thanekars feel house arrest
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Army being roped in to plug breaches in AP
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Neeraj qualifies for finale
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Vinesh, Bajrang start political innings

Congress likely to field them in Haryana polls

New Delhi: Olympians Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against then WFI chief and former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, entered the political arena on Friday by joining the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off".

Phogat and Punia met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence and later joined the party at the AICC headquarters in the presence of Congress general secretary in-charge organisation KC Venugopal.

Both Phogat and Punia or at least one are set to contest the assembly polls in Haryana on a Congress ticket, the sources said.

The Julana seat is being considered for Phogat, they added. Venugopal claimed that Phogat received a showcase notice from the Railways after she met Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Party sources said the notice talked about violating service



rules by meeting political leaders.

Venugopal asked if it was a crime to meet the leader of the opposition and urged the Railway authorities to relieve Phogat and not "play politics".

Without elaborating, Venugopal claimed Punia had also got a notice.

On whether Phogat and Punia would contest the assembly polls, Venugopal said the party's Central Election Committee would decide on that.

After joining the party, Phogat said the BJP was

I could have quit wrestling at Jantar Mantar and people also thought so. The BJP IT Cell propagated that we were a spent force and indulging in politics. They said I didn't want to play in the nationals, I played the nationals; they said she did not want to give trials, I gave trials; they said she does not want to fight at the Olympic level, I did that and reached the finals. Unfortunately, God had other plans.

Vinesh Phogat

supporting Singh while the Congress supported the protesting wrestlers when they "were being dragged on the roads" in Delhi.

I thank the people of the country and the media, you supported me throughout my wrestling journey. I thank the Congress party, it is said tough times tell you about who is with you. When we were dragged on the roads, all parties except the BJP stood with us and understood our pain and tears.

Vinesh Phogat

Punia and Phogat were part of the protest over sexual harassment allegations against former BJP MP and then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Singh in 2023.

-PTI

No talks with Pakistan until terrorism ceases

Jammu: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said India is not in favour of talks with Pakistan until terrorism ceases, emphasizing that "talks and bombs cannot go together".

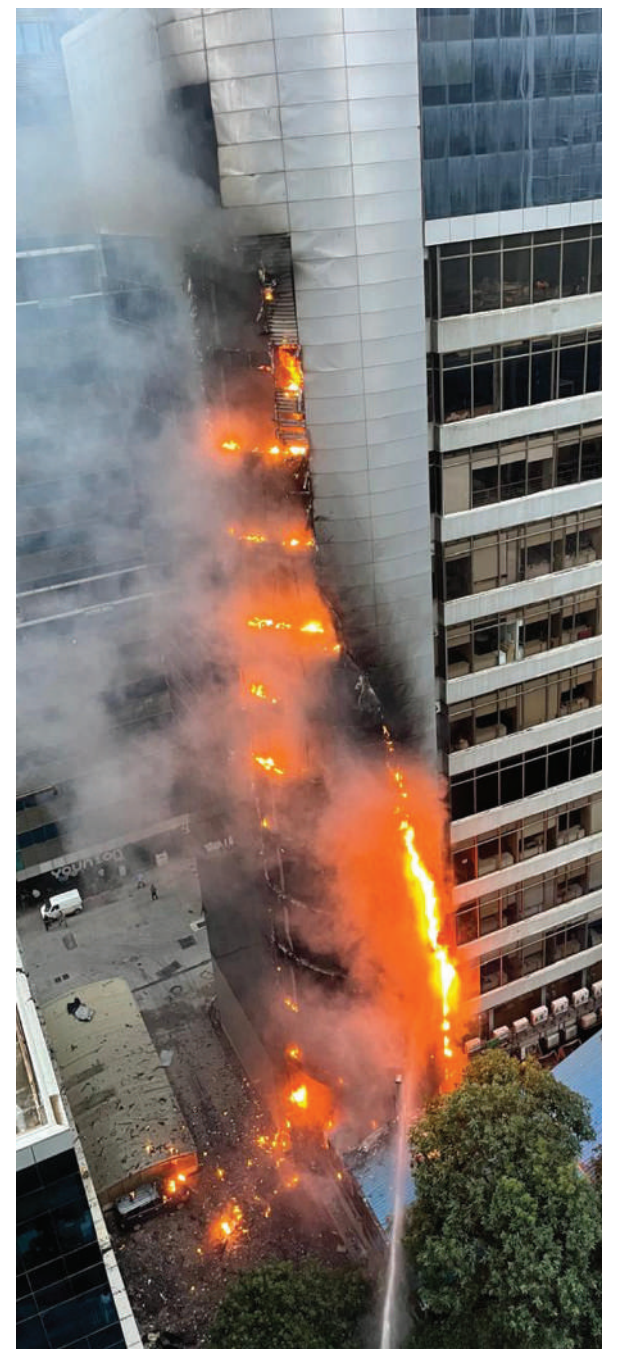
Shah made these remarks while releasing the BJP's manifesto for Jammu and Kashmir, dismissing any possibility of dialogue with Pakistan amidst the ongoing terrorist activities.

"We are not in favour of talks with Pakistan unless and until terrorism does not end. But we will definitely talk to the youth of Kashmir," he told reporters here.

Shah reiterated this stance when addressing questions about demands from the political parties to resume talks with Pakistan and restore cross LoC trade, saying, "Unless terrorism does not come to an end and a trade-terror ecosystem is formed, we cannot agree with it."

Replying to a question about the demand of the National Conference (NC) and the Congress about restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, he said "the demand is to mislead the people".

-PTI



Smoke and flame out after a fire broke out at Times Tower building in Kamala Mill compound in Mumbai on Friday. Pic: PTI

HC transfers Ghosalkar case to CBI

The court cites lapses and loose ends

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday said there were certain lapses and loose ends in the police probe into the murder of former Shiv Sena (UBT) corporator Abhishek Ghosalkar and transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

A division bench headed by Justice Revati Mohite Dere allowed a plea filed by Ghosalkar's wife, Tejasvee Ghosalkar, which raised concerns over the investigation carried out by Mumbai police and sought a CBI probe.

The bench said the police had not probed certain angles of the case and this would lead to miscarriage of justice.

The court directed the CBI's zonal director to appoint an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police from the IPS cadre to investigate the said case, adding that papers of investigation should be handed over to the central probe agency at

the earliest and in any event within two weeks.

It was a cold-blooded murder captured live, an incident which shook the conscience of one and all, the HC said.

Ghosalkar was shot dead by local businessman Mauris Noronha at the former's Borivali office during a Facebook Live session on February 8. Noronha shot himself dead soon after.

"In the present case what surfaces is that the mystery surrounding the death of deceased Abhishek continues," the bench said.

Although the police have claimed they have put all its best efforts and has investigated all angles, the ground reality appears otherwise, the HC bench observed.

Even innocent lapses in the investigation cannot be allowed as it would ultimately result in denial of a fair and impartial probe, leading to miscarriage of



justice, the court said, adding this cannot be permitted.

"We feel that some angles have not been investigated or looked into and, hence, deeper investigation needs to be done. We have gone through the investigation carried out and find that there are some loose ends/areas which have not been examined by the police," the HC said.

"It was a cold-blooded murder of an ex-corporator of the area. The said killing was seen live on Facebook, which was aired from Mauris Noronha's office," the bench said.

"We may note that although the deceased belonged to a particular po-

The maze of suspicious circumstances has not been pierced and solved and most importantly, some vital aspects which ought to have been investigated have not been investigated. If all angles of a case are not examined as in the present case, it would lead to travesty of justice.

Bombay High Court

litical party, the petitioner has not particularly alleged that some other political party was involved in the gruesome act," HC said.

Praveen Kumar strikes gold in high jump

Paris: India's Praveen Kumar dazzled with a record-breaking performance in the men's high jump T64 event, adding a Paralympic gold to his Tokyo Games silver here on Friday.

The 21-year-old from Noida, who was born with a short leg, smashed the Asian record with a best jump of 2.08m in the six-men field to finish on top of the podium.

India jumped to the 14th spot in the pecking order after Praveen's win.

The country has so far won six gold, nine silver and 11 bronze medals to achieve its best-ever haul at a single edition of the Paralympic Games.

India surpassed its Tokyo Games gold medal tally after Praveen's triumph in the men's high jump T64 event. At the Tokyo Paralympics, India had won five gold, six silver, and eight bronze medals.

-PTI

Last Metro extended

Mumbai: Operators of all three Metro lines in the city have decided to extend the time of the last service for the Ganesh festival that starts from Saturday.

The last service for Ghatkopar from Versova will depart at 12.10 am instead

of 11.20 pm, and that from Ghatkopar to Versova at 12.40 am instead of 11.45 pm. MMMOCL, announced that the last metro service from both Andheri West and Gundavali terminals will be extended by half an hour.

NOTICE

The office of 'The Perfect Voice' will remain closed on Saturday, September 7 on an account of Ganesh Chaturthi. The issue will not be published on Sunday, September 8.

-Editor

Anant Ambani in Lalbaug Cha Raja trust

The rich and the famous bring in high profile attention and big bucks to Ganeshotsav

By Aditi Pai

Mumbai: The glitzy pandals are set up, the idols are making way to their home for the next 10 days and devotees are gearing up of festivities from Saturday. And in the midst of religious and celebratory fervour, the Lalbaugcha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal has made news by appointing Anant Ambani to the trust that manages what is believed to be one of the most high-profile Ganesh mandals in Mumbai.

Insiders say that appointing high profile per-

sonalities has multiple benefits—the trustees donate large amounts of money to the mandal, their presence attracts and draws other noted people or celebrities, whose social media posts make their followers want to visit the same mandal. A member of another Ganesh mandal, who did not want to be named, says: "It's a sure-shot way of attaining attention and money. A high-profile trustee like Ambani will bring in a lot of donations to the trust and their other celebrity friends and acquaintances will also come there and make big




donations. Besides, even earlier, the family has made big contributions to the Lalbaug trust," he says.

Over the last few years, Ganesh mandals have been engaged in a battle of one upmanship—one claims to be wealthiest with the biggest jewels, another is the highest insured one while another takes pride in the


celebrity attendance at the pandal. Some other releases information on the large donations received. "It's a marketing tactic. Even temples have used celebrity presence, high profile trustees and stories of wish fulfilment to garner more footfalls and followers. Prominent trustees ensure heavy footfalls and big donations," says the person who was quoted earlier.

Another businessman to make it to the board of a Ganesh mandal and get involved in religious-cultural events is the Pune-based Punit Balan who recently

made a donation of Rs 3 crore to "strengthen Ganesh mandals". A film producer, owner of sports league teams and president of the Punit Balan Group, he is hailed as a young entrepreneur who was, last year, appointed as the trust celebration chief of the Shrimant Bhausaheb Rangari Ganpati Mandal in Pune. Full-page advertisements in all leading newspapers announced this appointment. This year, he gathered 35 Ganesh mandals to celebrate dahi handi together, in yet another cultural-religious gathering.



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Cracks widen in Mahayuti



By Correspondent

Mumbai: All is not well in ruling Mahayuti. The cracks have widened and left open in full public view. Both Shiv Sena and NCP have hardened their stance and are in no mood to take a backseat.

Continuing its tirade, on Friday Water Supply and Cleanliness Minister Gulabrao Patil lambasted NCP chief and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar once again. "I have never seen a worthless department like Finance. Ten times my file was turned down with a negative remark. But with non-stop follow-up from my side, we finally got the nod and the job was done," Patil stated. The furious minister, though didn't take any name during his speech however, his remarks were directly pointed towards Ajit Pawar who is at the helm of the affairs of Finance portfolio.

The Hand Pump and Power Pump Repair and Maintenance Employees Association have organised a felicitation ceremony in Jalgaon on Friday. While speaking at the event Patil took this dig at NCP leader and even emphasized that the de-

partment is work shrudder (Kam Chukkar).

First it was Health Minister Tanaji Sawant who put his foot-in-the-mouth and came down heavily on the NCP. He had said that he was a true Shiv Sainik who did not like sharing stage or cabinet meeting space with Congress and NCP leaders. He further complicated things by stating that he feels like vomiting when he sits close to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in the meetings.

Upset NCP was looking for an opportunity and they got short arm with



Ladki Bahin Yojana. Almost in a

week's time after Sena Minister poured scorn on the NCP, Ajit Pawar's party has hit back, once again bringing to the fore the internal war of the Mahayuti. Putting the Shiv Sena into shade, the NCP has changed the name of the state government's Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana in its advertisement. The party removed the word 'Mukhya Mantri' in the advertisement and instead called it 'Ajitdada's Ladki Bahin Yojana'.

NCP's move virtually created flutter in the political circle pushing Shiv Sena towards the wall. This issue was even raised in the cabinet meeting by Sena Ministers. Against this backdrop it was Shiv Sena's turn now. On Friday Minister Gulabrao Patil did his best to target the NCP. He even stood by his remarks afterwards. Soon after the function at Jalgaon, the media approached him and Patil repeated the same remarks.

Fissures have emerged in the two alliance partners. After the vomit remarks, the chief minister's silence and refusal to reprimand Sawant further angered the NCP. As both the sides are in action mode, the volley of charges are likely to continue.

Row exposed government: Supriya Sule

NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule on Friday said the squabbling among the ruling Mahayuti allies in Maharashtra over taking credit for the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme was unfortunate, and it has exposed the real intentions of the government.

The Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP government began to feel affection for "Bahin" (sisters/women) only after facing a debacle in the Lok Sabha elections, she claimed, talking to reporters here.



Sule's estranged cousin and Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar is a deputy Chief Minister.

"Ladki Bahin scheme was not brought in for women's empowerment, but for selfish political interests," the Baramati MP said.

"It is unfortunate that hard-working and self-respecting women are being misled into feeling that they should trust this government. Ministers are fighting with each other to claim credit. This is an insult to the brother-sister relations," she said.

