

# THE PERFECT VOICE



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## Sunita, Atishi among possible Kejriwal successors

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement to resign after two days kicked up a strong buzz on Sunday over the names of his wife Sunita and his ministers Atishi and Gopal Rai as his possible replacement.

Kejriwal, who was released on bail on Friday from the Tihar Jail in the excise policy graft case, said that he would hold a



Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia as his replacement, saying he will also not hold the post unless given clean chit by the people of Delhi.

Although there was no official comment from the AAP on the new CM chief minister after Kejriwal's resignation, sources said the CM's wife Sunita Kejriwal could be a potential candidate for replacement in the post.

A party functionary said when Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21, Sunita played a crucial role in the AAP's campaigning for the recent Lok Sabha

**Probable CMs**  
Sunita Kejriwal  
Atishi  
Gopal Rai  
Saurabh Bhardwaj  
Imran Hussain  
Kailash Gahlot

polls in Delhi, Gujarat and Haryana. She is a former Indian Revenue Services (IRS) officer who understands the working of the government as well, he reasoned. However, another senior AAP leader claimed that an MLA of the party will become the new CM.

Kejriwal said the name of the next CM will be de-

ceded in a meeting of the party MLAs on Tuesday.

The potential candidates for the CM's post also include the names of ministers Kailash Gahlot and Saurabh Bharadwaj.

There was also speculation that the AAP may bring forward some SC or Muslim legislator to hold the CM's post in view of the Delhi Assembly polls. There are 12 reserved constituencies and nearly half a dozen seats with significant minority population in the city.

Among the probables for the CM's post, Atishi was considered head and shoulders above others for hold-

**“I will resign after two days and hold the post again only after the people of Delhi give me a certificate of honesty. People should vote for me in the Delhi Assembly polls early next year if they think I'm honest, otherwise not.”**

**Arvind Kejriwal**

ing maximum number of portfolios in the Delhi government, including education, finance, PWD, revenue and services, and is considered close to Kejriwal. She is also a frontline spokesperson of the party defending the AAP government and Kejriwal, and attacking the BJP in her regular press conferences.

Gopal Rai is one of the senior most party leaders, commanding respect about being there in government since the AAP came to power for the first time in 2013.

-PTI

## Three IPS suspended over 'harassing' Mumbai model

**Amaravati:** The Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday issued separate orders suspending three senior IPS officers, including a DG rank, for their alleged involvement in "hastily arresting" and "harassing" a Mumbai-based actor-cum-model without proper investigation in a case filed against her.

Former intelligence chief P Sitharama Anjaneyulu (DG rank), former Vijayawada Police Commissioner Kranti Rana Tata (IG rank) and Vishal Gunni (SP rank), then Deputy Commissioner of Police (Vijayawada) were suspended after an inquiry revealing their role in the alleged harassment of the model. She accused the police officials of threatening her with dire consequences during the previous government if she did not withdraw a case she earlier filed against a top executive of a corporation in Mumbai.

The model was arrested earlier this year during the previous regime based on a complaint by a YSR Congress leader who accused her of cheating. The then intelligence chief, instructed the two other officials to arrest her, although no crime registered against her as of that date.

## Maha polls likely in second week of November: Shinde

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said the state assembly polls are expected to be held in the second week of November and seat-sharing among the ruling allies would be finalised in the next 8 to 10 days.

A two-phase poll would be preferable for the 288-member state assembly, Shinde said in an informal chat with mediapersons at his official residence 'Varsha' in Mumbai.

The Mahayuti government, comprising the Shiv Sena led by Shinde, BJP and the Ajit Pawar-headed NCP, was focusing on development and welfare measures and was getting good response from people, he said.

"Elections are likely in the second week of November. A two-phase election would be preferable. Merit and good strike rate will be the criteria for seat-sharing among the Mahayuti allies," the CM said.

The seat-sharing will be finalised in 8 to 10 days, he added.

Shinde said he can see support for the government among women and asserted his was a government of the common man.

"We have struck a balance between development and welfare schemes," he said.

The appointment letters have been given to 1.5 lakh youth for jobs under the skilled training programme for which they will get a stipend from Rs 6,000 to Rs 10,000. The target is to cover 10 lakh youth, the CM said.

Shinde said 1.6 crore women have so far got financial assistance under the government's Ladki Bahin scheme.

"We plan to reach out to 2.5 crore women," he said.

At present, women beneficiaries of the government's flagship 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Ladki Bahin Yojana' get Rs 1,500 per month.

Shinde also said his government aims to make Mumbai slum-free and ensure affordable housing for all.

All government agencies, like the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA), the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra (CIDCO) and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), have been roped-in for the redevelopment of slums, he added.

## Eight died trying to cross the English Channel

**Nice:** At least eight people died during a failed attempt to cross the English Channel from northern France, French maritime authorities said on Sunday.

The incident occurred Saturday just before midnight when authorities spotted a boat, carrying dozens, in distress near a beach in the northern town of Ambleteuse.

A French rescue ship was deployed to the area and rescue services offered medical assistance to 53 migrants on the beach, a statement from the French maritime authorities in charge of the Channel and the North Sea said.

"Despite the emergency care provided, eight people have died," the statement said. No people were discovered during the search at sea, it added.

Six people were taken to hospital "in relative emergency," including a 10-month-old baby with hypothermia, Jacques Billant, the Pas-de-Calais prefect, told French media on Sunday. He said survivors

of the accident come from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran.

Survivors of the tragedy have been taken to the sports hall in Ambleteuse, according to a statement from the prefecture of Pas-de-Calais region. Prosecutor's office in Boulogne-sur-mer has opened an investigation into the accident.

The incident Saturday occurred nearly two weeks after a boat carrying migrants ripped apart in the English Channel as they attempted to reach Britain from northern France, plunging dozens into the treacherous waterway and leaving 13 dead, officials said. British officials were quick to express sadness over another English Channel incident.

"It's awful," Foreign Secretary David Lammy told the BBC. "It's a further loss of life."

The new Labour Party government has pledged to crack down on criminal gangs plying the channel trade.

-AP



**Students dressed as Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi take part in a human chain on Mysore Road, organised as part of 'International Democracy Day' celebrations in Bengaluru on Sunday.**

## Kerala man died of Nipah virus

**Malappuram:** The 24-year-old man who died recently at a private hospital in Malappuram was infected with the Nipah virus, Kerala Health Minister Veena George said on Sunday.

George said the suspicion of Nipah infection arose after a death investi-

gation conducted by the Regional Medical Officer.

"The available samples were immediately sent for testing and it turned out to be positive," the minister said in a video message.

The Malappuram native who reached the state from Bengaluru died on Septem-

ber 9, after which his available samples were sent for testing to Kozhikode Medical college hospital laboratory.

Malappuram health officials said the results from Kozhikode medical college indicated a positive result.

-PTI

## Bangladeshi, Rohingya major threat to Jharkhand: Modi

**Jamshedpur:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the ruling JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of encouraging Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration for vote bank politics.

He asserted that these infiltrators pose a significant threat to the state by altering the demographic landscape of Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions.

"Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators have become a major threat to Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions. The demography of these regions is changing fast. The tribal population is on the decline. The infiltrators are establishing control of the panchayat system, grabbing land, indulging in atrocities on daughters of the state... Each Jharkhand resident is feeling unsafe," the Prime Minister said while addressing the 'Parivartan Maharally' of the BJP at Gopal Maidan here.

He also alleged that the JMM was "supporting infil-



trators" and that "illegal immigrants from the neighbouring country have managed to gain influence over the ruling party."

Modi criticised the Jharkhand government for refusing to acknowledge the ongoing infiltration, despite a High Court order to establish an independent panel to investigate the "infiltration of Bangladeshi immigrants" in the state.

Modi termed the JMM, RJD and the Congress as the "biggest enemies of Jharkhand", asserting that these parties were "power-hungry" and "indulged in vote bank politics."

The Prime Minister alleged that the RJD was still

# All doctors to have unique IDs, NMC starts registration

**New Delhi:** The National Medical Commission (NMC) has initiated the process of registration of all MBBS doctors eligible to practice in India on a recently launched portal, as a part of which all medical practitioners will have a unique ID.

The National Medical Register (NMR) is a dynamic database and will be a central repository of all registered doctors, in which their authenticity is verified by Aadhaar IDs.

"The NMR is ready for registration of registered medical practitioners (RMPs) with immediate effect," Dr. B. Srinivas, Secretary of the NMC said.

All the MBBS doctors who are registered on Indian Medical Register (IMR) have to register again on the

NMR, the NMC said in a public notice recently, and added that all medical colleges/institutions, state medical councils (SMCs) are inter-linked on the portal.

Some data will be visible to the public and others will only be visible to Ethics & Medical Registration Board (EMRB) of the NMC, SMC, National Board of Examinations (NBE) and medical institutions and RMPs as per requirements, the notice said.

To start the registration process, doctors would need their Aadhaar IDs, a digital copy of their MBBS degree certificate and the registration certificate of the State Medical Council/Medical Council of India where the doctor got registered the first time.

Additional details like registration



and qualification credentials can be manually entered and submitted through the portal.

Following this, the application is automatically forwarded to the respective SMC for verification. The SMC would then forward the application to the relevant college or institute for further review. Upon successful verification, the application is sent to the NMC.

After verification by NMC, a unique NMR ID would be issued. During this process, doctors can opt to join the Healthcare Provider Registry which will link them to the broader digital healthcare ecosystem, the notice said.

Through this portal, all stakeholders, including SMCs and educational institutions can log in and verify applications from a single

platform. The NMR portal offers a variety of features, including the ability to add additional qualifications, track applications, suspend licenses, and issue NMR ID cards and digital doctor certificates, it said.

Currently, registration using the MBBS degree is only available on the portal and adding additional qualification(s) would be made available soon, the NMC said.

"Till date, there was a lack of comprehensive data that could provide a detailed and holistic picture of aspects like total numbers of doctors in the country, those that have left the country, those who have lost their license to practice, or the numbers and details of doctors that have lost their lives.

The launch of the NMR will ensure

the provision of data of its more than 13 lakh doctors," an official had earlier said.

The National Medical Register (NMR) Portal was inaugurated by Union Health Minister J P Nadda on August 23.

"The National Health Register is a much-awaited step in this direction that will strengthen the digital healthcare ecosystem and will ensure quality healthcare to the people of India," Nadda had stated.

The NMC is mandated under Section 31 of the NMC Act, 2019 that Ethics & Medical Registration Board (EMRB) of NMC shall maintain a national register in electronic form containing the name, address, all recognised qualifications possessed by a licensed medical practitioner.

-PTI

# Never aspire to be CM: Uddhav changes tone

By Correspondent

**Ahmednagar:** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said he didn't harbour aspirations to become Maharashtra CM, a remark coming against the backdrop of MVA allies' reluctance to face assembly polls with a CM face.

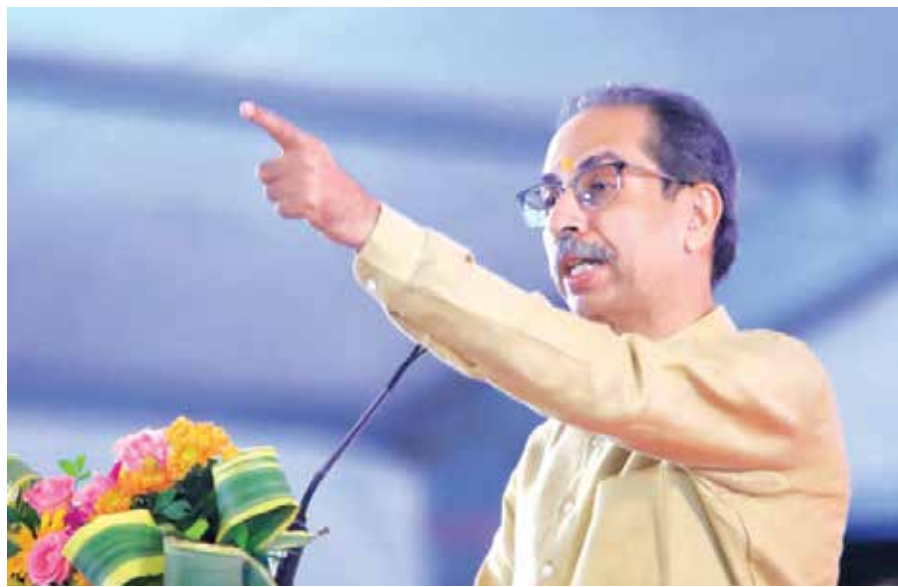
Addressing protesters in Ahmednagar, Thackeray said he didn't aspire to become the chief minister in (November) 2019 also. He was addressing state government employees protesting for the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme.

Notably, Thackeray had last month asked NCP (SP) and Congress to decide on a chief ministerial face for the Maha Vikas Aghadi but failed to get a positive response. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, the chief architect of the MVA, had asserted that there was no need for the MVA to declare a CM face.

The chief ministerial candidate would be decided based on which party wins the maximum number of seats in the alliance, Pawar had said. Thackeray further said the people of Maharashtra were his strength and power. "No one can retire me till you support me," he said.

Hitting out at his bete noire and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Thackeray said those who betrayed their parent party, which enabled their political rise, can also betray the people.

"For this reason, I don't want this government to come to power again. I have no aspirations to be the



**Whether I am in power or not, I feel empowered by the support of the people. Balasaheb (Thackeray) never held a position of power but all powers were wrested with him because of people's support.**  
-Uddhav Thackeray, President, Shiv Sena (UBT)

## Will you trust traitors as your brothers?

**Paithan:** In a veiled attack on ruling Shiv Sena, rival faction leader Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday wondered if women would trust "traitors" as their brothers who have betrayed their parent party. Addressing a gathering in Paithan city, Thackeray alleged traitors are projecting themselves as brothers to seek the support of women, an oblique reference to the Eknath Shinde-led government's monthly money transfer scheme for women.

"Will you trust these people who betrayed their parent political party as your brothers?" he asked. Under the Mukhyamanti Mazi Ladki Bahin Vojana, launched months before the assembly elections, eligible women receive Rs 1,500 per month. Stressing justice delayed is justice denied, Thackeray said he was seeking justice in the court of people who are supreme. "We trust the Supreme Court," Thackeray said, a remark coming in the context of the Shiv Sena

(UBT)'s appeal in the top court in a disqualification case against MLAs of the rival faction. Justifying the protests over the alleged sexual abuse of two girls at a school in Badlapur, the former chief minister referenced to agitations in West Bengal over the rape and murder of a doctor at a Kolkata hospital. Thackeray said the people have the right to seek justice against the delay in filing of an FIR by police in the Badlapur incident. "But police acted against the

protesters," he added. "When we protest we are accused of politicising the issue. Protesters have the right to ask for justice like what is happening in Bengal," the former chief minister said. He said the Thackerays may not be in power but they know how to fulfil the commitments made to the people. "This is our 'gharaneshahi' (dynasty) of honouring commitments," he said in an apparent rebuttal of BJP's criticism of dynasty politics.

chief minister now and even that time as well (November 2019 when the MVA government came to power after elections).

