

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Historic Day For India's Chess Power

SIT to probe laddu adulteration



Men, women win GOLD MEDALS for the first time in 45 years

Praggnanandhaa R and Vantika Agrawal of India focus during the final round of the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary on Sunday.

Pics: AP/PTI

Budapest: India on Sunday scripted history as its men's and women's teams clinched their maiden gold medals in the 45th Chess Olympiad after beating their respective opponents in the final round here.

The men's team defeated Slovenia after D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi and Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa won their respective matches in the 11th and final round match.

The women's team beat Azerbaijan 3.5-0.5 to clinch the title.

Indian men had earlier won two bronze -- in 2014 and 2022 --

in the tournament.

Indian women had won a bronze in the 2022 edition in Chennai.

World Championship challenger Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi yet again delivered in key games to help India secure its first title in the open category.

Up against Slovenia, Gukesh was at his very best in the technical phase of the game with black pieces against Vladimir Fedoseev. Though it was a laboured victory, the 18-year-old Grandmaster was spot on with his tremendous

strategic display.

Erigaisi also won with black pieces on the third board against Jan Subeli out of a surprising Centre Counter defense game.

If this was not enough, Praggnanandhaa struck form and scored a crushing victory over Anton Demchenko, as India earned a decisive 3-0 triumph over Slovenia with one game still remaining.

The Indian men ended up with a remarkable 21 points out of a possible 22. They conceded just a lone 2-2 draw against Uz-

bekistan while beating the rest of the opponents.

The Indian women then made it a double delight for the country as they scored 3.5-0.5 victory against Azerbaijan.

D Harika was at her technical best on the top board while Divya Deshmukh yet again outclassed her opponent to confirm her individual gold medal on the third board as well.

After Rameshbabu Vaishali drew her game, the Indian team confirmed the victory with Vantika Agrawal scoring another brilliant triumph. -PTI

Congrats to Team India for winning the last round as well! Sensational @DGukesh and @ArjunErigaisi, but also congrats to @vidit chess on an impressive result. Great captaincy by @srinath chess.

Congrats to India's Women's team. Great result by the whole team and captain @chessgmkunte and a special mention to @DivyaDeshmukh05 and to @vantikachess for her performance.

- Vishwanathan Anand, Grand Master

Explosion at coal mine kills 34

Tehran: An explosion in a coal mine in eastern Iran killed at least 34 workers and injured 17 others, officials said Sunday, marking one of the worst mining disasters in the country's history as others remained missing hours after the blast.

The blast struck a coal mine in Tabas, about 540 km (335 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, on Saturday night. By Sunday, weeping miners stood alongside mine cars that brought up the bodies of their colleagues, all covered in coal dust.

Around 70 people had been working at the time of the blast. State television later said that 17 were believed to be trapped at a depth of 200 metres (650 feet) down a 700-metre (2,300-foot) tunnel. However, figures kept changing throughout Sunday regarding the disaster in the rural area.

A provincial emergency official, Mohammad Ali Akhondi, told the state-run IRNA news agency Sunday afternoon that the death toll had reached at least 34 as rescue efforts continued.



The first ride of Ghodbunder Riders Masters was launched in Thane on Sunday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Keralite's link with Lebanon pager blasts

Wayanad (Kerala): Amid reports linking Rinson Jose, a Kerala native settled in Norway, to the probe into recent pager blasts in Lebanon, the Kerala police on Sunday confirmed a background check on his family, while a BJP leader referred to him as a "son of our nation" and demanded "protection."

"There is no case or investigation. Our special branch officials have carried out a background

check. There is nothing new in it; such checks are conducted whenever similar news reports emerge," a police officer told PTI.

Another police official said that a "precautionary patrol" has been launched in the area near Mananthavady where his family resides following the reports. He said that his family has not requested police protection.

Rinson, who went abroad for a job a decade ago, is

now a Norwegian citizen. Meanwhile, BJP leader Sandeep G Varier called for protection for Rinson and his family.

"He is the son of our nation. He is a Malayali. At any cost, we must provide protection to Rinson and his family," Varier, a state committee member of the BJP, said in a Facebook post.