Maharashtra got 52 pc of country's total FDI

Mumbai: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said 52 per cent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that came into the country in the first quarter of this fiscal headed towards the state.

"Between April and June this year, India received Rs 1,34,959 crore as FDI. Of this, Maharashtra secured Rs 70,795 crore, or 52.46 per cent. This amount surpasses the combined FDI received by several states, including Karnataka, Delhi, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan," Fadnavis told reporters.

Karnataka got FDI of Rs 19,059 and stood in second place, followed by Rs 10,788 crore for Delhi, Rs 9,023 crore for Telangana, Rs 8,508 crore for Gujarat, Rs 8,325 crore for Tamil Nadu, Rs 5,818 crore for Haryana, Rs 370 crore for Uttar Pradesh and Rs 311 crore for Rajasthan.

"From 2014 to 2019, during our tenure, Maharashtra got Rs 3,62,161 crore in Foreign Direct Investment. Over the past two years, the state has secured an additional Rs 3,14,318 crore in investments. While the initial figures for the first quarter of the current financial year are promising, we anticipate further growth once the data for the second quarter is released," the senior BJP leader asserted.

In 2022-23, Maharashtra saw foreign investment of Rs 1,18,422 crore, which grew to Rs 1,25,101 crore in the subsequent fiscal year, he said.

Mahayuti will together decide CM face after polls



By Correspondent

Nagpur: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said the state's three ruling parties - BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP - will together decide the Mahayuti's chief ministerial face, and asserted that there is no confusion in the ruling alliance over the issue.

He said the Mahayuti alliance will face the upcoming Maharashtra assembly polls under the leadership of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Fadnavis was speaking to reporters in Nagpur on the sidelines of a programme.

Replying to a query on whether the CM face in Maharashtra will be decided before or after the elections, he said, "There is no reason to create unnecessary confusion. In Mahayuti, CM Eknath Shinde is the head of the government and we are going to polls under his leadership."

The former chief minister said he does not have the right to decide the chief ministerial face.

"BJP's parliamentary board and leaders of two other ruling parties - CM Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led NCP - will together take a decision on this matter. Only they can decide whether to do it (choose

BJP's top 21

Nagpur: All leaders of the BJP from Maharashtra along with Union minister Nitin Gadkari will take part in the campaign for the upcoming assembly polls, the party's state unit chief Chandrashekar Bawankule said on Friday.

Talking to reporters about the BJP's assembly poll plan, he also said 21 leaders will be part of various committees across Maharashtra under Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, adding that responsibilities have been assigned.

"The BJP's plan for the Mahayuti has management up to the booth level. Union ministers Bhupender Yadav and Ashwini Vaishnav will also be involved in poll campaigning in Maharashtra. We requested Nitin Gadkari ji to give full time for election campaigning and he agreed," Bawankule said.

the CM candidate) now or later. I don't have a right to speak about it. But there is no confusion," Fadnavis said.

CRIME WATCH

Murder case registered

Thane: Police in Maharashtra's Thane district have registered a murder case after the body of a man was found on a roadside, an official said on Friday.

A passerby alerted the police after spotting the body in the Ghodpada locality of Bhiwandi on Thursday, he said.

It appears the man, aged around 40, was strangled, the official said. The body has been sent for post-mortem.

Man held for harassing girl

Thane: The Thane Police have arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly sexually harassing a teenage girl and manhandling her parents, an official said on Friday.

Accused Sagar Wagh had been stalking the 14-year-old girl since July, despite her parents asking him to stay away from their daughter.

On Thursday, Wagh entered the girl's house in the Bhiwandi area when she was alone and allegedly touched her inappropriately.

When the girl's parents went to Wagh's home to inform his family about the crime, he pushed them, the police official said.

Based on a complaint by the teen's mother, police booked Wagh for sexual harassment, stalking and voluntarily causing hurt under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, said senior inspector Bharat Kamath of the Narpoli police station.

Woman booked for cheating

Thane: A case has been registered against a 38-year-old woman from Thane who allegedly duped her friend of Rs 8.17 lakh on the pretext of claiming her deceased father's life insurance and promising a cut from the money, police said on Friday. Based on a complaint, the police on Wednesday registered a case under section 420 (cheating) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code against the accused, Sonia Suresh Nair, at Vishnunagar police station in Dombivili, an official said.

Man beaten suspecting cattle transporter

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: A man was assaulted in Maharashtra's Beed city in the early hours of Friday allegedly by five persons who suspected he was a cattle transporter, a police official said.

At around 12:15am, victim Mohammad Hazek (28) took the photograph of a cow that was hit and injured by a four-wheeler and sent it to his fiancée over phone, the official said.

"While walking back home, five men hit him with sticks after accusing him of being a cattle transporter. They thought so because he had taken a photograph of the injured cow. On his complaint, four persons identified as Mandar Deshpande (30), Omkar Lande (23), Anil Ghodke (26) and Rohit Lolge were arrested," the Beed city police station official said.

They have been charged under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for wrongful restraint, voluntarily causing hurt and other offences, the official added.

-PTI

Nod to semiconductor, EV projects

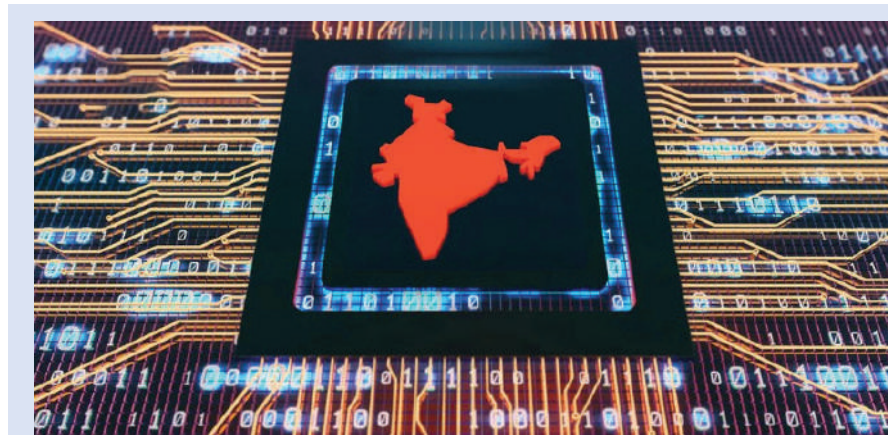
Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has given approval to four high technology mega projects, which entail a cumulative investment of Rs 1.17 lakh crore and with a potential of creating 29,000 jobs, in Marathwada, Vidarbha, Pune and Panvel near Mumbai.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the cabinet sub-committee of the industries department on Thursday evening.

The projects would result in investment in sectors like semiconductors and electric vehicle manufacturing, a statement from the Chief Minister's office (CMO) said on Friday, adding it would help Maharashtra get the identity of a leader state in the EV sector.

These projects would help develop a strong local supply chain and give major boost to technical innovation, research and development, CM Shinde said.

"It would help micro-small and medium industry stakeholders and also enable the local labour force to get training and skill development opportunities, which would raise employability and

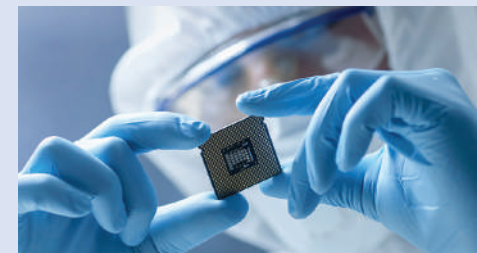


Project: Mega semiconductor manufacturing
Location: Panvel
Investors: Adani Group and Tower Semiconductor company
Investment: Rs 58,763 crore in first phase and Rs 25,184 crore in second phase.
Employment: 15,000

Project: A electric vehicle manufacturing
Location: Pune
Investors: Skoda Auto Volkswagen India
Investment: Rs 12,000 crore
Employment: 1,000

the skill bar needed for upcoming technologies," he said.

"Under the textile policy, Raymond Luxury Cottons would set up a mega-



Project: Mega electric vehicle manufacturing
Location: Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar
Investors: Toyota Kirloskar Motor Company.
Investment: Rs 21,273 crore
Employment: 12,000

project at Amravati for manufacturing products through spinning, yarn dyeing, weaving jute, weaving cotton, jute, mesta and cotton. This project

would come up at Nandgaon Peth MIDC with an investment of Rs 188 crore. It would generate employment for 550 persons," the CMO statement said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ramesh Chennithala, Leader, Congress

"Two murders were committed in Pune within three days. Inflation has spiralled out of control, making it difficult for people to celebrate festivals. People are greatly distressed, but the Mahayuti government is busy indulging in scams and collecting money."

Teen killed hit by Army vehicle

Nagpur: An 18-year-old boy died after the two-wheeler on which he was riding pillion was hit by an Army quick reaction team (QRT) vehicle in the cantonment area in Nagpur's Kamptee, a police official said on Friday.

The incident took place at Taof Chowk at 8pm on Wednesday, the Juni Kamptee police station official said. "Kunal Nanda Kulsunge (18) died after falling off the two-wheeler and sustaining severe head injuries. A case was registered against the QRT vehicle's driver.

Chiefs of over a thousand churches pray for Maharashtra

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Over a thousand churches across the state came together to pray for Maharashtra at the Inter-denominational Christian conference in Navi Mumbai on Friday, the organizers have said.

A number of religious heads addressed around 8,000 delegates who attended the day-long conference organized by Newlife Fellowship Association where they prayed for a stable government in Maharashtra



and urged the god almighty to shower his blessings upon the state.

"All christians of Maharashtra have come together to pray for Maharashtra.

We see there are several problems have been unleashed like the increasing crimes, farmers' suicides, instability etc. We want that to be done away with and hence we are praying to the god. In Christianity the prayers are made for a person. Hence, we prayed for Chief Minister Eknath Shinde," said Dr Ambarish Patnigire, former deputy municipal commissioner of Navi Mumbai and Chairman of the New Life Fellowship Association that organized the convention.

Teacher held for rape

Mumbai: A 30-year-old Arabic teacher has been arrested in Maharashtra's Beed city for allegedly raping an 11-year-old girl who attended his tuition, police said.

The accused (name not disclosed to protect the victim's identity) taught Urdu and Arabic to children at his home, said inspector A K Mudliyar of Pethbeed police station.

He allegedly raped the girl many times after other students left and also subjected her to unnatural sex, the official told PTI.

Thane cars feel house arrest

Aggrieved people meet CM Shinde, slam authorities for their failure to curb menace

Ghodbunder Road Jam

By Anand Mishra

Thane: Traffic woes in the Thane city kept sending nightmares to the thousands of the public on the fourth straight day as most of the roads, including the most crucial and busiest road of the city, Ghodbunder Road was seen having long and serpentine queues on the roads since the morning. Adding fuel to the fire, a small mishap put authorities into a tizzy when state transport operated but collided with a divider at Manpada road early in the morning.

Potentially a big causality was averted by the driver, that could have led to further jam for the whole day. Although the traffic police cleared the road on war-footing efforts, it reignited the ordeal that lakhs of motorists are facing since the last three days.

Affected people have upped their demand to the authorities, besides lashing out at politicians for showing unwillingness to solve the issues. They said that despite the ban of heavy vehicles in day time, traffic violations are on the rise forcing them to feel as 'arrested in house'. They are blocking the internal roads also, besides, absence of proper indicators and reflectors are leading to such jams. Those who want to catch Western Railway trains are the worst affected people and prefer local



Additional traffic wardens

Officials from various departments held a meeting in Thane on Friday to find solutions to severe traffic woes on Ghodbunder Road, the move coming a day after irate citizens protested.

In the meeting, Thane civic chief Saurabh Rao said the traffic situation would improve soon. The meeting was attended by officials of the police, metro rail, MMRDA, PWD, representatives of citizen groups as well as local

MLA Pratap Sarnaik.

Rao said short-term and long-term measures are being implemented, including deployment of 100 additional traffic wardens to help police in areas like Kapurbawdi and Gaimukh.

These wardens will be deployed from 6 am to 10 am and then again between 5 pm and 9 pm, while improvements to lane marking, direction indicators and lighting will be done, he said in the meeting.

Rao also directed officials to ensure roads and flyovers are pot-holed free before Anant Chaturdashi on September 17.

Rao said TMC will take up all responsibilities of Ghodbunder Road and bring relief to people soon.

An official said executive engineer Sanjay Kadam has been appointed as the nodal officer to coordinate with citizens and implement the necessary changes.

trains to reach Dadar or Borivali stations.

CM assures assistance

Aggrieved Thane commuters met Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday night around 10 pm and apprised him of the hardships

faced by lakhs of motorists for the last three days and requested him to resolve the issues. Initially, a big delegation was planning to meet Shinde at his house over the Ghodbunder road traffic issue, but the police allowed five people to meet.

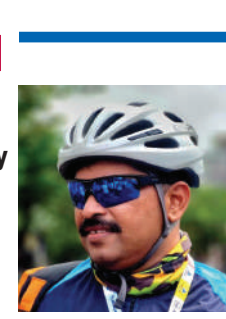
According to Gopal Sabe Patil, who is the country head of a biotech company and was one of the delegates, CM assured us to put every effort into place to solve the issue and directed the TMC officials to have a meeting with the representative of

the affected people on urgent basis.

Stupid planning to blame

Speaking to The Perfect Voice, Gopal Sabe Patil attributed this torment to the stupid and botched up plan-

“As many as 850 members of ‘Ghodbunder Cyclist Club’ have stalled our daily cycling routine of cycling due to traffic woes for the last 4 days. Traffic issues are bigger than cycling, so we have decided that roads remain possibly free for office goers first.”



Gopal Sabe Patil, Founder president of Ghodbunder Cyclist

“No strategy and planning in development plans, lacking of synchronization in various government/execution agencies is another reason. There are many more projects are under planning on and around GB road which are under approval or already approved. No single agency to get all these on one table and make an execution plan.”