"You can't retire me. Until

I enjoy your support, power is in my hands. The power of people is important," he added.

Thackeray took oath as the chief minister after the

Shiv Sena (undivided) parted ways with its long-time ally, the BJP, and joined hands with the NCP (undivided) and Congress after the assembly elections in

November 2019.

However, he had to resign in June 2022 after Shinde pulled off a coup and toppled the MVA government with the help of the BJP.

## Campaign song gives Ajit Pawar desired hits

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The NCP's debacle in the Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra has left no option before the party president and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar to change the track and adopt a different strategy. A desperate Pawar was looking for some channel through which he can connect with voters. As a part of this new line, he changed his style of functioning.

Ajit Pawar sounded the bugle for the upcoming assembly polls in Maharashtra by holding a public rally in Baramati. In this rally for the first-time people saw a wash of pink hue all around - from giant cutouts to hoardings to clothing.

After this Ajitdada launched the Jan Sanman Yatra to rebuild his political image ahead of the elections. Now the hi-tech way of campaign.

A new campaign song by the NCP is "Dadacha Vada" was released on September 8 and within a day, it had over one crore views. Ajit Pawar released a new campaign song a few weeks ago titled "Kam Karat Aloy, Kam Karat Rahanar". Significantly, this film got over 75 lakh views within a few days of its release.

Regardless of the platform, social media or his statewide Jan Sanman Yatra, Ajit Pawar has concentrated only on the various schemes. Ajit Pawar is directing all of his efforts, driven by politics, into expanding the schemes through which the beneficiary base.

## Pune-Kolhapur Vande Bharat train from today

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off several Vande Bharat trains during his visit to Gujarat on Monday.

The Vande Bharat trains will operate on routes including Kolhapur-Pune, Pune-Hubballi, Nagpur-Secunderabad, Agra Cantt to Banaras, and Durg to Visakhapatnam. The first 20-coach Vande Bharat train will run between Varanasi and Delhi, as per a PMO release.

Meanwhile, the Central Railway stated that the inaugural Kolhapur-Pune Vande Bharat Express will leave Kolhapur at 16.15 hrs on September 16 and reach Pune at 22.40 hrs the same day.

Pune-Hubballi Vande Bharat Express will leave Pune at 16.15 hrs on Monday and reach Hubballi at 23.40 hrs the same day. The Nagpur-Secunderabad Vande Bharat Express will depart Nagpur at 4.15 PM and reach Secunderabad at 11.25 PM the same day, the CR stated.

The Kolhapur-Pune-Kolhapur Vande Bharat Express will run three days per week.

Kolhapur-Pune Vande Bharat Express will run every Thursday, Saturday and Monday effective September 19. It will start from Kolhapur at 8.15 AM and reach its destination Pune at 1.30 PM the same day.

Pune-Kolhapur Vande Bharat Express will be operated every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday effective September 18. It will

depart from Pune at 2.15 PM and reach Kolhapur at 7.40 PM the same day, the CR stated.

The Kolhapur-Pune-Kolhapur Vande Bharat Express will halt at Miraj, Sangli, Kirloskarwadi, Karad and Satara stations.

The Pune-Hubballi-Pune Vande Bharat Express will also run three days per week on Thursday, Saturday and Monday.

With effect from September 19, the Pune-Hubballi Vande Bharat Express will leave Pune station at 14.15 hrs and reach Hubballi at 22.45 hrs the same day. Hubballi-Pune Vande Bharat Express will be operated every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from September 18. The train will leave Hubballi at 5 AM and reach Pune at 1.30 PM the same day with scheduled halts at Satara, Sangli, Miraj, Belagavi and Dharwad stations, the Central Railway said.

Nagpur-Secunderabad-Nagpur Vande Bharat Express will run six days a week, except Tuesday, from Thursday, departing from Nagpur at 5 AM and reaching Secunderabad at 12.15 PM the same day.

The Secunderabad-Nagpur Vande Bharat Express will also run six days a week, except Tuesday, which will leave Secunderabad at 1 PM and reach Nagpur at 8.20 PM the same day. This train will halt at Sevagram, Chandrapur, Ballarshah, Ramagundam and Kazipet stations.

## CRIME WATCH

### Three Nigerians held with drugs

**Vashi:** Three Nigerian nationals have been arrested for alleged possession of mephedrone and cocaine worth Rs 75.4 lakh in Navi Mumbai, police said on Sunday. The accused were nabbed near a temple in Kopar Khairane on Saturday night, senior inspector Sandeep Nigade of the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) said. The accused, Silvasa Nnachor (42), Ejike Donatus Ogugua (40), and Sunday Ezeobi (42), were residents of Kopar Khairane, he said. The ANC team seized 101.52 gm of mephedrone and 201.2 gm of cocaine worth Rs 75.4 lakh from the trio, the official said, adding that a probe is on to find out where the drugs were sourced from and the intended customers. A case has been registered under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he said.

### Mob beats up biker after he attacks woman

**Mumbai:** A mob beat up a motorcyclist after he allegedly pushed a woman pedestrian and attacked her with his helmet in an incident of road rage in south Mumbai, police said on Sunday. The police arrested the biker, Shahen Alam Sheikh (33), and later released him after serving him a notice following the attack on Saturday night. According to the police, the woman was waiting for a taxi on Nizam Street under the JJ flyover when the accused, who was on his motorcycle, hit her leg. After the woman reprimanded him, the accused started verbally abusing her, pushed her on the road and hit her on the head with his motorcycle helmet, the official said.

### 34 held after raid at gambling den

**Mumbai:** The Crime Branch of Mumbai police raided a gambling den in the city's Byculla area in the early hours of Sunday and arrested 34 people besides seizing cash of Rs 14 lakh, an officer said. Acting on inputs, police raided the premises at DP Wadi locality and took four owners of the club, three jockeys, eight staffers and 19 customers into custody, the officer said. Police also confiscated Rs 14.61 lakh of cash and other gambling materials from the spot.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"The only thing that the CM and Deputy CM are doing full time is creating a fake narrative by constantly spreading fake news. An attempt is being made to create religious discord in the state by spreading fake news about what did not happen in Karnataka."**  
-Balasaheb Thorat, Leader, Congress



## BMC prepares for eco friendly immersion

**Mumbai:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is fully prepared for the grand Ganesh idol immersion on Anant Chaturdashi, set to take place on Tuesday, September 17. With an emphasis on eco-friendly practices, BMC has arranged for 204 artificial immersion ponds across Mumbai, alongside 69 natural immersion sites, to ensure a smooth and environmentally conscious celebration of Ganeshotsav.

To help citizens locate these artificial ponds, BMC has introduced a QR code system. The QR code is available on posters and online at BMC portal.



Devotees take part in a procession for immersion of idols of Lord Ganesh during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Karad on Sunday. Pic: PTI

## Panel to establish 'Dhangar', 'Dhangad' as one community



**Mumbai:** The Maharashtra government will form a panel, including three IAS officers, to establish that 'Dhangar' and 'Dhangad' are different names of the same community, said state minister Shambhuraj Desai on Sunday.

Dhangars, a shepherd community from western Maharashtra and the state's Marathwada region, have been demanding its inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category.

The community says it has been deprived of the quota as the centre's database has no mention of 'Dhangar' but instead identifies 'Dhangad' as part of STs. Dhangars are currently on the 'Nomadic Tribe' list. Speaking to reporters

here, Desai said the committee will also have five representatives from the Dhangar community. The government is trying to find an amicable solution to their demands, said Desai, who belongs to the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The minister said the panel will study the existing data and prepare a draft note to establish that 'Dhangar' and 'Dhangad' are different names for the same community. "The draft will be sent to the Advocate General (state's top-most legal official) to ensure that there are no legal hurdles in the future before passing an order declaring 'Dhangar' and 'Dhangad' as the same community," he said.

## Two get 'double' life imprisonment for murder

**Latur:** Two persons were sentenced to "double" life imprisonment by a court in Latur in Maharashtra for killing a couple, an official said on Sunday.

District and Sessions Judge RB Rote, in his order of Friday, convicted Nishant (40) and Nitin Yadav (44) for killing Ashok Raut and Ashwini Yadav on November 9, 2014, the official said.

Nishant and Nitin were sentenced to two life sentences that will run consecutively, public prosecutor Santosh Deshpande said.

It is the first time such double life sentences have been handed down by any Latur court, he said. A total of 13 persons were examined by the prosecution during the trial, including an eyewitness and a doctor who provided expert testimony. -PTI

## Marathwada Liberation Day Ganeshotsav as freedom movement in Nizam-era

**Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar:** The Ganesh festival in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (then Aurangabad) had worked as a public awareness tool about freedom from the Nizam and the British rule, as per a souvenir published by a local body in 1973.

Amid the ongoing 10-day festival, local history researchers told PTI on Sunday that despite restrictions on celebrations in the Nizam-era, people here would find a way to convey to the masses about the freedom movement.

Many a time, the festival came under attack over themes depicted by Ganesh mandals to raise public awareness on various issues, as per the souvenir, a copy of which has been digitised by local history scholar and city-based Chhatrapati Shivaji museum director Shriprakash Purwar.

**September 17, 1948 - Nizam rule ended 1956 - Hyderabad state existed till that year**

Around 1945-46, a theme named 'Azadi ki Raah Par', depicting Mahatma Gandhi keeping his hand on the shoulders of M.A. Jinnah and moving to the temple of Swarajya, created chaos in the city, the souvenir said.

A group of 50-60 persons pelted stones on this display, alleging that sentiments of Muslims were hurt.

After police intervention, the display was opened for public again but under security, the document said.

"Once freed from the Nizam rule in 1948, the festival spread across the city and there was a wave of displays which remained high till 1951," it said.

In the Nizam state, it was tough to speak against the government. Speakers

## Five dead in van accident

**Mumbai:** Five persons were killed and four others injured after a pick-up van collided with a car in Maharashtra's Dhule district on Sunday, police said.

The accident occurred at Dasvel Fata in Shindkheda taluka in the morning, an official said. A pick-up van collided with a car, killing five persons, including three women, he said. Four persons also sustained injuries and are undergoing treatment at a hospital, the official said.

As per preliminary information, the driver of the pick-up van was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident, and he received minor injuries, he said. The Nardana police are probing into the incident, he said.

from various verticals were called to put forth their thoughts. Any controversial remarks attracted legal consequences, it said.

A demand to "break the Hyderabad state into pieces" was seen in locally distributed leaflets of Jai Hind Ganesh Mandal in the 1953 festival, as per the memoir.

Ganesh Mahasangh's former president Manohar Gawli in his article, which is part of the souvenir, said it was difficult to celebrate the Ganesh festival in the Nizam era.

The Nizam's dictatorship did not let the people celebrate their festivals. Hence, the city accepted freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak's way of celebrating the Ganesh festival, he said. -PTI

# VP targets Rahul over quota remark, calls it 'anti-constitutional mindset'

By Correspondent

Mumbai: In a veiled attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on "ending reservation", Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said such comments by a person holding a constitutional post shows an "anti-constitutional mindset".

Addressing a public event in Mumbai, Dhankhar also said awareness about India's Constitution is highly needed as some people have forgotten its soul.

**A person from a constitutional post saying on a foreign land that reservation should be ended underscores the same anti-constitutional mindset. The baton of prejudices against reservation has been handed over. It is the same old anti-constitutional mindset.**

Jagdeep Dhankhar, Vice President

"Reservation is not against meritocracy, but it is the soul of the country and the Constitution. It is an affirmative action and



not negative. It is not depriving someone of opportunity but handholding those who are pillars of strength of the society," the Vice President said.

During a recent visit to the US, Gandhi, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, said the Congress would think of scrapping reservations when "India is a fair place", which he said is not the case right now.

However, at press interaction in the US later, Gandhi had said he was misquoted to show that he was against reservations. "I have been saying again and again and again, we are going to increase reservations beyond 50 per cent," Gandhi clarified.

Dhankhar said it was an

**Corruption was eating into our society. No job was available, no contract was available and no opportunity was available without corruption. Power corridors were infested with corruption and this was very disheartening for young boys and girls. Now, power corridors have been neutralised and sanitised of these corrupt elements.**

Jagdeep Dhankhar, Vice President

irony that the foreign tour was not to follow duties like protecting the sovereignty and integrity of India and respecting its Constitution but instead "to express disrespect for the Constitution publicly".

"The Constitution is not to be flaunted like a book. It has to be respected, read and understood. No

gentleman, a wise person, or a person who respects the Constitution would ever accept such behaviour," he further said targeting the Congress leader.

Incidentally, Gandhi, during the Lok Sabha poll campaign, would often show a copy of the abridged version of the

Constitution to boost the Congress-led opposition's charge that the BJP wanted to change the Constitution and end reservations.

"The one holding a constitutional position is carrying out serialised, periodic anti-India rants on foreign soil. Can we overlook the continuous sacrilegious of our Constitution? I call upon the youth to rebuff such misadventures; they hurt our motherland," said the Vice President.

They should be ready to fight forces that disrespect the Constitution and its values, Dhankhar asserted. In an attack on previous Congress governments, the VP said, "The Mandal Commission report was submitted to the Union government but

## 'Constitution Temples' inaugurated

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday inaugurated 'Constitution Temples' at the vocational training centres in 434 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Maharashtra.

He presided over the programme in Mumbai, organised by the Maharashtra Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Department headed by minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha.

ITIs are post-secondary schools set up to provide training in various trades.

Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan and Union Minister of State for Social Justice Ramdas Athawale attended the event.

Dhankhar is on a two-day visit to Maharashtra.

He visited the famous Lalbaugcha Raja Ganesh pandal in Mumbai on Saturday, amid the ongoing 10-day Ganapati festival.

The vice president also visited the official residence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday evening and offered prayers at the idol of Lord Ganesh installed there.

**Rahul Gandhi has demanded removal of the 50 per cent limit on reservations for SC/STs and OBCs. Do you support this demand of the Congress, Mr @VPIndia?**

Pawan Khera, Head, Media and Publicity Department, Congress

no action was taken on it for ten years. The country saw two prime ministers in the same period, Indira

Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi. Both did nothing about it."

India no longer a "sleeping giant"

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said India was no longer a "sleeping giant", emphasising that the country's ascent is now unstoppable.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a digital tower at Ramdeobaba University in Nagpur, Dhankhar asserted that education is service and not commerce. "The quality education defines democracy and the quality education you are getting defines development which will fast-track our attainment of a fully developed nation by 2047," he said.

Referring to the International Day of Democracy,

observed on September 15, the vice president said artificial intelligence was a tool for good governance.

"India was earlier called a sleeping giant which is no longer the case. India is on the rise. Its rise is unstoppable," Dhankhar added.

India's economic rise has been exponential and according to global institutions, the country is a favourite destination for investment and opportunities, he said.