A relative of Rinson has said that he learned about the incident through the media. -PTI

His maternal uncle, Thankachan, said, "He grew up here in Wayanad and studied both here and outside Kerala. After completing his MBA, he left India 10 years ago. He had been studying abroad before joining a company. As far as we know, he is currently working for a company in Norway." Rinson last visited Kerala in November of last year and left in January. -PTI

India to get first security semiconductor plant

Wilmington (US): Under a transformative collaboration with the US, India will get a national security semiconductor fabrication plant that will produce chips for use in military hardware and next-generation telecommunications.

The India-US joint project was announced following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden in Wilmington on Saturday.

A joint fact sheet on Modi-Biden talks said the two leaders "hailed" the semiconductor project as a "watershed arrangement". It will be the first ever India-US semiconductor fabrication partnership.

It is the first time ever the US military has agreed to do a partnership for these highly-value technologies with India and it is a watershed moment as it is as significant as the civil nuclear deal, people familiar with the matter said.

The Fab becomes not only India's first, but one of the world's first multi-material fabs for national security. -PTI

Third left ruler around India



By Jayprakash Ramaiah

Colombo: Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Sunday was declared winner of the Sri Lankan presidential election by the country's Election Commission after an unprecedented second round of counting of votes. He will be Sri Lanka's first-ever Marxist President.

Dissanayake's victory may spell difficulties for India as the mighty China has been supporting the Marxists around India. Dissanayake will be the third left wing ruler in India's neighbouring countries. In November 2023, Maldives had elected Mohamed Muizzu as its President. The Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Shar-

ma Oli also belongs to the left-wing party.

Dissanayake, 56, the leader of the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna party's broader front National People's Power (NPP), defeated his closest rival Sajith Premadasa of Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB).

Incumbent president Ranil Wickremesinghe was eliminated in the first round after he failed to become within the top two in the vote list.

NPP said Dissanayake will take oath on Monday. He will be the 9th president of the island nation.

Sri Lanka's first Marxist President – Page 7

Max SC atrocities cases in UP followed by Rajasthan, MP

By Uzmi Athar

New Delhi: About 97.7 per cent of all cases of atrocities against SCs in 2022 were reported from 13 states, with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh recording the highest number of such crimes, according to a new government report.

According to the latest government report under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the majority of atrocities

against Scheduled Tribes (STs) were also concentrated in 13 states, which reported 98.91 per cent of all cases in 2022.

Of 51,656 cases registered under the law for Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 23.78 per cent of the total cases with 12,287, followed by Rajasthan at 8,651 (16.75 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh at 7,732 (14.97 per cent).

Other states with a significant number of cases of atrocities against SCs

were Bihar with 6,799 (13.16 per cent), Odisha with 3,576 (6.93 per cent), and Maharashtra with 2,706 (5.24 per cent).

These six states accounted for nearly 81 per cent of the total cases.

"Thirteen states, cumulatively accounting for 97.7 per cent (51,656) of the total cases (52,866) relating to offences of atrocities against members of SCs, registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in

Uttar Pradesh, which reported the highest number of cases of atrocities against SCs, was among the states which said "No atrocity prone areas have been identified in the State of Uttar Pradesh".

conjunction with the Indian Penal Code, during the year 2022," the report said.

Similarly, the majority of cases of atrocities against STs were concentrated in 13 states.

Of the 9,735 cases registered under the law for STs, Madhya Pradesh reported the highest num-

ber at 2,979 (30.61 per cent), the report said. Rajasthan had the second highest number of cases at 2,498 (25.66 per cent) while Odisha recorded 773 (7.94 per cent). Other states with a significant number of cases included Maharashtra with 691 (7.10 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh with

499 (5.13 per cent). The data also provided insight into the status of investigations and charge-sheeting under the Act.

Among the SC-related cases, 60.38 per cent led to charge sheets being filed while 14.78 per cent were concluded with final reports due to reasons such as false claims or lack of evidence.

By the end of 2022, investigation was pending in 17,166 cases.