Vinayak Pande, a resident



ning by the authorities. He said, “Undoubtedly, rampant traffic violations and mishaps are to be blamed for this menace, but several works have been started simultaneously in the city, which has given rise to this never-ending nightmare. Despite Metro construction works in progress, service roads have been dug up for the pipeline, besides the flyover at Bhayanderpada has been closed. Even ambulances are finding no ways and ending up in endless jams.”

#Justice For Ghodbunder Road launched

Baffled people took to social media and started alerting as well as launching a campaign with a hashtag #JusticeForGhodbunderRoad as the day broke on Friday. “Ghodbunder road is in the worst condition ever. Just to cover 2 km its required 60. It's everyday situation. These heavy vehicles are not moving, so they are just honking,” posted Sandeep Sharma at X tagging @

mieknathshinde among others.

Ankit Kaushik while tagging @ThaneCityPolice posted that heavy traffic build up on Ghodbunder... All heavy Trucks choking it. Sharing a Google Map pic that showed all red lines along the route, he further posted, “It has become worse. Please help clear this.” Residents of Lodha Splendor, Rosa Bella, Kanchar Pushp, Vijay Vilas society are among the worst hit people owing to the killer jam.

Firing accused booked for attempt to murder

By Correspondent

Thane: The railway police in Maharashtra's Thane district have registered an attempt-to-murder case against a 25-year-old man after he allegedly opened fire at two persons at Badlapur station and injured one of them, an official said on Friday.

The incident, which police said was the fallout of business rivalry, took place at platform number 1 at around 6 pm on Thursday when the suburban station on the Central Railway route was chock-a-block with commuters.

Senior Inspector Pandhari Kande of the Kalyan GRP (Government Railway Police) said an FIR has been registered against the arrested accused Vikas Nana Pagare for attempt to murder under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and under the Arms Act.

Police are also trying to find out if more people were involved in the shooting besides Pagare.

The incident was captured on cameras and a video of it went viral on



social media within minutes.

After opening fire, Pagare ran towards railway tracks in his attempt to flee, but he was chased and pinned down by policemen on duty with the help of some commuters.

Police identified the injured person as Shankar Sansare, while the second man targeted by Pagare escaped unhurt, but his identity was not revealed.

Sansare was rushed to a local hospital, where he

was treated for gunshot wounds, said the GRP.

The assailant and also the duo he targeted have criminal records and the firing was linked to professional rivalry over TV cable business between them in the area, said the police, citing preliminary probe.

Initially, there was a fight between Pagare and the duo outside the railway station. As Sansare ran inside the station, the gunman followed him and fired at him and the other per-

son accompanying him from his revolver, they said.

The GRP have sent the revolver and pellets for forensic analysis.

Badlapur was under the spotlight last month after two kindergarten girls were allegedly sexually assaulted by a male attendant at a private school there. The incident triggered a massive protest in the town, with thousands of people blocking trains at Badlapur station on August 20.

15,000 cops to be on streets

Mumbai: Around 15,000 police personnel besides senior officials will be deployed for security in Mumbai during the ten-day Ganesh festival which will start from Saturday.

As many as 32 Deputy Commissioners of Police, 45 Assistant Commissioners, 2,435 officials, 12,420 constables, home guards and personnel of the State Reserve Police Force, Rapid Action Force and Riot Control Unit will be on the streets, said an official here.

People should not touch suspicious-looking things, and contact police on numbers 100 or 112.



A Ganesha idol at Abhyuday Nagar, Mumbai on Friday. This time the idol has been installed in a replica of a palace. Pic: Anil Panaskar

Kuwaiti boat handed over to its owner

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Seven months after a Kuwaiti boat was seized when three men on board reached Mumbai undetected, giving a scare to security agencies, the vessel has been handed over to its owner after completion of legal formalities, officials have said.

The incident occurred on February 6 when three men hailing from Tamil Nadu arrived in Mumbai on a boat which remained

undetected all the way from Kuwait, raising questions about maritime security which was overhauled after Mumbai faced a major sea-borne terror attack in November 2008, a strike plotted and directed from Pakistan.

The Kuwaiti boat was spotted in the Arabian Sea near Sassoon Dock in south Mumbai and the three men on board the vessel were apprehended by police. Cops later placed the trio under arrest for entering illegally into In-

dia and seized the boat. Seven months after the incident, the boat, which was seized by police as part of the investigation into the case, was handed over to its owner Abdullah Sharahit on Thursday, an official said.

Sharahit came to Mumbai and went to the Colaba police station along with two lawyers and took custody of the boat after fulfilling legal formalities, he said.

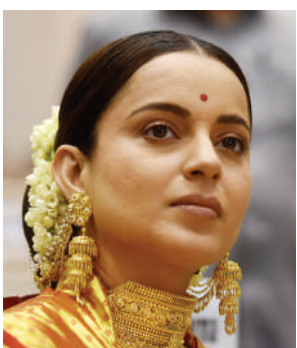
The incident had sparked serious concerns

about maritime security post the 26/11 terror attack on Mumbai.

The three men had reached Mumbai shores from Kuwait, where they were employed, by sailing in the boat for more than 10 days. The trio reached the metropolis by navigating the route with the help of a GPS device.

According to media reports from that time, the trio fled the Gulf country as they faced torture and exploitation by their employer.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Kangana Ranaut, Actor-MP

“With a heavy heart I announce that my directorial ‘Emergency’ has been postponed, we are still waiting for the certification from censor board, new release date will be announced soon, thanks for your understanding and patience.”

Singapore judges share ceremonial benches at HC

Mumbai: In a first, three judges from Singapore's Supreme Court, including its Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, were part of Bombay High Court benches on Friday.

Chief Justice Menon of Singapore's Supreme Court shared a Ceremonial Bench with Bombay HC's Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya as well as Justices G.S. Kulkarni and Firdosh Pooniwalla in the historic central courtroom.

The bench briefly heard petitions challenging reser-



vation granted to the Marathi community in Maharashtra.

Justice Ramesh Kannan of Singapore's apex court shared the bench with Justices Nitin Jamdar and

M.M. Sathaye, while Justice Andre Francis Maniam from that nation shared the Ceremonial Bench with HC Justices K.R. Shriram and Jitendra Jain. Welcoming Singapore's

Chief Justice Menon before the court began proceedings, CJ Upadhyaya said, “I am very glad and happy to announce that amongst us today is the CJ of Singapore Supreme Court. He was here in Bombay in 2015. I welcome him once again.”

Advocate General Birendra Saraf, appearing for the Maharashtra government, informed that the bench was assembled in a courtroom where the trial against freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak was held and where he was

convicted. “Chief Justice Menon shares ideas similar to our own Chief Justice of India regarding collaboration of ideas between Singapore and India,” Saraf said.

Senior counsel Pradeep Sanchetti, appearing for the petitioners in the Maratha reservation issue, said the reservation decision was arbitrary and illegal.

The bench heard the matter briefly. Before leaving, CJ Menon bowed and thanked everyone present in court. -PTI

UK watchdog's allegations against Google

London: Google was slammed on Friday by UK regulators who say it's taking advantage of its dominance in digital advertising to thwart competition in Britain, ratcheting up pressure that the tech giant is facing on both sides of the Atlantic over its "ad tech" business practices.

Britain's Competition and Markets Authority said that the US company gives preference to its own services to the detriment of online publishers and advertisers in Britain's 1.8 billion pound (USD 2.4 billion) digital ad market.

Google is a major player throughout the digital ad ecosystem, providing servers for publishers to manage ad space on their websites and apps, tools for advertisers and media agencies to buy display ads, and an exchange where both sides come together to buy and sell ads in real time at auctions. "We've provisionally found that Google is using its market power to hinder competition when it comes to the ads people see on websites," the watchdog's interim executive director of enforcement, Juliette Enser, said in a press release.

The watchdog's charges, known as a statement of objections, come two years after it opened its investiga-



tion. The European Union's antitrust authorities have also been Google's ad bidding services while and it has also been the focus of a state-led antitrust lawsuit against Google that's set to go to trial this month.

The CMA said that Google's "anti-competitive" conduct is ongoing, but the company disputed the allegations on Friday. "Google remains committed to creating value for our publisher and advertiser partners in this highly competitive sector," the company said in a prepared statement. "The core of this case rests on flawed interpretations of the ad tech sector. We disagree with the CMA's view and we will respond accordingly."

The UK watchdog alleged Google has been exploiting its dominance since 2015 to strengthen the market position of its own

AdX ad exchange and protect it from rivals. AdX is where Google charges the highest fees in the ad tech system, taking about 20 per cent of the amount from bids, the CMA said.

The regulator's accusations include charges that Google manipulates advertiser bids so they have higher value when they go into AdX auctions then rival exchanges. AdX also gets to bid first in auctions run by Google's publisher ad server, potentially shutting out rivals from the chance to bid, the watchdog said. Google now has the chance to reply to the charges. The CMA said its considering what is needed to make sure Google ceases the anti-competitive practices. It has the power to impose a fine worth up to 10 per cent of a company's annual worldwide revenue.

-AP

Case against startup over Tatkal ticket squashed

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court has dismissed criminal proceedings against an IIT graduate and startup founder, who developed a software tool that significantly reduced the time required to book railway Tatkal tickets.

Gaurav Dhake, who was charged under Section 143 of the Railways Act for allegedly illegally procuring and distributing railway tickets, saw the case against him quashed by a single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna.

The court ruled that

The petitioner has not indulged in the unauthorised business of procuring or distributing railway tickets.

-Karnataka High Court

Dhake's creation of a browser extension, which reduced the typical Tatkal booking time from five-seven minutes to just 45 seconds, did not constitute a violation of the Railways Act.

The software tool, which auto-filled the traveler's details to expedite the booking process on the IRCTC website, was initially offered for free. However, in February 2020, Dhake limited its use to 10 bookings per day to prevent bulk ticketing by agents and began charging Rs 30 per booking for "authenticity."

The Railways issued a notice to Dhake in September 2020, leading to the registration of a criminal case against him.

-PTI

BANKING MATTERS

Ghost Of Privatisation Of Public Sector Banks



By **Sudhakar Atre**

Since 2014, when NDA Government came to power Political opponents and leaders of organisations of Bank Employees are aggressively spreading a narrative that this Government will privatize Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

Every time these people speak with so much Gobielian over confidence that not only general public but employees of PSBs also started believing that privatisation is just a matter of time. Their primary logic is that the Jansangh, the ancestor of present BJP was against nationalisation and this Government wants to sell the PSBs to some industrialists.

In order to understand the issue little fact check is necessary. We will have to go back to 2013-14, the last year of UPA-2 and when NDA took over from them. It is a well known fact that PSBs were sitting on mountain of bad loans (NPAs) which were hidden in accounting tricks that time.

For the financial year ending in March 2014, PSBs admitted to a sharp 27 per cent fall in 'profits.' But this

was just the tip of the iceberg. It turned out later that there were likely no profits at all as over the next several years, the bad loans would have to be dug out, slowly and painfully. The cumulative losses to state run banks would be over Rs 2 lakh crore at that time if the right amount of NPAs would have been shown by these Banks. It came out in stages, as the account books were opened and checked.

After admitting to a 27 per cent fall in profits in 2013-14, PSBs began to admit to actual losses over the next several years. Then in 2015, the government began a detailed investigation to find out the real amount of non-performing assets. This was known as an Asset Quality Review (AQR). The lowest point was 2017-18, when PSBs reported cumulative losses of over Rs 85,000 crore.

Let us examine the origin of this problem. The crisis was embroiled in various political allegations and counter allegations but this article will try to restrict the discussion on official records. Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan never gave a straight answer. But in his 2018 response to parliament he said, "Too many loans were made to well-connected promoters who have a history of defaulting on their loans". Incidentally, in December 2013, then finance minister P Chidambaram insisted that you cannot blame the government if PSBs have made bad loans. "Blame should stop with the bank boards and not with the government" Interestingly he forgot to mention that all the members of Boards of PSBs are



appointed by the Government of the day. So this was direct admission by the then RBI Governor and the then Finance Minister that yes there existed a cancer of NPAs in PSBs, they only differed on who was the creator of this problem.

It was a horrible situation as any disaster in Indian Banking would have resulted into immediate collapse of Indian Economy. Global economist had started predicting doomsday for Indian Economy in general and Indian Banking in particular.

It was a horrible situation and lot of mudslinging started in political circles. Even the role of the then Prime Minister who is highly respected economist came under scanner. But thanks to the political wisdom of the NDA leadership, instead of engaging into this mudslinging, they accepted the challenge and immediately chalked out a strategy to overcome the crisis.

(The writer is a freelance author and speaker on banking. Views personal)

that have not been revived simply add to the stock of gross NPAs. A fair amount of the increase in NPAs may be due to aging rather than as a result of a fresh lot of NPAs." So he he was bold enough to state that rise of NPAs between 2014 and 2018 were not from fresh lending but they were from the accounts already existed prior to 2014.

The questions were asked whether these loans which later turned into NPAs were given under political pressure? Raghuram Rajan never gave a straight answer. But in his 2018 response to parliament he said, "Too many loans were made to well-connected promoters who have a history of defaulting on their loans". Incidentally, in December 2013, then finance minister P Chidambaram insisted that you cannot blame the government if PSBs have made bad loans. "Blame should stop with the bank boards and not with the government" Interestingly he forgot to mention that all the members of Boards of PSBs are

appointed by the Government of the day. So this was direct admission by the then RBI Governor and the then Finance Minister that yes there existed a cancer of NPAs in PSBs, they only differed on who was the creator of this problem.