Underscoring that education is service and not commerce, Dhankhar told the students at the university that an ecosystem is in place where the youth can realise their potential and talent.

"We are looking at government jobs and losing out on many opportunities," he said.

## New road near Atal Setu

Pune: A proposed 14-lane road near the Atal Setu sea bridge that will connect to Pune via a ring road will bring down traffic on Mumbai-Pune Expressway by 50 per cent, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Sunday.

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways was talking about road plans for Mumbai-Bengaluru at an alumni event organised by COEP Technological University on the occasion of Engineer's Day.

"There is huge traffic on Mumbai-Pune Expressway. A 14-lane road will be built near Atal Setu, which will further connect to Pune via a ring road and then onwards to Bengaluru. This road will bring down traffic on Mumbai-Pune Expressway by 50 per cent," he said.

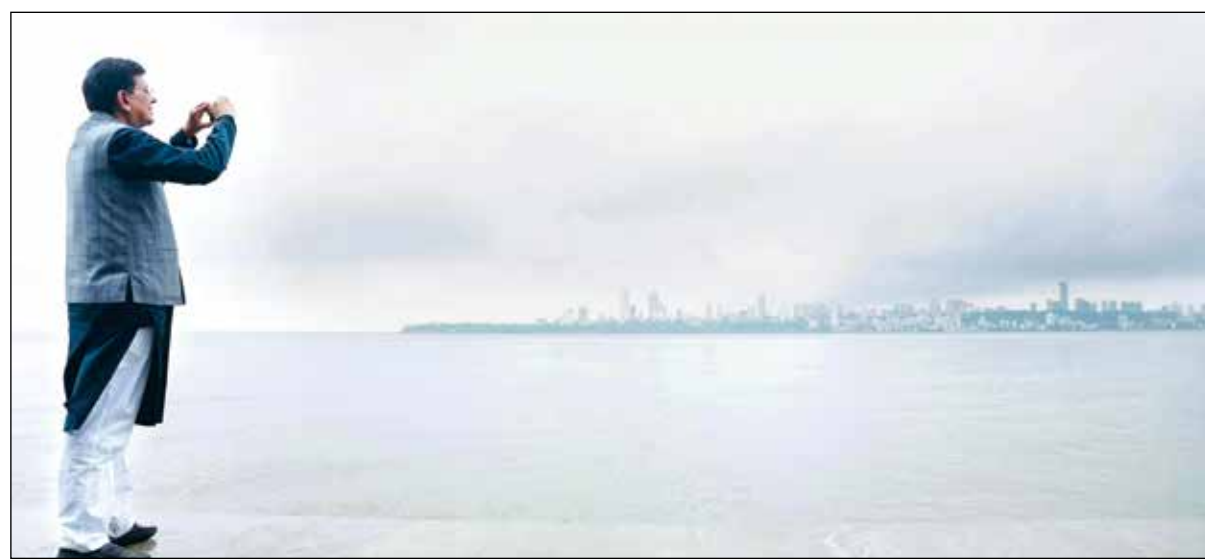
The Atal Setu is the

country's longest sea bridge and connects Sewri in Mumbai to Navi Mumbai.

Speaking at the event, Gadkari said India was ranked third in the world in the automobile sector and in the next 25 years all vehicles will run on electricity and not fossil fuels.

"Our technology should be economical. We can use garbage to make roads. Around 80 lakh tonnes of garbage has been used to build new roads. There is huge scope for researchers in this sector," Gadkari asserted.

Stressing on the Centre's Atmanirbhar (self reliance) concept, he said India needs "smart villages" rather than smart cities. "The standard of living of farmers should improve. Only then we can call them atmanirbhar," he pointed out.



A movie buff Union Minister for Commerce and Industries Piyush Goyal could not resist himself from taking a picture of the Malabar Hill seen from Marine Drive.

Pic: PTI



## Two Sena functionaries removed

Thane: The Shiv Sena has removed two office-bearers of its Thane unit after a video showed some people dancing and showering currency notes in front of a portrait of late Anand Dighe, the mentor of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The incident took place on September 12 during the Ganesh festival.

A video showed some local party activists dancing and showering money in front of the portrait of Dighe at Anand Ashram, from where the latter used

to run the Thane unit of the Shiv Sena.

The clip later went viral on social media.

CM Shinde and Thane Shiv Sena MP Naresh Mhaske had expressed disapproval, calling the incident "highly unpleasant" and contrary to the respectful manner in which Dighe celebrated such occasions.

As per an order issued by Mhaske on Saturday night, the two party office-bearers have been dismissed in connection with the matter. Their posts were not specified in the order.

## Man held for raping woman

Thane: A man has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 41-year-old bank employee in Navi Mumbai, police said.

Based on a complaint by the woman, a case was registered at the Panvel police station, and the accused was arrested on Friday. The accused, who worked as a driver in the bank, befriended the victim a few months ago and established a physical relationship with her.

## Passengers stuck in IndiGo flight for hours

Mumbai: Passengers of an IndiGo flight from the city to Doha waited inside the aircraft for more than four hours as the flight was delayed due to a technical issue on Sunday.

Some passengers took to social media to complain about the long flight delay and that they had to wait for long. The flight was to take off on Sunday early morning.

Passengers were inside the aircraft for more than four hours before they deplaned.

The flight is now

## KDMC to procure road-sweeping machines

Thane: The civic administration in Kalyan and Dombivli town in Maharashtra's Thane district will procure mechanical sweeping machines to clean concrete roads in its jurisdiction, an official said on Sunday.

The Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) said the initiative is being implemented using funds from the 15th Finance Commission under the Dust Mitigation Component.

As per an official release,

a tender for road-sweeping machines was issued on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal, and a Pune-based company got the contract to supply the same.

The civic body will receive four road-sweeping machines with a capacity of 6.5 cubic metres, and these will be deployed to clean 54 km of roads.

Cleaning operations will be carried out at night under the supervision of solid waste management officials, the release said.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Nitin Gadkari ji is expressing his heartfelt desire to be on the top chair, using the excuse of opposition parties he is sending a message to Modiji. INDIA alliance has very capable leaders who can lead the country, wouldn't want to borrow one from BJP. Well played Nitin ji."

- Priyanka Chatuvedi, MP, Shiv Sena (UBT)



## Navi Mumbai village celebrates 64 years of 'One Ganpati' festival

Thane: Agroli village in Navi Mumbai is commemorating 64 years of its unique 'One Village, One Ganpati' tradition, a celebration that underscores communal harmony and unity.

Originating from financial constraints and a limited number of households, the tradition has evolved into a grand annual festival.

Initially, villagers faced financial hurdles and often borrowed money to fund the celebrations, organisers said.

Over time, a collective contribu-

tion model emerged, with each family now contributing Rs. 2,000, leading to the festival's expansion and success.

On Sunday, Thane MP Naresh Mhaske, alongside Shiv Sena leader Vijay Nahata, visited the Ganesh pandal and praised the festival as a model of unity and devotion.

Rohidas Patil, president of the Ganapati Utsav Mandal and grandson of the tradition's founder, explained that the 'One Village, One Ganpati' concept was born out of necessity but has grown into a celebrated

event. The festival now includes around 150 households, even those affected by various projects, and serves as a vital occasion for villagers to reunite and celebrate with zeal, he said.

Mandal vice president Rajesh Patil said the younger generation is ready to continue the tradition.

The success of Agroli's festival has attracted visitors statewide, who come to observe and learn from this exemplary practice of unity and communal celebration, the organisers added.



Chief Minister Eknath Shinde with Bollywood actor Salman Khan during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival celebrations at his residence.

Pic: PTI

# Adani wins power bid in Maharashtra

By Ammar Zaidi

**New Delhi:** Adani group has won a bid to supply 6,600 MW of bundled renewable and thermal power to Maharashtra for the long term after its quote of Rs 4.08 per unit beat the likes of JSW Energy and Torrent Power, sources said.

Its bid for the bundled renewable and thermal energy supply for 25 years was almost a rupee lower than the cost at which Maharashtra currently procures electricity and will help meet future electricity requirements of the state, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Supplies are to start in 48 months from the date of award of the letter of intent. As per the bid conditions, Adani Power will supply solar power at a fixed cost of Rs 2.70 per unit throughout the entire supply period, while that from coal will be indexed to coal prices.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (MSEDCL), in March, floated a unique tender for sourcing 5,000 MW of electricity generated from sunlight and 1,600 MW of power generated from coal.

That tender was floated just ahead of the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections kicking in, and it was awarded to Adani before the announcement of the assembly elections in the state.

The tender combined solar power with thermal electricity to meet peak



- 6,600 MW – Required supply of bundled renewable and thermal power
- 5,000 MW – Electricity to be generated from sunlight
- 1,600 MW – Electricity to be generated from coal
- Rs 4.08 – Rate per unit quoted by Adani
- 27,877 MW – MSEDCL's contracted capacity of power
- 35,573 MW – Peak demand of electricity projected in 2028-29
- 39,884 MW – Peak demand of electricity projected in 2032-33

energy demand and that during non-solar hours (like night hours or monsoon/winter months).

It gave equal energy weightage to electricity generated from renewable energy and that from coal. Bidders were asked to quote a unified tariff for the supply of 6,600 MW of electricity (5,000 MW from solar and 1,600 MW from thermal). Adani Power quoted Rs 4.08 per unit to win the contract, according to sources said.

Its bid compares to Rs 4.36 per unit quoted by the second lowest bidder, JSW Energy, and Rs 4.70 per unit average procurement cost of Maharashtra last year. The tariff is about Re

1 per unit lower than the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) approved average power purchase cost of Rs 4.97 per kWh (unit) for 2024-25. In all, four companies participated in the tender for the electricity supply for 25 years.

The weighted average tariff for thermal and solar projects will help achieve a lower effective power tariff. Separate PPAs will be executed for solar and thermal projects. However, the aggregate power procurement will be complied in spirit even after that, sources said.

According to sources, MSEDCL designed the tender in a way to get equal

energy weightage to solar and thermal components. 5,000 MW of solar power equals 1,600 MW of thermal electricity in terms of capacity utilisation factor (CUF). The ratio between thermal and renewable power is 1:3.

The combination ensures that thermal meets the base load and cheaper solar electricity is available to the grid, sources said, adding that bundling renewable and thermal power was to drive efficiencies of scale. Sources said Adani will be paid a fixed price for renewable energy for 25 years, while there is an escalation price in the electricity produced from coal, but it more or less balances out after accounting for 1.5-2 per cent depreciation.

Against the regulatory requirement under Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO), 32 per cent of Maharashtra's power demand is to be met from solar sources by 2028.

Currently, the figure stands at only 12 per cent, and so the procurement of 5,000 MW of solar power will help in filling that requirement. Adani Power, India's largest private-sector thermal power generator, has a generation capacity in excess of 17 GW, which is rising to 31 GW by 2030.

Its sister company, Adani Green Energy Ltd, is the country's largest renewable energy company with a generation capacity of 11 GW, which is being expanded to 50 GW by 2030. -PTI



An Odissi dancer performs during the inaugural run of the Brahmapur-Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express in Brahmapur. Pic: PTI

## Cathay wants Indians use HK terminal

**Hong Kong:** Cathay Cargo, part of Cathay Pacific Airways, has said it wants Indian airlines to use its Hong Kong-based cargo terminal for various freight movements and is already in active discussion with one carrier.

According to Mark Watts, Chief Operating Officer of Cathay Cargo Terminal, the facility, with an annual shipment handling capacity of 2.7 million tonnes, is open for all airlines that fly into Hong Kong.

"We don't currently have any Indian air carriers, but I would definitely like to have more Indian air carriers using the Cathay Cargo terminal, and we are in active discussions with one at the moment," Watts told PTI in an interview.

## ONGC gets director to spearhead new energy, petrochemicals biz

**New Delhi:** Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has got a new director to spearhead its new energy, petrochemicals and corporate strategy as part of a board revamp aimed at breathing fresh life into the state-controlled behemoth.

Arumangshu Sarkar has been appointed as Director for strategy and corporate affairs, ONGC said in a stock exchange filing.

Before the elevation, Sarkar, a petroleum engineer from the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, was Group General Manager (Production) at ONGC. He had previously worked as General Manager (Strategy & Corporate Planning), ONGC Videsh Ltd - the overseas investment arm of ONGC.

Two years back, the board of ONGC was reorganised. Besides creating



the new post of Director (Strategy & Corporate Affairs), the post of Director (Production) was created after merging Director (Onshore), who is in charge of all oil and gas fields located on land, and Director (Offshore) who looks after all offshore assets, such as the prime Mumbai High fields.

In addition to the post of Director Production and Director Strategy and Corporate Affairs, the other key directorial positions at ONGC include the exploration, finance, human resources and technical & field services divisions, with all segments reporting to ONGC Managing Director Arun Kumar Singh.

According to an office order of July 2023, the new Director (Strategy & Corporate Affairs) will be in charge of joint ventures, downstream petrochemicals, new energy (renewable, hydrogen and carbon capture), corporate strategy, corporate marketing and legal.

"Present corporate strategy and planning group (will) be split into two verticals viz corporate planning and corporate strategy. Corporate planning would continue to report to the chairman, whereas the corporate strategy group would report to the director (strategy and corporate affairs)," it said. -PTI

## IIT-D develops mechanism to secure information

By Gunjan Sharma

**New Delhi:** Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi have developed a Cyclic Transparent Optical Polymer (CYTOP) material-based charge writing mechanism which may open new ways of developing advanced electronic devices for data storage and encryption, according to officials.

The research conducted in collaboration with the Max Plank Institute of Polymer Research and University of Stuttgart, Germany has recently been published in renowned science journal "ACS Langmuir" and the team is in process of filing a patent for the mechanism.

According to Ankur Goswami, Assistant Professor at the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, IIT Delhi, of late exchange of information securely has become challenging with the enhancement in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) technology.

"It has become imperative to develop systems

where the classified information can be shared among the security and surveillance agencies in a secure way. Written information, which can only be shared via physical means, can be traced and read by middleman that may lead to strong threat to the nation," Goswami told PTI.

"Therefore, there is need to develop a mechanism to write and read an information, which can only be accessed by the sender and receiver. Even if a middleman gets access to the information carrying object, he or she should not be able to read it. Aside from that, this information can be erased at specific voltage using same technique," he added.

"The present investigation would allow us to write anything on an electret substrate (material which can store charge indefinitely) by charge deposition using a sharp metal tip at a micro to nano metre scale and read by a scanner which can recognize the charged pattern," said Shalini Singh, researcher at the School of Interdisciplinary Research (SIRE), IIT Delhi. -PTI



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## RBI to revamp currency mgmt infra

**New Delhi:** The Reserve Bank plans to comprehensively revamp its currency management infrastructure over the next 4-5 years, mainly to ensure adequate storage and handling capacity to cater to the future cash needs of the growing economy.

The creation of greenfield currency management centres, the introduction of warehouse automation, the installation of security and surveillance systems, an inventory management system, and a centralised command centre are being mooted to

- 146.87 billion pieces – Notes in Circulation as of March 31, 2024
- 132.35 billion pieces – Coins in Circulation as of March 31, 2024

modernise the existing infrastructure, according to an RBI document.