For ST-related cases, 63.32 per cent resulted in

charge sheets being filed while 14.71 per cent ended with final reports.

At the end of the period under review, 2,702 cases involving atrocities against STs were still under investigation.

One of the most concerning trends highlighted in the report is the declining conviction rate for cases under the Act. In 2022, the conviction rate dropped to 32.4 per cent from 39.2 per cent in 2020.

Moreover, the report pointed out the inadequate

number of special courts set up to handle cases under the law.

Of 498 districts in 14 states, only 194 had established special courts to expedite trials in these cases.

The report also identified specific districts particularly prone to atrocities with only 10 states and Union Territories declaring such districts. The rest said there was no district prone to such cases of atrocities. -PTI

Supriya wants new poll symbol for Ajit's party

By Correspondent

Pune: NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule has said they have requested the Supreme Court to treat the two NCP factions equally and just as their party was given a new poll symbol, the same should be followed for the rival group led by Ajit Pawar.

The NCP (SP) has sought "natural justice" from the Supreme Court, Lok Sabha member Sule told reporters on Saturday.

The move comes ahead of the state assembly elections, likely to be held in November.

Ajit Pawar along with several other MLAs joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government in July 2023, leading to a split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founded by his uncle Sharad Pawar.

The NCP, founded by Sharad Pawar, had 'clock' as its election symbol before the split.

In February this year, the Election Commission allotted the NCP name and the 'clock' symbol to the Ajit Pawar-led group.

On March 19, the top court allowed the Sharad Pawar faction to use 'Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar' as its name along with the symbol of 'man blowing turha' (a traditional trumpet) ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.



It had passed the order on a plea by the Sharad Pawar group seeking to restrain the Ajit Pawar faction from using the 'clock' symbol for the polls, as allotted by the EC, on the ground that it was disrupting the level playing field.

The Sharad Pawar-led party moved the Supreme Court on Friday seeking that both factions of the NCP be given new poll symbols. The apex court has listed the plea for hearing on September 25.

Sule said, "Sharad Pawar is the founding member of our party and he takes all decisions. The NCP (SP) has sought natural justice from the Supreme Court."

"The court asked us to use the symbol of 'man blowing turha' until the final decision. The same decision should be taken for the other NCP faction. There is big confusion about the 'clock' symbol. Thus, we request the court to take a decision before the

upcoming Vidhan Sabha elections," Sule said.

There are two political parties claiming the same symbol and the court has not yet made a judgement, hence both the parties should be treated equally, said the Baramati MP, who is the daughter of Sharad Pawar. The top court had earlier observed that the name and photographs of Sharad Pawar cannot be used by the Ajit Pawar faction for political gains.

The SC on February 19 directed that the Election Commission's order allotting 'Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar' as the party name for the Sharad Pawar faction will continue till further orders.

On February 15, state assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar held the faction led by Ajit Pawar was the real NCP and the anti-defection provisions in the Constitution cannot be used to stifle internal dissent.

ECl to visit Mumbai Friday

By Correspondent

Mumbai: An Election Commission delegation headed by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and two commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu will visit Mumbai on September 27-28.

They will meet political parties, the state chief electoral officer, Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik, and other officials to discuss the preparations and planning for the Assembly election. The delegation is also going to know the preparedness from district collectors and superintendent of police.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has hinted that the Assembly elections are likely to be held in November post Diwali. The model code of conduct is likely to be enforced in the second week of October.

The Election Commission did not hold the elections together with Haryana citing a reason of festive season. The Commission's visit to Mumbai is an indication that it is going to start the preparations for the Assembly elections soon. The elections in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana will conclude in first week of October. After that, all eyes will be on the Maharashtra elections.

The prominent alliance, the ruling Mahayuti and the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi have started their talks over seat sharing. However, none of them has arrived to a conclusion yet.

Political observers believe that they may announce the pact after Dussehra.