(The writer is a freelance author and speaker on banking. Views personal)



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw with MD & Chairman of Japan Bank for International Cooperation Tadashi Maeda, during a meeting. Pic: PTI

Allegations against Madhabi Buch

Congress questions PM's silence

New Delhi: Levelling more conflict of interest allegations against SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, the Congress on Friday claimed that she received rental income from an entity affiliated with a company that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases, including that of insider trading.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the question really had to be asked of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and no one

else on how much more evidence was needed to show the collapse of transparency and integrity, as far as the capital markets regulator was concerned.

"By the NSE's data, there are now 10 crore Indians with unique PANs who have some form of investment in this market. Don't they deserve better? Why does he not move? What is he afraid of?" Ramesh said in a post on X.

The Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Kherra said that between 2018 and 2024,

Buch -- as a whole-time member and later chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) -- had been receiving rental income amounting to Rs 2.16 crore from "Carol Info Services Limited", a company affiliated to Wockhardt Limited.

Kherra asserted that this was an outright case of corruption that invoked conflict of interest, violating sections 4, 7 and 8 of SEBI's 2008 code on conflict of interests for members of its board.

-PTI

Adani delivers lecture at college which had rejected him

Mumbai: Gautam Adani had in the late 1970s applied to join a Mumbai college for education, but the college rejected his application. He did not pursue education but turned to business and went on to build a USD 220 billion empire. About four-and-a-half decades later, he gets called to the same college to deliver a lecture to students on Teachers Day.

Adani had moved to Mumbai at the age of 16 and started working as a diamond sorter. Around the same time in 1977 or 1978, he applied for admission to the city's Jai Hind College. "But they rejected him," said Vikram Nankani, President of the Jai Hind College Alumni Association, as he introduced India's second richest person before his lecture.

He had applied to Jai Hind College because his elder brother Vinod had earlier studied in the same college. "Fortunately or unfortunately, the college did not accept him and he went on to work full time and pursued an alternative career," Nankani said, declaring Gautam Adani as a "deemed alumni" since he had applied to join.

After working as a dia-



mond sorter for almost two years, he returned to his home state of Gujarat to run a packaging factory managed by a brother.

He never really looked back after he launched his firm in 1998, trading in commodities. Over the next two-and-a-half-decade, his debt-fuelled companies diversified into ports, mines, infrastructure, power, city gas, renewable energy, cement, real estate, data centres and media.

The infrastructure tycoon, who runs 13 seaports in India, operates seven airports, is the largest private player in power, is the biggest renewable energy producer, runs the country's second-largest cement company, is building expressways and re-developing Asia's largest slums, is described by some as the most

aggressive of India's new generation of entrepreneur. Delivering the lecture 'Breaking Boundaries: The Power of Passion and Unconventional Paths to Success', Adani, 62, was just 16 years old when he chose to break his first boundary.

"It had to do with giving up my education and choosing to move to an unknown future in Mumbai. People still ask me, 'Why did you move to Mumbai? Why did you not complete your education?' The answer lies in the heart of every young dreamer who sees boundaries not as barriers but as challenges that test his courage. "I was driven by a need to see if I had the courage to make a life for myself in the most happening city of our country," he said.

Mumbai was his training ground for business as he

learned to sort and trade in diamonds.

"The field of trading makes a good teacher. I learnt very early that an entrepreneur can never be frozen by over-evaluating the choices in front of him," he said. "It is Mumbai that taught me 'To think big, you must first dare to dream beyond your boundaries'."

In the 1980s, he established a trading organisation for importing polymers to supply to the struggling small-scale industries. "By the time I turned 23, my trading venture was doing well," he said. After the 1991 economic liberalisation, he established a global trading house dealing in polymers, metals, textiles, and agri-products. He was just 29 then. "Within two years, we had become the largest global trading house in the country. This is when I understood the combined value of both speed and scale," he said.

"Thereafter, in 1994, we decided that it was time to go public, and Adani Exports, now known as Adani Enterprises, launched its IPO. The IPO was a strong success and underscored for me the importance of public markets." -PTI

Airbus India, IIT ink pact

Guwahati: The IIT-Guwahati entered into an agreement with Airbus India Private Ltd on Friday to set up a global training centre for aviation and logistics business here.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the collaboration will pave the way for Assam to emerge as a logistics hub in providing skilled personnel in aerospace technology.

"This is a milestone initiative to welcome Airbus India to our state. This agreement does not represent just a formal alliance, but a shared commitment to innovation and excellence to aerospace technology and development of logistics hub in Assam," he said at the MoU signing ceremony at IIT-Guwahati. The CM maintained that the project will address the current skill gap, and the collaboration is poised to elevate global competitiveness and the logistics sector in the northeast region.

"This is a significant step in creating a robust and dynamic workforce in our region," Sarma said, emphasising that the coming together of academic excellence of IIT-Guwahati and Airbus India's excellence in technology and global leadership will benefit Assam.

BSE SENSEX	TOP GAINERS	PTI
September 6, 2024		
%	POINTS	
+1.13	Asian Paints 3274.50	
+1.03	Bajaj Finance 7317.65	
+0.79	JSW Steel 932.35	
+0.08	Hindustan Unilever 2838.45	

BSE SENSEX	TOP LOSERS	PTI
September 6, 2024		
%	POINTS	
-4.40	SBIN 782.60	
-2.09	ICICI Bank 1210.05	
-2.08	NTPC 395.15	
-1.95	HCL Tech 1755.50	
-1.92	Reliance 2929.85	
-1.87	Tata Motors 1048.65	
-1.86	ITC 501.65	
-1.83	Axis Bank 1159.15	
-1.60	Adani Ports 1441.90	
-1.59	Infosys 1902.20	

Vaccine management portal to be launched by Sept end

New Delhi: Online vaccine management portal U-Win will be launched later this month to maintain a permanent digital record of vaccination and medicines of more than three crore pregnant women and almost 2.7 crore children born annually, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra said on Friday.

The U-Win platform, a replication of the COVID-19 vaccine manage-

ment system Co-WIN, is being run in a pilot mode in all states and Union territories except for West Bengal and captures every vaccination event of all pregnant women and children under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).

Speaking at the national conference on "Universal Access to Healthcare: Digital Solutions" held here, Chan-

dra said that one of the goals of the national digital mission is to increase the reach of healthcare services and reduce the disparity between rural and urban areas.

The health secretary highlighted the success of the Co-WIN and Aarogya Setu apps in helping to deliver more than 220 crore vaccinations across the country.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Giriraj Singh,
Union Minister for
Textiles

"The coming days belong to Technical textiles in every sector. I am fully confident that in 2025-26 the niche carbon fibre product will also be with India. Earlier we used to import diapers. Thanks to PM Modi for bringing production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme which has created excitement in the industry."

14 KPs enter fray from valley

By Anil Bhatt

Jammu: So far, 14 Kashmiri Pandits have filed nominations to contest from the valley for the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, aiming to ensure the return and rehabilitation of their fellow community members, whose number run up to 3 lakh.

Srinagar's Habba Kadal assembly constituency has virtually turned into an electoral battlefield for the displaced Kashmiri Pandits. A record six KPs out of the 14 have filed their nomination from the assembly segment, which goes to polls, along with 26 other constituencies in the second phase of elections, on September 25.

"As many as six candidates from the KP community have filed their nomination papers in Habba Kadal. Of them, five have filed under recognised political parties, while two have filed as Independents. A total of 14 candidates have filed their nominations," an election department official told PTI.

Ashok Kumar Bhat has filed his papers as the BJP candidate, Sanjay Saraf as the Lok Jan Shakti Party candidate, and Santosh Labroo will be contesting election as an All Alliance Democratic Party candidate.

Ashok Raina, Panaji Dembi, and Ashok Sahaib will fight as Independents. Saraf, who has contested



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Ravinder Raina, Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and G Kishan Reddy release the party's election manifesto ahead of the state Assembly elections, in Jammu on Friday.

Pic: PTI

elections from the seat twice in the past, said his aim is to bridge the gap between communities and ensure the return of the community spread across the country, back to the valley. "If I am elected as an MLA, I will work to ensure the return of KPs to the valley with respect, dignity, and security. This includes carving out places for them here. We should be ambassadors of peace," Saraf, contesting from his home constituency of Anantnag, told PTI.

The six KPs in fray are banking on the support of the 25,000-strong migrant vote bank in Habba Kadal, traditionally, a National Conference stronghold.

Raman Mattoo, a KP, won the election in 2002 as an In-

dependent candidate and became a minister in the Mufti Sayeed government.

In 2014, four KPs candidates contested from the seat, while in 2008, the number was a record 12. In the 2002 elections, out of 11 total, nine were KPs.

BJP's Vir Saraf, Apni Party's M K Yogi, and Dileep Pandita, an Independent, will seek election from Shangus-Anantnag segment. In all, 13 candidates are in fray from the segment. Yogi, a former president of the powerful Marant temple committee and a former NC leader, alleged that no party has done anything for the Kashmiri Pandits.

"I will ensure that KPs are brought back through a return and rehabilitation

policy. BJP did marketing and sold their pain but did nothing in the past 15 years," he told PTI.

Vikram Koul, head of KP volunteers, told PTI, "We welcome the contest by community members. Political parties have even fielded them. We wish to see them in the Assembly." He, however, added that the community has always had high hopes from political parties, but they did little for the community.

"For the past 30 years, the community lives as refugees in its own land. The return and rehabilitation policy was framed, but no government implemented it on the ground to take back over 3 lakh KPs to the valley and rehabilitate them," he said.

-PTI

Elderly man killed in bomb attack

Imphal: An elderly man was killed and five others were injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a residential area of Moirang in Bishnupur district on Friday afternoon, officials said.

The rocket which fell on the compound of former chief minister Mairembam Koireng's residence seemed

Human chain against drone attacks

Thousands of people across five districts of Imphal Valley on Friday took part in a series of human chain rallies to protest the recent drone and gun attacks in Manipur that resulted in two civilian deaths and 12 injuries. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the ongoing conflict in the state. Organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), the rally saw school and college students in uniform.

to be an improvised one.

It is the second rocket that was fired in the district on Friday.

"The elderly man was preparing for some religious rituals in the compound when the bomb exploded. He died on the spot," the official said.

Five others, including a 13-year-old girl, were injured in the explosion.

Vinesh resigns from Railways before joining Congress

New Delhi: The wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways, citing personal reasons.

"Sportspeople are wronged many times but are unable to speak out. Look at us, they got Bajrang banned for four years on doping charges because he stood with us. So we are paying a price, we will not be scared and won't back off. The fight will continue. Our court case is going on, we will win that also, we will win in life," she said.

Phogat said they would be among the people and ensure their welfare. Punia said the Congress stood with them during their tough times. "What BJP IT Cell is saying today, that we just wanted to do politics... We had written to all women BJP MPs to stand with us but they didn't come. We are

"We will work hard to strengthen the Congress and the nation... The day Vinesh qualified for the finals, the country was happy but the next day everyone was sad. At that time, one IT cell was celebrating.

Bajrang Punia



Senior Congress leaders from Haryana - Deepender Singh Hooda and Bhopinder Singh Hooda - are hatching conspiracy against me. Whatever I had said on day one, I still stand by it. And today, the same thing is being said by the entire country.

Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, ex-chief, WFI

she was nine years old and she reached this far due to her courage and bravery. "Some people are criticising their joining the Congress. So many athletes and Olympians are in different parties, is that also a conspiracy?" Venugopal asked.

paying the price for raising our voices for women but now we know that the BJP stands with atrocities against women at Jantar Mantar, and all other parties stand with us," he said. Venugopal said Phogat's father was shot dead when

Man held for cruelty to dog

Panaji: Police have arrested a man for killing a dog by tying the animal to his two-wheeler and dragging it for kilometres in Goa.

Ashok Panhalkar, currently residing at Khorlim, Mapusa, and originally from Belgaum in Karnataka, has been booked under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, a senior official said.

Police took action against Panhalkar after a video showing his alleged cruel act went viral. On the afternoon of September 4, Panhalkar allegedly tied the dog to his motorcycle and dragged it for a long distance, causing the death of the canine.

-PTI

KFCC to meet women artistes

Bengaluru: Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce has called for a meeting with women artistes to discuss sexual and other abuse prevalent in the industry on September 16, a top office-bearer said on Friday.

The meeting has been convened after the Karnataka State Commission for Women asked the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) to do so.

N.M. Suresh, president of KFCC told PTI, "The state Women's Commission asked us to convene a

meeting on the September 13, but because it is festival time, and also because people might be shooting and may need more time to adjust their schedules, we have tentatively called for a meeting on September 16."

According to him, only on Monday, September 9, they will know for sure when they will be able to hold the meet.

"But we will definitely meet to come to a consensus on what should be the next course of action," added Suresh.

-PTI

SC relief to YouTuber

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Madras High Court directive to YouTuber Felix Jerald to close down his channel "RedPix 24x7" as one of the bail conditions.

Jerald had been arrested for hosting an "objectionable" interview of another YouTuber Savukku Shankar on his YouTube channel. In the interview, Shankar made certain comments against Madras HC judges and women police officers of the state. The high court, which granted bail to both YouTubers, had asked Jerald to close down his channel as one of the conditions.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra issued a notice to the state government and stayed the particular direction on closure of the channel. It, however, asked him to comply with other bail conditions. "You are making scurrilous allegations against the judiciary and all women IPS officers. Why do you host such interviews?" the CJI asked. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the YouTuber, said that such an interview should not have been shown.

-PTI

ED raids Sandip Ghosh's houses

Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers on Friday conducted simultaneous search operations at the residences of Sandip Ghosh, the former principal of the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and three of his associates in connection with alleged financial irregularities at the institute, an officer said.

The raids were carried out at Ghosh's residence in Beliaghata and at two locations in Howrah and Subhasgram. All the four are already in CBI custody. "We reached these places around 6.15 am and started our raids," the officer told PTI.

