

THE PERFECT VOICE



Girl offered lift, raped in car ... pg 3



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Arshdeep in top 10 ICC T20I rankings ... pg 10

Two months After Bangladesh Turmoil

PERFECT EXCLUSIVE

Students who engineered the change feel defeated



OUT OF 158 COORDINATORS AT LEAST 40 HAVE QUIT; OTHERS LOOKING THE OTHER WAY

By Romita Datta

Kolkata: The platform, which led the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement in Bangladesh, culminating to a regime change and end of the 15-year-old powerful Sheikh Hasina government is on its way out. At least so it appears, given the propensity among student leaders to resign from the post of coordinators.

Out of 158 student coordinators about 40 have already put in their papers. The number is increasing

every day, which in a way vindicates that students no longer feel in tune with what is happening in Bangladesh.

Though the coordinators have not officially cited the reason for exit, they made no bones to say that their job has gone redundant, post the formation of the interim government. Asked to explain as to why the feeling of redundancy has crept in, a student leader of Jagannath Vishwavidyalaya (Jagannath University) said "coordinators are no longer need-

ed because the job of coordination is over."

Prodded further on this, he admitted that a majoritarian voice is calling the shots in the current dispensation. "Those who are numerically strong, be it politically or in terms of community, are playing a decisive role in the current state of affairs. We are closely watching the situation. Nobody should forget that students brought down a powerful autocratic government and therefore weeding out radical fundamentalists from the

system wouldn't be a difficult job," said the same leader on condition of anonymity

The caretaker Cabinet of Bangladesh under Muhammad Yunus has 20 advisers and six special positions under the Chief Adviser. The team is a motley group but indirect presence or influence of right wing party like He-fazat-e-Islam and radicals like Jamaat-e-Islam cannot be ruled out. Two frontrunners of the student's movement, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud

have found their place in the cabinet. "The faces we see in the Cabinet apparently may be harmless but no one knows who they represent or hold allegiance to," said a source. And above everything else, what is worrisome is the sudden emergence of the banned outfit—Hizb ut-Tahrir, a pan Islamist organization, outlawed by the Bangladesh government in under Anti-Terrorism Act.

The dissent felt since the very first day of Hasina's exit - Page 7

Body of missing jawan found

Srinagar: Security forces on Wednesday recovered the bullet-ridden body of a missing soldier from Anantnag district of J&K, officials said here. The body of Territorial Army jawan Hilal Ahmad Bhat, who was reported missing on Tuesday from Shah, was recovered from Sanglan forest in Utrasoo area of Anantnag.

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has tendered its advice to the Union Government to include seven castes in the Other Backward Class (OBC). These castes are Lodha/Lodhi, Badgujar, Suryavanshi Gujar, Leve



Gujar/Reve Gujar/Reva Gujar, Dangari, Bhojar,

Pawar and Kapewar/Munnar Kapewar/Munnar Kapu/, Telanga/Telang, Pentarreddy and Bukekari.

Senior BJP leader Hansraj Ahir is the Chairman of NCBC. Apart from Ahir, Bhusan Kama form the two-member bench of the NCBC.

They held hearings re-

garding the inclusion on October 17, 2023 and July 26, 2024 in Mumbai and the final decision to tender the advice to the Union Government for the inclusion of the above castes under the Central List of OBCs for Maharashtra was taken on October 8, 2024. Accordingly, the advice was tendered on Wednesday.

Seven castes to be added in OBC

Cong seeks inquiry into EVM 'discrepancies'

PARTY CLAIMS EVMS WERE OPERATING AT 60-70 PC BATTERY CAPACITY

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday demanded a thorough probe into "discrepancies" found in some Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) during the counting of votes of the Haryana assembly polls and demanded that such EVMs should be sealed and secured pending the inquiry.

A delegation of top Congress leaders comprising former chief ministers Bhopinder Singh Hooda and Ashok Gehlot and AICC leaders K C Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Ajay Maken and Pawan Khera, besides Haryana Congress chief Udai Bhan, met with top Election Commission officials here.

The delegation handed over a memorandum to the officials along with specific



complaints from various constituencies in Haryana. The Congress leaders alleged that there are at least 20 such complaints, including seven in writing from as many assembly constituencies, with many referring to EVMs functioning at 99 per cent battery capacity whereas the average EVMs were

found to be operating at 60 to 70 per cent battery capacity during the counting.

The party alleged "glaring discrepancies" related to some of the EVMs in the Haryana polls and urged the EC to conduct a probe.

He said the Congress will submit more complaints to the EC in the next few days.

We have informed the EC about all the complaints. CM Nayab Saini himself said that we have completed all arrangements and we will form the government. Therefore, the batteries of EVMs with 99 pc charge used in elections have become a cause of suspicion.

- Udai Bhan, Chief, Haryana Congress



We name our daughters Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati; we worship the divine feminine power in the temples but oppress, repress and even attack the feminine power amidst us. That is the irony in the way India sees its women.

After the safety of the daylight fades, women are seen as easy prey by the predators of the night.

We mark the nine nights of Navratri, the festival of the goddess, by celebrating the dedication and valour of nine real-life women who brave the challenges of the night to pursue their dreams.

PART - 8

Battling Predators

THE DOCTOR OVERCAME THE FEAR OF NAXALITES AND THE FOREST WHILE DISCHARGING HER DUTIES

By Aditi Pai

Three years ago, on a rainy night, Dr Mayuri Bhalavi, 36, was walking back to her staff quarters after checking on a patient at the emergency department of the hospital when she "got the biggest fright". It was post-midnight and the heavy downpour had given birth to a small stream in the campus which Bhalavi had to jump over. "As I approached it, I saw a huge yellow striped snake flowing through the water. I screamed out in fear; I couldn't move. I ran back to the hospital and asked a colleague to drop me home. That's the only fear I face when I work here," she says. Another one, she says, was of Naxalites. Bhalavi's occupational hazards are far removed from the safety concerns that several other working women face but for her, these are real fears that she strives to overcome everyday.

Bhalavi and her husband are doctors living and working on the SEARCH campus in Gadchiroli, a remote tribal area in eastern Maharashtra. For the past nine years, she's been living on the campus which offers her convenience and safety. "Everyone lives here like a family so it's safe," she says. Bhalavi has never faced any trouble from the patients or their families either. Most patients come from the neighbouring tribal areas and are often known to the doctors at the hospital.

An initial fear she had when she joined the hospital nine years ago was that of Naxalites. None of them, however, scared or troubled any of the doctors which instilled confidence in her. Bhalavi recalls a night when a woman was brought in with severe vaginal injuries. She was summoned to treat the patient along with Dr Rani Bang, co-founder of the SEARCH. Standing there



DR MAYURI BHALAVI, Doctor, 36

were three burly men and a woman. After the surgery and treatment, Bhalavi was told that they were the Naxalites she feared so much. The only tell-tale signs were their build and their clothes. "Only the Naxalite women wear trousers and shirts, the rest of the women are

says. Often, her sleep is disturbed, which leads to migraine attacks. There are times when she goes without food for long hours if she's treating patients and that leads to acidity. "Family life and our daily routine suffers for sure when you work night shifts. I tell my patients to follow a healthy lifestyle but mine is often wrong. But then, I am a doctor so my patients come first," she says.

Born in Amravati, Bhalavi completed her BAMS degree and started working in Wardha as part of a government programme that diagnosed congenital diseases among children. Nine years ago, she and her doctor husband moved to Gadchiroli to work at SEARCH. "I always wanted to work in a tribal area and give back to the people of our community. I live in a remote place but the opportunities and learning is far better than the exposure I would have got in urban areas," she says. As head of the nursing department, Bhalavi grooms young girls from the tribal communities that surround the SEARCH campus to become able nurses. As she rushes through the wards checking, treating and comforting patients, Bhalavi hopes that she doesn't encounter snakes as she heads home after a long night at the hospital.

Opportunities and learning is far better than the exposure I would have got in urban areas.



The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus glowing after a sudden burst of rain in the city on Wednesday.

Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Haryana verdict shows people won't back hateful conspiracies: PM Modi

By Correspondent

Nagpur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the BJP's victory in the Haryana elections shows the mood in the country and the people have shown they will not fall prey to the hateful conspiracies of the Congress and "urban Naxals". The Congress is an irresponsible party and a factory to "spread hatred" which wants to divide Hindus and pit one community against another, Modi said after virtually launching various development projects of more than Rs 7,600 crore in the Maharashtra.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) wants to weaken Maharashtra to gain power, but the ruling Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) is determined to strengthen the state, he said.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month.

Modi said never before has Maharashtra seen the expeditious development of projects. Under the Congress regime, the same speed and scale was witnessed in terms of corruption.

He accused the opposition party of indulging in caste politics to divide Hindus for political gains and expressed confidence that the people of Maharashtra would reject efforts to break the society.

The BJP has won the Haryana assembly elec-



Why should PM use govt programme to make 'political speech': Cong

The Congress on Wednesday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his attack on the party while virtually inaugurating development projects for Maharashtra, saying taxpayers' money cannot and should not be used to indulge in a "political speech." In a post on X, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "Why should the @PMOIndia use a government platform and a government programme to make a political speech and attack the opposition?"

"Taxpayers' money cannot and should not be used to indulge in a political speech? For that, he can use the BJP's platform," Khara said.

tions, he said, adding that "in Maharashtra we have to get a bigger victory." Modi said that the Marathis and the people of Maharashtra are congratulating him for the Centre granting classical language status to Marathi.

The BJP's victory in the Haryana assembly polls for the third consecutive time

Dalits, but the community understood its dangerous intentions of snatching their reservations and to distribute it to its vote bank.

"Today, Dalits of Haryana have given a record support to the BJP and the OBCs of Haryana are with BJP looking at its development works. The Congress provoked farmers, but they know who gave them MSP (minimum support price) on their produce," he said adding that the cultivators of Haryana are happy with the BJP's farmer welfare policies.

"It is the policy of Congress to pit one Hindu community against another. Congress knows that it will benefit as much when Hindus get divided. Congress wants to ignite fire in the Hindu community by any way possible for political gains," Modi said pointing out that the Congress implements this formula wherever there is an election in the country.

That is why, Gandhi ji had said that Congress should be disbanded. However, Congress did not get finished, but is bent upon finishing the country today. The Congress made poverty as the fuel of its politics and always kept the poor as poor, Modi said, adding that his government lifted 25 crore people out of poverty in last 10 years.

"Our goal is Viksit Bharat with the development of poor, farmers, youth and women," the prime minister said

Opposition's 'fake narrative' smashed: Fadnavis

Nagpur: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said the BJP's victory in the Haryana assembly polls has busted the "fake narrative" created by its rivals during the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year. While the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi allies were united, now they are taking potshots at each other, Fadnavis told reporters at the Nagpur airport.

He also said the seat-sharing discussions of the ruling Mahayuti, comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's NCP, were almost in the final stage and that elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month.

Bucking anti-incumbency, the ruling BJP pulled off a hat-trick of wins in Haryana to retain power and halt Congress' comeback attempt in the assembly elections, results of which were announced Tuesday.

While the BJP ended up with its best-ever haul of 48 seats, the Congress got 37 seats in Haryana. Asked what will be the impact of Haryana elections on the Maharashtra assembly polls, Fadnavis said the results in the northern state have clearly broken the "fake narrative" created (by BJP's rivals) during the Lok Sabha elections and now people are standing with the BJP. On seat-sharing talks in the ruling Mahayuti, Fadnavis said discussions are almost in the final stage and added that "80 per cent of the paper (alluding to writing an exam) is solved and 20 per cent will be solved soon."

Sena (UBT) blames overconfidence of Cong

SANJAY RAUT PRESSES FOR CM FACE IN MAHARASHTRA

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) on Wednesday blamed ally Congress's defeat in Haryana on "overconfidence", and said the Congress must decide whether it wants to contest the Maharashtra elections on its own.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led party also reiterated its demand that the Opposition's Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi alliance that also includes the NCP led by Sharad Pawar should declare its chief ministerial face ahead of the elections.

The comments drew a sharp response from the Congress which said such criticism will not be tolerated. Exposing the fissures in the MVA even as seat-sharing talks are underway, Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut alleged that the Congress relies on its allies wherever it is weak, but ignores them where it is strong.

"The Congress defeat in Haryana is due to its overconfidence and the arrogance of its local leaders. No one thought the BJP will come to power again and it was made to look like a one-sided contest," said the editorial in Saamana, the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece.

"One should learn from Congress how to turn victory into defeat," it said.

Talking to reporters, Raut said "people want a leader" in a state like Maharashtra. "People cannot digest this policy that you first contest polls and declare the CM

later," said the Rajya Sabha member. Notably, both Congress and NCP (SP) are not keen on declaring the CM face in advance.

"The Congress has to take a stand on whether it wants to fight on its own. Then the other parties will take their decision," Raut further said.

Wherever Congress is weak, it takes help of regional parties, but in regions where it thinks it is strong, it assigns no importance to its regional allies, Raut claimed.

INDIA allies won in Jammu and Kashmir as National Conference leader Omar Abdullah was the face of the Opposition, he said.

"Had Haryana polls been contested by the INDIA alliance and seats allocated to Samajwadi Party, Aam Aadmi Party, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT), it would have helped the alliance, but Congress thought the battle would be one-sided and it will win on its own," Raut added.

He also credited the BJP with deft election management in Haryana which divided the opposition vote.

The editorial in Saamana, meanwhile, noted that the Congress organisation was in disarray in Haryana, unlike that of the BJP.

Recalling the last year's election results in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, the editorial said the BJP was certain not to return to power, but internal disputes of the Congress helped the saffron party.



Patole retorts advising not to target Congress

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Nana Patole on Wednesday advised Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut to mind his words after Raut's remarks, that the "Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a lost battle (in Haryana)". "Being in an alliance, leaders should not target one another. We will talk about this in a (seat-sharing) meeting today. There are different scenarios in Maharashtra and Haryana and we will work out better in Maharashtra. I don't know the basis of Raut's statement, but you cannot blame a partner party when you are stitched into an alliance," visibly upset Patole told the media as the alliance leaders arrived here at the YB Chavan centre for a seat sharing meeting. After the devastating results in Haryana assembly polls the tensions have now shifted to Maharashtra and the leaders of Rahul Gandhi's party appeared much upset over being put in the spot by their alliance partners.