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari presents Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Ambedkar Smurti Award 2024 to Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale with his wife Seema Athawale during the Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar Smurti Award in Nagpur on Sunday. Pic: PTI

B'lore Expressway in planning stage

RTI query reveals status of the infrastructure project

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The rumors surrounding the land acquisition process for the proposed Pune-Bangalore Greenfield Expressway have been dispelled, following an official response from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The clarification came after an RTI (Right to Information) application was filed by activist Jeetendra Ghadge.

In its response, the NHAI confirmed that the project is still in the Detailed Project Report (DPR) stage, with no further details available regarding land acquisition as the expressway remains in the planning phase. The Pune-Bangalore Expressway is part of the ambitious Bharat-

mala Pariyojana initiative, aiming to improve national connectivity. This eight-lane, access-controlled expressway will span 700 kilometers, passing through 12 districts—three in Maharashtra and nine in Karnataka. Upon completion, it will reduce the travel distance between Pune and Bengaluru by approximately 95 kilometers, cutting travel time from around 15 hours to just 7 hours. Additionally, the expressway will link up with the existing Pune-Mumbai Expressway at Pune, enhancing connectivity across the region.

Fear of land acquisition

The project, targeted for completion by 2028, has generated significant public interest, particularly

from residents who fear their land may be acquired for the construction. Jeetendra Ghadge, founder of The Young Whistleblower Foundation, emphasized the rising concerns of locals due to the absence of regular updates from the NHAI.

"There is growing public interest along the route, especially from residents whose lands may be acquired for the project. Rumors are spreading due to the lack of official updates from the NHAI. While the NHAI has refused to disclose more details in response to the RTI, in the public interest, the highway authority should provide current status updates on these projects so that citizens affected by them are well-informed," said

Ghadge. As the project remains in the DPR stage, affected communities are eagerly awaiting more transparency from the authorities to address their concerns about land acquisition and future development.

Typically, land acquisition begins once the DPR is finalized and the project moves into more advanced phases of approval and execution. The timeline for land acquisition will depend on various factors, including government approvals, environmental clearances, and public consultations. Given the target completion date of 2028, land acquisition is expected to commence in the coming years, but an official timeline has yet to be announced by the NHAI.

CRIME WATCH

Two held for rape of teenage girl

Thane: Police have arrested a man for allegedly raping a 17-year-old girl and another person for abetting the crime in Navi Mumbai, an officer said on Sunday.

The 30-year-old man took the victim to the house of the other accused, aged 29, in Karanjade area on September 19 and raped her, said assistant police inspector Vijay Kamble from Kalamboli police station.

Based on a complaint by the girl's mother, the two men were arrested the same day and booked under BNS.

Two held with fake currency notes

Thane: A man and a woman have been arrested in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai for allegedly possessing and circulating counterfeit currency notes, police said on Sunday.

The police caught the man, aged 35, and the 36-year-old woman on Friday near New Panvel and seized fake currency notes with a face value of Rs 81,000 from their possession, an official from Rabale MIDC police station said.

Accessories used for making the fake notes were also seized from them, he said.

An FIR was registered against the two accused under various Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections.

Six booked for cryptocurrency fraud

Thane: The Navi Mumbai police have registered a case against six persons for allegedly duping a man of Rs 87 lakh after promising him high returns in cryptocurrency trade, an officer said on Sunday.

Since May last year, the accused lured the 48-year-old victim to join a WhatsApp group for the purchase of USDT (cryptocurrency) and made him pay Rs 87,48,141 on different IDs for it, cyber police station's senior police inspector Gajanan Kadam said.

After he made the payments, the accused did not respond to his call. Realising that he had been cheated, the man approached the cyber police with a complaint, he said.

Two die of electrocution

Pune: Two persons died of electrocution during a religious procession in Maharashtra's Pune city on Sunday, police said.

The incident occurred in the Wadgaon Sheri area around 11.30 am, an official from Chandan Nagar police station said.

The victims, Zakariya Shaikh (20) and Abhay Waghmare (17), climbed onto a truck with a DJ music system and were hoisting a flag, which came in contact with high-voltage electric wires, he said.

The duo got electrocuted, and one of them died on the spot, the official said.