The expected timeline for the whole project is 4-5 years, according to the expression of interest (EoI) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for procurement of consultancy and project management services for the modernisation of currency management

infrastructure. "Despite moderation in the growth rate of NIC (Notes In Circulation) in the last three years, analysis indicates that the growth will continue to be positive over the foreseeable future though the pace thereof is expected to be slower over the next decade," the document said. -PTI

## Vande Metro expected to transform inter-city travel

**Bhuj (Gujarat):** India's first Vande Metro, which will be virtually flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday in Gujarat is poised to transform inter-city travel with its advanced medium-distance capabilities, the Railway Ministry said.

While PM Modi will be in Ahmedabad, the train will start from Bhuj and reach Ahmedabad covering 359 km of distance in 5.45 hours. For passengers, its regular service will start from

September 17 from Ahmedabad and the total journey will cost Rs 455.

"While the other metros cover only short distances, Vande Metro trains will connect cities from the heart of the city to the peripheral cities," the ministry said.

It added that the word 'metro' gives an impression of urban landscape, however, Vande Metro was conceptualised by incorporating numerous advancements.

Giving a comprehensive overview of the Vande Metro and other Metros being operated in the country, the ministry said, "Vande Metro operates at a maximum speed of 110 km/h, offering faster acceleration and deceleration to passengers. This speed advantage ensures quicker commutes and improved efficiency."

It added, "With ergonomically designed seats, fully air-conditioned cabins and modular interiors, Vande Metro definitely proves to

be superior than the other metros."

Highlighting its safety aspects, the Railway Ministry said that Vande Metro is equipped with advanced safety systems like KAVACH for collision avoidance, fire detection, and aerosol-based fire suppression, along with emergency lights.

So far, it's accessibility is concerned, according to the Ministry, it has been designed with inclusivity in features such as Divyang-

jan-friendly toilets, a fully sealed flexible gangway and meal service among others.

Emphasising its superior technology, the Ministry said that Vande Metro incorporates cutting-edge technology, including under slung propulsion and advanced braking systems, offering a smoother ride.

"Featuring 12 coaches with seating for 1,150 passengers, the Vande Metro offers a host of innovative features. -PTI

## Panel likely on online gaming

**New Delhi:** An inter-departmental committee with representatives from ED, RBI, tax and consumer affairs departments may be set up to combat the proliferation of online gaming platforms and ensure regulatory compliance, a DGGI report said.

The GST intelligence wing of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has initiated action against 118 domestic online gaming entities. -PTI

## Goa's new cruise terminal to boost tourism

**Panaji:** With a 40 per cent rise in cruise passengers in FY 2023-24, the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) expects to grow it further with the construction of the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal in Goa by March 2025, an official said.

The development of the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal and allied facilities is expected to boost tourism and local economy while fostering sustainable practices and infrastructure

improvements, thereby enhancing the region's competitiveness in the global cruise market, the senior MPA official told PTI.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the Maritime States Development Council meeting held in Goa on September 12 and 13.

The increase in global cruise liner traffic has led to a significant rise in cruise ship arrivals at the Mormugao Port, positioning it for a substantial future growth,



the official said. In the 2023-24 financial year, there was an increase in calls by cruise vessels by 15 per cent and rise in cruise passengers by 40 per cent compared to FY 2022-23, he said.

On the first day of Maritime States Development Council meeting, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal visited the site of the proposed state-of-the-art building which will house the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal.

The official said the focus would be on passengers in the new facility. The international cruise terminal will have 24 immigration counters, 10 check-in counters, a

waiting lounge and other facilities, he said.

"The domestic cruise terminal will have 12 check-in counters, waiting lounges and other facilities. Ancillary commercial building will have an experiential shopping zone aimed at cruise tourists and will also be accessible to the general public," he said.

The terminal will have duty-free retain shops, lounges, food court and other facilities, the official added. -PTI

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"India can lower its risk of global supply chain disruptions by boosting domestic container production, encouraging the use of locally made containers, and increasing the use of Indian shipping companies for transporting goods."



- Ajay Srivastava, Founder, Global Trade Research Initiative



BJP workers protest against Tala Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abhijit Mondal (unseen) while he was taken to court after his arrest in connection with the R.G.Kar Medical College and Hospital incident at CGO Complex in Kolkata on Sunday. In second picture, CBI officials take Tala Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abhijit Mondal (L) to produce him in a court after his arrest in connection with the incident. Pic: PTI



# Sandip Ghosh accused of tampering evidence

**Kolkata:** A local court here on Sunday sent former principal of RG Kar hospital Sandip Ghosh and Tala police station officer-in-charge Abhijit Mondal to CBI custody till September 17, an officer said.

Both Ghosh and Mondal were produced before a court here by the central agency in connection with the rape-murder of a doctor at the state-run hospital.

"We have got their custody for three days till September 17. Now, both will be questioned together. The duo has played vital roles in the RG Kar case," the officer told PTI.

The CBI, probing the case, had on Saturday evening arrested Mondal and added charges of evidence tampering against Ghosh, who is currently in judicial custody in a corruption case related to the RG Kar hospital.

Mondal also faces accusations

of tampering with evidence, delaying registration of the FIR, and other related offences, according to the officer. The RG Kar Medical College and Hospital falls under the jurisdiction of Tala PS.

The police officer was held after he "failed to provide satisfying answers" during questioning by the CBI officers on Saturday.

The CBI claimed in court that "there could be a bigger conspiracy" and that both Ghosh and Mondal had played some "vital roles" in this crime.

The two were in touch with each other, and the former issued instructions to the policeman on how to proceed with the rape-murder case. Mondal was informed about the death of the doctor around 10 am on August 9, but the FIR was lodged around 11 pm, the CBI said. Both of them tried to "downplay the incident"

as well as "shield" the heinous crime, it said in court.

The police should have treated it as a suo motu case at the outset, since it's a rape-murder incident, the central probe agency said.

The CBI arrested Ghosh on September 2 in connection with financial irregularities at the hospital.

The body of the postgraduate trainee was found in the seminar hall of the state-run hospital on August 9. To date, three persons have been arrested in connection with the rape-murder case.

## MLA courts controversy

A ruling Trinamool Congress MLA on Sunday courted controversy by lashing out at the movement of doctors and people on the RG Kar issue, saying that "mere clapping and dancing to slogans accompanied by music beat will not lead to success".

Agitating doctors strongly opposed the remarks, saying it was a people's movement and should not be trivialised.

Rajarhat-New Town MLA Tapas Chatterjee, during a meeting in his locality, was heard saying in a purported video, "Clapping and dancing to disco beats will not make any movement successful. A true movement is marked by more serious activities."

Strongly opposing the MLA's remarks, Aniket Mahata, an office-bearer of the Junior Doctors' Forum, told PTI, "We are staging an agitation demanding justice for the victim and are getting the support of the common people. Our stir will continue till our demands are met. Our movement should not be trivialised." Chatterjee could not be contacted for a comment.

-PTI

## Census to be conducted soon

**New Delhi:** The government has started preparations for conducting the decadal census, but a decision is yet to be taken on including a column on caste as part of the exercise, sources said on Sunday.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one source said that the decadal census will be conducted soon. India has conducted the census every 10 years since 1881. The first phase of this decade's census was expected to begin on April 1, 2020 but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The implementation of the Women's Reservation Act, enacted by Parliament last year, too is linked to the conduct of the decadal census. The law reserving one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies shall come into effect after an exercise of delimitation is undertaken based on the relevant figures of the first census recorded after the Act has come into force.

"This is yet to be decided," the source said when asked about inclusion of a column on caste in the decadal census. The political parties have been making vociferous demands for conducting a caste census.

In the absence of fresh data, the government agencies are still formulating policies and allocating subsidies based on the data of the 2011 census.

The house listing phase of the census and the exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR) were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020 but it was postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Modi releases sanction letters

**Ranchi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually distributed sanction letters to 32,000 beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) and released the first instalment of Rs 32 crore for the construction of houses.

He also virtually handed over keys to 46,000 beneficiaries of PMAY-G across the country.

"In line with his commitment to housing for all, the PM distributed sanction letters to 32,000 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) beneficiaries from Jharkhand. He released the first instalment of assistance to the beneficiaries. The prime minister also participated in the 'Griha Pravesh' celebrations of 46,000 beneficiaries," a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said.

The Centre has approved 1,13,400 houses for the poor in Jharkhand under the PMAY-G scheme. Addressing the beneficiaries virtually from Ranchi, Modi said that the first instalment of PMAY-G was released and thousands of houses were also handed over under the scheme.

"The prime minister underlined that the first instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) was being started today, which would ensure pucca houses to thousands of beneficiaries. Other facilities of toilet, drinking water, electricity, gas connection were also provided along with PMAY-G," the statement said.

The PM pointed out that when a "family gets its own house, their self-confidence increases".



Thousands of jobs were also being created in villages and cities for the people of Jharkhand along with pucca houses through PM Awas Yojna, he said.

Modi also said the PM-Janman scheme is being run for the tribal brothers and sisters of Jharkhand and other parts of the country.

"Efforts are being made to reach out to the tribes, who are still lagging, through the scheme. In a bid to provide houses, roads, electricity and education to such families, officers are reaching out to them. Such efforts are part of my commitment to 'Vikshit Jharkhand'. We will fulfil the dreams of Jharkhand," he said.

The prime minister underlined that many significant steps have been taken to empower the poor, Dalit, deprived and tribal families of the country since 2014. He said the PM-Janman Yojana is being run for the tribal community across the country, including Jharkhand.

Modi also tendered an apology to the people of Jharkhand as he could not be present at the venue due to poor weather conditions, restricting his helicopter's movement and compelling him to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for the projects via video conferencing.

-PTI

## Shimla mosque dispute: VHP leaders booked

**Shimla:** VHP leaders, former councillors and chief of panchayats were among 50 people booked for violence during a protest that was held here last week demanding the demolition of an illegal portion of a mosque in the Sanjauli area, police said on Sunday.

Protesters clashed with security personnel on September 11, breaking barricades and pelting stones as police used water cannons and batons to disperse them. About 10 people, including police and women, were injured.

Call detail records of people who instigated the protest have been gathered and more cases will be registered, the Superintendent of Police of Shimla Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told the PTI.

"There is CCTV footage, video and photograph evidence of people carrying stones in their hands that were thrown at officers on duty," the officer said.

The 50 people who police identified and registered eight cases so far include leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), panchayat chiefs and their deputies, former council-

lors and shopkeepers, besides people from Chopal and Theog, officials said.

"It was a pre-planned protest to disturb the peace. Those who provoked the whole incident on social media have been identified and their act and conduct endorse how they participated in the crime," the SP said.

"In a video, a person was seen standing on a tempo and provoking the people to break the prohibitory order under section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). We did not receive any application seeking permission to protest," he said.

The SP said two police personnel sustained serious injuries, with one on the back and another on the head, and those guilty of it would be dealt with strictly as per the law.

Amid tension in Shimla over the Sanjauli mosque issue, a Muslim welfare committee last Thursday offered to demolish the unauthorised part while members of the community themselves pulled down a wall of a mosque in government land in Mandi.

-PTI



People take part in a protest organised by Delhi Meitei Co-ordinating Committee over recent violence in Manipur at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday. Pic: PTI

## Sikkim to build parking lot at Nathu La

**Gangtok:** The Sikkim government has decided to build parking for 1,000 tourist vehicles at Nathu La at the India-China border, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said.

The scenic Ganesh Tok on the outskirts of Gangtok will be developed as a tourist spot with various amenities such as restaurants and banquet halls, among others, he said.

"We propose to construct

a parking facility at Nathu La to accommodate 1,000 vehicles to boost tourism," Tamang posted on Facebook after chairing a high-level meeting at his official residence at Mintokgang on Saturday night.

Ganesh Tok will also have areas for events, and feature a centre that will highlight Sikkim's unique artwork and culture with a design that reflects the region's topography and ecol-

ogy, aiming to attract international visitors, he said. The state government will also construct a convention centre at Namli with facilities such as guest houses, conference rooms, auditoriums, restaurants, a sports complex and a wedding hall, he added.

A 500-bed hostel for working women will be built in Gangtok, Tamang said.

-PTI

## Cong accuses Modi of depriving tribals religious identity

**New Delhi:** With Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Jharkhand, the Congress on Sunday asked why are the people of Jharkhand still facing the problem of "poor connectivity" and also accused the PM of depriving the tribals their religious identity and refusing to recognise the Sarna Code.

Congress General Secretary In-Charge Communications Jairam Ramesh also asked why the Adityapur Industrial Area had not received environmental clearance yet.

"The non-biological PM is in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand today. He should answer these three questions to the people of Jharkhand," Ramesh said in a post in Hindi on X. Why are the people of Jamshedpur still facing the problem of poor connectivity, he asked. Ramesh said that despite being an industrial hub, Jamshedpur is facing the problem of poor transport connectivity.

"The number of trains running to major cities like Bhagalpur, Bengaluru and Delhi is

not sufficient. The city had a functional airport till 2016 but despite joining the UDAN scheme in 2018, the plan for a new airport did not materialise," he said.

An MoU was signed between the Jharkhand government and the Airports Authority of India in January 2019 to build the Dhalbhumgarh airport by December 2022, he said.

This will give a good boost to MSMEs in Adityapur, including major industrial players like Tata, he added.

-PTI

## BMW hits scooter, two women die

**Indore:** Two young women riding a scooter were killed after a speeding BMW car hit the two-wheeler in Indore, police said on Sunday.

The car driver fled the scene with the vehicle after the accident occurred late Saturday night. Police have registered a case against the car owner and the driver, and launched a search.

## Naxalites kill man on suspicion of being informer

**Sukma:** Naxalites allegedly killed a 25-year-old man on suspicion of being a police informer in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, police said on Sunday.

Dodi Arjun, a "shiksha doot" (temporary visiting teacher), was allegedly beaten and strangled in Gondpalli village under the Jagargunda police station limits on Saturday evening,

an official said.

The police were alerted about the killing on Sunday, following which a team was sent to the spot, he said. Naxalites held a "jan adalat" (kangaroo court), suspecting the victim of being a police informer, and killed him, he said. The official said Arjun was working at a school in the Jagargunda area, a Maoist stronghold.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Many had the passion, perseverance and commitment to drive far reaching changes in society. Some of the fiercest and most fearless voices against injustice were of women."

- Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition



## 'Squid Game' plagiarised, says 'Luck' director

**New Delhi:** Director Soham Shah has filed a lawsuit against Netflix for allegedly plagiarising his 2009 film "Luck" to make the Korean series "Squid Game", a claim the streamer on Sunday said holds no merit.

"This claim has no merit. 'Squid Game' was created by and written by Hwang Dong Hyuk and we intend to defend this matter vigorously," a Netflix spokesperson said in a statement.