The ED has filed an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) against Ghosh, which is analogous to a First Information Report (FIR) in criminal cases. On August 23, the Calcutta High Court ordered the transfer of the investigation into the alleged financial irregularities at state-run hospital from a state-constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) to the CBI.

This decision followed a petition by Dr. Akhtar Ali,

SC bins Ghosh's plea

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by former principal of Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh challenging a Calcutta High Court order rejecting his



petition to be added as a party to a case of alleged financial irregularities at the institute on his watch.

A bench of Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud

and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said as an accused Ghosh has no locus standi (legal right to approach court) to be impleaded in the matter.

The high court had on August 23 transferred the probe into the alleged financial irregularities from a state-constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). "You were a principal of the college when the incident took place. As an accused you have no locus (standi) to intervene in the PIL, where the Calcutta high court is monitoring the investigation," the bench said.

RG Kar in October 2023 but was reinstated within a month. Dr. Ali had raised concerns that the corruption at RG Kar hospital might be linked to the doctor's death, suggesting that the victim was aware of the misconduct and might have threatened to expose it.

the former deputy superintendent of the facility, who sought an investigation by the ED into multiple allegations of financial misconduct during Ghosh's tenure as principal. Ghosh served as principal from February 2021 to September 2023. He was briefly transferred from



Kerala Assembly Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan, AICC General Secretary Deepa Dasmunsi, President K Sudhakaran and others take part in a protest rally demanding the resignation of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.

Pic: PTI

SC asks HP HC collegium to reconsider names

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday asked the collegium of the Himachal Pradesh High Court to reconsider the names of two senior-most district and sessions judges for elevation as judges of the high court.

The apex court observed that the high court Chief

Justice could not individually reconsider a recommendation and it could only be done by a High Court collegium, acting collectively.

A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra delivered its verdict on the plea filed by the two senior-most district and sessions

judges, alleging that their merit and seniority were not considered by the high court collegium in the selection of names for high court judgeship.

"There was no collective consultation and deliberation by the members of the high court collegium," the bench said while pronounc-

ing the judgment.

"In light of the above, the high court collegium should now reconsider the names of Chirag Bhanu Singh and Arvind Malhotra for elevation as judges of the high court, following the Supreme Court collegium decision dated January 4, 2024..." it said.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Akhilesh Yadav, President, Samajwadi Party

"It's not about fielding candidates in a few seats, but about understanding the pain and suffering of the people and freeing them from the BJP's corrupt and manipulative politics. Over the last 10 years, the BJP has pushed Haryana's development back by two decades."

UP land linked to Musharraf auctioned

Baghpat (UP): A two-hectare land parcel here falling under enemy property and linked to Pakistan's former president Pervez Musharraf has been auctioned for Rs 1.38 crore, officials said on Friday.

The property is located in Kotana village, Baraut tehsil of Baghpat and was declared as enemy property in 2010.

The classification of enemy property pertains to assets owned by Pakistani nationals in India which

are managed by the Custodian Of Enemy Property, a department under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Musharraf, a former Pakistan military chief who seized power after a coup in the country in 1999, died in 2023. He was born in Delhi in pre-Partition India.

Baraut's Sub-Divisional Magistrate Amar Verma confirmed Musharraf's grandfather lived in Kotana. "As far as the former Pakistan president is con-



cerned, he was born in Delhi. He never came here. These people have joint land here.

"Former Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf's father Syed Musharrafuddin and mother Zarin Be-

gum never lived in the village but his uncle Humayun lived here for a long time," Verma told PTI. He said there is also a house in the village where Humayun lived before Independence. In 2010, this piece of land was declared enemy property and its auction was finalised at 10.30 pm on Thursday, he added.

The auctioned land, initially valued at Rs 39.06 lakh, fetched over Rs 1.38 crore and the proceeds from the sale will be depos-

ited in the MHA department's account, a senior Baghpat administration official said.

"The land is recorded under the name 'Nuru' in our revenue records. There is no documented connection between this Nuru and Pervez Musharraf. The records only show that Nuru was a resident who left for Pakistan in 1965," Baghpat's Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Pankaj Verma told PTI.

-PTI

Army being roped in to plug breaches in AP



Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has said that Army teams are being roped in to plug the Budameru rivulet breaches to control the flood situation in Vijayawada.

Addressing a press conference at the NTR district collectorate in Vijayawada on Thursday, Naidu, who was accompanied by Union Agriculture Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan, said Chouhan had been apprised about the catastrophe.

Chouhan earlier in the day conducted an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in Vijayawada.

"The Army is also coming to close the breach... We are putting in all efforts we need to do," said Naidu.

According to the CM, a technical team has arrived

to analyse the situation, following unprecedented rains and floods in the centrally located commercial city. Naidu noted that the deluge had ravaged all the houses in its path, destroying vehicles, household appliances and many other things.

He also said that there is a need to raise the capacity of Prakasam Barrage to discharge up to 15 lakh cusecs of floodwaters, noting that it can withstand only up to 11.9 lakh cusecs.

Union Minister Chouhan said that the situation is bad in the flood-hit areas, adding that he has never seen such a situation before. He said 400 mm rainfall at one time is a major catastrophe, but appreciated the efforts being put in by the chief minister and the government

machinery.

He appreciated that drones are being used to deliver food in the affected areas, and said that the Army is expected to come soon to close Budameru breaches. Chouhan alleged that illegal mining had occurred near Budameru during the previous YSRCP government and claimed that it also contributed to the disaster.

He also said that the Central government will extend all the required support to the southern state. Meanwhile, an Ajit Singh Nagar resident who left for Hyderabad to escape the floods told PTI that their neighbours called them to defer his return plan to Vijayawada as some floodwaters were coming back.

-PTI

Environment conservation part of cultural consciousness

Surat: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called the conservation of water and environment a part of India's cultural consciousness, pitching for the "reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle" mantra to save water.

He was virtually speaking at a programme marking the launch of the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative in Surat, a step aimed at strengthening community involvement in water conservation.

"For water conservation, we have to work on the mantra of 'reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle'. We also need to adopt innovative techniques and the latest technology to conserve water," said the PM.

PM Narendra Modi said India has just four per cent of freshwater resources, and many parts of the country face a water crisis.

"In the last few days, various parts of India have seen rain fury, which was unprecedented," said the PM.

Stressing the need to save water, he said water and environment conservation is part of India's cultural consciousness.

The Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative aligns with the ongoing "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign, reinforcing Modi's vision of collaborative water management to ensure long-term water security, according to an official statement released by the government.

-PTI

WASTE TO BEST

How to recycle the Nirmalya?



By
Dr. Sanjay Joshi



As a daily routine in a large number of households, pooja is performed and while worshipping, fresh flowers and floral garlands are offered to the gods and/or goddesses which turn into Nirmalya the next day as mentioned in the last week's article. During special festivals these rituals are performed on a larger scale resulting in generation of tons of floral waste.

Eventually, huge piles of floral waste ultimately end up mostly in the waterways and waterbodies thereby polluting those natural ecosystems. Then, prior to festive seasons, it is customary to undertake extensive cleaning of the house. As we begin the cleaning process, we retrieve many different articles, items from the storage lofts, attics etc. etc. Looking at this collection at the end of the day, we keep on asking ourselves 'when did I get this thing.. why did I get that thing.. now what am I going to do

with this thing..it is now outdated..lying in the attic for at least a couple of years or may be even more..it has lost its usefulness and or its value so what next? Its obvious destination is the dustbin. And that is how, we generate the trash.

Friends, so far we have learned how we are responsible for the generation of garbage or trash through our own activities. Let us look at how this garbage is managed at the individual level, society level and the community level after it is generated. In a housing complex, as a general practice, dustbin filled with garbage is kept outside the apartment.

Then a common sweeper appointed by the society collects the dustbins from every apartment to be emptied into a large bin which is then kept outside

the society premises for the urban local body people to take it away to a dumping ground. However, this practice does not exist everywhere. In many areas, it is observed that a cluster of residential societies dump all their garbage openly along the roadside. It is left at the mercy of the garbage collectors. At a certain prescribed period during the day or even night, again the garbage collectors appointed by the urban local body come there, collect that open heap of garbage manually, dump it into a truck and take it away. As they try to dump this heap of garbage, some of it is left at the place and some trash spills down. Garbage collectors do not bother much to collect these bits and pieces, and some trash always remains there.

Next day, again almost

the same amount of trash accumulates there. So, friends it is people like you and me generating the trash or garbage in our houses on day-to-day basis and simply throwing it out. We have that 'OSOM' (Out of Sight-Out of Mind) mentality. I feel happy that my house is clean, free of any dirt and that my health and hygiene is well maintained. But what about my locality? What about the beauty and aesthetics in my neighborhood? What about the roads and by-lanes I walk along? Think and Think about it! May the God of Wisdom, our most revered and beloved Ganapati Bappa bring us prosperity, happiness and plenty of fresh air, fresh water and greenery around us!

(The writer is an environment specialist. Views personal)

Houses in Bageshwar villages develop cracks

Pithoragarh (U'khand): Cracks similar to those in Joshimath have appeared on the walls and ceilings of houses in more than two dozen villages of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, sending residents in a state of alarm.

Locals attributed land subsidence, which had aggravated with time, to large-scale soapstone mining in the area and excavated ditches being left untreated by contractors, who often violated mining norms by blasting and using heavy machinery for digging. "Despite mining being stopped in the area two years ago, we found at least seven to eight houses in Kanda village with cracks still appearing on the walls and ceilings," said District Mining Officer Jig-

yasa Bisht, who visited the village on September 3 along with a geologist and revenue officials.

Around 1,000 people had to leave their homes in Joshimath, recently renamed Jyotirmath, in early 2023 when large cracks appeared on the walls and floors due to land subsidence. The administration's attention was drawn to the latest threat when locals raised the issue during a janata darbar at the collectorate in Bageshwar.

However, the National Green Tribunal has not taken cognisance of any such incident in the district, Bisht said.

Cracks have also appeared in houses in more than 25 villages adjacent to the areas where mining is still going on in the district, the officer said.

-PTI

121	No of soapstone mines
50	No of soapstone mines running at present
11	No if villages identified for rehabilitation
131	No of families identified for rehabilitation
402	No of villages in the district
100	No of villages facing threat of gradual subsidence

NGT order on Ganga stayed

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order of the National Green Tribunal directing criminal prosecution and punitive action against Uttarakhand government officials for failure to prevent the discharge of untreated sewage into the Ganga.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the Centre and posted the matter for hearing in the second week of December.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on February 9 had deprecated the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board for remaining a "silent spectator" and not taking proper action to prevent the discharge of untreated sewage into the Ganga.

In a 151-page order, the tribunal had directed the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) to take punitive action against responsible government officers and heads of departments by initiating criminal proceedings against them.

-PTI

Southern China braces for Typhoon Yagi

Hong Kong: A powerful typhoon swept south of Hong Kong and was moving toward a Chinese island province where it was expected to make landfall Friday, forcing many aspects of life in the region to a halt.

Trading on the stock market, bank services and schools were halted in Hong Kong after the city's weather authority raised a No. 8 typhoon signal for Typhoon Yagi, the third-highest warning under the city's weather system.

Heavy rain and strong winds overnight felled dozens of trees across the financial hub before the weather gradually calmed on Friday morning. The weather forecaster was expected to downgrade the typhoon signal in the afternoon.

In Hainan, a tropical holiday island in southern China, residents were bracing for the powerful storm. The province's meteorological service expected Yagi to make landfall somewhere between the province's Wenchang city and Xuwen county in neighboring Guangdong province later Friday.



Residents protect their belongings as they negotiate a flooded street caused by heavy rains from Tropical Storm Yagi, locally called Enteng, in Cainta, Rizal province, Philippines.

230 km per hour	Speed of the wind
250	No of people seeking refuge
100	No of flights cancelled
47,600	No of people displaced in Philippine

Pic:AP/PTI

reported.

State media China Daily said classes, work, transportation and businesses were suspended in parts of the province as early as Wednesday evening. Some tourist attractions were closed and all flights at its international airport in Haikou city were grounded on Friday. Yagi was still a tropical storm when it blew out of the northwestern Philippines into the South China Sea on Wednesday, leaving at least 16 people dead and 17 others missing, mostly in landslides and widespread flooding, and affecting more than 2 million people in northern and central provinces.

More than 47,600 people were displaced from their homes in Philippine provinces, and classes, work, inter-island ferry services and domestic flights were disrupted for days, including in the densely populated capital region, metropolitan Manila.

-AP

Boy injured in fresh wolf attack

Bahraich (UP): An eight-year-old boy was injured in a wolf attack while playing outside his home in the Mahsi tehsil here, his family alleged on Friday.

The boy has suffered injuries, including some on his face, and has been hospitalized, a government doctor said.

In the last two months, Bahraich district has recorded eight deaths, including seven children in a series of attacks by wolves while around three dozen other people were left injured, according to official figures. The latest attack took place Thursday evening at the Golwa village of the Mahsi tehsil -- a rural area a little closer to the city but away from the areas of all the previous attacks.

Sangam Lal's mother Phoolmati told PTI, "The child was playing near the door of the house. Then the wolf knocked him down and injured him."

-PTI

Earth breaks another record for hottest summer

Bonn: Summer 2024 sweltered to Earth's hottest on record, making it even more likely that this year will end up as the warmest humanity has measured, European climate service Copernicus reported Friday.

And if this sounds familiar, that's because the records the globe shattered were set just last year as human-caused climate change, with a temporary boost from an El Nino, keeps dialling up temperatures and extreme weather, scientists said.

The northern meteorological summer — June, July and August — averaged 16.8 degrees Celsius (62.24 degrees Fahrenheit), according to Copernicus. That's 0.03 degrees Celsius (0.05

degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the old record in 2023. Copernicus records go back to 1940, but American, British and Japanese records, which start in the mid-19th century, show the last decade has been the hottest since regular measurements were taken and likely in about 120,000 years, according to some scientists.