CRIME WATCH

Thane court acquits 4 chain snatchers

Thane: A Thane court has acquitted four members of the Irani gang booked under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in a chain-snatching case, saying there was laxity on the part of police due to which the accused were getting benefit of doubt. Special Judge (MCOCA) Amit M Shete, in the order on October 1, also directed the police authorities to initiate appropriate action against the errant cops. Those acquitted of the charges under the MCOCA are Kasim Afsar Irani (35), Jafar @ Bhurelal Gulam Husain Irani (28), Sarfaraj Firoj Irani (34) and Aliabbas @ Zenali Firoj Irani (31), all from Ambivali at Irani locality in Kalyan. The accused were charged stemming from an incident involving the theft of gold jewellery of Pushpavati Kanade on July 8, 2019 at Wayale Nagar in Kalyan.

Three booked for assaulting couple

Thane: Police have registered a case against a woman and her two relatives for allegedly assaulting a couple after a dispute over her minor son thrashing the couple's child in Thane's Daighar area on October 6. The accused woman's six-year-old son allegedly beat up and kicked the couple's son, aged 2, residing in their neighbourhood without any reason. When the toddler returned home and his mother noticed injuries on his body, she and her husband went to enquire about it with the parents of the boy who hit him. The mother of the boy who hit the toddler got annoyed. She, her sister-in-law and brother-in-law later allegedly beat up the toddler's parents.

Minor girl falls from scooter, dies

Nagpur: A seven-year-old girl was killed as she came under the wheels of a mini truck after falling from a scooter ridden by her grandfather in Nagpur, police said on Wednesday. The accident took place on a road connecting Gopal Nagar to Padole Square on Tuesday evening. The girl was on her way to attend a dance class and was riding pillion on the scooter with her grandfather. An unidentified vehicle suddenly hit them. The minor and her grandfather fell on the road and the girl got crushed by the rear wheels of a mini truck heading in the same direction, an officer said.

Sukhoi to take off from Navi Mumbai airport, says CM

By Correspondent

Nagpur: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday announced that a Sukhoi fighter jet will take off from the Navi Mumbai international airport this week.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a "bigger fighter than the Sukhoi fighter jet" as he takes on the entire opposition alone, Shinde quipped at a program here where the PM virtually laid the foundation stone of various development projects in the poll-bound state.

The greenfield Navi Mumbai international airport near Mumbai is currently under construction. It is expected to be operational by March next year, officials had said earlier.

"I want to give good news that in the next two-three days Sukhoi fighter jets will take off from the Navi Mumbai international airport," said the chief minister who too addressed the function through video link.

"We all believe that Modi ji is a bigger fighter than the Sukhoi fighter jet and he fights with all the oppo-

sition and wins on his own. Hence, his fighter jet has landed in the hearts of 140 crore people. Modi ji is taking the country to greater heights at the speed of a jet," Shinde, a BJP ally, added.

Congratulating Modi for the BJP's victory in the Haryana assembly elections, he assured that the success will be replicated in the coming elections in Ma-



harashtra. On the PM inaugurating ten new medical colleges in the state, Shinde noted that Maharashtra has the highest number of medical colleges in the country. Inauguration of ten medical colleges was a record, he added.

Before 2014, there were 387 medical colleges in the country and the number rose to 706 in the last ten years, he said.

Similarly, the number of airports in the country has

rose to more than 150 from 74 in 2014, the chief minister said.

Speaking on the occasion, deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the inauguration of ten medical colleges in a single day was a proud moment for the state.

The upgradation of the Nagpur airport will create a large number of jobs and investment opportunities in central India and also give a boost to the Nagpur cargo hub, the BJP leader said while thanking the prime minister for the development projects.

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari expressed happiness over the 'bhoomi-pujan' (ground-breaking ceremony) of the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Nagpur International Airport's new terminal. It will boost economic activity and benefit Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh along with Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, the senior BJP leader noted.

Gadkari also praised Fadnavis for his efforts for the development of the Nagpur airport.

Bus falls into gorge, 19 women injured

Mumbai: At least 20 persons, including 19 female passengers, sustained injuries after a state-owned bus carrying women for a 'Ladki Bahin' event plunged into a 50-foot-deep gorge in Maharashtra's Raigad district on Wednesday, police said.

The bus belonging to the Bhiwandi depot of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) with 29 women on board met with the accident in the Mangaon tehsil in the afternoon, an official said.

The women were being taken to a programme in connection with the 'Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana', which provides monthly financial assistance of Rs 1,500 to eligible women, at Mangaon.

As the bus reached Kumbhet village, the driver lost control of the vehicle, which rolled down about 50 feet into a valley, he said.

At least 19 women and a man sustained injuries in the incident, he said.

Twelve injured women were rushed to the sub-district hospital in Mangaon. The others were taken to the primary hospital in Goregaon in Raigad district, he said.

Will roll out election strategy if demands not met: Jarange

By Correspondent

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday said if the Maharashtra government did not accept the Maratha community's quota-related demands, he would disclose his strategy for the assembly elections within 48 hours of the code of conduct coming into force.

If his supporters decide to contest the elections, they would fight independently and would not form an alliance though they would seek to defeat the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP coalition, Jarange told PTI in an interview over phone.

"We are waiting for the code of conduct... Once the code of conduct is in force, and if our demands are not accepted (by that point), we will roll out our strategy for the assembly elections in the next 48 hours. I will not let them (the ruling coalition) sleep," said the activist who undertook a series of fasts in the last more than one year to press the demand of reservation for the Marathas.



"I have done my homework and prepared a strategy for contesting elections or to defeat the candidates of the ruling parties. (Deputy Chief Minister) Devendra Fadnavis says they have solved 80 percent of the question paper (worked out sharing of 80 percent of seats). But I say that 80 percent of their work has been spoiled," he further said.

Asked about his assertion that the disgruntled Maratha community will seek to defeat the candidates of the ruling coalition in 113 constituencies, Jarange said, "We have a list of 113 candidates whom we want to defeat if the Maratha quota issue is not resolved. But we are not going to get into alliance with anyone. If we decide to contest, our candidates will be fielded independently."

PETA wants Salman to remove donkey

New Delhi: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India on Wednesday appealed to Bollywood superstar Salman Khan to use his influence to remove a donkey from the sets of "Big Boss 18." In a letter sent to Khan, PETA India highlighted growing public concern over the use of the donkey, which was introduced on the popular reality show's latest edition as the 19th contestant Gadhraj.

"We are being inundated with complaints by members of the public who are deeply distressed over the keeping of a donkey in the 'Big Boss' house. Their con-



cerns are valid and must not be ignored," read the letter. Penned by its representative Shaurya Agrawal, PETA India asked the "Tiger 3" star to use his "influence to urge the show's producers to avoid using animals as props for entertainment."

In the letter, the NGO also requested that the donkey be surrendered to PETA India for "re-homing in a sanctuary", where it could live alongside other rescued donkeys.

The complaints center around the donkey being confined in a small space and exposed to the harsh conditions of a television

set, which can be particularly distressing for prey animals like donkeys. "Big Boss" is light-hearted entertainment, but the use of animals on a show set is no laughing matter. As prey animals, donkeys are naturally nervous. They, and other animals, would find the lights, sounds and clamor that is standard on all show sets confusing and frightening.

"That a show set is no place for an animal is obvious to viewers who are saddened to see the donkey kept in a small, confined space standing in waste," the letter stated.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Shiv Sena has gained good grounds in Pune city. As we have a strong position in terms of party organisation and cadre, we are eyeing Hadapsar, Wadgaon Sheri and Khadakwasla for the upcoming state elections."



Pramod Bhangire, President, Shiv Sena, Pune

A lone girl offered lift, raped in car

Mumbai: A 31-year-old man has been arrested by Mumbai Police for allegedly raping an 18-year-old girl after offering her a lift in his car in Mahim area, an officer said on Wednesday.

The girl had initially claimed that she was sexually assaulted by two men who spiked drinking water offered to her in the car. However, the CCTV footage analysed by the police showed the involvement of the lone accused who took the girl to a secluded spot on the night of October 7.

The accused approached the girl after spotting her alone at Bandra railway station. The girl was crying as her uncle didn't reach to pick her up, the officer said. The victim, who hails from Uttar

Pradesh, lives in Mira Road area with her uncle.

"The accused offered to drop the girl to her destination in his car. He took her to a secluded spot in Mahim area and allegedly raped her on October 7 night. The man dropped the victim at Bandra railway station after committing the crime," the officer said.

Commuters spotted the girl crying at the railway station and informed the police, he added.

During questioning by police, the girl disclosed the incident, leading to the registration of a case of rape and the arrest of the accused from Golibar area in Santacruz, the officer said.

The accused is originally from West Bengal but is currently settled in Mumbai.

VBA announces 10 candidates

Mumbai: The Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) has announced 10 candidates for as many Muslim dominated constituencies across the state. With this list the VBA has announced a total of 21 of its candidates so far.

At Parbhani the VBA has fielded former deputy mayor and current leader of Congress party in the Municipal Corporation Sayyad Sami Sayyad Sahebjan. His brother Sayyad Khaled had bagged 45,000 votes in 2014 assembly election from this constituency. Other constituencies from where the VBA announced candidates today include Malkapur, Balapur, Aurangabad Central, Gangapur, Kalyan West, Hadapsar, Man, Shirol and Sangali.



The Mumbaikars were caught unaware of a sudden burst of rain in the city on Wednesday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Man booked over 'triple talaq'

Mumbai: A 27-year-old man has been booked for allegedly giving his wife 'triple talaq' (instant divorce), which was banned in 2019, for not getting money from her parents, an official said on Wednesday.

The incident came to light on Monday evening when the 22-year-old woman approached the JJ Marg police station with a complaint against her husband, his parents and younger brother, the official said.

In her complaint, the woman said she married the man, who is in the scrap business, in 2020 against her parents' wishes. She then snapped ties

with her parents and started living with her husband and his family at Pydhonie in south Mumbai.

The couple has two children, the official said, citing the woman's complaint.

Soon after the marriage, the woman's in-laws allegedly forced her to take up a job and earn following which she started working as a teacher in a private school. However, they allegedly kept asking her to get money from her parents. The woman told the police that she was harassed physically and mentally by her in-laws after she refused to bring money from her parents.

Shilpa Shetty, husband challenge ED eviction notices in HC

Mumbai: Actor Shilpa Shetty and her businessman husband Raj Kundra have moved the Bombay High Court challenging ED's notices directing them to vacate their house in Mumbai's Juhu area and a farmhouse in Pune within ten days in connection with a money-laundering case linked to an alleged Bitcoin fraud.

The couple's advocate Prashant Patil said that Shetty and Kundra received the eviction notices only on October 3. He termed the notices arbitrary and illegal and sought them to be quashed.

According to the pleas, there is no grave urgency for the petitioners to vacate their premises and that the issuance of such eviction notices was uncalled for.

"The petitioners are also seeking relief on humanitarian grounds as the prem-

ing them to evict their residential premises here and a farmhouse in Pune within ten days in connection with a money-laundering case linked to an alleged Bitcoin fraud.

The couple's advocate Prashant Patil said that Shetty and Kundra received the eviction notices only on October 3. He termed the notices arbitrary and illegal and sought them to be quashed.

According to the pleas, there is no grave urgency for the petitioners to vacate their premises and that the issuance of such eviction notices was uncalled for.

"The petitioners are also seeking relief on humanitarian grounds as the prem-



ise in question is their residential premise in which they have been staying with their family of six members for almost two decades," the petitions said. The pleas also sought HC to stay the effect of the eviction notices.

As per the pleas, the ED had in 2018 lodged a complaint against one Amit Bhardwaj and others for an alleged Bitcoin fraud and

on charges of money laundering. Both Shetty and her husband have not been named as accused in the case. The ED, during its probe, had summoned Kundra for questioning on several occasions. Kundra had appeared before the agency after each summons, the pleas said.

In April 2024, Shetty and Kundra received a notice based on an order passed by the ED provisionally attaching their assets including their residential premise in Juhu that had been purchased by Kundra's father in 2009. Both Shetty and Kundra submitted their response.

"However, in contravention to the provisions of

law, the adjudicating authority confirmed the provisional attachment order on September 18, 2024. This order clearly states that the attachment is confirmed only till the conclusion of trial and is subject to its outcome," the pleas said.

"The petitioners (Shetty and Kundra) on October 3 received two notices dated September 27, 2024, directing them to vacate their residential premises and the farmhouse," the petitions said. The petitions said no eviction order/notice can be issued prior to conviction. The pleas added that their residential premise has no connection with the scheduled offence or any proceeds of crime.

Senior cop held for accepting Rs 3.50 lakh bribe

Thane: The Anti-Corruption Bureau probing the allegations of bribery against a senior police inspector from Navi Mumbai has stumbled upon his involvement in accepting Rs 14 lakh bribe in the past, an officer said on Wednesday.

In a fresh case, the accused, identified as Satish Jadhav, was nabbed near the police quarters in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday night for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 3.50 lakh for not arresting a man in a cheating case, the officer said.

Jadhav, 55, had allegedly demanded Rs 4 lakh from the complainant for not arresting his father. As per the complaint Jadhav, the senior PI at NRI police station, had earlier allegedly accepted Rs 14 lakh from the same complainant.

Tussle between Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) in Kalyan

By Correspondent

Thane: Two Assembly seats in Kalyan could become a point of differences between Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT). While the Congress has staked a claim on these seats the Shiv Sena (UBT) is not favourable to the demand.

According to a source, the Congress wants to contest from Kalyan East and Kalyan West constituencies. At present, Raju Patil of the MNS represents the Kalyan Rural seat. Shiv Sena (UBT) is also keeping an eye on this seat. The BJP's Ganpat Gaikwad

represents the Kalyan East constituency. The other seat in the district, Dombivli, is expected to go to Shiv Sena (UBT) for its leader Deepesh Mhatre.

The Congress is worried about its fortunes in Kalyan if the Shiv Sena (UBT) has a last word in the seat allocation. In Bhiwandi Parliamentary constituency, three out of the six seats are likely to go to NCP, two to Shiv Sena (UBT) and one to Samajwadi Party. As a result, Congress may get only one seat in Bhiwandi.

In Murbad and Shahapur, where the BJP



holds seats, NCP (SP) is staking its claim. Sjhiv Sena (UBT) has staked claim on Kalyan West, where they have an incumbent MLA. Since this constituency has significant voters from Dalit and Muslim communities the Congress believes they would help the party to win the



seat comfortably. The source says, an understanding within the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) states that each Lok Sabha constituency should see representation from all three alliance partners. Since Congress has no substantial strength in the Thane parliamentary con-

stituency, it does not expect any seats there.