According to the documents of the lawsuit ob-



tained by American outlet TMZ, "Squid Game" -- which became the most watched series on Netflix when it premiered in 2021

-- is a "rip-off" of the movie starring Imran Khan, Shruti Haasan, and Sanjay Dutt. Created, written and directed by Hwang Dong



Hyuk, "Squid Game" follows 456 players, all of them in deep financial debt, who were brought to a secret play to play a deadly chil-

dren's game for a chance to win a 45.6 billion won prize.

On the other hand, "Luck" revolves around an underworld kingpin who recruits people endowed with 'luck' from across the globe to take part in a series of challenges designed to test their chance factor, as gamblers around the world bet on them.

According to TMZ, in "Luck" it's only after characters start competing that they realize losing any of the challenges means death -- and that the death of a fel-

low participant also increases the pot of money available to the remaining contestants". In the documents, Shah also claimed that he wrote the story of the film around 2006 and the film released in July 2009. In several interviews, Hwang has said he first came up with the idea for the Netflix series in 2008.

Shah's allegations come months ahead of the season two premiere of "Squid Game", fronted by Korean star Lee Jung-jae, on December 26.

-PTI

## Billionaire returns after private spacewalk

**Cape Canaveral:** A billionaire spacewalker returned to Earth with his crew on Sunday, ending a five-day trip that lifted them higher than anyone has travelled since NASA's moonwalkers. SpaceX's capsule splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas in the predawn darkness, carrying tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, two SpaceX engineers and a former Air Force Thunderbird pilot. They pulled off the first private spacewalk while orbiting nearly 460 miles (740 kilometres) above Earth, higher than the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope. Their spacecraft hit a peak altitude of 1,408 km following Tuesday's liftoff.

Isaacman became only the 264th person to perform a spacewalk since the former Soviet Union scored the first in 1965, and SpaceX's Sarah Gillis the 265th. Until now, all spacewalks were done by professional astronauts.

During Thursday's commercial spacewalk, the Dragon capsule's hatch was open barely a half-hour. Isaacman emerged only up to his waist to briefly test SpaceX's brand new space-suit followed by Gillis, who was knee high as she flexed her arms and legs for several minutes. Gillis, a classically trained violinist, also held a performance in orbit earlier in the week.

The spacewalk lasted less than two hours, considerably shorter than those at the International Space Station. Most of that time was needed to depressurise the entire capsule and then restore the cabin air. -AP

**New Delhi:** The MoU process to bring a new batch of cheetahs from Kenya is in progress, with India having finalised its part and awaiting approval from the African country, a senior official has said.

Cheetahs for the breeding centre being built in Gujarat's Banni grasslands will also be brought from Kenya, SP Yadav, the director general of the International Big Cat Alliance, told PTI editors during a recent interaction here.

The 'Action Plan for Re-introduction of Cheetah in India' talks about bringing around 12-14 cheetahs each year from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries for five years to establish a founder stock.

"The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process is in progress. India has finalised its part, and the Kenyan government needs to approve it. After that, both governments will sign the MoU," Yadav, who is the adviser to the Centre's Cheetah Project Steering Committee, said.

"Discussions are ongoing with South Africa. It has already identified 12 to 16 surplus cheetahs. They must either give them to another country or euthanise them. That is the current situation," Yadav added.

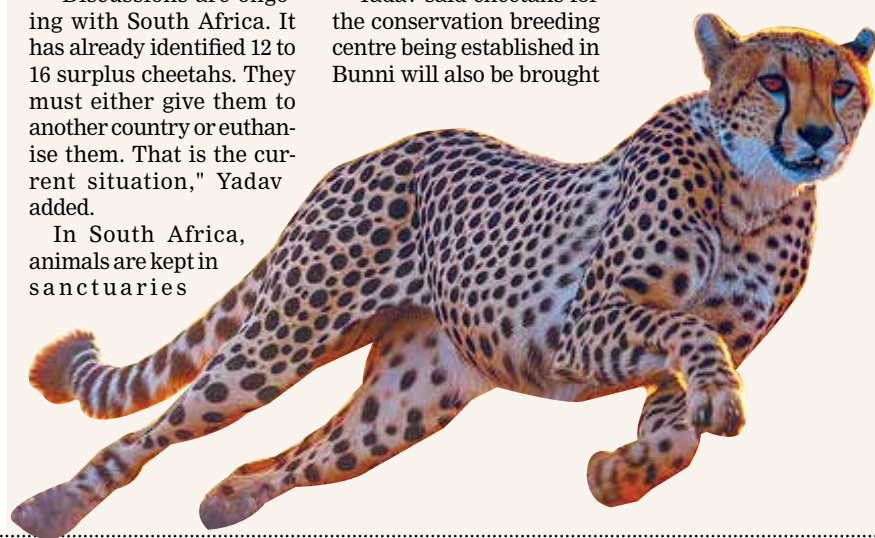
In South Africa, animals are kept in sanctuaries

based on their carrying capacities. If the population exceeds this capacity, they either export the animals or euthanise them, as they cannot sustain an overpopulation, he explained.

Yadav said cheetahs for the conservation breeding centre being established in Banni will also be brought

from Kenya and that "winter is the ideal time to bring them".

The cheetah conservation breeding centre being developed in a 500-hectare enclosure can accommo-



## Two years of Project Cheetah

# India awaits Kenya's approval for new batch



**20** No of cheetahs have been brought to the Kuno National Park so far -- eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

**8** No of adult cheetahs -- three females and five males -- have died

**17** Cubs have been born in India, with 12 surviving, bringing the total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno to 24.

date 16 cheetahs, officials have said.

Yadav also dismissed reports suggesting that a Namibian cheetah named Pawan died from poisoning last month. He clarified that there were no signs of poisoning such as saliva oozing from the mouth or liquid seeping from the nose.

"There was no such

thing. It is purely speculation," he said.

Asked if cheetahs can drown, he said that it had rained heavily that night and there are nallahs (streams) with boulders and rocks.

"We do not know what happened, but the symptoms suggest that the cheetah died from drowning. There was no other reason.

There were no marks on the body. Two doctors conducted the post-mortem and confirmed drowning. There was water in the lungs. It was unfortunate," Yadav added.

Asked about the low prey base in the Kuno National Park and the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, he said, "The number of cheetahs in the wild will depend solely on the prey population. We will not release more cheetahs if the prey population cannot support them. That is within our control."

Yadav said that the staff at Kuno will administer prophylactic medicine to the cheetahs in the wild through tranquilisers. If they are unsuccessful, "there is no option but to recapture the animals", he

said.

Prophylactic medicines are given to prevent infection.

Due to differences in circadian rhythms between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, some cheetahs developed thick winter coats during the Indian summer and monsoon last year, in anticipation of the African winter (June to September).

Three of these cheetahs -- a Namibian female and two South African males -- died after wounds beneath their winter coats, on their backs and necks, became infested with maggots and led to blood infections.

Asked about the secrecy associated with Project Cheetah, Yadav said that the perception of secrecy is misleading.

"Cheetah introduction has gained unprecedented media attention -- more than any other animal conservation effort before.

"No country, not even developed ones, has dared to undertake an experiment of this kind. If you look at the Western media, it is hard for them to believe that India can accomplish this," he said.

On the progress of Project Cheetah, Yadav said when South Africa lost its entire cheetah population, they imported the animal from Namibia, and it took them 20 years to establish a viable population.

"In India, we lost all the tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan in 2005. It took nearly 15 years to re-establish a stable population there. "It takes time; it is not instant coffee," he said. -PTI

## EXPLAINER

# Why first private spacewalk is just a vanity project?



By Gail Iles

Two astronauts have carried out the first-ever commercial spacewalk, using new less-bulky spacesuits designed by SpaceX.

Tech billionaire Jared Isaacman (who also funded the mission) and SpaceX engineer Sarah Gillis together spent almost half an hour outside their spacecraft at an altitude of some 700 km, further from Earth than any human since the Apollo Moon landings.

The brief jaunt into the void is a significant milestone for commercial spaceflight, with the spacecraft, suits and the overall mission all being SpaceX productions.

What's so interesting about the mission?

The Polaris Dawn mission stands out for several reasons. In terms of science and technology, the highlight is the test of new spacesuits for extravehicular activity (or EVA). A spacesuit that allows an astronaut to leave their vessel is a small spacecraft in its own right, and interest in new, modern suits is growing as NASA's planned Artemis missions to the Moon approach.

The mission is travelling around Earth in a highly elliptical orbit, which means

its altitude ranges from 192 km way out to 1,400 km. The orbit is taking astronauts through regions of high radiation, including the South Atlantic Anomaly, and may allow for testing of the new suits under these extreme conditions.

Polaris Dawn also carries 36 different experiments, many studying the effects of spaceflight on the human body.

Polaris Dawn is the first of three missions Isaacman plans with SpaceX, which he says will "serve the bigger purpose of opening up space for everyone and making humankind a multi-planetary species". The second may aim to boost the Hubble Space Telescope's orbit and prolong its life, while the third may use SpaceX's reusable Starship rocket (which is currently in the early stages of testing).

Commercial spaceflight on the way up

Perhaps the most significant thing about Polaris Dawn is what it suggests about the future of spaceflight. This is a commercial mission, operated by SpaceX using its own technology without the involvement of government

space agencies.

It is not the "space tourism" we have seen from the likes of Blue Origin, sending rich people on sub-orbital joyrides. While the SpaceX mission is funded via private wealth, it is making a genuine contribution to scientific knowledge -- and to the future of spaceflight.

One crucial feature of government space programmes has been the rigorous training and selection process for astronauts, ensuring those who make it to space know exactly what they are doing. SpaceX is continuing this high level of professionalism, with four extremely well-qualified and prepared astronauts participating in Polaris Dawn.

The Polaris Dawn space-



two NASA astronauts are stranded on the International Space Station due to problems with the Starliner space vehicle, which Boeing built for the US space agency at great expense. It is now expected the pair will be rescued next February by a SpaceX vehicle (developed for far less money than Boeing's).

### For all humankind?

The rise of non-government space flight has its critics, who say commercial imperatives and private control have no place in what should be a purely scientific endeavour. SpaceX (with its controversial owner Elon Musk) has also faced criticisms over environmental concerns and treatment of staff.

However, the huge improvements in space technology and reductions in cost that have occurred in recent years are largely due to commercial involvement. When humanity returns to the Moon -- and if we one day travel to Mars and beyond -- private companies will play an essential role.

And while Polaris Dawn is clearly a passion project for Isaacman, it's not a vanity project. It will have real benefits in terms of science and technology -- and that's good news for all future human endeavours, in space and here on Earth.

The Conversation

## Delhi Zoo adds rhino, tiger, pied hornbills

**New Delhi:** A rhinoceros, a Bengal tiger and a pair of pied hornbills were brought to the Delhi Zoo on Saturday as part of an exchange programme with Assam, officials said.

They will be ready for public exhibition at Delhi's National Zoological Park -- commonly called Delhi Zoo -- after a 21-day quarantine, they said.

Confirming the animals' arrival from Assam State Zoo-cum Botanical Garden, Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar told PTI. "A male tiger, a male rhino, and a pair of pied hornbills arrived this morning. After a veterinary examination, all have been placed in quarantine."

The nine-member team that was tasked with bringing the tiger named Sultan and rhino named Dharmendra left Assam on September 11 and arrived on the Saturday.

"The zoo team departed for Assam in two trucks on September 4 to bring new animals to our zoo," a Delhi Zoo official told PTI.

"We used two trucks to minimise stress on the animals. Separate trucks were assigned for the tiger and rhino to avoid adding any additional strain during travel as travel itself is a major source of stress," range officer Saurabh Vashisht, who led the team, told PTI.

"We had two female rhinos, and after long efforts, we finally made it happen. Now we have a pair, and we hope they will reproduce in the future," Vashisht said, noting that senior authorities had been working for a long time to bring these animals to the zoo.

The Bengal tiger, named Sultan, and the male rhinoceros, named Dharmendra, will soon join the zoo's collection of majestic wildlife, he said. -PTI

# Oil India to invest Rs 25,000 crore for net zero emissions

**4 million tonnes**  
Quantity of oil IOC plans to dig out

**5 billion cubic metres**  
Quantity of gas IOC plans to dig out

**61**  
No of wells dug in 2023

**75**  
No of wells to be dug in 2024

**New Delhi:** State-owned Oil India Ltd plans to invest Rs 25,000 crore in clean energy projects to help achieve the net zero carbon emission goal by 2040, its chairman Ranjit Rath said on Saturday.

OIL's net zero plan includes a combination of cutting down the flaring of gas and commercialisation of stranded gas as well as setting up renewable electricity generation capacity, building green hydrogen plants and constructing biogas and ethanol plants.

The company also plans to lay an 80-kilometer pipeline to bring natural gas from fields in Arunachal Pradesh to Assam to help replace polluting liquid fuels in transport as well as industries.

"Achieving a net zero target involves a bouquet of activities," he said.

It already has firming up plans for 640 MW of solar projects in Assam and another 150 MW in Himachal Pradesh, he said.

OIL joins fellow state-owned firms who are investing billions of dollars to help India as a nation achieve net zero emission by 2070.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's biggest

oil firm, is targeting net zero by 2046 while oil and gas producer ONGC has announced Rs 2 lakh crore investment to achieve the same goal by 2038.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd too are targeting 2040

**The net zero plans will go alongside its target to raise crude oil and natural gas production to 9 million tonnes of oil and oil equivalent gas by 2025-26 from 6.5 million tonnes produced in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024.**

to achieve net zero carbon emissions from their operations while Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) wants to do so by 2046.

While drilling more wells will reverse the 12 per cent decline in production that has set in the mature fields, the company is also increasing exploration to tap newer reservoirs as well as using technology to increase output from existing fields.

On its subsidiary Numaligarh refinery in Assam, Rath said expansion of capacity, from current 3 million tonnes per annum to 9 million tonnes at an estimated cost of Rs 28,000 crore, is planned to be completed by December 2025.



## Türkiye's bid to join BRICS

# Chance to bridge east-west gap

By Kaswar Klasra

Doha: Türkiye has formally requested to join BRICS, the bloc of emerging-market nations, signaling a significant shift in its foreign policy aimed at expanding its global influence beyond traditional Western alliances. Turkish officials have confirmed the development, underscoring President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's belief that the geopolitical center of gravity is shifting away from the West toward emerging economies like China and Russia.

Since its inception with Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and the addition of South Africa in 2010, BRICS has expanded to include 11 members. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates joined in 2024. Now known as "BRICS Plus," the group represents 46% of the global population, 29% of the world's GDP, 43% of oil production, and 25% of global exports.

Türkiye's economy aligns well with the BRICS bloc. Half of Türkiye's natural gas imports come from Russia, while the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China aims to link East Asia, the fastest-growing region, with Europe, the largest single market. Türkiye's strategic position makes it a key distribution hub for the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia.