The Augusts of both 2024 and 2023 tied for the hottest Augusts globally at 16.82 degrees Celsius (62.27 degrees Fahrenheit). July was the first time in more than a year that the world did not set a record, a tad behind 2023, but because June 2024 was so much hotter than June 2023, this summer as a whole was the hottest, Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said.

"What those sober numbers

indicate is how the climate crisis is tightening its grip on us," said Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research, who wasn't part of the research. It's a sweaty grip because with the high temperatures, the dew point — one of several ways to measure the air's humidity — probably was at or near record high this summer for much of the world, Buontempo said.

Until last month Buontempo, like some other climate scientists, was on the fence over whether 2024 would smash the hottest year record set last year, mostly because August 2023 was so enormously hotter than average. But then this August 2024 matched 2023, making Buontempo "pretty certain" that this year will end up hot-

test on record.

"In order for 2024 not to become the warmest on record, we need to see very significant landscape cooling for the remaining few months, which doesn't look likely at this stage," Buontempo said.

With a forecasted La Nina — a temporary natural cooling of parts of the central Pacific — the last four months of the year may no longer be record-setters like most of the past year and a half. But it's not likely cool enough to keep 2024 from breaking the annual record, Buontempo said. These aren't just numbers in a record book, but weather that hurts people, climate scientists said.

"This all translates to more misery around the world as places like Phoenix start to feel

like a barbecue locked on high for longer and longer stretches of the year," said University of Michigan environment dean and climate scientist Jonathan Overpeck.

The Arizona city has had more than 100 days of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius) weather this year. "With longer and more severe heat waves come more severe droughts in some places, and more intense rains and flooding in others. Climate change is becoming too obvious, and too costly, to ignore."

Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center in Cape Cod, said there's been a deluge of extreme weather of heat, floods, wildfires and high winds that are violent and

dangerous.

"Like people living in a war zone with the constant thumping of bombs and clatter of guns, we are becoming deaf to what should be alarm bells and air-raid sirens," Francis said in an email. While a portion of last year's record heat was driven by an El Nino — a temporary

natural warming of parts of the central Pacific that alters weather worldwide — that effect is gone, and it shows the main driver is long-term human-caused climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, Buontempo said.

-AP



Efforts To Sway US Polls

American company, Russian propaganda

Washington: Russia has long sought to inject disinformation into U.S. political discourse. Now, it's got a new angle: paying Americans to do the work.

This week's indictment of two Russian state media employees on charges that they paid a Tennessee company to create pro-Russian content has renewed concerns about foreign meddling in the November election while revealing the Kremlin's latest tactic in a growing information war.

If the allegations prove correct, they represent a significant escalation, analysts say, and likely capture only a small piece of a larger Russian effort to sway the election.

"We have seen the smoke for years. Now, here's the fire," said Jim Ludes, a former national defense analyst who now leads the Pell Center for International Relations at Salve Regina University. "I don't wonder if they're doing more of this. I have no doubt."

Intelligence officials and private analysts say Russia's disinformation campaigns are designed to cut off American assistance to Ukraine, clearing the way for a rapid Russian victory after more than two years of bitter conflict. In the presidential race, Russia supports Donald Trump as the candidate perceived as the least supportive of Ukraine, intelligence offi-



According to prosecutors, the two employees of RT, a Russian outlet formerly known as Russia Today, funneled \$10 million to the U.S. media company, which then paid several popular right-wing influencers for their content — in one case \$400,000 a month. Two of those influencers said they had no idea their work was being supported by Russia.

cials say. Trump has openly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, suggested cutting funds to Ukraine and repeatedly criticized the NATO military alliance. On Thursday, Putin wryly claimed he was pulling for Vice President Kamala Harris to win. A secondary goal of Russian disinformation, officials have said, is to increase political polarization and distrust as a way of eroding American confidence in democracy.

This summer, intelligence officials warned that Russia was using unwitting Americans to spread its propaganda by adapting it to fit existing social debates within the U.S. Instead of creating new

conflicts, Russia has found success by identifying and exaggerating existing divides, tailoring disinformation accordingly. When successful, Russia can get Americans to spread its talking points for free, without them even knowing their source.

Earlier this year, Russian state media and networks of fake accounts began to amplify claims about immigration on platforms used by Americans. The company hired by RT was identified as Tenet Media by two of the right-wing content creators it paid — Tim Pool and Benny Johnson. Both men said on social media Wednesday that they had no

knowledge of Tenet's relationship with RT and that if the allegations are true, they are victims. China and Iran have mounted their own campaigns to use social media to shape American views. Iran covertly supported protests over the war in Gaza and was recently accused of trying to hack into the campaign systems of Trump and Harris, his Democratic opponent. Russia, however, remains the chief threat, intelligence officials maintain. -AP

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, Russian state media claimed without evidence that the virus was the product of U.S. bioweapons experiments and that the U.S. maintained biological laboratories in Ukraine. English-language posts soon started showing up on American social media sites. Four years later, the conspiracy theory still reverberates on far-right message boards.

relationship with RT and that if the allegations are true, they are victims. China and Iran have mounted their own campaigns to use social media to shape American views. Iran covertly supported protests over the war in Gaza and was recently accused of trying to hack into the campaign systems of Trump and Harris, his Democratic opponent. Russia, however, remains the chief threat, intelligence officials maintain. -AP



Pope Francis is taken past a guard of honour ahead of his departure from Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Indonesia on Friday. Indonesian police detained seven people in a failed plot to attack Pope Francis, who wrapped up the first leg of his 12-day Asia-Pacific tour from the archipelago on Friday. Pic:AP/PTI

Japanese man arrested in Belarus

Tallinn (Estonia): A Japanese man has been arrested in Belarus and is facing charges of working for Japan's special services by photographing military and civilian infrastructure near the border with Ukraine.

A report on Belarusian state TV on Thursday said suspect Masatoshi Nakanishi was arrested in July, and faces seven years in prison if convicted.

The TV report said Nakanishi took 9,000 photographs of military installations, airfields, railway lines, bridges and other infrastructure in the Belarusian-Ukrainian border area. Nakanishi had lived in Gomel, Belarus' second-largest city, near the border, since 2018 and taught Japanese at a local university, the report said. -PTI

Fire in Kenya school kills 17

Nairobi (Kenya): Sep 6 (AP) A fire in a school dormitory in Kenya killed 17 students and seriously burned 13 others, police said on Friday.

There are fears that the death toll may rise, police said.

The cause of the fire Thursday night at Hillside Enderasha Primary in Nyeri county was being investigated, police spokesperson Resila Onyango said. The school caters to children up to the age of 14.

Nyeri County Commissioner Pius Murugu and the education ministry reported that the dormitory that caught fire housed more than 150 boys. Since most of the buildings are built with wood planks, the fire spread very fast. The school, which has

824 students, is located in the country's central highlands, 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the capital, Nairobi, where wooden structures are common.

Anxious parents who had been unable to trace their children among survivors waited at the school, engulfed with grief.

President William Ruto called the news "devastating".

"I instruct relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate this horrific incident. Those responsible will be held to account," he wrote on the social media platform X.

His deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, urged school administrators to ensure that safety guidelines recommended by the education ministry for boarding

schools are being followed.

School fires are common in Kenyan boarding schools, often due to arson fuelled by drug abuse and overcrowding, according to a recent education ministry report. Many students stay at school because parents believe it gives them more time to study without long commutes.

Some fires have been started by students during protests over the workload or living conditions. In 2017, 10 high school students died in a school fire started by a student in Nairobi.

The deadliest school fire was in 2001 when 67 students died in a dormitory fire in Machakos county. -AP

Israeli forces appear to withdraw from West Bank camp

Jenin Refugee Camp (West Bank): Israeli forces appeared Friday to have withdrawn from the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, after a more-than weeklong military operation that has left dozens dead and a trail of destruction.

Overnight, Israeli armored personnel carriers were seen leaving the camp from a checkpoint set up on one of the main roads, and an Associated Press reporter inside the camp saw no evidence of any remaining troops inside as dawn broke early Friday morning.

Israel's military had no immediate comment but said it would issue a statement later in the day. It was not clear whether the apparent withdrawal was only a temporary measure to regroup forces. Hundreds of Israeli troops have been involved for more than a week in what has been their deadliest operation in the occupied West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began, employing what the United Nations called "lethal warlike tactics."

Their focus has been the Jenin refugee camp, a stronghold of Palestinian militancy that has grown



An explosion is seen during an Israeli military operation in the West Bank city of Jenin on Thursday. Pic:AP/PTI

since the Hamas attack on Israel that started the war in Gaza nearly 11 months ago. Fighting in Jenin accounts for 21 of 39 Palestinian deaths who local health officials say have been killed during the Israeli push in the West Bank — most of whom, the military says, have been militants.

The fighting has had a devastating effect on Palestinian civilians living in Jenin. Water and electric services have been cut, families have been confined to their homes and ambulances evacuating the wounded have been slowed on their way to nearby hospitals, as Israeli soldiers search for militants.

In the quiet morning Fri-

day, Jenin residents took advantage of the lull to rummage through the rubble of destroyed buildings and take stock of the damage.

Twisted rebar protruded from the concrete of collapsed buildings, and walls still standing were pockmarked by bullets and shrapnel. During the operation, Israeli military officials said they were targeting militants in Jenin, Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp curb recent attacks against Israeli civilians they say have become more sophisticated and deadly. It was not immediately clear whether they were also removing troops from the other two camps as well. -AP

Officers of Singapore's elite force jailed

By Gurdip Singh

Singapore: Five officers from the Gurkha Contingent (GC), Singapore's most trusted police force division, were sentenced to jail terms after they pleaded guilty to operating unlawful cross-border money transfer services, with each man's case involving transactions between SGD 1,03,473 and SGD 2.86 million.

They were given jail sentences on Thursday after they pleaded guilty to charges under the Payment Services Act (PSA), The Straits Times reported.

The Gurkha officers from a special unit of the police force are deployed in sensitive areas here. Officer Sitaram Tamang's case involved over SGD 2.86 million in total and he was sentenced to five months in jail. The 40-year-old had pleaded guilty to a charge under the PSA involving nearly SGD 1.6 million. Three other charges were also considered during sentencing.

Dik Bahadur Gurung, 32, was sentenced to 12 weeks in jail after he pleaded guilty to two charges. -PTI

Japan PM makes farewell visit to South Korea

Seoul: Less than a month before leaving office, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is visiting South Korea on Friday to boost warming ties between the traditional Asian rivals, as challenges lie ahead for their cooperation after his departure.

Kishida's two-day trip was arranged after he "actively" expressed hope for a meeting with conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol to end his term on a high note in bilateral relations, according to Yoon's office. It said Yoon and Kishida will look back on their achievements in bilateral ties and discuss further cooperation during a meeting Friday, the 12th between the two leaders.

This shows what legacy Kishida wants to leave after three years in office, experts say. He is credited with boosting Japan's security and diplomatic partnerships with the U.S., South Korea and others but suffered low popularity at home due to his governing party's political scandals.

"Prime Minister Kishida has put his personal political capital on the line to improve relations with South Korea. With Presi-



dent Yoon, Kishida upgraded bilateral diplomatic and security cooperation and elevated trilateralism with the United States" at a summit at Camp David in the United States last year, said Leif-Eric Easley, professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.

"This farewell summit in Seoul is meant to solidify that legacy," he said.

Japan and South Korea are both key U.S. allies in Asia, together hosting about 80,000 American troops. Their cooperation is crucial for U.S. efforts to buttress its regional alliances in response to increasing Chinese influence and North Korea's growing nuclear threat. But ties between Japan and South Korea have suffered periodic setbacks because of griev-

ances stemming from Japan's 1910-45 colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula.

Bilateral ties began thawing significantly after Yoon took a contentious step in March 2023 to resolve long-running compensation issues for Koreans who were forced to work for Japanese companies during the colonial period. Kishida later expressed sympathy for the suffering of Korean forced laborers, though he avoided a new, direct apology for the colonization.

Yoon's creation of a South Korean corporate fund to compensate victims of forced labor without Japanese contributions triggered a domestic backlash as his liberal rivals accused him of being submissive to Tokyo. -AP

Trump lawyers fight to overturn jury's finding

New York: While Donald Trump campaigns for the presidency, his lawyers are fighting to overturn a verdict finding him liable for sexual abuse and slander.

Three judges of the second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals are scheduled to hear arguments Friday in Trump's appeal of a jury's finding that he sexually assaulted the writer E. Jean Carroll. She says the Republican attacked her in a department store dressing room in 1996. That jury awarded Carroll \$5 million.

For several days, preparations have been underway in a stately federal courthouse in lower Manhattan for Trump to attend the arguments in person.

Trump's lawyers say the jury's verdict should be tossed because evidence was allowed at trial that should have been excluded and other evidence was excluded that should have been permitted.

Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, has jabbed at Trump over the jury's verdict, noting repeatedly that he had been found liable for sexual abuse. -AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Muhammad Yunus, Head of Bangladesh's Interim Government

"Obviously, we will try to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I will try if all the heads of state of SAARC nations come together and take a photo. SAARC was formed for a great cause; it now exists only on paper and is not functioning. We have forgotten the name of SAARC; I am trying to revive the spirit of SAARC."

Rich woman escapes as victims' family forgives

Karachi: A woman from a rich and influential business family escaped from punishment after the relatives of the road rage victims forgive her. The woman had killed two people under her swanky SUV in a road rage case.

The incident drew widespread condemnation as the two killed came from lower middle class. The rich lady also injured three other motorcyclists on the main Karsaz Road in the city as she lost control of her car.

The accident on August 19 garnered lot of attention on social media and became a raging debate on television channels as videos of Natasha Danish appearing disoriented and unrepentant over her actions went viral.