"In Kalyan East, in the past three elections, an outsider candidate was imposed, indirectly benefiting the BJP. In 2014, Congress and NCP contested separately, and independent candidate Ganpat Gaikwad won. He also won in 2009 as an independent. In 2019, Gaikwad won on a BJP ticket. The imposition of an outsider candidate has helped the BJP in these elections." The Congress workers expressed their reservations on allocating the seats in Kalyan to Shiv Sena (UBT) at a meeting.

Man kills wife during fight

Thane: Police have launched a search for a 32-year-old man from Ambernath in Thane district who is on the run after allegedly killing his wife by slitting her throat during an argument over domestic issues, an official said.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ambernath) Suresh Warade said an FIR under section 103 (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has been since registered at the Shivaji Nagar police station against the accused, Vicky Londe.

Londe, who got married three years ago, was staying with his wife and one-year-old daughter in a housing complex in the Palegaon area of Ambernath town.

The couple often fought over domestic issues. During one such fight on Tuesday night, the accused, in a fit of rage, slit the throat of his wife (28) with a sharp object, killing her on the spot, and fled, said Warade.

On being alerted by neighbours, police rushed to the spot and sent the body for post-mortem to a government hospital, he said.

Woman held for abandoning sister's newborn

Thane: Police have arrested a 24-year-old woman for allegedly abandoning the newborn child of her sister in Thane, an officer said.

Some passersby spotted the newborn girl lying on a road near a chawl (row tenement) at Bhaskar Nagar in Kaiwa at around 6.15 am on Tuesday and alerted local police. After receiving information, police rushed to the spot and took charge of the child, police spokesperson Shailesh Salvi said.

With no clue about the child's parents, the police worked on several leads and examined CCTV footage of the locality.

Based on technical and intelligence inputs, the police zeroed-in on the child's aunt within six hours, the official said. Following the woman's questioning, it came to light that the child belonged to her sister. The accused woman's sister has been admitted to a civic hospital for treatment.

Sanjay Raut booked in MP

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Police on Wednesday registered an FIR against Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut for allegedly making misleading remarks over the state government's flagship Ladli Behna Yojana.

The case was registered after a complaint by BJP's Mahila Morcha district president Vandana Jachak and vice president Sushma Chouhan.

Sex rackets busted in Thane

Thane: Thane police has busted two sex rackets and rescued nine women including two from Thailand, officials said on Wednesday. A total of four persons, including a woman from Thailand, were arrested in these cases, they said.

Acting on a tip-off that a sex racket was being run from a spa located inside a mall, a team of the Anti-Extortion Cell of the crime branch raided the place on Tuesday, said assistant police inspector Sunil Tarmale.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I find myself pondering over questions -- did I achieve everything I set out to do? How will history judge my tenure? Could I have done things differently? What legacy will I leave for future generations of judges and legal professionals?"

D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India



BMC pulled up for 'insensitive' approach over toilets

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court has deprecated the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's "uncooperative and insensitive" approach towards providing additional toilets in a slum area here and said the civic body had a constitutional obligation.

A division bench of Justices M S Sonak and Kamal Khata on October 4 directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to provide temporary toilets blocks in the area within 15 days and construct the permanent additional blocks in

three months. The order was passed in a petition filed by some residents of a slum at Kalina seeking a direction to the BMC to provide reasonably sufficient toilet blocks for men and women.

The petition claimed that at present, there is acute inadequacy of toilets in the area. As per the plea, there are nearly 1,600 persons living in the locality but there are only 10 toilet blocks - six for men and four for women.

The bench said this was an extremely unfortunate

The BMC assured the court that it would install temporary toilet blocks within 45 days while constructing the permanent additional toilet blocks, which would take more than six months.

case and these 10 toilet blocks were woefully insufficient for the residents, even by applying the most frugal standards.

The BMC last year told the court that it would construct the additional toilets but since some portion of

the land belongs to the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA), a No Objection Certificate (NOC) was required. The MHADA, however, had told the court that it gave its NOC in 2023 itself and assured the HC that it would provide all assistance to the civic body.

The court expressed its displeasure with the BMC's false and misleading statements that the toilets could not be constructed as the MHADA was yet to issue the NOC. "After MHADA's affidavit and the accompanying

NOCs, the entire approach of the BMC was to find further hurdles to evade its statutory and constitutional obligations," the court said. The BMC was only interested in discovering additional problems, leaving the residents' deprived of necessities like a toilet block, it noted.

The HC said it was quite surprised with the BMC's attitude in first misleading the court by apportioning the blame on MHADA and then placing innumerable hurdles to avoid compliance with its constitutional obli-

gations. "The BMC is considered the richest municipal corporation in this country. Therefore, pleading lack of finance is not an option," the court said.

The HC deprecated the behavior of the BMC officer who was appearing before it in the matter and said he was only interested in finding problems rather than solutions. The HC said because of the officer's non-cooperative attitude, it was left with no alternative but to place the entire responsibility personally on the BMC commissioner.



takings given by them in the past to the court assuring none of their workers would put up any illegal hoarding or banner.

The court warned that any violation of the undertakings would be viewed seriously.

The bench was hearing a bunch of petitions seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against civic officials for failing to comply with a 2017 HC order on illegal hoardings and banners.

Advocate Uday Warunjikar, appearing for one of the petitioner NGOs, Suswarajya Foundation, on Wednesday told the court that in view of the upcoming elections, likely to be held in November, there are chances of an increase in illegal hoardings and banners. The court noted that it was common knowledge that political parties and socio-religious organisations account for most of these hoardings and banners on streets.

RBI should cut repo rate in coming months, say experts

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank's decision to hold rates and adopt a 'neutral' monetary policy stance is a pragmatic move, and there are expectations of interest rate cuts in coming months, according to industry players. The central bank kept

4.5 per cent – Inflation forecast for 2024-25
7.2 per cent – GDP forecast

In another customer-friendly initiative, the RBI announced a beneficiary account name look-up facility for Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) systems will be introduced. Payment Systems like UPI and IMPS provide a facility for the remitter to verify the name of the receiver (beneficiary) before initiating a payment transaction.



Missed opportunity to spur housing demand: CREDAI

The RBI should have cut key interest rates to boost growth in the real estate sector and the overall economy as any reduction in mortgage rates would have further accelerated housing demand in the current festive quarter, according to industry players. Realtors' apex body CREDAI National President Boman Irani said, "As RBI remains cautious regarding potential inflationary pressures, the central bank's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent - albeit with a revised neutral stance - seems somewhat like a missed opportunity, especially with the festive season around the corner." A rate cut would have provided the ideal boost to accelerate consumer demand across industries, he said, while expecting rate cut in the next quarter. Niranjan Hiranandani, Chairman of Hiranandani Group, said although a 25-basis point cut could have energized festive sales and buoyed market sentiment, the current approach represents a prudent approach to ensuring economic stability.

By keeping the repo rates unchanged and shifting from 'accommodation' to 'neutral', the MPC has taken a very calculated stance and is being watchful. Rural demand is trending upwards while urban demand continues to hold.
Manish Jain, Managing Director, Bajaj Broking

The status quo on the repo rate was no surprise. The MPC rightly decided to wait for critical incoming information related to geo-political developments, commodity price trends etc.
Siddhartha Sanyal, Chief Economist and Head of Research, Bandhan Bank

There is a hawkish undertone to policy verdict in terms of a persistent focus on tight vigilance on the near-term trajectory of inflation to safeguard against systemic risks.
Mandar Pitale, Head Treasury, SBM Bank India

its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

Describing the RBI monetary policy review as "realistic and pragmatic", industry body Assocham said the change in stance to 'neutral' from 'withdrawal of accommodation' has given a signal about interest rates reversing downwards in the next few quarters.

This proposed initiative by RBI to enable remitters to verify the name of the beneficiary before initiating a payment transaction is a critical step in enhancing payment security. Extending this to NEFT and RTGS systems would drastically reduce fraud and misdirected payments, adding trust in digital financial services.
Amit Relan, co-founder and CEO, mFilterIt

The RBI may go for a rate cut in December if it has to. The price movements during the festive months will be critical.
Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte
The monetary policy committee, which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repurchase or repo rate - which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent for a 10th straight policy meeting.

Ratan Tata continues to be in hospital

Mumbai: Veteran industrialist and Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata continues to be in Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital for age-related ailments, said people aware of the situation.

Comments from the Tata group could not be immediately obtained on his health condition.

On Monday, Tata, known for his philanthropy besides being a respected industry leader, had asserted that there was no cause for concern regarding his health and that he was undergoing check-ups for age-related medical conditions.

Termining "rumours" reports of his hospitalisation in a Mumbai hospital, in a post on social media platform X, 86-year-old Tata said, "These claims are unfounded." "I am currently undergoing medical check-ups due to my age-related medical conditions," asserted Tata, who led the Tata Group from March 1991 to December 2012 as Chairman of Tata Sons, the holding company of the salt-to-software conglomerate.

"There is no cause for concern. I remain in good spirits," he said, requesting the public and media to refrain from "spreading misinformation". Reports had claimed that Tata was taken to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital in the early hours of Monday, following a drop in blood pressure.

In his post, Tata said, "I am aware of recent rumours circulating regarding my health and I want to assure everyone that these claims are unfounded."

SEBI proposes policy for sharing data



New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday proposed that stock exchanges and other market infrastructure institutions frame their own policy for sharing data for the purpose of research to promote data democratisation, data privacy and data accountability.

However, data shared with vendors for commercial purposes will not fall under this policy, Sebi suggested in its consultation paper. The markets regulator has a data sharing policy to share anonymised data that are not publicly available. However, since Sebi is not the originator of most of the market data, the scope of sharing data under the extant data sharing policy of Sebi was deliberated by its Market Data Advisory Committee (MDAC).

The committee suggested that in order to achieve the balance between data privacy vis-a-vis providing access to data, organizations, which are the actual source of data, will need to have a policy on data collection, processing, storage, dissemination and sharing.

Accordingly, the regulator, in its consultation paper, has proposed that "stock exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations will have their own policy for sharing data separately for research purposes only."

The regulator has proposed that market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) - stock exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations - should segregate data available, for each market segment, into two baskets. Data in the first basket will be those which can be shared with the public. These should be aggregate and analysed data only. This basket will also include reporting and disclosure data that are mandated by the regulators. The principle should be to avoid disclosing any personal, sensitive or confidential information in the public domain.

Data in the second basket will contain information that cannot be shared with the public. This data would include KYC information/trade logs/holding details of an entity among others with the identity of the entity. This would also include anonymised data that could be used to identify an entity directly or indirectly. MIIs have been proposed to identify data in the baskets and accordingly frame their data sharing policy. Further, the categorisation of data into the two baskets should be uniform and market segment wise for each category of MIIs.

The data made available through the first basket should be in a stakeholder friendly format.

-PTI

Airbus Beluga aircraft lands in Kolkata



Kolkata: Kolkata Airport has for the first time welcomed the biggest Airbus Beluga series aircraft - Beluga XL, an official said on Wednesday.

Beluga XL is the upgraded and bigger version of Beluga ST. Earlier the NSCB airport in Kolkata had accommodated its ST series aircraft but it was for the first time on Tuesday night that Kolkata airport accommodated the XL series aircraft, an Airports Authority of India spokesperson said in a statement.

The aircraft landed on Tuesday at 10.43 pm. It arrived at Kolkata airport from Bahrain international airport. It was received with a water salute, the spokesperson said. "For the first time, Kolkata's NSCB Airport welcomed the Airbus Beluga XL, the largest in its series, carrying essential aircraft compo-

nents. The flight stopped in Kolkata for crew rest, FDTL and refueling, as it's the only airport in Eastern India equipped to handle this aircraft," the Kolkata airport posted on X.

The aircraft originated its flight from Toulouse (LFBO/TLS) Airbus Factory, and is transporting some equipment and parts to another unit based in Tianjin (ZBTJ), China, the spokesperson said.

The flight has arrived at Kolkata for crew rest, crew flight duty time limitations (FDTL) and fuel stop as Kolkata is the only suitable airport in eastern India to accommodate this type of aircraft. The Beluga XL (Airbus A330-743L) is one of the large transport aircraft designed by Airbus to carry oversized cargo, primarily aircraft components such as wings and fuselages.

Gadkari launches Humsafar Policy

New Delhi: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday launched 'Humsafar Policy' as part of which essential facilities such as clean toilets, baby care rooms will be provided along the country's national highways network. The Humsafar Policy will see the introduction of facilities, such as clean toilets, baby care rooms, provisions for wheelchairs, EV charging stations, parking spaces, and dormitory services at fuel stations, according to a statement.

The policy will also offer a convenient, safe, and enjoyable experience for highway users, while empowering entrepreneurs, generating jobs, and enhancing livelihoods for service providers, as per the statement. Addressing the launch ceremony, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Gadkari said the Humsafar brand will become synonymous with utmost safety and comfort for travellers and drivers along the nation's world-class highway network.

He also emphasised on the need to deliver high quality, standardised services across the national highways.

Cabinet okays fortified rice supply under welfare schemes

New Delhi: The government on Wednesday decided to continue the supply of free fortified rice under the food law and other welfare schemes till 2028 with an outlay of Rs 17,082 crore, a move aimed at reducing anaemia and micro-nutrient deficiency.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The rice fortification process involves the addition of Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) enriched with micro-nutrients (iron, folic acid, Vitamin B12) as per standards prescribed by food regulator FSSAI to regular rice (custom milled rice).

Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the total financial implication to supply free fortified rice will be Rs 17,082 crore, fully funded by the Centre.

"The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the universal supply of fortified Rice under all schemes of the Government, including Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) and



other welfare schemes etc in its present form, from July 2024 and up to December 2028," according to an official statement.

The rice fortification initiative will continue as a central sector initiative with 100 per cent funding by the central government as part of PMGKAY (Food Subsidy), thus providing a unified institutional mechanism for implementation, it added.

In line with the Prime Minister's address on 75th Independence Day on the necessity of Nutritional Security in the country, the government said the initiative "Supply of fortified rice throughout the

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), other welfare schemes, Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), PM POSHAN (Erstwhile MDM) in all states and Union Territories (UTs)" was taken up.

"According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) conducted between 2019 and 2021, anaemia remains a widespread issue in India, affecting children, women, and men across various age groups and income levels.

Besides iron deficiency, other vitamin and mineral deficiencies, such as Vitamin B12 and folic acid, also persist, impacting the

SpiceJet to add 10 aircraft

Mumbai: Domestic carrier SpiceJet on Tuesday said it will enhance its fleet by another 10 aircraft by next month with the first plane set to be inducted on October 10.