Türkiye's desire to join BRICS also reflects its ambition to balance ties in a multipolar world, while still maintaining its obligations



as a key member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The timing of Türkiye's application, which was submitted earlier this year, is important. Türkiye has maintained strong relations with Russia. On the other hand it is playing a significant role in NATO which is flexing muscles against Russia. By becoming a member of BRICS, Turkey will become more influential to mediate between Russia and Washington-led West.

This move can multiply Turkey's strength as on one side it is an integral member of NATO and on the other side it is growing closeness with Russia and China. An official from Türkiye's Foreign Ministry confirmed the bid, stressing that it forms part of a broader strategy to diversify Türkiye's international relations.

"Türkiye can become more powerful, prosperous, and prestigious by improving its relations with both the East and the West," Erdoğan said during a speech in Istanbul over the weekend. "Any other approach will harm Türkiye's interests."

BRICS is actively seeking

to expand its global footprint, with plans to launch a currency and banking system that could rival the dominance of the U.S. dollar.

The BRICS summit scheduled for October 22-24 in Kazan, Russia, is expected to discuss further enlargement of the group. In addition to Türkiye, other countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and Azerbaijan have also expressed interest in joining.

For BRICS members, Türkiye's inclusion could provide access to significant new trade routes and deepen political ties in the region. For the West, however, Türkiye's possible entry into BRICS is highly significant. By becoming a part of BRICS, Türkiye can serve as a bridge between Washington dominated financial institutions (like IMF and World Bank) and BRICS. New members would gain access to financing through BRICS' New Development Bank, as well as the potential for increased trade and political cooperation. Türkiye's inclusion in BRICS will also strengthen China-led BRICS's role at world's financial horizon.

## Maldives resolves 'misunderstandings'

Male: Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer has acknowledged that the Maldives-India ties witnessed rough patches in the initial days of President Mohammad Muizzu-led government but insisted that the two countries have resolved the "misunderstandings".

Zameer made the remarks on Friday during a visit to Sri Lanka, where he stressed the importance of the Indian Ocean archipelago's relationships with key allies, particularly China and India. He said that relations with India had faced challenges, particularly following President Muizzu's campaign to remove a small contingent of Indian troops from the Maldives.

Zameer said that the "misunderstandings" between the two countries have been resolved following the repatriation of Indian troops from the Maldives. "At the start of our government, we did have some rough patches (with India), you know," Zameer has been quoted as saying by The Edition newspaper. "(We) have good relations with both China and India, and both countries continue to support Maldives," he said.

India's relationship with the Maldives came under strain since Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, took charge as the President. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel manning three aviation platforms gifted by India to the Maldives. After talks between the two sides, the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians. Things escalated after three Maldivian deputy ministers made controversial remarks regarding India and PM Modi on social media.



The United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, fly in formation at the Sound of Speed Airshow in St. Joseph, Mo. on Saturday. Pic:APPTI

# ADB asks Pakistan to adopt Indian plan on education

Islamabad: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has advised Pakistan to adopt India's scheme ULLAS to fix its dysfunctional education system and impart quality training to its citizens, according to a media report.

The Manila-based lender's recommendation came in response to Pakistan's request for financial support to improve its education system and impart education to all out-of-school children. The Express Tribune newspaper said.

The Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS) was launched by the Government of India in July last year to help non-literate and adults who missed out



on formal schooling.

The ADB recommends that the government adopt a strategic and multi-stakeholder consultative approach, drawing on international best practices, such as the government of India's new centrally sponsored scheme "ULLAS", according to the lender.

The ADB emphasised that the ULLAS scheme emphasises the need for both federal and provincial governments to collaborate urgently to enhance access to quality education and can offer insightful lessons

26 million	No of out-of-school children in Pakistan
134	No of districts in Pakistan. A Planning Commission's report revealed that education delivery system had become dysfunctional all these districts, barring Islamabad

Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the new centrally-sponsored scheme ULLAS for the five-year period to cover all the aspects of "Education for All".

The objective of the Indian scheme is to impart not only foundational literacy and numeracy but also to cover other components which are necessary for a citizen of the 21st century such as critical life skills including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education and family welfare.

ADB president will meet with Pakistani stakeholders on Monday. -PTI

# Venezuela says it arrested six foreigners

By Manuel Rueda

Bogota (Colombia): Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen were arrested Saturday after Venezuelan officials accused them of coming to the South American country to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro.

The arrests were announced on state television by Diosdado Cabello, the nation's powerful interior minister. Cabello said the foreign citizens were part of a CIA-led plot to overthrow the Venezuelan government and kill several members of its leadership. In the television program, Cabello showed images of rifles that he said were confiscated from some of the plotters of the alleged plan.

The arrest of the American citizens included a member of the Navy, who Cabello identified as Wilbert Joseph Castañeda Gomez. Cabello said that Gomez was a navy seal who had served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia. Spain's embassy in Venezuela did not reply to a request for comment on the arrests of its citizens.

The US State Department late Saturday confirmed the

detention of a US military member and said it was aware of "unconfirmed reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela."

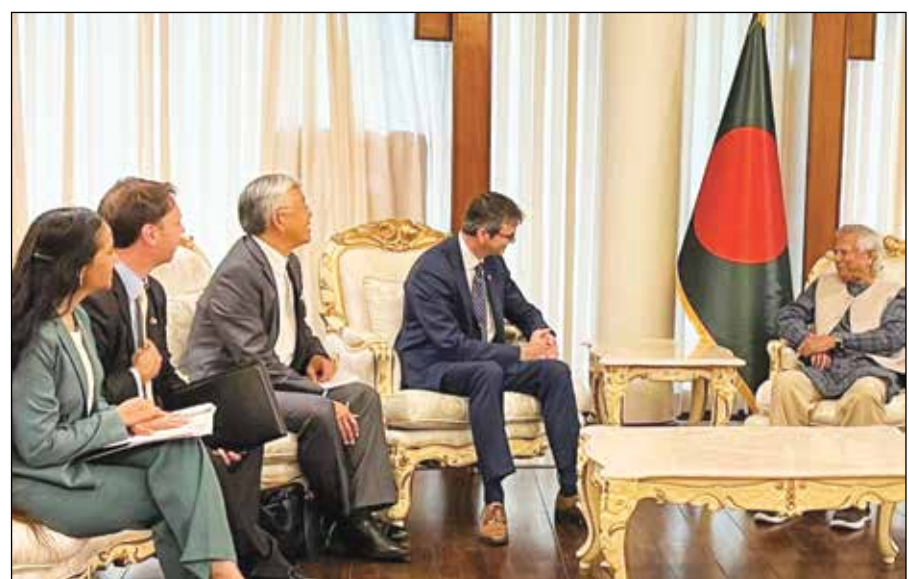
"Any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false. The United States continues to support a democratic solution to the political crisis in Venezuela," the statement said.

The announcement of the arrests comes just two days after the US Treasury imposed sanctions on 16 allies of Maduro who were accused by U.S. government

of obstructing voting during the disputed July 28 Venezuelan presidential election, and carrying out human rights abuses.

Earlier this week, Spain's parliament recognized opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez as the winner of the election, angering Maduro allies who called on the Venezuelan government to suspend commercial and diplomatic relations with Spain. Tensions between Venezuela's government and the US have increased as well following the election.

-AP



Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus during a meeting with a US delegation. Pic: PTI

# Yemen missile lands in central Israel

Jerusalem: A missile fired from Yemen landed in an open area in central Israel early Sunday, the Israeli military said, in the latest reverberation from the nearly yearlong war in Gaza.

The early morning attack triggered air raid sirens, including at Israel's international airport, where local media aired footage of people racing to shelters. There were no reports of casualties or damage, and the airport author-

ity said operations resumed as normal shortly thereafter.

A fire could be seen in a rural area of central Israel, and local media showed images of what appeared to be a fragment from a missile or interceptor that landed on an escalator in a train station in the central town of Modiin. The military said the sound of explosions in the area came from interceptors.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have repeat-

# Attempt to murder case against Hasina

Dhaka: A fresh case has been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 58 others on the charges of attempting to murder a student during the violent clashes that led to the fall of her government last month, a media report said on Sunday.

It was the latest in the slew of cases filed against the 76-year-old former premier, who resigned and fled to India on August 5 following a massive protest by students against a controversial quota system in government jobs.

The case was filed on Fri-

day by 22-year-old Fahim Faisal, who claimed he was shot and injured during an anti-government protest in Dinajpur on August 4, a day before the fall of the Hasina-led Awami League government. The Daily Star newspaper reported. With this, the tally of cases against Hasina has reached 155, including 136 for murder, seven for crimes against humanity and genocide, three for abduction, eight for attempted murder and one for the attack on a Bangladesh Nationalist Party procession, the report said.

According to the case statement, protesters were

assaulted with firearms and local weapons, resulting in multiple injuries to Faisal, who was treated at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital and recovered partially.

The case accuses 59 people, including Hasina, former whip Iqbalur Rahim and Dinajpur Sadar Upazila Chairman Imdad Sarkar.

Over 230 people were killed in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina-led government, taking the death toll to more than 600 since the massive protest by students first started in mid-July. -PTI

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We continue to remain excited about the Indian market. It has been driven by robust economic movement. We aspire to expand more into India. That will happen only next year. India is a very important market."



- Captain Izham Ismail, MD, MAG Group

# Traces of Mohatta Palace's past vanishing

Karachi: Stained glass windows, a sweeping staircase and embellished interiors make Mohatta Palace a gem in Karachi, a Pakistani megacity of 20 million people. Peacocks roam the lawn and the sounds of construction and traffic melt away as visitors enter the grounds.

The pink stone balustrades, domes and parapets look like they've been plucked from the northern Indian state of Rajasthan, a relic of a time when Muslims and Hindus lived side by side in the port city. But magnificence is no



guarantee of survival in a city where land is scarce and development is rampant. Demolition, encroachment, neglect, piecemeal conserva-

tion laws and vandalism are eroding signs of Karachi's past.

The building's trustees have fended off an attempt to

The palace was passed into the hands of Pakistani political royalty as the home of Fatima Jinnah, the younger sister of Pakistan's first leader and a powerful politician in her own right. After her death, the authorities gave the building to her sister Shirin, but Shirin's passing in 1980 sparked a court fight, and a court ordered the building sealed.

Mohatta Palace is a symbol of diversity. Hindu entrepreneur Shivratan Mohatta had it built in the 1920s because he wanted a coastal residence for his ailing wife to benefit from the Arabian Sea breeze. Hundreds of donkey carts carried the distinctively coloured pink stone from Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

turn it into a dental college, but there's still a decades long lawsuit in which heirs of a former owner are trying to take control of the land. It

sat empty for almost two decades before formally opening as a museum in 1999.

The palace sits on prime real estate in the desirable

neighbourhood of Old Clifton, among mansions, businesses and upmarket restaurants. The land under buildings like the Mohatta Palace is widely coveted, said palace lawyer Faisal Siddiqi. "It shows that greed is more important than heritage." For most Pakistanis, the palace is the closest they'll get to the architectural splendor of India's Rajasthan, because travel restrictions and hostile bureaucracies largely keep people in either country from crossing the border for leisure, study or work.

EDITORIAL

Reclaiming Identity

India's ongoing project of renaming places reflects the country's efforts to assert its national identity, cleanse itself of historical baggage, and reconnect with its civilizational roots. The latest move — the renaming of Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram — signals a broader intention to shed vestiges of foreign domination, both from the period of British imperialism and earlier Muslim invasions. The symbolism in these name changes is unmistakable, part of a wider cultural and political push to reassert India's indigenous history, which many feel has been sidelined for centuries.

Names are not mere labels on maps; they carry the weight of history, legacy, and identity. When Indians traverse through streets, towns, and cities, many still encounter names that echo colonial or Islamic invader legacies. A substantial number of places in Delhi, the capital of modern India, are named after rulers of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal dynasty, dynasties that came through conquest and imposed their authority on the land.

For many, these names represent more than just historical figures; they symbolize domination, violence, and a legacy that is at odds with India's present aspirations as a confident, resurgent power. The act of renaming is thus seen as part of a broader cultural reclamation.

Renaming places is not merely an academic exercise in historical correction but a politically charged one. Advocates of renaming argue that India must celebrate its own heroes - like Chandragupta Maurya, Rana Pratap or Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj — leaders who resisted foreign domination and defended India's sovereignty rather than glorifying invaders who sought to erase it.

Delhi is a stark example of this historical disconnect. Despite being the seat of modern India's political power, few public spaces are named after Shivaji Maharaj, who defied Mughal authority, or Maharana Pratap, who stood against Akbar's empire. The names of foreign conquerors dominate the urban landscape.

Critics of the renaming drive often accuse the government of pandering to a narrow, sectarian agenda. They argue that renaming places will not change history and risks inflaming communal tensions. But such criticism overlooks the fact that every nation has the right to shape its narrative. France does not honour the names of Napoleon's enemies in its street names, nor does Britain name its landmarks after those who sought to subjugate it.

The challenge for India is to strike a balance between renaming that honours its indigenous history and avoiding erasure of its Islamic past. After all, the Mughal and Sultanate periods are integral to India's complex history. In many cases, India can follow a path of dual recognition, acknowledging both the indigenous heritage and foreign influences by honouring people with a syncretic legacy. History is not monolithic, and India's national identity is shaped by myriad influences. The renaming of streets and towns must not turn into a wholesale erasure of the past but should be a thoughtful reconsideration of which legacies are honoured in public spaces.

NATIONAL INTEREST

India's 'Caged Parrot': The Compromised Integrity of Probe Agencies



By Kiran D. Tare

In a telling moment during the recent bail hearing of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Supreme Court of India admonished the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), warning that it must dispel its image as a "caged parrot." The phrase, originally coined by the court a decade ago, once again highlights a persistent problem in Indian governance: the blatant politicisation of supposedly impartial investigative agencies. From the CBI to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), these institutions designed to uphold the rule of law, increasingly appear compromised, their autonomy eroded by the very state they are meant to serve.

The question of whether the **Without comprehensive reforms, India's most powerful investigative bodies, from the CBI to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), risk becoming permanent political tools.**



CBI, ED, and their ilk have always been vulnerable to political manipulation is not new. But under the Modi government, their role has gained renewed scrutiny. Are these agencies merely continuing a tradition of subservience to the central government, or are they now operating under a more brazen form of political control than in previous administrations?

The CBI traces its origins to the Special Police Establishment, created in 1941 to combat corruption in the procurement of war supplies during the British Raj. After Independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru institutionalised the CBI in 1963 as a premier investigative agency, charged with investigating corruption in central government offices. Over time, its remit expanded to include high-profile cases of criminality, economic offences and, increasingly, political scandals.

Despite the lofty ideals behind its creation, the CBI has always struggled to maintain its independence. Successive governments have used it as a tool to control dissent, intimidate politi-

cal opponents and shield allies. A particularly illustrative case occurred during Indira Gandhi's tenure in the 1970s. During the infamous Emergency period (1975-77), the CBI was co-opted to suppress dissent against the government, pursuing opposition leaders with zeal while ignoring corruption within the ruling party. The agency's neutrality was further questioned in the aftermath of the Emergency, when investigations against Gandhi herself were conveniently stifled after her return to power in 1980.