As Natasha Danish hit Imran Arif and his daughter Amna Arif from behind, their motorcycle went flying, according to videos of the incident shared on social media and by the police. Imran used to sell pa-

pers to shops while his daughter was employed in a private firm.

After the hearing at a Sessions Court earlier on Friday, Barrister Uzair Ghouri, representing the bereaved families, told the media outside the court that they (the families) had forgiven the driver in the name of Allah.

The defence lawyer had claimed after the incident that the accused had mental health issues. She was under treatment since 2005.

The victims' family submitted an affidavit in the court forgiving the accused.

The agreement between the affected families and the accused were presented in the court of a judicial magistrate where the case was under trial, after which the accused was granted bail.

Soon after social media erupted with blames that the family accepted blood money.

"The court has released Natasha on bail, she can go

anywhere in the world," said defence lawyer barrister Amir Mansoob.

(Box) In Pakistan, under Sharia laws, a victim's family/heirs can forgive an accused even if he or she has caused deaths. The law is called Qisas and Diyat law. Qisas, defined as "punishment by causing similar hurt at the same part of the body of the convict," and diyat meaning, "compensation ... payable to the heirs of the victims." -PTI

EDITORIAL

Divided House

Ahead of critical state elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faces a wave of internal discontent and defections. What was once a formidable political juggernaut, steered by the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the strategic acumen of Home Minister Amit Shah, now grapples with a series of challenges that threaten to undermine its dominance in states. These elections, which come after the BJP's reduced majority in the 2024 general election, will test the party's ability to maintain internal cohesion within their state units.

The defections and discontent within the BJP units appear to reflect a disconnect between the party's central leadership and its regional cadres.

In Haryana, a state that has traditionally oscillated between the BJP and the Congress, the saffron party faces a grave situation after being buffeted by headwinds of dissent following the release of its first list of 67 candidates. At least 12 leaders quit the party in protest.

The BJP's struggle in Haryana stems from its historically weak base in a state dominated by Congress and the INLD. Its breakthrough in 2014, driven by the Modi wave and a strategic non-Jat coalition, faded by 2019. Despite ruling for nearly a decade, the BJP still lacks a strong local leader, relying heavily on Modi's appeal, which now seems to be losing its impact.

In Maharashtra, the BJP, allied with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, lent itself open to accusations of opportunism and a lack of ideological consistency after inducting Ajit Pawar's NCP. The problem of plenty is plaguing the party with loyalists questioning the party's candidate selection and strategic direction. The BJP's problems have been exacerbated by defections to the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP). With key figures in the party reportedly engaging with Sharad Pawar, further defections loom large.

In Jharkhand, the BJP has struggled to mount a cohesive opposition in face of the formidable challenge of the JMM. The saffron party has been plagued by infighting and the defection of key tribal leaders who have accused the BJP of neglecting regional issues.

In Jammu & Kashmir, the BJP's ambitions of cementing its position following the abrogation of Article 370 have hit a wall. Dissatisfaction is rising among BJP leaders over the party's choice to field candidates in only eight of sixteen seats in the first phase of the elections. This selective approach is perceived as a lack of commitment to the Valley, intensifying discontent with the central leadership. In several states, the BJP's reliance on defectors and the marginalization of local leaders in favour of high-profile outsiders have alienated core supporters and disrupted the party's organizational cohesion. Furthermore, the party's attempts to balance national ambitions with state-specific realities have often led to conflicting strategies and inconsistent messaging. As the party heads into these crucial assembly elections, it faces a critical test of its ability to manage internal dissent, reconcile competing interests, and present a coherent vision to voters.

GUEST COLUMN

The Migration Crisis: Germany's Social and Political Reckoning



By Christoph Ernst

Whoever is surprised about the election results to the German states of Thuringia and Saxony which saw the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) make stunning gains, should consider what has been happening to Germany in the past nine years. Enforced Islamic mass migration is a minority agenda of the cultural Left, but the majority of the population is fed-up with it, signalling a brewing conflict between post-democratic elites in Berlin and Brussels and the general public.

Nobody knows how many people migrated to Germany over the last nine years. Estimates vary. At least four million. Maybe six. The newcomers are predominantly young men, from very different cultural backgrounds than the Christian natives.

In August 2015, Angela Merkel opened Germany's borders to all Syrian refugees, the migrants then piling on the Balkan route, effectively suspending asylum statutes and selling it to the public as a humanitarian act. This move aligned with former UN migration chief Peter Sutherland's vision of revitalizing Europe's population by bringing in young people from the Middle East. Sutherland had announced in September 2015 that Germany would accept at least 3.2 million people by 2021.

Hardly anyone in Germany knew of the plan. Even members of Merkel's cabinet believed she was merely providing generous emergency aid. Only when the borders stayed open and the 'refugees' kept flooding in, it dawned on some that she

was following an inverted colonization scheme designed by the UN and key players of the European Union (EU) in Brussels.

Neither Sutherland nor Merkel considered grave the socio-cultural consequences of the venture. Maybe they did and had ulterior motives. In any case, it did neither Germany nor Europe any good. Germany is a welfare state. As Milton Friedman pointed out, welfare states aren't compatible with open borders. For people from poor countries, however, free monthly benefits from the German state are often equivalent to more than a year's average salary at home.

In 2023, variations of 'Mohammed' were among the top names for newborn boys in many major German cities. Over half of Germany's social expenses were directed toward newly arrived migrants, even as impoverished pensioners struggled. Simultaneously, about 2.6 lakh highly-skilled Germans, largely young professionals, left the country, driven away by high taxes, low wages, and declining security—potentially undermining the future economic backbone of the nation.

Meanwhile, German municipalities were bursting at the seams. German municipalities were overwhelmed as container camps for young men from Syria and Afghanistan were established in small villages, often against local opposition. Rather than addressing the growing crisis, the government continued to incentivize migration. In July 2024, a new law allowed immigrants to gain dual citizenship and voting rights after just three years. The integration commissioner, of Syrian descent, announced this in Arabic on 'X' from Cairo.

The ruling coalition hopes that these 'prey Germans' will support their parties, but this approach effectively disenfranchises the native population, devalues citizenship, and undermines the foundations of their once liberal and democratic society.

Germany's immigration policy is equally self-destructive on other levels.



Confronted with the supposed western 'decadence,' upset Muslims tend to revert to their 'religious roots' and radicalize.

This is followed by a parallel increase in Jew-hatred and a steep rise in crime. Young Muslims are three to four times more 'criminogenic' than their German counterparts. Gang rapes and knife attacks, rare in pre-2015 Germany, are seeing a revival. Simultaneously, critics of Islam face threats and entire neighbourhoods are under the thrall of the imported religious dress-code. Discussing these issues is taboo, with anyone who does labelled as 'right-wing,' 'racist,' or 'Islamophobic.' Muslim immigration breeds false political correctness and kills free speech. While thousands of migrants unmolested by the police openly celebrate Adolf Hitler, wish Jews into gas chambers and call for the introduction of Sharia law and the Caliphate, the government is denouncing the opposition AfD as the key threat to democracy and a Nazi-party revenant. The AfD is 'right-wing' alright, but that is largely due to incessant demonization by established parties.

Meanwhile, it is not just liberal-minded Muslims, under attack by self-proclaimed jihadists and their left-wing allies, but anybody openly sceptical of Islam is under threat.

The election results in Thuringia and Saxony must be seen against this background. They reflect nine years of unchecked, ideology driven, state-sponsored mass-migration. Germans, generally

more compliant than the French, are increasingly fed up with state-imposed multiculturalism, sanitized language, climate alarmism, and identity politics. East Germans, having endured 40 years of Socialist propaganda and double-standards, are particularly resistant to such narratives compared to their Western counterparts. The relentless urge of the enlightened few to 'educate' them in identity-politics nauseates them.

The anointed circles in Berlin refuse to grasp this. The Left-Green establishment, the media, the state-subsidized cultural sector and their narcissistic bubble of 'fat cats' are in a different galaxy than the majority. They behave like the French aristocracy on the eve of the Revolution, without vaguely possessing the charms of Marie Antoinette.

Many left-wing voters also oppose unchecked migration. The Christian Democrats face a dilemma: if they block the AfD and ally with the left, they risk alienating their own supporters. Weekend after next, there are elections in Brandenburg. Should the Christian Democrats move Leftwards, it would only strengthen the AfD and cement the abyss between the populace and the ruling caste. Then, things could get nasty!

(The author is an historian and novelist who writes historically-aware crime fiction. He is currently working on a book on Germany's migration crisis. Views personal)

SATTIRE WITH SWAG



STATES WATCH

Quelling the Naxal menace in the 'Red Corridor'

With 159 Maoist cadres neutralized in 2024 alone, the protracted Naxalite insurgency faces a severe setback, a factor being attributed to enhance security coordination between central and state security forces and effective operations.

At least 15 Naxal cadre – six in an encounter in Telangana's Bhadradi Kothagudem district and a further nine in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada-Bijapur region – were killed in encounters with security forces, suggesting a marked decline of Naxal activity in the so-called 'Red Corridor' which spans the mineral-rich, impoverished regions of central and eastern India.

Chhattisgarh, once the movement's epicentre, has seen a substantial reduction in violence, from 355 incidents in 2020 to 245 in 2024. The deployment of sophisticated tactics in the dense Bastar jungles, a Naxalite stronghold, has dismantled crucial supply lines and captured key leaders. Local police, supported by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and specialized units like the Greyhounds, are now adept at navigating the challenging terrain.

A prime reason is that the government's counterinsur-

gency strategy has evolved from a purely militaristic approach to a more nuanced one. This strategy, encapsulated in the



security forces. The District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds, aimed at redirecting a portion of mining revenue into affected communities, have started showing results. In Chhattisgarh, DMF funds have been used to build schools, hospitals, and provide drinking water, benefiting thousands of villagers who once saw little gain from the state.

Yet, vigilance and a nuanced strategy are essential to prevent a resurgence and address the underlying grievances catalysing the insurgency. The insurgency, while significantly weakened, is not eradicated. Civil society organizations have raised concerns about the repression of activists and tribals, arguing that such actions could increase disenchantment and inadvertently bolster the Maoist cause.

The success in quelling Naxalism, particularly in Chhattisgarh, is a testament to the effectiveness of an integrated approach combining security, development, and social outreach.

Yet, it serves as a cautionary tale that highlights the importance of vigilance, adaptive strategy, and continued focus on addressing the socioeconomic disparities that fuel such movements. The lessons learned from the country's battle against Naxalism will be crucial in shaping its broader counterinsurgency and internal security policies. The 'Red Corridor,' once a symbol of defiance, is fading — but maintaining this status requires ongoing commitment and careful management of both security and developmental efforts.

Sweden to end screen time for children under two

Sweden says children under the age of two should not be exposed to any digital screens. The recommendations, issued by the Scandinavian country's public health agency earlier this month as a new school year begins, are the latest in a worldwide effort to limit screen time for young children.

The coronavirus lockdowns exacerbated the problem as schools turned to Zoom for distance-learning and parents relied on TV shows and movies to keep their children occupied while they worked from home.

What does Sweden say?

Sweden suggests that toddlers should not have any exposure to digital screens, including television. The recommendations ease slightly as the children age: From 2 to 5 years

old, they should have a maximum of one hour a day in front of a screen, while for youngsters aged 6 to 12 it's two hours. Teenagers should have no more than three hours of screen time a day.

Sweden's suggestions came after research found that children reported negative effects like poorer sleep, depression and limited physical activity with high use of digital devices.

What other countries are doing?

Similar recommendations have come out of other countries as well, including the United States, Ireland, Canada, Australia and France.

France has the strictest suggestions so far, saying children under 3 should not have any time in front of screens. The recommendation comes from a report published in

April that was commissioned by President Emmanuel Macron.

Ireland and the US say babies and toddlers can engage in video calls with family and friends - though Canada, Australia and Sweden do not make such distinctions.

What about cellphone bans?

Cellphone bans are already in place at many schools across the United States. Cellphone pouches, lockers and bins have grown in popularity to help carry out the prohibitions.

But the bans aren't always enforced, and students often find ways to bend the rules, like hiding phones on their laps. Some parents have expressed concerns that bans could cut them off from their kids if there is an emergency, such as a school shooting.



1



2



3



4

KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 A giant 'pookkalam' (floral carpets) laid as part of the Onam festival, in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.
- 2 A newly-inducted police constable with her family members during the passing out parade in Nagpur on Friday.
- 3 A woman takes a selfie as she lies in a pool of plastic balls at the Blow Up Experience installation, part of an exhibit of inflatable art and technology, in Montevideo, Uruguay on Friday.
- 4 Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the winners of National Teachers' Award 2024, in New Delhi on Friday.
- 5 Workers during the construction of a glass bridge which will connect Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Thiruvalluvar Statue, in Kanyakumari on Wednesday.

All Pictures PTI, AP



5

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Say & accept 'no' sometimes; it can be empowering & liberating



By
Aditi Pai



Around a decade ago, I read the book *The Power of No: Because One Little Word Can Bring Health, Abundance, and Happiness* by James Altucher which talks about how a “well-placed no will save you time and trouble.” Ever since, the ability to refuse a request and to accept rejection has caught my attention and each time I chance upon any piece that addresses this issue, my eyes and mind open up even more. I have lapped up quotes by spiritual gurus; listened to videos by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and Eckhart Tolle and read pieces on how the ability to politely turn down a request can save you energy, time and stress and also help set healthy boundaries.

Be it spiritual gurus, life coaches or mental health experts, they will all tell you how empowering it can be to refuse a request—now that

request can be an extra project at work, a loan you can ill-afford, emotional demands or even a relationship. On occasion, I still find it cumbersome and difficult to say the golden word—no. After all, aren't we all secretly people pleasers?