Seven of these aircraft will be acquired on lease, while three previously grounded ones are being reintroduced, SpiceJet said in a release.

The Gurugram-headquartered airline has only 19 aircraft in operations while as many as 36 planes were on grounded as of October 8. The announcement comes on the back of SpiceJet securing Rs 3,000 crore fresh capital infusion through QIP late last month. The airline will receive an additional Rs 736 crore from a previous funding round, further bolstering its financial stability and growth trajectory.

SpiceJet said it has already signed agreements for the leased aircraft, with the full induction of all seven planes expected by November 15.

Two of these leased aircraft have already arrived in India and are scheduled for immediate induction.

-PTI

Google loses final appeal against 2.4 bn Euro fine

London: Google lost its final legal challenge on Tuesday against a European Union (EU) penalty for giving its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results, ending a long-running antitrust case that came with a fine.

The European Union's Court of Justice upheld a lower court's decision, rejecting the company's appeal against the 2.4 billion Euro (USD 2.7 billion) penalty from the European Commission, the 27-nation

bloc's top antitrust enforcer. "By today's judgment, the Court of Justice dismisses the appeal and thus upholds the judgment of the General Court," the court said.

The commission punished the Silicon Valley giant in 2017 for unfairly directing visitors to its own Google Shopping service to the detriment of competitors. It was one of three multibillion-Euro fines that the commission imposed on Google in the previous decade as Brussels started

ramping up its crackdown on the tech industry.

"We are disappointed with the decision of the Court, which relates to a very specific set of facts," Google said. It said it made changes in 2017 to comply with the commission's decision requiring it to treat competitors equally. It started holding auctions for shopping search listings that it would bid for alongside other comparison shopping services. "Our approach has worked successfully for more than



seven years, generating billions of clicks for more than 800 comparison shopping services," Google said.

At the same time, the company appealed the decision to the courts. But the EU General Court, the tribunal's lower section, rejected its challenge in 2021 and the Court of Justice's adviser later recommended

rejecting the appeal.

European consumer group BEUC hailed the court's decision, saying it shows how the bloc's competition law "remains highly relevant" in digital markets.

"Google harmed millions of European consumers by ensuring that rival comparison shopping services were virtually invisible," director general Agustín Reyna said. "Google's illegal practices prevented consumers from accessing potentially cheaper prices

and useful product information from rival comparison shopping services on all sorts of products, from clothes to washing machines."

Google is still appealing the other two EU antitrust penalties, which involved its Android mobile operating system and AdSense advertising platform. The company was dealt a setback in the Android case when the EU General Court upheld the commission's 4.125 billion Euro fine in a 2022 decision.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We have an unwavering faith in Ayurveda from generation to generation. Taking advantage of this faith, some people harm innocent people by making false and misleading claims. They not only harm the health of the citizens but also tarnish Ayurveda."

Droupadi Murmu, President of India



RG Kar Charge Sheet

CBI cites blood stain, DNA report of accused



Kolkata: The CBI has listed 11 pieces of evidence, such as reports of DNA and blood samples, in its charge sheet to hold arrested Kolkata Police civic volunteer Sanjay Roy as the "sole accused" in the rape and murder of a woman doctor at the RG Kar hospital here.

The agency mentioned the presence of his DNA on the body of the victim, short hair, injuries on his body, blood stains of the victim, the CCTV footage and the location of his mobile phone as per the call detail records as evidence against Roy.

The charge sheet, a copy of which is with PTI, also mentioned that Roy sustained "blunt force injuries consistent with the marks of resistance/struggle by the victim".

Roy was arrested by Kolkata Police on August 10.

"His (Roy's) presence in RG Kar Medical College & Hospital and also at the third floor of the emergency building where SoC (scene of the crime) lies, during the intervening night of August 8 and 9 is proved by way of CCTV footage. His presence is proved by way of the location of his mobile phone as per CDR," the CBI charge sheet said.

The central probe agency has referred to the deceased woman 'V' in its charge sheet submitted before a local court here on Monday.

"(There were) presence of his DNA on the reference DNA/questioned DNA body of the 'V' during autopsy... the presence of blood stains of 'V' on his jeans and footwear which were recovered by the local police on August 12 in pursuance of his

disclosure statement. The short hair found from the SoC has matched with accused Sanjay Roy," the charge sheet said.

On August 9, the body of the 31-year-old woman doctor was recovered from the seminar room of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

"(There was) pairing of one bluetooth earphone found from the scene of crime (SoC) with the seized mobile phone of accused Sanjay Roy as per CFSL (Central Forensic Science Laboratory) reports. It is worth mentioning here that accused Sanjay Roy while seen moving towards SoC on the intervening night of August 8 and 9 was wearing one bluetooth earphone neckband but at the time of returning from SoC towards lift, the said earphone on his neck was missing," the charge sheet

added. The central probe agency mentioned that the "cause of death was due to asphyxia as a combined effect of throttling (manual strangulation) and smothering".

"Rigor mortis was present all over the body at the time of conducting the postmortem examination, which implies that this person died 12 to 18 hours prior to conduction of autopsy," it said.

"The injuries related to hymen, which were fresh in origin, clearly indicated that the victim had suffered forceful penetrative sexual assault. It is further corroborated with the report of swab taken from (the) area around both nipples showing the presence of saliva belonging to Sanjay Roy as confirmed by DNA," the charge sheet said.

-PTI

Teenager gang-raped on Navratri night

Surat: A teenager was allegedly raped by three persons when she was out with a friend during the ongoing Navratri festival in Gujarat's Surat district, police said Wednesday.

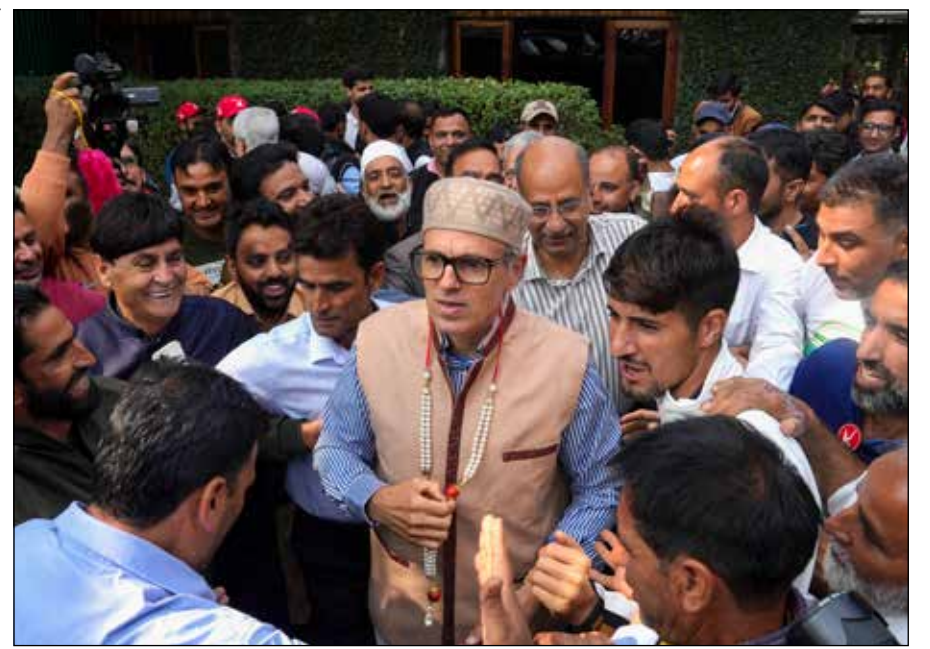
The 17-year-old was allegedly sexually assaulted in a deserted place on the outskirts of Mota Borsara village in Mangrol taluka within the jurisdiction of Kosamba police station around 11 pm on Tuesday, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Hitesh Joysar said. The alleged crime comes days after a teenager was gang-raped on the outskirts of Vadodara when she was out with her friend.

"The teen had gone to Kim to meet her friends after attending her coaching class. At around 10.30 pm, she had ice cream with her two friends. She and her (male) friend were then sitting in a deserted place on their way to a petrol pump along the highway near Mota Borsara village when three men approached them," the SP said. The trio grabbed the girl while her friend escaped, the police officer said. They took turns to rape her before fleeing with her and her friend's mobile phones, he said.

"A motorcycle has been seized and two accused have been identified. Once they are nabbed, we shall be able to get the third accused as well," he said.

After escaping the girl's friend informed locals who reached the area within half an hour and launched a search operation. In the meantime, the police were also alerted, he said.

More than ten teams have been formed to crack the case. A dog squad and forensic teams have also been engaged to gather evidence, Joysar said.



Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Vice President Omar Abdullah being greeted by party workers at his residence in Srinagar on Wednesday. PicPTI

71 per cent PDP candidates lose their deposit

Srinagar/ Jammu: Over 71 per cent candidates of the PDP forfeited their deposits as the regional outfit was decimated at the hustings on Tuesday with only three candidates making it to the maiden assembly of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory.

Out of 873 candidates who ran for the 90 assembly seats, 666 candidates -- 76.28 per cent of the total, forfeited deposits. This has earned the Election Commission of India an amount little more than Rs 1.60 crore.

The PDP fielded the highest number of 80 candidates in this election with 57 of them losing their deposits.

In Kashmir, where the party founded by former chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his daughter Mehbooba Mufti has its base, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was routed and reduced

from 28 seats in 2014 to just three seats this time.

According to the Election Commission of India data, the PDP fielded candidates on 46 of the 47 seats in the valley. Out of these, 25 candidates forfeited their deposit while 17 other candidates stood second in their constituencies. In Jammu, the PDP did not win a single seat and only two of its 34 candidates managed to get more than one-sixth of the total votes polled in their respective constituencies. The remaining 32 forfeited their deposits.

The BJP, which fielded 62 candidates across the Union Territory, won 29 seats and 19 of its candidates had to forfeit their deposits.

In Kashmir, the saffron party fielded 19 candidates and all but one had to forego their deposit money. Faqir Mohammad Khan, the BJP aspirant from Gurez,

was the only candidate to get more than one-sixth of the polled votes. Khan stood second in the race, losing by a margin of just 1,132 votes.

Prominent among those who forfeited the deposit money were People's Conference president Sajad Gani Lone (Kupwara), former deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig (Baramulla), Baig's wife Safina Baig (Wagoora-Kreeri), former ministers Abdul Gani Vakil (Raf-iabad), Mohammad Ashraf Mir (Lal Chowk) and Aijaz Guroo (Sopore), the brother of Parliament attack convict Mohammad Afzal Guroo.

Out of the 47 seats in the valley, five seats saw all the contestants except the winner forfeit their deposits. These segments are Sopore, Baramulla, Habbakadal, Lal Chowk and Central Shalteng. -PTI

J'khand farmers earning through animal husbandry

Ranchi: Farmers and livestock rearers in rural Jharkhand are increasingly turning to animal husbandry as a promising source of additional income, an official said on Wednesday.

It is providing them a safeguard from crop loss due to erratic weather patterns for the past few years.

Jharkhand suffered a drought-like situation in two consecutive years in 2022 and 2023. The state government had to declare 226 blocks as drought hit in 2022 and 158 blocks in 2023. The state recorded normal rainfall this monsoon season after two years.

The Hemant Soren-led government has been providing essential support to boost animal husbandry as a promising source of additional income. For this, the government has launched Mukhyamantri Pashudhan Vikas Yojana (MPVY), which is aimed at boosting the production of milk, meat, and eggs, thereby narrowing the gap between demand and supply.

"Amid the change in climate, our farmers need to

adopt diverse farming. The state has huge demand for milk and meat but they are imported from other states. Our government is working to meet the demand by promoting farmers," Chief Minister Hemant Soren said at Apke Yojana, Apki Sarkar, Apke Dwar event last month. The MPVY provides several valuable benefits including grants and subsidies for purchasing livestock, access to veterinary care and skill development programmes in animal husbandry.

Bhuvenshwar Singh, a beneficiary of MPVY from Ranchi's Mandar block, said that he received three cows under the scheme and the number of cattle rose to five now. "With an increasing number of animals, my income has also increased," he said.

Another beneficiary Sanatan Singh said that he used to sell milk locally but did not get the actual price. "Now I sell the milk to Medha dairy, owned by the Jharkhand Milk Federation, and get the actual price through direct benefit transfer," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini in New Delhi on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

Cong MLA booked for rape

Bengaluru: An FIR has been registered against Congress MLA and former minister Vinay Kulkarni on allegations of rape, kidnapping and criminal intimidation, police said on Wednesday.

The case was booked following a complaint by a 34-year-old social worker at Sanjay Nagar police station, accusing the Dharwad MLA of making phone and video calls to her, they said. In the FIR, the legislator

has been named as accused number one and his close aide Arjun as accused number two, police said.

The woman has alleged that she met the MLA in 2022 and accused Kulkarni of making video calls to her and having vulgar conversations with her.

She alleged that he took her to a deserted area near the Kempegowda International Airport in Devanahalli where he raped and sexually assaulted her in-

side the car. He also threatened her to remain quiet.

Based on her complaint, a case was registered against the MLA under IT Act and other sections, including that of rape, kidnapping, criminal intimidation, causing disappearance of evidence, voluntarily causing hurt and assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty, according to the police.

-PTI

Tough task bridging divide, says Karan Singh

Srinagar: Congress leader Karan Singh Wednesday said a clear and sharp political divide between the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir would be a challenge for the new government to overcome.

In a statement, Singh said it is a matter of great satisfaction that after ten long years free and fair elections were held in J-K without any untoward incident for which the Election Commission and the security forces deserve appreciation.

"The National Conference has performed spectacularly in Kashmir while the BJP has done the same in Jammu. However, the BJP has drawn blank in Kashmir and the Congress a virtual blank in Jammu.

The former Rajya Sabha MP congratulated NC Vice President Omar Abdullah for the electoral success and wished him a successful tenure.

"The next logical step, of course, is to restore full statehood to J-K. This has been a commitment of the Government of India to the Supreme Court and I would urge that it be done without further delay while the political atmosphere is still vibrant," he said.

Drug case: Malayalam actors to be probed

Kochi: The police on Wednesday said that they would expand the investigation into the alleged narcotic substance abuse case to include Malayalam film actors whose names emerged following the recent arrest of a notorious gangster and his accomplices at a luxury hotel here.

The names of actors Sreenath Bhasi and Prayaga Martin, who have both been part of several hit films, were mentioned in the custody application report submitted by Maradu police. This came after the arrest of gangster Om Prakash.