The tenure of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi saw the Bofors scandal, in which the CBI was slow to investigate despite mounting evidence of corruption. Subsequent governments, including those led by the Janata Dal and United Front, also dabbled in using the CBI to settle scores.

The term "caged parrot" gained currency in 2013 during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The Supreme Court's scathing remark came in the context of the

investigation into the 2G spectrum scandal, one of the most significant cases of corporate and political malfeasance in Indian history.

Since Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to power in 2014, the charge that investigative agencies are being misused has only intensified. Under the current regime, high-profile raids, arrests, and charges against opposition leaders have become almost routine.

Critics argue that these investigations are aimed at hobbling the opposition, a strategy employed not just to weaken rivals but to create an atmosphere of fear. The message is clear: dissent will be met with legal reprisal. Supporters of the Modi government argue that the agencies are simply doing their job. But the optics of such investigations, particularly when they disproportionately target those opposed to the government, are hard to ignore.

The Enforcement Directorate, too, has seen its powers vastly expanded under the Modi government. According to data from

the Lok Sabha, the ED has registered over 1,700 cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act since 2014, a 500% increase from the previous UPA era.

While it is tempting to lay the blame entirely at the door of the Modi government, the truth is more nuanced. The politicization of the CBI and other probe agencies has long been a feature of Indian governance. The Congress party, which ruled India for much of its post-independence history, also wielded these tools of power.

The question now is whether the CBI and ED can ever return to their intended role as impartial enforcers of the law. The Supreme Court's remarks offer a glimmer of hope, but words alone will not suffice. Institutional reforms are urgently needed. The independence of these agencies must be protected through greater accountability mechanisms, such as a more autonomous selection process for key officials, reducing the direct influence of the government of the day.

One solution could be to place the CBI under the direct oversight of a parliamentary committee, rather than the central government, ensuring that no single political entity can dictate its actions. Similarly, limiting the powers of the government to approve or withhold permission for investigations, especially in cases involving government officials or politicians, would help mitigate accusations of bias.

India's democracy cannot thrive if its investigative agencies are seen as compromised. The parrot, as the Supreme Court suggested, must be freed—before the song it sings becomes irredeemably one-sided.

GLOBAL WATCH

Maduro's Repression and Venezuela's Political Turmoil

Venezuela's political landscape has erupted into crisis following disputed elections and a severe crackdown on dissent. Nicolás Maduro's regime, already mired in economic collapse and humanitarian disaster, faces intensified international scrutiny and internal dissent as allegations of electoral manipulation fuel unrest and geopolitical shifts.

The July 2024 presidential election in Venezuela has been marred by allegations of manipulation and fraud. Despite claims of a landslide victory by incumbent President Nicolás Maduro, the electoral process has been shrouded in controversy. The National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner with 51% of the vote, but the lack of transparency (no detailed vote tallies were released) has fuelled scepticism.

International observers from the United Nations and the Carter Center, invited by Maduro's government, questioned the credibility of the results.

In response to the election controversy, the US government has imposed sanctions on 16 of Maduro's allies, accusing them of obstructing the vote and committing human rights abuses. Targets include high-ranking officials in the judiciary, security forces, and prosecutors. This move, coupled with the recent exile of Edmundo González Urrutia, a key opposition figure who claimed a wide-margin victory, has heightened the political volatility.

**Nicolás Maduro's administration faces mounting internal and external pressures as allegations of electoral manipulation cast a long shadow over the country's political landscape.**



Secretary of State Antony Blinken has condemned the regime's actions, accusing Maduro of clinging to power through repression and intimidation. The US State Department has also placed visa restrictions on additional Maduro allies, while the Treasury Department has penalized over 140 Venezuelan officials. The ongoing crackdown has spurred violent protests and deepened the crisis.

Venezuela's current turmoil is rooted in its political and economic history. The country's profound reliance on oil - Venezuela holds the largest proven reserves globally, at 303.3 billion barrels—has shaped its economic and political dynamics. Hugo Chávez's presidency, starting in 1998, leveraged an oil boom to fund extensive social programs, which initially reduced poverty and unemployment. However, the collapse of oil prices in 2014 precipitated a severe economic crisis, marked by hyperinflation, shortages, and a dramatic decline in living standards.

Maduro, Chávez's handpicked successor, inherited a beleaguered economy heavily reliant on oil. Under his rule, Venezuela has seen further economic decline, exacerbated by US sanctions targeting the oil sector and broader economic management failures. The IMF reported that inflation peaked at a staggering million percent in 2019, and the UN estimated that over 7 million Venezuelans had fled the country by 2022, predominantly to neighbouring South American countries.

Venezuela's crisis reverberates far beyond its borders, particularly in the global oil market. Sanctions have severely restricted Venezuela's ability to export oil, contributing to volatility in global oil prices. Indian oil imports from Venezuela, which had plummeted during 2020-23 due to sanctions, surged again late last year, with India emerging as the world's top buyer of Venezuelan crude.

International reactions to Venezuela's situation have been polarized. The US and several Latin American countries have condemned the election as fraudulent, calling for increased scrutiny and intervention. Meanwhile, Russia and China have expressed support for Maduro, reflecting their broader strategic interests in the region. Russia has reaffirmed its cordial relations with Venezuela, while China has extended diplomatic congratulations to Maduro.

In Latin America, responses vary. While allies like Cuba, Bolivia, and Nicaragua have supported Maduro, countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Costa Rica have rejected the election outcome. The Organization of American States (OAS) has seen a dramatic rift, with Venezuela severing diplomatic ties following criticism from nine Latin American nations.

The future of Venezuela hinges on a resolution to its political and economic crises.

STATES WATCH

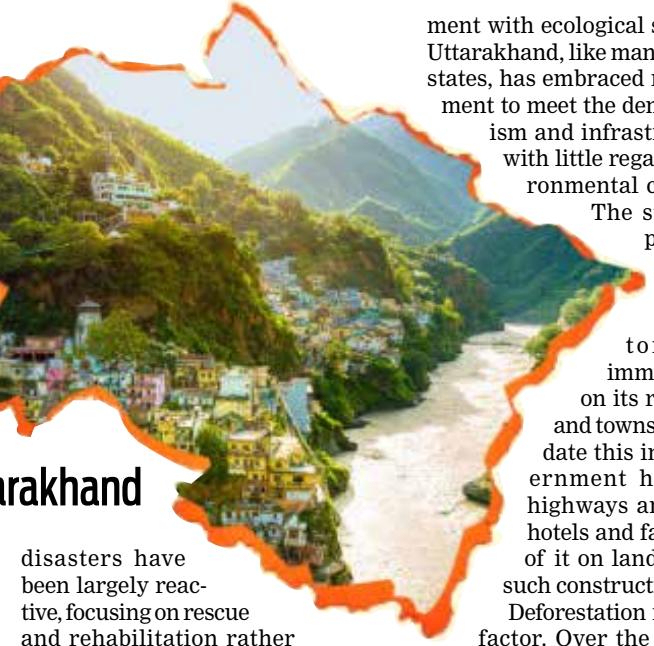
Ecological Fragility In Focus Once Again

The hill state of Uttarakhand, known for its verdant landscapes and sacred pilgrimage sites, has been seeing a distressing uptick in natural disasters, with landslides becoming an all-too-frequent occurrence. The recent series of landslides, triggered by heavy monsoon rains, has once again raised questions about the fragile ecology of the state and the role of human activity in exacerbating these disasters.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has instructed the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams and District Magistrates to remain on high alert due to the heavy rainfall. The Chief Minister has also urged residents to exercise extreme caution in light of the growing threat from the rising waters and continuing landslides. Yet, broader questions about Uttarakhand's long-term safety and sustainability unanswered as Uttarakhand's ecological and developmental balance stands on the edge of a precipice.

While landslides, floods and cloud-bursts are not new to the region, their frequency and intensity have surged in recent years. This monsoon season alone, more than 100 landslides have been reported, blocking roads, submerging homes, and isolating entire communities. Vehicular movement was severely affected at several locations along the Badrinath National Highway with roads at Barrage Kunj, Sonala, Nandprayag and Lambagad blocked by landslides.

The state's vulnerability to natural disasters became global news in 2013, when the Kedarnath floods devastated the region, killing thousands. Caused by a glacial lake burst and exacerbated by heavy monsoon rains, the disaster washed away entire towns. While the scale of the 2013 calamity was extreme, it set a grim precedent for the region. Since then, the government's responses to such



Uttarakhand

disasters have been largely reactive, focusing on rescue and rehabilitation rather than preventive measures.

Hydroelectric projects continue unabated, despite warnings from environmentalists that they disturb the delicate Himalayan ecosystem. In February 2021, a glacier burst in Chamoli district led to another disaster, with flash floods devastating the Rishi Ganga and Dhauliganga river valleys. This event destroyed a hydro-power project, underscoring the fragile interplay between infrastructure development and natural forces in the region.

The problem facing the hill state is how to reconcile the need for develop-

**The recent landslides in Uttarakhand, triggered by heavy monsoon rains, are a stark reminder of the mounting risks of unchecked development in the hill state.**

ment with ecological sustainability. Uttarakhand, like many other Indian states, has embraced rapid development to meet the demands of tourism and infrastructure, often with little regard for its environmental consequences.

The state's annual pilgrimage traffic — drawing millions of visitors — puts immense pressure on its roads, bridges, and towns. To accommodate this influx, the government has expanded highways and built more hotels and facilities, much of it on land ill-suited for such construction.

Deforestation is another key factor. Over the past few decades, Uttarakhand has lost significant forest cover to make way for infrastructure projects, farming, and urban expansion. Trees, which anchor the soil and help absorb water, act as natural barriers against landslides. Their removal leaves hillsides exposed to erosion, which becomes catastrophic when heavy rains hit. Climate change has amplified the region's vulnerabilities. Rising global temperatures are accelerating glacier melt in the Himalayas, increasing the risk of glacial lake outburst floods. The erratic weather patterns associated with climate change also make monsoons more unpredictable, with bursts of heavy rainfall leading to sudden landslides and flash floods.

Uttarakhand faces a difficult balancing act: it needs development to support its economy, particularly through tourism, but it also needs to protect its fragile environment. Hydro-power development, while essential to India's energy goals, must be approached with greater caution. The Char Dham road project, for instance, could be reconsidered or redesigned with stricter environmental safeguards.





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**KALEIDOSCOPE**

- 1 Artists perform Thiruvathira in front of the floral carpet (Athapookkalam) at the Sreepadmanabha Swamy temple on the occasion of the Thiruvonam Day in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday.
- 2 Army personnel of India and the USA during a joint training exercise at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Bikaner.
- 3 Folk artists and others take part in a human chain on Mysore Road organised as part of 'International Democracy Day' celebrations in Bengaluru on Sunday.
- 4 Malayali women celebrate 'Onam' with 'pookalam' (flower rangoli), in Chikmagalur, Karnataka on Sunday.
- 5 Monks of Swaminarayan Temple offer a holy bath to Lord Swaminarayan on the occasion of 'Jal Jilani Ekadashi' at Swaminarayan Gurukul in Surat on Saturday.



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All Pictures PTI, AP

**FORENSIC MATTERS**

# Polygraph Testing: A Double-Edged Sword in Modern Legal Investigations



By  
**Keshav Kumar & Samiksha Das**

The polygraph, referred to as the "lie detector," has historically been a subject of significant scholarly interest and controversy within the domains of law enforcement, security, and forensic investigation. Advocates of this technology contend that it serves as an essential instrument for revealing deception, as it purportedly identifies physiological variations linked to lying, including modifications in heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and skin conductivity.

The inception of the polygraph can be traced to the early 20th century. Researchers William Marston and John Augustus Larson initiated experimental endeavours employing diverse methodologies to quantify physiological reactions in a quest to ascertain falsehoods. With time, the polygraph has experienced significant evolution, characterised by enhancements in sensor technologies and data analytical methodologies that facilitate more precise and dependable assessments of the physiological alterations potentially linked to deceptive behaviour.

In India, several high-profile cases have involved the use of polygraph tests. Notable cases

**The polygraph, or 'lie detector', has evolved since its inception in the early 20th century. Despite advancements in AI and sensor technology, its reliability remains questioned. In India, polygraphs have been used in high-profile cases, but the Supreme Court mandates voluntary testing, with results serving only as supplementary evidence.**



from the 1990s include the Bombay Bomb Blast Case (1993), where Yakub Menon was convicted for his role in the serial bombings, and the Shivani Bhatnagar Journalist Murder Case (1999). In the 2000s, the Nithari Hatya Kand (2005), while the Aarushi Talwar Murder Case (2008) captured public attention. In 2007, the Mecca Masjid Hyderabad Case and the Madhumita Shukla Murder Case were widely covered. In the 2010s, cases like the Adarsh scam (2011), the Sheena Bora Murder case (2012), the 2G scam case (2012), and the Vyapam case (2013) highlighted the role of polygraph testing in complex fraud and murder cases. In 2015, the Udahampur Attack Case, involving a Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist, and the Pathankot Airbase Attack case (2016) also saw using polygraph tests for interrogation. Hathras gang rape case (2020), Shradha Walker Murder case (2022), and Kolkata rape-murder case (2024), are some of the recent major cases where polygraph has been used.

The Supreme Court has adopted a sophisticated perspective regarding the utilisation of polygraph results as evidentiary material in judicial processes. The Supreme Court has acknowledged the utility of polygraph examinations as a method for collecting evidence, particularly in scenarios where alternative forms of evidence may be deficient. The court has concurrently articulated apprehensions concerning their dependability and admissibility as legal evidence. In the seminal case of Selvi & Ors. vs. State of Karnataka (2010), the Supreme

Court decreed that no person may be compelled to undergo a polygraph examination without their explicit consent, underscoring that such procedures are intrusive and infringe upon the fundamental right against self-incrimination as enshrined in Article 20(3) of the Indian Constitution. However, the court has allowed voluntary polygraph tests, but any information obtained may be used as supplementary or corroborative evidence.

Recent scientific innovations have sought to improve the precision of polygraph tests by exploring alternative methodologies, including the use of artificial intelligence algorithms and machine learning techniques. These approaches aim to analyse polygraph data with greater accuracy, reducing the occurrence of false positives and enhancing overall reliability. These algorithms are designed to identify subtle physiological patterns that may elude detection through traditional polygraph methodologies. As scientific and technological paradigms progress, the polygraph may ultimately establish itself as a more dependable and ethically justified instrument for truth verification; nonetheless, it is imperative to uphold a prudent and deliberate approach to its application within the judicial system.