But it's relatively easier to say 'no' than to accept no. We've been raised in a culture of always saying yes and hearing yes. And yes, that's what we subconsciously teach our children as well. “Don't take no for an answer” is what modern corporate coaches or over ambitious parents will tell their children. It begins in childhood—a child demands, parents give in, sometimes after the initial hesitance or posturing. Rarely do we see parents reason it out with the child explaining why something cannot—and will not—be done or given. Loans are sought to buy a new bicycle or Xbox, screen time deadlines are extended when the teenager throws a tantrum and monthly allowances see a raise when the child cajoles the indulgent parents. Turning down a partner's desire for a movie night can lead to fights and refusing to gift your wife an expensive solitaire is projected by marketing gimmicks as lack of love. And there we see the beginning of a problem that has the potential to snowball into a dysfunctional society. Our inability to take

no for an answer.

The rising crimes against women are a result of multiple factors but can find roots in this very inability to take no from a woman in a highly patriarchal society. Think acid attacks by jilted lovers, rapes of girlfriends who've refused the partner's sexual advances, merciless beatings when the wife's refused to cook her husband's favourite meal and murders when women have only said a simple word—which is 'no'. Hearing 'no' stirs anger and resentment within us especially when we believe that we deserve what we are asking for. Accepting refusal shifts the power balance which a people hate. A sense of entitlement or superiority, be it in class, position or gender, gets shattered when someone refuses to give us what we are demanding. The response can range from silent sulking to an argument to a show-down to crime in an extreme uncontrolled and unhealthy mind.

Acceptance is quite often the key to happiness and peace. And probably a state of being that can prevent unnecessary strife and crime. Parents can put this in their parenting rulebook—teaching their children to refuse and accept rejection.

With time you realise that the tiny word, 'no' is actually quite liberating!

How often do we like to hear the word 'no'? Not very often for sure. We hate to say no and we feel offended when someone says 'no' to us. And therein lies the problem for most of our misery, anger, hatred, heartbreak and in extreme cases, crime.

FILMS & ME

Why Is Bollywood Silent?



By
Shoma A. Chatterji

Before the Hema Committee Report, The Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) was formed by a group of female actors from the Malayalam film industry after the assault of a female actor by a male colleague in 2017. WCC had insisted that A.M.M.A (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) should have an IC, but then there was the debate about having ICs (Internal Committees) at each production unit. However, the recent uproar led to the resignation of acclaimed director Ranjith, the head of the Kerala Chalachitra Academy chairman handed his resignation, bowing to Kerala government pressure two days after Bengali actor Sreelekha Mitra accused him of having touched her inappropriately. This was followed by superstar Mohan Babu as head of A.M.M.A. along with his colleagues who resigned from the organization.

“It has been planned to recommend to the government that forming of IC should be made mandatory while registering the name of a movie and the existence of the IC should be specified while call sheets are given to the cast and crew,” said Sandhya, who had been guiding the WCC legally to form ICs in the film industry.

However, though women from general professions do carry complaints to the police, the molester and the harasser goes scot-free, and their voices are silenced at the outset, in case of women working in the film industry, from a costume designer to an art director to a junior artist or top actress, there is a collective wall of silence that stops the victims from even approaching the police because their very employment in the film industry is directly

linked to their compromise to sexual acts by men in power because if they refuse, they will be quietly and not so quietly will be ousted out of the industry.

The Hema Committee report released on August 27, has exposed the rampant abuse of power and status by power-wielding men in the Malayalam film industry. It states, “The Indian society is at a critical juncture where it is faced with the issue of a nefarious rape culture that normalises sexual abuse of women in the workplace. In light of the recent Kolkata gang rape-murder case as well as the Malayalam film industry exposé, it is important that we demand a change and justice for the survivors and victims of sexual violence. This is not just an isolated issue. Rape culture spares none and makes the marginalised even more vulnerable.”

Interestingly, the Report is based on real-life experiences of forced sexual harassment made by actors and other women who have been victims in the hands of very powerful men who hold control of the film industry in Kerala.

Two weeks after the Hema Committee report sent shockwaves across several Indian film industries, artistes from the Kannada film industry (KFI) have responded to the ongoing issue. After actor Sruthi Hariharan demanded a panel in Sandalwood similar to that of Hema Committee, members of Film Industry For Rights and Equality (FIRE) have asked the Karnataka government to constitute a committee headed by a retired judge to study and report on issues faced by women, including sexual harassment in the industry.

FIRE was formed during the #MeToo wave in 2018 when Sruthi accused actor Arjun Sarja of sexual harassment. A not-for-profit organisation under the Societies Act to tackle sexual harassment and casting couch in the industry, FIRE is led by filmmaker Kavita Lankesh, president of the panel. Actor Chetan Ahimsa serves as the secretary. Incidentally, Kavita Lankesh is the sister of Gowri Lankesh who was brutally murdered some years ago.

There is also the allegation by the VIP perpetrators is that there is no sexual harassment as sexual relationships are consensual that is, based on the 'consent' of the women concerned. The word 'consensual' is an adjective derived from the noun 'consensus.' English is a tricky language where words often have subjective interpretations that differ from person to person and from place to place while in some cases, over a period of time, they acquire definite meanings. The word “consensual” has almost exclusively come to be associated between two or more people who mutually agree to sexual activity, agenda unknown.

The main difference between sexual harassment at the workplace and the casting couch lies in the difference between forced sex and consensual sex. But in some cases, as Weinstein's famous and not-so-famous victims have stated, “consensual sex” can also be forced. But then, it becomes a question of the powerful versus the vulnerable and in these cases, sexual pressure and blackmail is a war between the powerful and the vulnerable, where the “vulnerable” is not necessarily weak and without options.

It is rather strange that Bollywood, the most internationally popular film industry in India, maintains an explosive silence on the very phrase “sexual harassment at the workplace” as if it does not exist. But it does. The same goes for the Bengali, Marathi and other film industries where women prefer to remain silent for the fear of being thrown out of the industry following which, it would perhaps be impossible for them to get another job. Had they backed the Hema Committee Report, the movement would have been much stronger than it is becoming now.

This is a never-ending story filled with stories of exploitation by powerful men conditioned by patriarchy of women brought up to believe that they are weak which they are not. The only way to close this is by quoting Martin Luther King who said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

US Open

Pegula faces Sabalenka in final

New York: Jessica Pegula shrugged off a sluggish start and came back from a set and a break down at the U.S. Open to defeat Karolina Muchova 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 for a berth in her first Grand Slam final.

The No. 6-seeded Pegula, a 30-year-old from New York, has won 15 of her past 16 matches and will meet No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka for the title on Saturday.

Sabalenka, last year's runner-up to Coco Gauff at Flushing Meadows, returned to the championship match by holding off a late push to beat No. 13 Emma Navarro of the U.S. 6-3, 7-6 (2).

Things did not look promising for Pegula early: Muchova, the 2023 French Open runner-up but unseeded after missing about 10 months because of wrist surgery, employed every ounce of her versatility and creativity, the traits that make her so hard to deal with on any surface.

The slices. The touch at the net. The serve-and-volleying. Ten of the match's first 12 winners came off her racket. The first set lasted 28 minutes, and Muchova won 30 of its 44 points.

Muchova grabbed eight of the first nine games and was one point from leading 3-0 in the second set. But she couldn't convert a break chance there, flubbing a forehand volley, and everything changed.

Quickly, the 52nd-ranked Muchova went from not being able to miss a shot to not being able to make one. And Pegula turned it on, demonstrating the confident brand of tennis she used to eliminate No. 1 Iga Swiatek, a five-time major champion, in straight sets on Wednesday. Pegula had been 0-6 in major quarterfinals before that breakthrough.

Took Pegula a while to play that well Thursday, but once she got going, whoa, did she ever. All told, she collected nine of 11 games, a span that allowed her to not merely flip the second set but race to a 3-0 edge in the third.

-AP



Vikram Rathour in New Zealand coaching staff

Auckland: Former India batting coach Vikram Rathour and Sri Lanka spin great Rangana Herath were on Friday added to New Zealand's coaching staff ahead of Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

New Zealand will play a one-off Test against Afghanistan before heading to Sri Lanka for a two-Test series. The one-off Test against the Afghans will be held at the Greater Noida Sports Complex Ground from September 9 to 13.

The Kiwis are also due to play a three-Test series against India in October-November.

While Herath has been appointed for Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka as New Zealand's spin bowling coach, Rathour will be with the Kiwi side only for the contest against Afghanistan. Rathour had a successful run as India's batting coach under head coach Rahul Dravid. His tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup win in June this year. The addition of Rathour and Herath was announced by New Zealand Cricket on their website.

"Sri Lankan spin maestro Rangana Herath has been appointed as spin-bowling coach for the three upcoming Tests in Asia, replacing former Pakistan spinner and coach Saqlain Mushtaq who was originally announced to fill the temporary role before pulling out to take up a position with the Pakistan Cricket Board," New Zealand Cricket said in a statement.

Head coach Gary Stead said, "We're really excited to introduce Rangana and Vikram into our Test group."



Army personnel show their skills during 'Know Your Army' programme at Army ground, in Ranchi on Friday.

Pic-PTI

Errani, Vavassori win mixed doubles

New York: Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori won the U.S. Open mixed doubles title with a 7-6 (0), 7-5 victory Thursday over Taylor Townsend and Donald Young, who fell just short of a Grand Slam title in his final match before retiring.

Errani, who won a career Grand Slam in women's doubles with fellow Italian Roberta Vinci, added her first career mixed doubles title to the Olympic gold medal in women's doubles she won last month with Jasmine Paolini.

-AP

Australia fires coach

Sydney: Swimming Australia has fired coach Michael Palfrey over comments made at the Paris Olympics where he said he hoped a South Korean athlete would beat Australian swimmers.

Palfrey told South Korean television he hoped South Korea's Kim Woo-min would win the men's 400-meter freestyle in Paris, an event that featured Australians Sam Short and Elijah Winnington.

"I really hope he can win, but ultimately I really hope he swims well," Palfrey said in Paris during the Games. He added, "Go Korea."

Swimming Australia said in a statement Friday



that it had terminated Palfrey "due to a breach of his employment agreement."

It added Palfrey brought "himself into disrepute and causing serious damage to his and Swimming Australia's reputation, and adversely affecting Swimming Australia's interests."

The statement said Palfrey would retain his coach

accreditation status.

Palfrey, who previously worked with Kim as an adviser, was told along with Australia's other swimming coaches to end any association with non-Australian swimmers in March, four months prior to the Olympic Games.

Germany's Lukas Martens won the gold medal in the men's 400-meter freestyle, with Winnington claiming silver ahead of Kim, who won bronze.

Australia head swim coach Rohan Taylor had called the comments by Palfrey "un-Australian" and said he might be sent home, but he was eventually allowed to remain in Paris.

-AP

Shourya Saini bags gold

Hanover: Shourya Saini scripted a World Deaf Championship record with a score of 452.4 on way to securing gold in men's 50m Rifle 3-Positions event here on Friday.

He had made it to the final with a qualification score of 580.

It is Saini's second medal in the competition, following his silver in the men's 10m Air Rifle event. Among the other Indians, Kushagra Singh sealed a fourth-place finish in the final.

Chetan Sapkal settled for bronze in men's 25m Rapid-fire pistol, taking India's medals tally in to 17 (five gold, seven silver and five bronze).

Facilities For Cricketers On Mumbai Grounds SC junks plea against HC order

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea challenging the Bombay High Court's order which had disposed of a petition seeking directions to provide drinking water and other facilities to cricket players during practice or unofficial matches on public grounds in Mumbai.

"What kind of a PIL (public interest litigation) is this? Cricketers will take care if they are not provided toilets. Why an advocate should be bothered about it," a bench of Justices A S Oka and A G Masih observed.

The bench was hearing a petition filed by a lawyer, who had challenged the high court's June last year order disposing of his petition.

In his PIL filed before the high court, he had sought directions to the Mumbai Cricket Association and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to provide drinking water and other facilities to players during practice or unofficial matches on public grounds.

The top court said the high court was right in not entertaining the PIL at the

instance of the petitioner. "We concur with the view taken by the high court in paragraphs 3 and 5 of the impugned order," the bench said, while dismissing the plea.

In its order, the high court had said there was no reason given by the petitioner why the players cannot seek redressal of their grievance on their own.

The high court had also clarified that if and when this cause would be raised by any aggrieved player, the same would be considered on its own merits.

-PTI



Australia's Vanessa Low competes in the Para Athletics Women's Long Jump - T63 Final at the Stade de France at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris, France on Thursday.

Pic-APPTI

Tanisha-Dhruv bow out of Taipei Open

Taipei: India's Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila bowed out of the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament after a hard-fought loss in the mixed doubles quarterfinals here on Friday.

The Indian duo lost 20-22, 12-21 to Thailand's fourth-seeded pair Pakkapon Teeraratsakul and Phataimas Muenwong in a match lasting just over half an hour.

Tanisha and Dhruv, ranked 97th in the world, started strong, leading 6-3 and later held a 19-16 advantage in the first game.

However, their Thai opponents, ranked 28th globally, mounted a comeback with a four-point burst to earn a game point. The Indian pair saved one point but ultimately lost the opening game after their rivals secured two more crucial points. In the second game, Pakkapon and Phataimas took control, establishing an 11-6 lead at the mid-game break.

-PTI

Neeraj qualifies for finale



New Delhi: India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world.

The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 14 and 15 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday.

The 26-year-old is two

points adrift of Czechia's Jakub Vadlech. Grenada's Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber occupy the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively. Peters had pipped Weber in the Zurich meet.

Chopra, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and added a silver to his kitty in the Paris edition last month, has been struggling with his fitness this season.

The Indian finished second in the Lausanne Diamond Leg, bested by Peters, who threw 90.61m. In Paris Olympics, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had taken the gold with a monster throw of 92.97m.

-PTI