While Martin's family denied her involvement in the matter, Bhasi has not yet commented on the development.

The police reported the presence of some suspected narcotic substances in the hotel room, which had been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for examination.

A clearer understanding of the situation is expected once the test results are available, they said.

Speaking to reporters, Kochi City Police Commissioner Putta Vimaladitya

said that the investigation is ongoing. The team is gathering details, including who visited the hotel, the purpose of their visit, and what took place there, he said.

The Commissioner said as part of the process, several individuals have been summoned and their statements recorded. "However, the commissioner added that they would be summoned as part of the ongoing investigation.

The investigation was launched after cases were registered under various laws, including the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Prakash, who has been involved in several criminal cases, was arrested at the Maradu hotel along with his accomplices on charges of possessing illegal narcotics.

The inclusion of Bhasi and Martin's names in the police report comes at a time when allegations of misconduct within the Malayalam film industry, including drug abuse and the sexual harassment of female actors, have resurfaced.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We have to minimise the differences that they have created between Jammu, and Kashmir. Our endeavour should be that the Hindus there have this confidence in us that we will think about them in the same manner as about Kashmir."



Farooq Abdullah, President, National Conference

Atishi evicted from Delhi CM residence, says AAP

GOVERNOR SAYS IT IS NOT OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, NOT YET ALLOTTED

New Delhi: "Delhi chief minister's residence" at 6, Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines was forcibly vacated at the behest of the BJP as Lt Governor V.K. Saxena wants to allot it to a saffron party leader, the CMO alleged in a statement on Wednesday.

The allegation has set a stage for another round of tussle between the AAP dispensation and the LG office.

Sources at the LG office claimed that the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow is not the official residence of the Chief Minister and that it has not been allotted to CM Atishi so far.

The PWD owns the bungalow and takes possession after it is vacated. The bungalow's allotment is done by it after proper inventory of goods kept there.

Chief Minister Atishi moved with her belongings



to the bungalow in North Delhi's Civil Lines area on Monday. It was occupied for

over nine years by her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal who vacated it after resigning as chief minister.

"For the first time in the history of the country, the Chief Minister's residence was vacated. On the instructions of BJP, LG forcibly removed CM Atishi's belongings from the CM residence. LG is preparing to allot the CM residence to a big BJP leader. The BJP, which has been out of pow-

er in Delhi for 27 years, is now trying to occupy the CM residence," the Office of Chief Minister Atishi alleged in the statement.

A pick-up van carrying cardboard cartons was seen coming out of the bungalow. A hand cart carrying an almirah and a carton was also seen moving out of the bungalow.

Meanwhile, Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, in a post on X, alleged that the

LG was "planting" in the media that CM Atishi's belongings were removed because she did not give its keys and it will be allotted to her after an inventory of items was prepared.

In another post, he questioned the LG if the keys of Raj Niwas were handed over by his predecessor to the PWD and if any inventory was prepared when he shifted there.

-PTI

Nepal's Nima youngest to scale 14 tallest peaks



Kathmandu: Nepal's 18-year-old Nima Rinji Sherpa has become the youngest climber ever to scale each of the 14 tallest mountains (over 8,000 meters) in the world with his successful summit of Mt Shishapangma in China.

Nima and his partner Pasang Nurbu Sherpa reached the summit of the Shishapangma, which stands at 8,027 meters above sea level, shortly after 6:00am (China Standard Time), which is 3.30am in IST, on Wednesday, the youngster announced on his Instagram page.

"Today, as I stand atop my 14th 8000-meter peak, I dedicate this world record to my project, #SherpaPower," he posted.

"This summit is not just the culmination of my personal journey, but a tribute to every Sherpa who has ever dared to dream beyond the traditional boundaries set for us. Mountaineering is more than labor; it is a testament to our strength, resilience, and passion.

Nima said he wants to show the younger generation of Sherpas that they can rise above the "stereotype of being only support climbers".

"We are not just guides; we are trailblazers. Let this be a call to every Sherpa to see the dignity in our work, the power in our heritage, and the limitless possibilities in our future," he said.

Hailing from a family of mountaineers, Nima began his quest to scale each of the 14 tallest peaks in the world at the age of 16 and 162 days when he reached the top of Mt Manaslu (8163m) in September 2022.

It was his passion for photography of the mountains that brought Nima into climbing but it soon turned out to be a passion for him to tell the story of the Sherpa community.

"Slowly, I realised, the Sherpas, my community, we have always been in the shadows and all the international athletes that you see, no one is from Sherpa

community (in the front), but we are always the ones backing them up," he told PTI in an interview in May this year.

"We're always carrying their equipment, carrying their food, the load, fixing the ropes, looking after the weather condition, looking after their safety, looking for the rescue things."

"All those things are being looked after by us, but our names are always somewhere down the line. That's when I decided (that) I want to climb more for this, for my community more, rather than for myself," said Nima, who prefers to go without oxygen support for the first 7,000 metres.

Perhaps the biggest achievement for the young mountaineer came when he scaled Mt Everest (8848.86m) and Mt Lhotse (8516) in a span of a mere 10 hours when he was a little over 17 years, in May 2023.

Like he did when he scaled Mt Manaslu, Nima became the youngest to

climb the Nanga Parbat (8125m) in June 2023.

In his bid to become the youngest ever, Nima went on to climb Mt Gasherbrum I (8068m), Mt Gasherbrum II (8035m), Mt Broad Peak (8047m) and Mt K2 (8,611m) in July 2023 while he reached the peak of Mt Cho-Oyu (8188m) in October 2023.

Nima had a successful year 2023 scaling the Mt Dhaulagiri (8167m) in September but took a break after four climbers died in an avalanche at Shishapangma.

"One of them was very close to me, we had climbed five mountains together in Pakistan. He was like a hero to me and a very strong Sherpa. But to know that he got caught in the avalanche and passed away, that was very tough for me," he said.

Nima returned to scaling the peaks earlier this year reaching the top of Mt Annapurna I (8091m) in April and the top of Mt Makalu (8485m) in May 4. -PTI



Fishermen row their boat through toxic foam in the Yamuna river in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Pic: PTI

Hurricane Milton closes in

Tampa: Hurricane Milton churned Wednesday toward a potentially catastrophic collision along the west coast of Florida, where some residents insisted they would stay after millions were ordered to evacuate and officials warned that stragglers would face grim odds of surviving.

The Tampa Bay area, home to more than 3.3 million people.

The National Hurricane Centre predicted Milton, a monstrous Category 5 hurricane during much of its approach, would likely weaken but remain a major hurricane when it makes landfall late Wednesday.

Milton was centred late Tuesday about 650 kilometers southwest of Tampa with maximum sustained winds of 260 kmh, the National Hurricane Centre reported.

Wangchuk claims RSS approached him, and extended support

New Delhi: Sonam Wangchuk, who is on a hunger strike for the last four days, on Wednesday said a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh came to him last night, extended his support, and also gave him some mosquito repellent.

"Someone came around 10.30-11 pm, and brought herbal mosquito repellent for us. He stayed away from the gate, and said he did not want to be captured in any CCTV camera," Wangchuk, on strike with several of his supporters since Sunday, said on X.

"He said he is with the RSS, and close to BJP. He said we have our sympathy with you, and people of Ladakh, but we cannot come out openly," he said.

"Yesterday, BJP leader Naresh ji came with a special message from Murli Manohar Joshi ji. This makes us feel people rise above party, religion, when



it is about justice. They are not blind followers, they can differentiate between right and wrong," he added. Another protester said they have not yet been approached by the government.

"Our protest is continuing. This morning, several members had low blood pressure," a group member told PTI.

Wangchuk with his supporters marched to Delhi from Leh demanding inclusion of Ladakh in the sixth schedule Constitution. They were detained at the capital's Singhu border on

September 30 by Delhi Police and released on the night of October 2.

The group is demanding a meeting with top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The sixth schedule of the Constitution includes provisions for the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram in northeast India. It establishes autonomous councils that have legislative, judicial, executive and financial powers to independently govern these areas.

The protesters are also demanding statehood, a public service commission for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

The march to Delhi was organised by Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance, has been spearheading the agitation. -PTI



An idol of Goddess Durga being taken to a 'puja pandal' on a boat during the Durga Puja festival in Nadia district, West Bengal on Wednesday.

Pic: PTI

Will the Earth warm by 2°C or 5.5°C?

By Jonny Williams and Georgia Rose Grant

Reading: Climate change is usually discussed in terms of rising temperatures. But scientists often use a different measure, known as "equilibrium climate sensitivity". This is defined as the global mean warming caused by a doubling of pre-industrial carbon dioxide (CO2) levels in the atmosphere.

We use this measure to describe the range of potential temperature increases on longer timescales, and to compare how well climate models reproduce observed warming.

But the predicted range of rising temperature has remained stubbornly wide, somewhere between 2°C and 5.5°C of warming, as assessed in several generations of reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This is despite concerted efforts to narrow it down.

Measuring long-term climate sensitivity is central to future predictions, but we are already seeing the effects of warming across the world with extremes in weather, even at the low end of the range.

We argue efforts to boil down Earth's response to climate change to one number may be unhelpful. The continued uncertainty could be seen as a failure of climate models to converge on the correct value. Using equilibrium climate sensitivity as a metric for "precisely" predicting the amount of warming expected from a given amount of greenhouse gases is, at best, ambiguous.

History of climate sensitivity
About a century before the first computational estimates of Earth's climate sensitivity were published in 1967, the Swedish physicist and 1903 Nobel laureate Svante August Arrhenius was the first to estimate values at 4-6°C.

Since the early efforts to model Earth systems, computer simulations have steadily increased in complexity. The first models only simulated the atmosphere, but they have evolved to include vegetation, processes in the ocean and sea ice.

While undoubtedly beneficial to the understanding of fundamental science, each of these added processes has introduced uncertainties in the models' warming response.

Indeed, given the level of complexity (which differs between models) and resolution of some current models, it is not surprising the estimates of climate sensitivity differ so much.

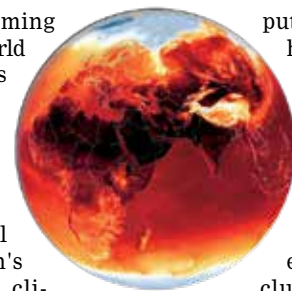
Self-enforcing feedbacks
Climate feedbacks are central to our argument that equilibrium climate sensitivity is poorly defined. An example of this is the relationship between ice volume and reflectivity.

As highly reflective ice melts on land or sea, the underlying surface is exposed and less sunlight reflected back into space. This increases the amount of warming for a given amount of greenhouse gases. It's what scientists refer to as a positive feedback loop.

It quickly became apparent when studying some recent climate model results that some simulations are producing equilibrium climate sensitivity ranges noticeably higher than before. In some models, this has been linked to larger self-enhancing cloud feedbacks and how aerosols are represented.

Where to from here?
Equilibrium climate sensitivity is undoubtedly a convenient way of distilling future projections.

Communicating uncertainty in projections of future climate conditions is a "wicked" problem. But we risk losing perspective of Earth's system response by focusing on the effort to make climate models agree on one measure. This is not the answer future generations need. -PTI



Rare rain in Sahara Desert

Rabat: A rare deluge of rainfall left blue lagoons of water amid the palm trees and sand dunes of the Sahara Desert, nourishing some of its most drought-stricken regions with more water than many had seen in decades. Southeastern Morocco's desert is among the

most arid places in the world and rarely experiences rain in late summer.

The Moroccan government said two days of rainfall in September had exceeded yearly averages in several areas that get an average of less than 250 millimetres annually, including

Tata, one of the areas hit hardest. The storms provided more rainfall than had been seen in decades, leaving striking images of bountiful water gushing through the Saharan sands amid castles and desert flora. "It's been 30 to 50 years since we've had this much rain in such a

short space of time," said Houssine Youabeb of Morocco's General Directorate of Meteorology. Six consecutive years of drought have posed challenges for much of Morocco, forcing farmers to leave fields fallow and cities and villages to ration water consumption. -AP

Manitoba's train is lifeline for many towns

Ottawa: The setting sun backlights a pristine panoply of pines of different sizes and species. Far northern Canadian countryside rolls by at a leisurely pace of a train ride, viewed through an upper deck glass-enclosed of a special observation car. Waves of green and brown in slightly varying shades sweep by. It's mesmerizing and calming. Two or three hours pass peacefully without notice. Two hours becomes two days.

It starts with a vista of the tree-less but not quite barren tundra, then powers through hours of tall forests. They eventually give way to more manicured cropland with the occasional animal, even a herd of elk. Sunset glimmers off a lake. When night comes it holds the hope of a Northern Lights sighting stretching all around. It's Churchill's connection to the rest of the world.

While it's promoted for tourism, the train is actually a lifeline for the town and its outskirts, but no roads go to other cities. So it's expensive flying or an overnight train ride at a more reasonable price tag.

The semi-weekly trains bring tourists, residents,

mail, food, fuel and other necessities.

From May 2017 to October 2018, part of the rail line washed out because of storms and poor maintenance, stranding an entire community.



Staples had to be delivered by air and propane fuel was brought in by ship through the Hudson Bay. Prices in town skyrocketed and lawsuits were filed over who was responsible for the repair

The town and some First Nations in the area took over the rail line and it's back to operating. Spence said with the community pouring tens of millions of dollars into

1,697 kms
The distance the train covers
10
No of listed stops

costs.

"We had no rail service for about 18 months meaning Churchillians couldn't go out by rail to visit their families in other parts of Manitoba," Churchill Mayor Mike Spence said.

repairs the lines should stay open even as the world's weather gets more extreme. Sleeper berths are available on the train, along with shower cubicles the size of those in a New York hotel room, but for those

To get between Churchill, Manitoba, Canada — the polar bear and beluga whale capital of the world and a tourist hot spot for northern adventure tourism — and Winnipeg, Manitoba, there are only two options: A \$1,100 one-way plane flight that takes two-and-a-half hours or a scenic 45-hour to 49-hour much cheaper train ride. It's a \$200 train ride like few others from the glass ceiling of the observation car Canada's VIA railroad bills it as a "scenic adventure."

And finally, after 49 hours, the train pulls into Winnipeg. -AP

traveling more cheaply or booking late, there are standard seats in the cabin. Many passengers pass their time playing cards and chatting.

Thompson — just under halfway between Churchill and Winnipeg — is where many Churchill residents train journey ends.