*(Keshav Kumar is a retired IPS and forensic consultant to Assam Government. Samiksha Das is Forensic Psychologist, Assistant Lecturer (OP-JGU). Views personal.)*

**MY CORNER**

# Navi Mumbai's Ramleela Rekindles Epic Traditions



By  
**Pravin Barve**

In an era where digital entertainment often overshadows age-old cultural traditions, the residents of Alaknanda Society in Nerul East, Navi Mumbai, chose to swim against the tide. Over the course of five days, our society hosted a vibrant rendition of the Ramleela, bringing to life the ancient epic of the Ramayana in a manner that captivated both young and old. Spearheaded by the community's Ramleela committee, the event aimed not just to entertain but to rekindle a sense of cultural pride and spiritual reflection in an increasingly fast-paced world.

The Ramayana, with its intricate tales of devotion, sacrifice, and righteousness, has been passed down through generations. Yet in today's hustle, the profound lessons it offers often take a back seat. The Ramleela sought to change that by immersing the audience in a timeless narrative, reminding them of the virtues embodied by Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman.

Each day of the five-day spectacle focused on core values—love, loyalty, courage, faith, and justice—delicately woven into the retelling. The organizers aimed to inspire the younger generation, hoping the lessons from this ancient text would find a place in their daily lives.

What distinguished this event was not just the scale of the production but the collective effort behind it. Planning began five months in advance, with a dedicated committee overseeing everything from script adaptation to stage design. Careful attention was paid to ensuring that the script hewed closely to the original epic while introducing creative elements to engage modern audiences. Authenticity was the guiding principle, with dialogues, costumes, and music meticulously curated to evoke the grandeur of Ayodhya and Lanka.

The Ramleela is as much about community spirit as it was about performance. Volunteers, spanning genera-

tions, came together to contribute. Teenagers played the lead roles, while children as young as five, alongside elderly members, participated with equal enthusiasm. What began as a community project soon became a passion for many, with the cast meeting three times a week for rehearsals that spanned months. The result was a rousing performance filled with well-choreographed dance and battle scenes, enriched by live musical accompaniments.

The five-day journey through the Ramayana was carefully structured to transport the audience into the world of



the epic. From the joyous birth of Lord Ram and his brothers in Ayodhya, to the sorrow of his exile, the kidnapping of Sita, the climactic battle with Ravana, and finally, the triumphant return to Ayodhya — each segment was staged with a precision that kept the audience enthralled.

But beyond the theatrics, what truly set this Ramleela apart was the unity it fostered. It was a celebration of tradition, yes, but also a reminder of the strength of community when working towards a common cause. In a world increasingly fragmented by individualism, this was a rare and heartwarming display of collective effort and devotion. The success of the Ramleela has set a new benchmark for cultural events in the society. It has reignited a passion for tradition and laid the groundwork for future endeavors where culture and community are seamlessly intertwined. In the end, it was not just a performance—it was a reaffirmation of the values that continue to shape Indian society, no matter how much the world changes. The tale of Lord Ram, as timeless as it is, found new life in the hearts of the residents of Alaknanda Society. It was not just about retelling a story; it was about living it.

*(The writer is resident of Navi Mumbai. Views personal)*

# India favourites against Korea in ACT semi today



**Hulunbuir (China):** Maintaining a clean slate, favourites India will fancy their chances when they take on a below-par but unpredictable Korea in the semifinals of the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Monday.

Paris Olympics bronze medalist India have been in rollicking form in the tournament so far, registering five wins out of five league matches. The Harmanpreet Singh-led side started their campaign with a 3-0 win over hosts China and then trounced Japan and Malaysia 5-1 and 8-1 respectively.

India then beat Korea 3-1 before eking out a narrow 2-1 win over arch-rivals Pakistan.

It has been a commanding performance from the Indians as they excelled in every department be it forwardline, midfield or defence.

The most promising part of India's performance in the league stages has been

the form of the strikers. Scoring field goals was a major concern in Paris but here the young forward-line comprising Sukhjeet Singh, Abhishek, Uttam Singh, Gurjot Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal and others have exceeded expectations.

Young midfielder Raj Kumar Pal, too, has shone bright, scoring some fine field goals. Besides, veteran Manpreet Singh, vice-captain Vivek Sagar Prasad and Nilakanta Sharma has excelled in the midfield.

The Indian defence too has performed stoutly, conceding just four goals with goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and Suraj Karkera not letting the team feel the void left the retirement of the talismanic PR Sreejesh.

Harmanpreet, one of the best dragflickers in the world currently, has led from the front and has continued his good form of Paris, converting as many as five penalty corners.

When India struggled for field goals, Harmanpreet stood up with his penalty corner conversions.

Harmanpreet also has an able understudy in young Jugraj Singh, who is right now the fastest dragflicker in the world.

But a knockout game is a new beginning for any side and the Indians can ill afford to take Korea lightly as they can spring a surprise on their day, evidence of which was their last-gasp equaliser to draw 3-3 against Malaysia and keep their semifinal hopes alive.

The Indian defence will also have to be cautious about not conceding too many penalty corners as in Jihun Yang, the tournament's leading scorer with seven goals, Korea possesses a potent dragflicker.

In the other semifinal of the day, Pakistan will take on hosts China.

The final is scheduled for Tuesday.

-PTI

# First Pak woman cricket umpire



**Islamabad:** Saleema Imtiaz became the first Pakistani woman to be nominated to the ICC international panel of development umpires, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Sunday.

Imtiaz's nomination on the panel means she is now eligible to officiate in women's bilateral international matches and ICC women's events.

"This isn't just a win for me, it's a win for every aspiring female cricketer and umpire in Pakistan," Imtiaz said in a statement.

"I hope my success motivates countless women who dream of making their mark in the sport."

"This moment reflects the growing influence of women in cricket and the PCB's commitment to fostering that development."

Imtiaz's daughter, Kainat played 40 international games for Pakistan that included 19 one-day internationals and 21 T20s.

Imtiaz said she had always wanted to make her own name in the field of umpiring ever since her daughter made her international debut against South Africa in 2010.

"My own dream was to represent my country at an international level," Imtiaz said. Imtiaz joined the PCB's women's umpires panel in 2008.

-AP

# Women Navy officers to embark on challenging expedition

**New Delhi:** Two Indian Navy women officers -- Lt Commander Roopa A and Lt Commander Dilna K -- would be embarking on an arduous blue-water voyage around the world soon.

The duo will be undertaking the expedition of circumnavigating the globe on board Indian naval sailing vessel (INSV) Tarini, Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said on Sunday.

The two women officers have been preparing for the 'Sagar Parikrama' expedition for the last three years, he said.

"Sagar Parikrama would be a gruelling voyage requiring extreme skills, physical fitness and mental alertness. The officers have been training rigorously and gained thousands of miles of experience under their belt," Commander Madhwal said.

The two officers are un-



INSV Tarini is known for circumnavigating the globe with an all-women officer crew in the historic first 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' in 2017. The circumnavigation of INSV Tarini will be a significant step forward in India's ocean sailing enterprise and maritime endeavours, showcasing the nation's growing prominence in global maritime activities and gender equality, the spokesperson said.

dergoing training under the mentorship of ace circumnavigator, and 'Golden Globe Race' hero, Commander Abhilash Tomy (Retd).

The officers, as part of a six-member crew, had participated in trans-oceanic expedition from Goa to Rio de Janeiro via Cape Town

and back last year. Thereafter, they undertook a sailing expedition from Goa to Port Blair and back in double-handed mode.

Further, the duo successfully undertook a sortie from Goa to Port Louis, Mauritius again in dual handed mode early this

year. "Indian Navy has made significant efforts to revitalise the sailing tradition, emphasising its commitment to preserve maritime heritage and promote seamanship skills," the Navy spokesperson said.

He said the Indian Navy has taken a centre stage in ocean sailing expeditions through the pioneering efforts of sail training ships INS -- Tarangini and INS Sudarshini, and circumnavigating onboard INSV Mhadei and Tarini.

"Continuing with the celebration of maritime skill and adventure, two Indian Navy women officers -- Lt Commander Roopa A and Lt Commander Dilna K would be embarking on the extraordinary expedition of circumnavigating the globe on board INSV Tarini very shortly," Madhwal added.

-PTI



Olympic double medallist Manu Bhaker visits Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Pic: PTI

# Lahiri slips to tied 12 at Golf

**Chicago:** India's Anirban Lahiri went 1-over 71 in the second round and slipped to tied 12th in the 2024 LIV Golf Individual Championship here.

Lahiri carded two birdies but he also had three bogeys on the second day, and now he has a total of 2-under for 36 holes. Lahiri began the tournament with a fine 3-under 67 that placed him inside the top-5.

He had four birdies against one bogey in the opening round. Jon Rahm entered this week's regular-season finale with a slim points margin over Joaquin Niemann.

The Legion XIII captain increased that advantage with a brilliant bogey-free 6-under 64 that now has him in position to claim two trophies after Sunday's final round at Bolingbrook Golf Club. Rahm is at 7 under and owns a one-shot lead over Fireballs GC Captain Sergio Garcia on the leaderboard and a three-shot lead over Niemann, the Torque GC captain.

-PTI

# Men's National Junior Hockey Championship

# Jharkhand, Odisha in quarters

**Jalandhar:** Hockey Jharkhand outclassed Hockey Gujarat, while Hockey Association of Odisha defeated Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey to enter the quarterfinals of the 14th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship here on Sunday.

Jharkhand will face Hockey Haryana and Odisha will take on Punjab Hockey in the last eight round on Monday.

Hockey Jharkhand drubbed Gujarat 27-0. Adisan Minj (12', 16', 35', 56', 58', 59') stood out to be top goal scorer for Jharkhand.

Ghuran Lohra (2', 6', 19', 24', 53') also scored five goals in the game along with Roshan Ekka (5', 30', 31', 39') and Deepak Soreng (18', 26', 43', 47') who scored four goals each to put their team in a strong position.

Baraik Kamal Chik (16', 25', 40') also joined his teammates to take the game away from their opponent and scored a hat-trick.

Sukhnath Guria (32', 33') scored a brace as well whereas Abhishek Tigga (5'), Sumit Barwa (15'+) and Mangra Dohray (30') scored one goal each.

Odisha defeated Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey 5-2.

-PTI



# Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab win

Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab secured wins on day six of the 14th Hockey India Junior Men's National Championship here on Sunday.

Andhra Pradesh and Delhi played out a 5-5 draw.

In the first match, Haryana thrashed Rajasthan 6-1. Rohit Rana (2nd minute), Sunil Maan (11th), Sahil Ruhail (17th) and Ami Khasa (60th) scored one goal each, while Navraj Singh (7th, 37th) struck a brace for Haryana.

Anurag Suthar (50th) scored the consolation goal for Rajasthan.

In the second match, Karnataka also notched up a 6-1 win over Kerala with Aryan Uthappa Mt (6th, 35th) and Sunil P B (8th, 45th) scoring a couple of goals each.

Vivek Ravi Bagade (22nd) and Dhanush Kaveriappa Ma (32nd) too scored one goal each, while in response, Anujith P (47th) scored the only goal for Kerala.

In the last match of the day, Punjab trounced Mizoram 7-1. For Punjab, captain Ujwal Singh (10th) opened the account before Harshdeep Singh (12th).

# Gill to be rested for B'desh T20Is

**New Delhi:** India vice-captain Shubman Gill is among the prominent players who will be rested for the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh starting October 7 as part of BCCI's workload management policy.

Gill, India's No.3 in Test matches, is a vital cog in the team's top-order alongside Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Yashasvi Jaiswal and is expected to play all 10 Tests this season.

Apart from Gill, a few more important players will also be rested keeping the the three- Test series against New Zealand in mind.

India will start their upcoming international season with a two-Test series against Bangladesh in Chennai from September 19 followed by the second match in Kanpur starting September 27. The teams have arrived in Chennai.

-PTI

# Davis Cup

# Ramkumar-Balaji pair loses must-win doubles



**Stockholm:** Ramkumar Ramanathan and N Sriram Balaji could play well only in patches to lose the do-or-die doubles against Andre Goransson and Filip Bergevi as India succumbed to Sweden in the Davis Cup World Group I tie after conceding an unassailable 0-3 lead, here Sunday.

After losing both the singles on Saturday, India needed to win the third rubber to stay alive in the tie but Ramkumar and Balaji went down 3-6 4-6 in one hour and 19 minutes.

India's dismal record against Sweden in the Davis Cup continued as it was the team's sixth defeat in as many ties.

The reverse singles have been rendered inconsequential.

India will now compete next year in Play-offs to keep place in World Group I.

The Indian pair had its first chance in game three in the opening set on Goransson's serve. Balaji and Ramkumar pocketed four straight points to earn a breakpoint but the home team averted the danger.

Ramkumar was, however, broken in the next game and Bergevi held his own to zoom to a commanding 5-2 lead.

Balaji served to stay in the set and managed to hold. The home team comfortably sealed the opening set with Bergevi holding at

love. In the second set, Ramkumar had a fiery start, holding at love.

Bergevi though surprisingly struggled with his first serve as he committed two double faults to be at 30-all.

Sensing a chance, Ramkumar attacked Bergevi's second serve but could respond only with a feeble shot on the Swede's widish cross court return. Standing at the net, it was an easy put away for Goransson.

Balaji was under pressure in the next game. Serving at deuce, he fired an ace but Goransson hit a backhand volley winner on the next point to again make it deuce. The Indians soaked the pressure and eventually saved the game.

Balaji faced the heat again in the seventh game with both Swedish players finding service return winners with attacking shots. Goransson earned a break chance with a volley winner from the net.

Ramkumar hit a powerful forehand return following an exciting rally on that break point and later the Indians saved one more but on the third breakpoint Balaji netted a return.

The lead stayed with the home team that served out the match in the 10th game. Ramkumar's causal forehand return landed outside the lines on the match point.

-PTI

# Took part in DL final with fracture in hand

**Brussels:** Double Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Sunday revealed that he took part in the Diamond League season finale despite a hand injury sustained during a training session.

On Saturday, Chopra came agonisingly close to winning the Diamond League crown before missing it by a single centimeter to finish as runner-up for the second consecutive year with a throw of 87.86m here.

"On Monday, I injured myself in practice and x-rays showed that I had fractured the fourth metacarpal in my left hand. It was another painful challenge for me. But with the help of my team, I was able to participate in Brussels," the 26-year-old said on his social media handle.

"This was the last competition of the year, and I wanted to end my season on the track. While I couldn't meet my own expectations, I feel this was a season in which I learned a lot. I am now determined to return, fully fit and ready to go."

Chopra had been struggling with his fitness this season and is expected to meet a doctor to rectify a groin injury that has affected him all season and came in the way of his quest to hit the elusive 90m mark.

This hand injury is a new one and he did not elaborate much on it.

Chopra, who added a silver to his Olympic medal tally in Paris following a historic gold at the Tokyo Games, thus ended his season on a high.

Reflecting on his season, he said, "As the 2024 season ends, I look back on everything I've learned through the year - about im-

provement, setbacks, mentality and more.

"I want to thank all of you for your encouragement. 2024 has made me a better athlete and person. See you in 2025."

-PTI