Many ride the train weekly, traveling to and from Thompson. At about 13,600 residents, it's the biggest community the train stops at, besides Winnipeg, with amenities like big-box stores and restaurants. Thompson — just under halfway between Churchill and Winnipeg — is where many Churchill residents train journey ends. -AP

Dissent felt since Hasina's exit

THE PRESENCE OF RADICAL ELEMENTS HAS LEFT THE STUDENTS IN DILEMMA OVER MOTIVE OF THE AGITATION

By Romita Datta

Kolkata: The hyper activity of the Hizb ut-Tahir inside university and college campuses, resurfacing of its posters and slogans and the attack on the sculpture, erected in memory of the victims of the Holy Artisan Bakery terror attack in 2016, on the very day of Hasina's exit and the fall of the government, August 5, 2024, are raising concern and alarm.

The kind of majoritarian muscle flexing one is noticing in Bangladesh, be it through the diktats over Durga puja celebration and Hindu festivals or vandalism of places of worship and seats of culture, post the regime change, students are not only ashamed but also feel disturbed to have had played a crucial role behind the political change. However, they are not yet prepared to regret the steps taken to topple the government. "It was essential, given the kind of repression and stifling of individual freedom and rights happening under the draconian Digital Security Act," said a student Sheikh Shakib. The end of the autocratic Hasina era was much needed, they feel, but the outcome doesn't look hopeful either.

A journalist and an activist Sheikh Rubel said it straight. "I can't say people are happy. An uncer-



tainty and fear have gripped people as Bangladesh is going through a transition phase. The Police have become idle and there are ample reasons for this. The interim government has caused mass transfers and reshuffling but ultimately people being brought in the forefront are products of the same Hasina rule and its highly politicised bureaucracy and police."

Coordination committee losing strength

About 17 students of JNV, who were coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, have resigned. According to them, the glue or the unifying factor that held the students together was anti Hasina and anti Awami League sentiments. Now that objective being fulfilled, narrow vested interests of religion, community and politics are rearing their heads and consequently fracturing the unity.

Reasons for being upset

Diktat on Durga Puja

The recent diktats by a radical group, Insaaf Kayemkari Chhatra Janata, over Durga puja celebration and the government's silence have hurt the sentiments of many Bangladeshis. Apart from two occasions where the government has ensured there would be adequate measures to ensure peaceful celebration of the festival, no efforts were seen to stop the radical group from fanning communal tension.

"We believe in the spirit of the Constitution of Bangladesh, which upholds the ideals of socialism, democracy and secularism. There's no space for religious fundamentalism. We have to give the caretaker government some time to repair and set things right," a student leader of Jahangir Nagar Viswavidyalaya said.

with the turn of events are many. But students are not yet ready to feel dejected or hopeless. "There's no reason to feel disillusioned. Good that people are being exposed and we are getting to see the real picture behind the camouflage," said the same leader of Jagannath Vishwavidyalaya.

Abdur Rashid of Jahangirnagar University, a prominent face of the movement, said clearly - "the movement has remained largely silent on crucial issues such as

banning partisan student politics, bringing to justice those involved in the July carnage, and providing compensation to the injured and victims." He expressed in a written statement that student leaders under the current dispensation are working and functioning as a ruling party's student arm

where personal narrow interests are subsuming the general interests of students, that shaped the quota movement.

On the question of the coordination committee losing in strength and relevance, a student leader shared that the committee was formed for guiding the movement. "The movement was successful. We have got rid of the despotic rule. So, there is no need of collective coordination. Moreover, the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement was not a registered body or an organisation. It was just a banner or a platform that acted as an umbrella for protestors. The reasons for protest are over and so the banner is coming down," reasoned another student leader, who quit recently as a coordinator.

Students are resigning

from their responsibility as coordinators but they are not leaving the field. They realise that the buck at some point stops at them. This is because the death knell for Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League government was sounded from the Anti-Discrimination Student's Movement.

The cry for abolition of 76 per cent reservation in public jobs or removal of job quota was given by the students. But with time the cry got amplified as more and more people, aggrieved over a number of issues, felt the need to join the movement and raise their voice against the government. Soon the protest against quota took the shape of a mass uprising and the call to remove reservation in government jobs became a cry of no confidence against Hasina.



Students guard, not police

Instead of police, 64 districts of Bangladesh are being guarded and protected by students, who have doubled up as vigilantes for protecting minority muhallas and places of worship. "For protecting 40,000 population of a particular ward in Jessore, students and civil society have formed groups each comprising 10 vigilantes. They engage in night patrolling. Had the students not been on streets protecting people, the country would have seen a blood bath of revenge politics, the kind that follows immediately after the dictatorial regime ends," said Rubel.

Though some are guarded in their reactions, the students on the ground are making amends where it is necessary. A teacher of Independent University, a private university in Bangladesh, was heckled, gheraoed and later suspended for a three line criticism of the current situation on a social media post. Some of the student leaders were initially vocal but realising their protest might cost the teacher her job, they fell silent. Again when two teachers of Dhaka University, known for being advocates of transgender rights, got removed from the Education Curriculum Committee, the student activists could do precious little to bring them on board.

The interim government under Yunus dissolved the entire committee to stop the controversy on a temporary basis. The students see the current government's move as shaky, lacking in conviction and dependent on multiple people with their diverse strands of ideology, different interests and disparate political thoughts. "Instead of a single party or single face of the government we are having a multi-headed power at play and we are confused as to which head is running the show," said another journalist of Bangladesh.

UK auction house withdraws sale of 'Naga Human Skull'



By Aditi Khanna

London: A UK auction house has withdrawn a 'Naga Human Skull' from its lots for a live online sale on Wednesday following outcry in India over the issue.

The Swan auction house at Tetsworth in Oxfordshire had a series of skulls and other remains originating from around the world as part of 'The Curious Collector Sale, Antiquarian Books, Manuscripts & Paintings. The '19th Century Horned Naga Human Skull, Naga Tribe' was slotted as Lot No. 64 and resulted in protests in Nagaland, led by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio who sought the intervention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to stop the hurtful sale.

"The news of the proposed auction of Naga human remains in the UK has been received by all sections in a negative manner as it is

a highly emotional and sacred issue for our people. It has been a traditional custom of our people to give the highest respect and honour for the remains of the deceased," said Rio in his letter.

He urged the minister to take up the matter with the High Commission of India in London so that steps are taken to ensure that the auction of the skull can be stopped after the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) raised concerns over the matter.

The piece is listed for an opening bid of GBP 2,100 (Rs 23 lakh approximately) with the auctioneer's estimate expecting it to fetch as much as GBP 4,000 (Rs 43 lakh approximately). The FNR asserted that the auction of the human remains contravenes Article 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

- PTI



Indian Navy's frontline stealth frigate INS Talwar arrives in South Africa to participate in the eighth edition of IBSAMAR, a joint multinational maritime exercise among Indian, Brazilian and South African navies, in Simon.

Pic: AP/PTI

Taiwan urges China to exercise restraint

Taipei: Taiwan has urged China to exercise restraint in military drills in the coming days, as Beijing prepares to launch a satellite on Thursday in which the launch vehicle will pass through the airspace near Taiwan.

The Ministry of National Defense (MND) said in a statement on Tuesday that China is scheduled to launch a satellite launch ve-

hicle (SLV) from its Xichang Satellite Launch Centre on Thursday, when Taiwan celebrates its National Day. The SLV will be headed toward the West Pacific passing through Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ), according to the MND.

An ADIZ is a self-declared area in which a country claims the right to identify, locate, and control ap-

proaching foreign aircraft but is not part of its territorial airspace as defined by international law.

At a legislative hearing on Tuesday, Premier Cho Jung-tai was asked by opposition Kuomintang (KMT) Legislator Yeh Yuan-chih whether the scheduled satellite launch could be part of a reported 'Joint Sword 2024 B' military exercise. In response, Cho said he hoped

China would conduct its military drills in its own jurisdiction, exercise restraint, and avoid actions "that disrupt regional security and security in the Indo-Pacific region."

"Taiwan will be prepared," Cho said, adding that he will ask the military to gather information on the launch and monitor the process so that it will not pose any threats to the public.

Hezbollah steps up rocket fire

Beirut: Hezbollah fired another barrage of rockets into Israel on Tuesday, and the militant group's acting leader vowed to keep up pressure that has forced tens of thousands of Israelis from their homes near the Lebanese border.

The Israeli military said it sent more ground troops into southern Lebanon and that a senior Hezbollah commander was killed in an airstrike.

Dozens of rockets fired by Hezbollah were aimed as far south as Haifa, and the Israeli government warned residents north of the coastal city to limit activities, prompting the closure of more schools.

The Israeli military said Hezbollah launched about 180 rockets across the border.

Sheikh Naim Kassem, Hezbollah's acting leader, said its military capabilities remain intact after weeks of heavy Israeli airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon, and attacks that killed its top commanders in a matter of days.

He said Israeli forces



have not been able to advance since launching a ground incursion into Lebanon last week.

Kassem, speaking by video from an undisclosed location, said Hezbollah will name a new leader to succeed longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah, "but the circumstances are difficult because of the war."

In a statement addressed to the people of Lebanon, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Hezbollah "weaker than it has been for many, many years." He added: "We took out thousands of terrorists, including Nasrallah himself, and Nasrallah's replacement, and the replacement of his replacement," but without naming them.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"You can kill a revolutionary, but you cannot kill the revolution. You can eliminate leaders of Hezbollah, but cannot eliminate Hezbollah. It's not an imaginary structure that came to Lebanon by parachute."

Rabie Narsh, Lebanon's Ambassador to India



Nobel Prize in chemistry to David Baker, Demis Hassabis, John Jumper for work on proteins

Stockholm: The Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded Wednesday to David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John Jumper for their work with proteins.

Hans Ellegren, secretary general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences that decides on the prize, announced the prize. In 2003, Baker designed a new protein and

since then, his research group has produced one imaginative protein creation after another, including proteins that can be used as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, nanomaterials and tiny sensors, the Nobel committee said.

Hassabis and Jumper created an artificial intelligence model that has been able to predict the



structure of virtually all the 200 million proteins

that researchers have identified. Last year, the chem-

istry award went to three scientists for their work on quantum dots - tiny particles just a few nanometres in diameter that can release very bright coloured light and whose applications in everyday life include electronics and medical imaging.

Six days of Nobel announcements opened Monday with Americans Victor

Ambros and Gary Ruvkun winning the medicine prize. Two founding fathers of machine learning - John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton - won the physics prize. The awards continue with the literature prize on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the economics award on October 14.

- AP

EDITORIAL

Overworked,
Overstretched

Maharashtra's Chief Minister, Eknath Shinde, has long been known for his relentless work ethic, but this dedication has come at a cost. Overexertion has taken its toll on Shinde's health, forcing him to cancel a crucial cabinet meeting before the model code of conduct ahead of the Assembly election comes into effect and prompting doctors to advise complete rest. This is not the first time the CM has been unwell due to his exhausting schedule, but the recent episode underscores a growing concern: Shinde may be pushing himself beyond his limits.

Well before he staged his coup to become CM, Shinde has cultivated 'a man of action' persona: during the 2018 Kerala floods, he reached the water-logged state with boxes of medicines and first-aid tools. Since taking office in June 2022, Shinde has been a man in perpetual motion. Immediately after taking oath as Chief Minister, his schedule had been a whirlwind of tours, meetings, and late-night trips to Delhi. This punishing schedule has continued ever since. His supporters point to his hands-on approach, whether visiting flood-hit regions or overseeing relief efforts in landslide-stricken areas, as evidence of a leader who leads from the front. In one moving instance, in July 2023, Shinde did not merely review the situation in Irshalwadi, a village buried by a landslide; he climbed the steep ascent in torrential rain to reach the settlement, directing rescue operations to show solidarity with rescue workers.

This 'field-man' persona has earned him praise, but has also raised concerns about sustainability. Shinde's determination to be everywhere has left him sleep-deprived, with his public engagements often stretching into the early hours. His insistence on connecting with every constituent, addressing even minor grievances, has endeared him to the public but strained his physical well-being. Even senior figures in Maharashtra's government have noticed the toll his work habits are taking.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar recently admonished his own party workers for extracting too much work from Shinde. Despite this, Shinde continues to take on more than most politicians would dare. He frequently visits disaster-hit areas in person, often stepping into roles that could easily be delegated to local officials. His recent visit to the site of a fire accident in Chembur, for instance, could have been handled by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation commissioner, but Shinde chose to lead from the front, underscoring his desire to remain connected with the grassroots. The CM's gruelling pace has now raised concerns about his ability to continue at such a breakneck speed. While his loyalists argue that this commitment is a testament to his rise from the ranks, it is evident that such a schedule is unsustainable. For all his devotion to the role, Maharashtra's Chief Minister may need to learn that even the most dedicated leaders require rest.

NATIONAL INTEREST

A Victory of Democracy & Rejection
of Caste Appeasement, Separatism

By
Kiran D. Tare

Defying all anti-incumbency predictions, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pulled off a stunning victory in the Haryana Assembly election while performing creditably in Jammu and Kashmir, which saw the triumph of the National Conference, in alliance with the Congress. Most striking is the transformation in the hitherto strife-torn Jammu and Kashmir, which witnessed its first election since the abrogation of Article 370 by the Narendra Modi-led Central government in 2019.

There, a record voter turnout outpaced even that of Mumbai, and the election was conducted without a single instance of stone-pelting - an almost unthinkable scenario in previous years.

The significance of the peaceful election in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be

The Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir election results underscore an important truth for both the BJP and Congress that humble, inclusive leadership grounded in local realities triumph over caste calculations and separatist rhetoric.

overstated. Separatist forces, long the dominant voice of discontent in the region, were conspicuously rejected by the electorate. Their defeat signals a broader rejection by the electorate of the old guard's divisive rhetoric, which often centered on demands for dialogue with Pakistan. Omar Abdullah, leader of the National Conference and victor in the election, notably shifted his message from one of engagement with Pakistan to a call for the restoration of statehood—an evolution in discourse that reflects a desire for democratic self-determination rather than external mediation.

This change is a welcome development, suggesting that even within traditional political circles, the appetite for separatist posturing is waning.

In Haryana, the BJP's historic hat-trick win underscores a critical lesson for all political parties across India: the futility of excessive reliance on appeasing one single caste to the exclusion of others.

The Congress's failed strategy of wooing the Jat community at the expense of a broader, more inclusive appeal backfired spectacularly. The BJP, by contrast, managed to unite diverse sections of the electorate, including farmers, soldiers, and athletes - three groups that historically hold sway in Haryana, symbolized by the slogan 'Kisan, Jawan, Pehalwan' (Farmer, Soldier, Wrestler).

The anticipated 'farmer rage' in the wake of the controversial agricultural reforms did not materialize, debunking predictions that rural discontent would sink the BJP's chances.

The Congress's inability to attract Dalit voters, combined with its overdependence on caste appeasement, proved a fatal miscalculation.

Now, one hopes that instead of some introspection, the Congress will not resort to its familiar complaints, such as claims of manipulation with electronic voting machines (EVMs). They should realize that such grievances are likely to ring hollow with an electorate that turned out in large numbers, signalling broad faith in the democratic process.



A particularly shrewd move by the BJP was the decision to grant parole to controversial religious leader Baba Ram Rahim, a figure with a vast following in Haryana. This manoeuvre, while criticized by some, likely played a role in mobilizing a critical bloc of voters in the BJP's favour. The party's mastery of local dynamics, along with its ability to connect with key influencers, continues to set it apart from its competitors.

The BJP's leadership choices also proved crucial. While incumbent Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was no doubt a capable administrator and a dyed-in-wool party loyalist, his perceived arrogance had begun to alienate sections of the electorate and party workers. The BJP's decision to elevate Nayab Saini, a more down-to-earth and approachable leader, proved to be a masterstroke.

Saini's grassroots appeal and tireless outreach efforts resonated deeply with voters, providing the BJP with the human touch that Khattar, for all his technocratic prowess, lacked. With virtually every exit poll predicting gloom and doom for the BJP in Haryana, the party demonstrated that leaders like Nayab Saini can win elections by forging strong bonds with the grassroots and offering a message of inclusion rather than division.

The BJP's electoral success in Haryana holds lessons for other states, particularly Maharashtra. In many ways, Khattar's case should hold a mirror for Devendra Fadnis, another highly capable leader but whose style of functioning is perceived to be authoritarian and domineering rather than inclusive.

Yet, unlike Haryana, the BJP thus far has found no Nayab Singh Saini equivalent in Maharashtra - a gap that could pose challenges for the party's prospects there.

Another crucial takeaway is that the Congress over-focus on Jat appeasement in Haryana ought to make the ruling Mahayuti coalition in Maharashtra wary about kowtowing too much to the Marathi community. As the Haryana elections demonstrate, such strategies offer diminishing returns. The BJP's triumph was built on its ability to appeal to a broad cross-section of voters, grounded in promises of development, stability, and national pride rather than pandering to specific communities.

The results also offer a simple and powerful maxim for future electoral battles of any political party, be it the BJP or the Congress. And that is stay connected, stay grounded, be humble, and be polite. Then you can win any election, no matter what the pundits predict!

Cracks in the Covenant: The Left's Clash with
U.S.-Israel Relations

By
Shoumojit Banerjee

In 2006, an essay by political scientists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt created a furore in the American intellectual and political landscape. Their provocative thesis, later expanded into the book 'The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,' argued that the United States' 'special relationship' with Israel was not based on shared democratic values or strategic interests, but on the outsized influence of a powerful pro-Israel lobby. The book's central thesis - that a powerful pro-Israel lobby in the United States shapes American foreign policy to the detriment of both American and Israeli interests - touched a raw nerve in Washington and beyond. Accusations of anti-Semitism, charges of bias, and passionate defenses of U.S.-Israel relations came thick and fast. The book sparked a debate that, even over a decade later, still reverberates in foreign policy circles.

They argued that the U.S. was making decisions, particularly in its unwavering support for Israel, that were not in its strategic interest.

America's enduring bond with Israel has been at cross purposes with the Left's stance on the Jewish State, which has swung from early support for Zionism to fierce criticism of it.



They claimed that America's ongoing support for Israel makes so little strategic sense that it can only be explained by the irresistible pressure applied by the Jewish-owned media, by Jewish lobbyists, by Jewish policy wonks and by their fellow travellers on the Christian right.

In their view, the lobby pushed for policies that often clashed with broader U.S. interests in the region, especially in relation to Arab states, and contributed to a perception of American bias, which they argued helped fuel anti-American sentiment in the Middle East.

The controversy they sparked touched on something undeniable: America's relationship with Israel is unique, and it has been, for decades, a defining feature of U.S. foreign policy. Rooted in history, religion, and geopolitical strategy, this US-Israel bond is often seen as unshakable, regardless of the shifting sands of Middle Eastern politics.

This relationship is apparent amid Israel's ongoing onslaught to wipe out terror outfits like Hamas and Hezbollah regardless of the mounting civilian cost in lives. U.S. presidents, regardless of party

affiliation, have consistently offered unwavering support to Israel, with billions of dollars in military aid and diplomatic backing at international forums.

Ever since Israel embarked on its ferocious retaliation against Hamas following the October 7 attacks, American college campuses, as well as 'progressives' and 'liberals' across the globe including Europe and India, erupted in a paroxysm of pro-Palestine support and firestorm of condemnation, sometimes downright vicious, against Israel. Observers have drawn parallels between these demonstrations and the anti-Vietnam War protests of the late 1960s.

There is a supreme historical irony here: The so-called Left around the globe today is in an unforgiving mood, stridently chastising Israel for being colonialists and oppressors, ruthlessly prosecuting their 'genocidal' war against the victimized Palestinians.

And yet, once upon a time, leftist movements in Europe and the United States once viewed Zionism as a



cause aligned with progressive and anti-colonial struggles.

The early Zionist movement, with its emphasis on socialist values and its promise of creating a new, just society in Palestine, was widely embraced by left-wing intellectuals and political activists while Zionist pioneers, particularly in the kibbutzim, envisioned agrarian communes where wealth was shared and class distinctions erased - principles that resonated with socialists worldwide.

In commentator Walter Russell Mead's splendidly nuanced 'Arc of a Covenant' which delves into the forgotten history of left-wing support for Zionism, the author emphasizes that many on the left saw the creation of Israel as a form of anti-colonial resistance, particularly in the context of post-World War II decolonization movements. The book is a counterpoint to the work of Mearsheimer and Walt, and dismisses the Israel Lobby theory as a "rancid urban legend."

Then, there was the alignment between labour movements in the U.S. and Zionism, especially during

the interwar years. The Histadrut, Israel's powerful labour union, was closely tied to the international socialist movement with figures like David Ben-Gurion were admired by left-wing activists for blending socialism with the pursuit of Jewish self-determination.

However, this sense of solidarity between the global left and Zionism began to unravel in the 1960s and the 70s with the decline of Israel's labour party, with the rise of Palestinian nationalism and Israel's increasingly militarized stance.

Between 1948 and 1967, leftist intellectuals had admired Zionism for its socialist underpinnings and its kibbutzim, agricultural collectives that embodied socialist ideals. However, following Israel's triumph in the Six-Day War of 1967, the Left began to recast the Jewish state as an imperialist power, turning what was once solidarity into animosity.

But to cast the U.S.-Israel relationship merely as the result of lobbying or political machinations would be way off the mark: it is a deeply rooted relationship founded upon American values, historical experiences, and strategic interests.

The US-Israel relationship has developed through a series of pivotal historical moments, notably the aftermath of World War II and the establishment of Israel in 1948. The United States, shaped by its own history of struggle for independence and democracy, found in Israel a kindred spirit—a nation forged from adversity and committed to the principles of self-determination and liberty.

The relationship between US and Israel can be traced right back to America's Puritan origins, to a time when the early settlers saw themselves as inheritors of the biblical narrative, with America itself as a kind of Promised Land. The narrative of Jews returning to the Promised Land resonated powerfully with Americans when the Jewish State was founded in 1948.

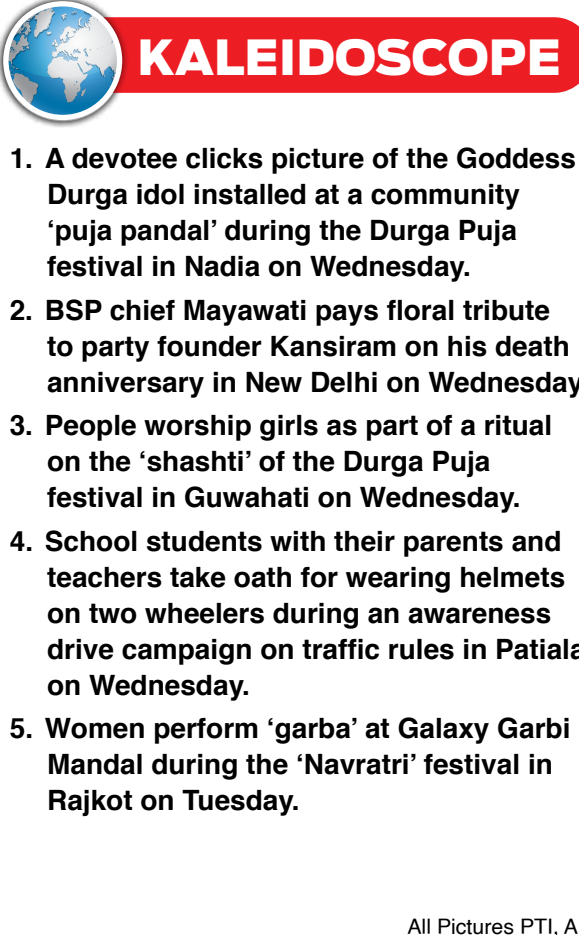
Whereas Mearsheimer and Walt focus on the influence of the Israel lobby, often painting it as a powerful force that distorts American interests, Mead emphasizes the broader cultural and ideological currents that have shaped U.S. support for Israel. U.S. support for Israel has historically acted as a stabilizing factor in a volatile region, aligning with American interests in promoting democracy and countering extremist ideologies.

While a pro-Israel lobby does exist inside the United States, it is only one of many interest groups, and that, thanks to the structure of U.S. democracy, such lobbies succeed only when they have broad public backing. In other words, powerful lobbies depend on public opinion for their power; they do not create that opinion. And the American public happens to be very pro-Israel — for a long list of organic reasons that have nothing to do with AIPAC, George Soros or the Sulzbergers.

Today, going by the cacophony of the 'liberal' protests taking place around the globe against Israel (often tinged with antisemitism), the Left would appear not to have forgiven the Jewish State for its success and survival.

However, regardless of Ivy League students and their professors with fancy post-modernist ideologies, ordinary Americans do not think there is anything strange about their country's support for Israel; such scepticism is best reserved for some coastal elites and peripheral intellectuals, with leisure time and wealth on their hands.

(In our concluding part tomorrow, we look at the shifting dynamics of Israel's relations with India, how our country shifted from a broadly pro-Palestine stance under Nehru and Indira Gandhi to one favouring Israel under Modi, and what the future holds for the Middle East and India's role usher in peace and stability to a strife-torn region)



KALEIDOSCOPE

1. A devotee clicks picture of the Goddess Durga idol installed at a community 'puja pandal' during the Durga Puja festival in Nadia on Wednesday.
2. BSP chief Mayawati pays floral tribute to party founder Kanshiram on his death anniversary in New Delhi on Wednesday.
3. People worship girls as part of a ritual on the 'shashti' of the Durga Puja festival in Guwahati on Wednesday.
4. School students with their parents and teachers take oath for wearing helmets on two wheelers during an awareness drive campaign on traffic rules in Patiala on Wednesday.
5. Women perform 'garba' at Galaxy Garbi Mandal during the 'Navratri' festival in Rajkot on Tuesday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

READERS' CHOICE

Prioritising Mental Health at the Workplace



By
Dr. Mayur K. Muthe

In the last few months alone, India has witnessed multiple young professionals succumbing to the pressures of excessive workloads, unrealistic expectations, and the relentless pursuit of career success. These tragic incidents, though often under-reported, have sparked conversations about the mental health crisis brewing within the corporate world. From tech startups to financial institutions, young employees are bearing the brunt of long hours, constant connectivity, and high-stakes work environments, leaving little room for recovery or personal well-being.

The most alarming aspect of this trend is the normalisation of burnout and mental health struggles as a by-product of ambition. Companies often promote a culture of hustle, glorifying overwork while overlooking the detrimental impact on employee well-being. Many young professionals have to prove themselves and remain silent about their mental health struggles, fearing that voicing concerns will be seen as a sign of weakness or a lack of commitment.

With the advent of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, boundaries between personal and professional lives have blurred, amplifying the mental burden on employees. Poor mental health not only affects employees and their families but also undermines companies' productivity and profitability.

Improved mental health benefits employees, their families, organisations, and society.

Recognising the Red Flags

Mental health needs attention when you or your colleagues experience:

1. Feeling excessively overwhelmed by performance at the workplace
2. Experiencing low mood, dejection, and lack of confidence
3. Disturbed sleep and appetite
4. Increased irritability, anger outbursts, and mood swings leading to problems in professional and personal relationships
5. Self-harm thoughts and attempts

These troubling trends highlight the urgent need for proactive interventions in workplaces. Fortunately,

Promoting mental health can:

- Enhance job satisfaction
- Boost productivity
- Reduce absenteeism
- Improve overall well-being

organisation can take several steps to support their employees' mental well-being.

Simple interventions, significant difference:

- Open discussions about stress management
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- Mental health training for managers
 - Flexible work arrangements
 - Wellness initiatives
 - And most importantly, encouraging employees or colleagues to seek professional help from either a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or a counsellor, as required and if necessary.



health initiatives through tax breaks or requiring companies to adhere to mental health standards.

World Mental Health Day was first celebrated in 1992 by the World Federation for Mental Health. This year's theme, 'Prioritising Mental Health at the Workplace,' seeks to shed light on an often overlooked but deeply consequential aspect of employee welfare. It urges organisations worldwide to take proactive steps toward fostering a healthier, more supportive work environment.

A proactive approach to addressing mental health at work begins with recognising the early signs of distress, enabling timely intervention and support for employees before their struggles escalate into more severe mental health issues.

Investing in workplace mental health is crucial. It's time for organisations to prioritise their employees' well-being, fostering a culture of support and understanding. We don't need to wait for another crisis to confront this reality. It's time for companies and leaders to commit to prioritising mental health and fostering a culture where well-being and success go hand in hand. Take action today—support mental health at your workplace before it's too late.

(The writer is a Consultant Psychiatrist based in Jalgaon. Views personal.)

EXPLAINER

The two-state solution is dead, so why do politicians rely on it?

It has been a year since Hamas attacked Israel, killing 1,139 people and reshaping the Middle East once again. As the war drags on, the potential for peace appears simply out of reach.

While the media and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appear more focused on events in Lebanon, the bombing of the Gaza Strip continues.

The struggle for peace appears increasingly futile as a campaign of supposed escalating to de-escalate unravels any appetite for the fighting to stop, even if temporarily.

However, while the talk of what happens the "day after" the war ends may be premature, ultimately it will shape any deal. There appears to be a consensus among world leaders that at the core of future peace, negotiations for implementing the "two-state solution", which would see a Palestinian state existing peacefully alongside Israel, should be restarted. But in the aftermath of Hamas's attacks, is this still a possibility?

Unfortunately, despite all the best intentions of world leaders, a Palestinian state has long been a practical impossibility. There are two main reasons for this.

The Jerusalem conundrum

First, Israel controls both east and west Jerusalem. The division of the ancient city is not historic but is a consequence of the 1948 war that saw the creation of the Israeli state.

However, given the centrality of Jerusalem for both Palestinians and Israelis, each view control of the city as being emblematic of the legitimacy and righteousness of their respective claims to statehood.

For Palestinians, there is no Palestine without at least East Jerusalem. Not only is Jerusalem the third holiest city in Islam, East Jerusalem, with its crucial religious, cultural, political, administrative, and economic position, is considered by Palestinian to be an indispensable part of any future state.

Equally, for Israelis, there is no Israel without Jerusalem. The city is the holiest place in Ju-



daism, where Jewish temples stood on Temple Mount for thousands of years. The western wall, which is in East Jerusalem, is the last remaining structure of these temples. Thousands of Jews pray at the site every day. When Israeli forces captured East Jerusalem from Jordan during the 1967 Six Day War, the unification of the city was greeted by an almost messianic jubilation by Israelis. For the first time in nearly 2,000 years the Jewish people had control of the holiest city in Judaism.

However, for Palestinians, the loss of control of East Jerusalem became another painful symbol of their dispossession that began in 1948. Since 1967, successive Israeli governments have authorised and funded the construction of numerous settlements in and around East Jerusalem as part of a strategy to make it impossible for any future Israeli government to be forced to ever cede control of East Jerusalem to Palestinians, and with it control over Temple Mount.

In 1980, Israel's parliament, the Knesset, passed the Jerusalem Law that declared the united city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Israeli settlements, alongside the Separation Wall that encloses much of the West Bank, are explicitly designed to excise Palestinian communities from East Jerusalem, forming part of the decades-long demographic struggle to ensure that Jerusalem becomes a majority Jewish city.

Identity and culture

In the aftermath of Hamas's attacks that saw the most significant loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust, there is little will among Israelis to "reward" the Palestinians,

and by extension, Hamas, with statehood.

Netanyahu himself vehemently opposes any Palestinian state, declaring that it would pose an existential threat to the state of Israel.

Since he first became prime minister in 1996, Netanyahu has only ever grudgingly engaged in negotiations with the Palestinian leadership, steadfastly refusing to make any concessions that would advance the cause of Palestinian statehood.

Not only does Netanyahu's position have to do with refusing to divide Jerusalem, it also includes his refusal to cede control of the West Bank, which Israelis refer to by their biblical names, Judea and Samaria. There is a strong belief in Israel, especially among conservatives and right-wing nationalists that the state of Israel should rightfully exist from "the river to the sea", and the current government appears determined to make this ideological goal a reality.

What this war has become is a strident effort by the Israeli government to not only crush Hamas but crush the last remaining vestige of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and thus to the ideal of an Israeli state existing wholly from "the river to the sea". The only other Palestinian movement with the capacity to resist is Fatah.

Since October 2023, the UN has recorded an explosion of Israeli settler outposts being constructed throughout the West Bank, further cementing Israel's control of territory that would form part of any Palestinian state. Additionally, recent reports suggest that Netanyahu is considering a plan that would see the northern half of the Gaza Strip declared a military zone, meaning all Palestinian residents would be removed.

This would mean the forcible relocation of between 300,000 to 500,000 Palestinians — a repeat of 1948's Nakba (Arabic for the catastrophe) that saw approximately 725,000 Palestinians "relocate" to refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and neighbouring Arab states.

-360info

Arshdeep in top 10 ICC T20I rankings



Dubai: Riding on a string of impressive performances, Indian seamer Arshdeep Singh entered the top 10 among bowlers and was placed eighth in the ICC T20I rankings issued here on Wednesday.

The left-arm seamer, who returned 3/14 in the opening T20I against Bangladesh in Gwalior last Sunday, jumped eight spots with 642 rating points to reach the eighth position. He is the only Indian bowler in the top 10.

England's Adil Rashid continues as the top-ranked bowler in the shortest format followed by Akeal Hossain of the West Indies and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan at the second and third spots respectively.

"Arshdeep is also a big winner in the latest rankings update, with the left-arm pacer rising eight places to equal eighth on the updated list for T20I bowlers and

reaching a new career-high rating following his three-wicket haul against Bangladesh," the ICC said on its website.

Hardik Pandya, who blasted a 16-ball 39 with five fours and two sixes, moved up seven places to reach the 60th spot among batters.

The ace Indian all-rounder also returned 4-0-26-1 and moved to the third spot as he rose four positions in the list of top all-rounders, which is headed by England's Liam Livingstone with Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee at the second position.

Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is not a part of the India squad for the three T20Is against Bangladesh, dropped one position to fifth and was leapfrogged by Pakistan's Babar Azam.

Washington Sundar also improved his ranking as he got to 35th among T20I bowlers, moving up four positions.

-PTI

Allman named Delhi Half Marathon's ambassador

Two-time Olympic gold-winning American discus thrower Valerie Allman was on Wednesday named the international event ambassador of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon to be held here on October 20.

Allman threw 69.50 meters in the Paris Games this year to set a new American record and win the gold medal. In the previous Tokyo Games, she had finished at the top of the podium with a throw of 68.98 meters.



Her feat ended USA's wait for a gold in discus throw which they had last won in 2008.

Allman, whose personal best is of 71.46 meters, is also a two-time World Championship medallist, clinching the silver in 2023 and a bronze in 2022.

"The start line is not just a race; it's a celebration of camaraderie, determination, and resilience, and a showcase of our ability to push limits and achieve new personal milestones," she said in a release issued by the organisers.

-PTI



Novak Djokovic celebrates after defeating Roman Safiullin of Russia in the men's singles fourth round match of the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament on Wednesday. Pic:PTI

Race Across India starts from Oct 10

By correspondent

Mumbai: The second edition of Race Across India is all set to bring people from all walks of life including Armed Forces, doctors and visually impaired cyclists. The race, supported by Indian Oil, starts from October 10 in Srinagar and will conclude at Kanniyakumari in Tamil Nadu, traversing through 12 states and a variety of terrain.

Among the visually impaired participants are Sagar Vasant Bodake and Ajay Lalwani from Nashik. While Bodake's cycling achievements span over 11,500 km across Maharashtra, including challenging routes like Dadar to the Statue of Unity, Lalwani has successfully completed Mumbai-Goa-Mumbai in 7 days and Mumbai-Kashmir-Kanyakumari-Mumbai in 45 days.

Some of the other notable participants include Deepak Amin, a solo rider and Dr Amit Samarth, a pioneering Indian cyclist. Amin has completed the Seattle to Portland ride and is now preparing for his first major challenge in endurance cycling. Dr. Amit is the first Indian to complete the 5,000-kilometer Race Across America (RAAM) in its 37-year history.



The other rider is Dr Prakash Gopal Sharbidre, a Consultant Nephrologist from Kolhapur. Wing Commander Vikrant Uniyal, a 43-year-old officer in the Indian Air Force and resident of Dehradun, is also a participant. His remarkable journey includes several expeditions such as the Siachen to Kargil cycling expedition (2018), Chadar Trek (2019), Mt. Kailash Mansarovar (2016), and the Ladakh Marathon (2018).

Nikhil Ramesh Bahekar, who began cycling in 2021 and Amitkumar Chandrakant Kamble, Police Head constable in Maharashtra Police, are also among the participants.

Among the international participants are Krzysztof Fechner from Zielona Góra, Poland, who has competed in ultramarathons across the globe.

Williamson to miss initial part of Test series



Auckland: Senior batter Kane Williamson is set to miss the initial part of the upcoming three-Test series in India starting on October 16 due to groin strain, with New Zealand naming Mark Chapman as his cover in the 17-man squad here on Wednesday.

Williamson, who is dealing with a groin strain, will delay his departure to India where New Zealand will play three Tests at Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai.

While senior batting all-rounder Michael Bracewell has been roped in only for the first Test in Bengaluru, spinner Ish Sodhi will be available

only for the second and third Tests.

Tom Latham will be leading the Kiwis after Tim Southee stepped aside from the leadership role a few days ago.

"Williamson experienced groin discomfort during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle and will require a period of rehabilitation before joining the Blackcaps Test squad in India," New Zealand Cricket said on their website.

New Zealand selector Sam Wells said the decision to delay Williamson's departure to India was to give the former skipper more time to rest.

-PTI



India's Abhishek Sharma returns to pavilion after being dismissed by Bangladesh's Tanzim Hasan Sakib during the second T20 International cricket match between India and Bangladesh at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Wednesday. Pic:PTI

World Padel League Comes to Mumbai

Mumbai: The second season of the World Padel League, in collaboration with Wizcraft Entertainment, will take place at the NESCO Centre in Mumbai from February 6 to 9.

The World Padel League is being supported by the Indian Padel Federation and the second season will feature top male and female Padel players from across

the world, competing in franchise teams.

"We are thrilled to bring the World Padel League to Mumbai for its second season. After the resounding success of the first season in Dubai, we are confident that this event will be a huge hit in India as well. Padel in India is on the rise, and we are proud to bring the 'Greatest Show on

Court' to India," expressed Navdeep Arneja, COO, World Padel League.

Sneha Abraham Sehgal, President, Indian Padel Federation said, "Padel has been rapidly rising in India and more people are increasingly interested in taking up the sport. With the World Padel League coming to India, it shows Padel's growing popularity."

Iron Born romp to 6-0 victory

Mumbai: Iron Born FC dished out a perfect combined performance and romped to a facile 6-0 win against MH Oranje - Atletico FC in a Mumbai Super Division match of MFA League 2024-2025 played at the Neville D'Souza ground, Bandra on Wednesday.

Iron Born scored the goals through Pratyaksh Shetty and Vishal Singh both striking two goals each and one each from Soham Sawant and Aman Mishra to complete the margin of victory.

In a closely contested encounter, Savio Fernando scored the all-important winning goal in leading Tarun Sporting FC to a narrow 1-0 win against Shastri Nagar - Offshoots FC.

Results - Mumbai Super Div: Tarun Sporting FC 1 (Savio Fernando) beat Shastri Nagar - Offshoots FC 0; Iron Born FC 6 (Pratyaksh Shetty 2, Vishal Singh 2, Soham Sawant, Aman Mishra) beat MH Oranje - Atletico FC 0; West Zone United 3 (Sohail Khatri 2, Mohd. Adnan) beat Kenkre FC Under-19 1 (Sujit Verma).

WCG Annual Football Tournament 2024

Curt and Dylan score two goals in Anne's win

Mumbai: St Anne's (Bandra) pulled off a thrilling 5-4 win against Our Lady of Fatima (Vidya Vihar) in a Men's Open match of the 44th Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana Annual Rink Football Tournament 2024, played under floodlights at the WCG courts.

Striker Curt DeMello and Dylan Monteiro, both struck a brace of goals each, while Baven Parmar added his touch to seal the win for St Anne's. Meanwhile, Fahad Sayad, Elvis Rodrigues, Jayesh Kurup, and Arjun Singh were on target to reduce the deficit for the losing team.

In another close contest, St Joseph's 'A' (Juhu) worked hard and pulled off a close 2-1 win against St Anthony's ('A' Malad). St Joseph's struck through Andres D'Souza and Sagar Kamble, while Nikhil Patil netted for the Malad outfit.

Our Lady of Salvation's (Dadar) registered a 3-1 win over Our Lady Of Fatima



(Vasai). Pranit Kadam scored two goals and Craig D'Souza chipped in with one for the Salvation lads, while Seon D'Souza was on target for the Vasai outfit.

In a Veteran's match, Golden Gunners FC struck good form and combined well as a team to prevail over Cool Veterans 3-1. Sandeep Dongrikar, Jonathan Fernandes and Osborne D'Souza scored a goal each for Golden Gunners, while Ramnarayan Nair reduced the margin for Cool Veterans.



Ishan Kishan returns as Jharkhand captain after controversial pullout last season

Ranchi: India batter Ishan Kishan on Wednesday returned to the Jharkhand Ranji team as its captain, following his controversial pullout last season that led to his exclusion from the BCCI central contract.

The explosive left-hander, who became a regular in India's white-ball squad after Rishabh Pant's road accident in December 2022, took a break during India's tour of South Africa last year.

Post break, he did not participate in any official BCCI matches, which raised a few eyebrows

as the board stressed on players prioritising domestic cricket when not on national duty.

The 26-year-old resurfaced this February, playing in the privately organised DY Patil T20 Cup ahead of the IPL and sparking a debate over balance between franchise cricket and state commitments.

His absence from domestic cricket during this period contributed to his omission from the BCCI's 2023-24 central contracts.

However, Kishan has since worked his way back into the

BCCI's good books with strong performances in domestic cricket, including a century for India C on his return in the Duleep Trophy last month.

He also represented the Rest of India in the Irani Cup, scoring 38 in his only innings.

Now, as captain of Jharkhand's 16-member squad, Kishan is set to lead a young squad with last season's designated skipper Virat Singh as his deputy and Kumar Kushagra as the wicketkeeper.

Jharkhand begin their Ranji Trophy campaign against As-

sam in Guwahati in Elite Group D.

Last season, Jharkhand finished third from the bottom in Group A, winning two, losing two, and drawing three of their seven matches.

"Ishan is an experienced player and he has international experience," chairman of Jharkhand's selection committee Subroto Das was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"We have picked a very young team. Saurabh Tiwary, Shahbaz Nadeem and Varun Aaron had all retired after last season so we

had to rethink our strategy. Ishan is capable of leading this young side and we're confident of doing well this Ranji season."

Squad: Ishan Kishan (c), Virat Singh (vc), Kumar Kushagra (wk), Nazim Siddique, Aryaman Sen, Sharandeep Singh, Kumar Suraj, Anukul Roy, Utkarsh Singh, Supriyo Chakraborty, Saurabh Shekhar, Vikas Kumar, Vivekanand Tiwary, Manishi, Ravi Kumar Yadav and Raunak Kumar.

- PTI