The other man was admitted to a nearby hospital and succumbed during treatment, he said, adding that a case will be registered in this regard.



NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar being felicitated by Chairman of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha Chandra Kant Dalvi during the inauguration of a new building of Mahatma Gandhi Vidyalyaya, at Kale village in Karad on Sunday. Pic: PTI

Minister lays foundation of Buddha Vihar

Latur: Maharashtra minister Sanjay Bansode on Sunday laid the foundation stone of a Buddha Vihar in the Udgir tehsil of Latur district and promised that adequate funds would be made available for it.

He said development works worth Rs 6,000 crore have been approved for the region to create infrastructure and jobs.

Speaking at the event at Avalkondaj, he said the Buddha Vihar should be recognised as a 'sanskar kendra', a centre aimed at promoting and nurturing cultural, spiritual, and moral values.

The minister of sports

and youth welfare, who also represents the Udgir assembly seat, said a grand Buddha Vihar, similar to the one in Karnataka's Gulbarga, has already been constructed in Udgir and was recently inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu.

He also talked about programmes like the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana' for women, 'Mukhyamantri Baliraja Veejavalat Yojana' to provide free power to farmers, 'Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana' for senior citizens and the scheme offering three free cooking gas cylinders annually to eligible beneficiaries.

Transporters claim delay in fitness renewal

Mumbai: Commercial vehicle owners across Maharashtra claimed they faced challenges in renewing fitness certificates, particularly concerning Speed Limiting Devices (SLD) on vehicles compliant with BS-IV and BS-VI emission norms.

Transporters said issues began in mid-August following changes to the Vahan system—a national vehicle registration portal. It has become mandatory for commercial vehicles—such as trucks, tempos, taxis, and buses—to provide SLD certificate details during the fitness renewal process.

Many transporters and RTO officials the PTI spoke to view this requirement as unnecessary. They argue it not only delays the renewal of fitness certificates but also fosters corruption, forcing vehicle owners to seek assistance from dealers and RTO agents.

BS4 and BS6 are Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms set by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Under Rule 118 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), SLDs or speed governors, must be



installed in all commercial vehicles (excluding auto rickshaws and quadricycles) to limit speeds to below 80 km/hr, a regulation enforced since October 1, 2015.

Older vehicles were equipped with external speed governors, while newer models feature an Electronic Control Unit (ECU) for speed regulation.

The transport department requires detailed SLD information—including unique identification numbers, approval and fitment dates, and test report numbers—to be updated in the Vahan system. Without this information, fitness certificates cannot be issued, leaving many BS-IV and BS-VI vehi-

cles in limbo.

"Without updating the SLD details on the Vahan system, fitness certificates for the vehicles cannot be generated," a senior Motor Vehicle Inspector said, adding that fitness renewals for several BS-IV and BS-VI vehicles now remain pending. Upto 8 years, fitness certificates of commercial vehicles were renewed after every two years and then once a year.

Transporters say they are frustrated over the situation.

"I took my 2-year-old bus for fitness renewal on September 3, but the RTO (Regional Transport Office) has yet to issue the certificate due to SLD details. It's been nearly

20 days since the renewal test, and I'm still waiting," claimed a school bus owner from Thane.

Another trucker also expressed discontent with the new process, noting that they previously could renew fitness certificates at any RTO.

Now, they are compelled to return to the RTO where their vehicle is registered just to update SLD information. "One can imagine the waste of time and money," he said.

Bal Malkit Singh, chairman of the Core Committee and former president of the All India Motor Transport Congress, claimed that despite previous assurances from the transport commissioner, the issue remains unresolved.

He plans to raise the matter again with the transport department next week. "There are still some teething problems despite the circular being issued," he told PTI. "There are still some teething problems despite the circular being issued. Our members have flagged some issues, which will be taken up (with the transport department) on Monday," Singh added. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I am a farmer. We haven't paid bills for the last three generations. My grandfather's (water) pumps are still there. Neither my grandfather and my father, nor I paid the farm electricity bills."



Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State for Ayush

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public that, VIJAY KUMAR VICHARE was an owner of the Flat bearing no. B/007, Ground floor, Ankit Apartment (now known as Mandep Co-op. Hsg. Soc. Ltd.), Navghar Road, Bhayander (East), Tal. & Dist. Thane, 401105. He died on dtd. 09/11/1993. His son Pramod Vijaykumar Vichare died on dtd. 20/07/2005. His second son Vinod Vijaykumar Vichare died on dtd. 09/04/2007. Later, his wife i.e., Smita Vijaykumar Vichare died on dtd. 04/07/2021. As per the Will of Smita Vijaykumar Vichare, Thane Civil Court on dtd. 13/02/2024, in M.A. Application no. 301/2023 issued a probate according to which the above referred Flat has been given to Shankar Laxman Pawar. Hence, Shankar Laxman Pawar has requested to Mandep Co-op. Hsg. Soc. Ltd. to grant him membership of the said Flat and since the original Share certificate of the said Flat has been lost he has also requested to issue a duplicate share certificate of the said Flat.

So, anyone having right, title, interest and heirship rights, loan, on the above referred Flat, it's agreement or its share certificate or if anyone has any issue in granting membership rights to Shankar Laxman Pawar then please write to the undersigned with necessary documents within 14 days from the publication of this notice, failing which the society will do the necessary which please be noted.

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If Pakistani cinema allowed, it will cost you big time

Raj Thackeray warns theatre owners against screening Fawad Khan's film

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray has strongly warned theatre owners against screening the Pakistani blockbuster film, 'The Legend Of Maula Jatt', in the state. He has also threatened them with dire consequences if they choose to screen the film in the state.

The Legend Of Maula Jatt, starring Fawad Khan and Mahira Khan, became the highest grossing Pakistani film after its release in 2022, and it will now be the first Pakistani film to be released in India after almost a decade. The film is set to premiere in Indian theatres on October 2.

Thackeray took to his X handle on Sunday. He wrote, "Pakistani actor Fawad Khan's movie titled 'Legend of



Maula Jatt' is going to release in India soon. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena will not allow the movie to be released in Maharashtra under any circumstances. Why are films of Pakistani actors allowed to be released in India?"

He further wrote, "Art knows no

national boundaries, that's fine in other cases, but in case of Pakistan it won't work at all. Why are we getting artists from a country that propagates hatred for India, to dance here and screen their films? Governments should not allow this film to be released in any state of the country, let alone Maharashtra."

Thackeray mentioned that people might remember the blow by MNS the last time such incidents happened in the state, and the party won't shy away from teaching naysayers a lesson or two.

If theatre owners who are reluctant to screen Marathi films allow Pakistani cinema to enter this land, it will cost them big time. I do not want any conflict in the state during Navratri, and I am sure the government does not want it too, he stated.

Girl killed in ceiling plaster collapse

Thane: A five-year-old girl died and three of her family members suffered injuries after a chunk of ceiling plaster collapsed on them in their flat at a 30-year-old building in Thane on Sunday, an official said.

The incident occurred around 8 am in their ground floor home at the 6-storey Jeevan Baug building in the Mumbra area, said Yasin Tadvi, chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation.

The victims were in their kitchen when a large piece of concrete fell on them, he said. Uneja Sheikh (5), Umar Sheikh (23), Muskan Sheikh (21) and one-year-old Izaan Sheikh sustained injuries. They were rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors declared Uneja dead.

Dharavi protest: Three held for damage to public property

Mumbai: Police on Sunday arrested three persons for allegedly damaging public property and blocking a road, a day after locals protested to stop BMC from razing the 'illegal' portion of a mosque at Dharavi here, an officer said.

Those arrested allegedly hurled stones at a vehicle of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and damaged its windshield, said the official from Dharavi police station.

The FIR has been registered against them under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Maharashtra Police Act, Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, and sections of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Tension prevailed in the Dharavi slum colony on Saturday morning after



hundreds of residents blocked 90 Feet Road to oppose the BMC's plan to demolish an alleged illegal portion of a mosque, officials had said earlier.

Some residents stopped civic officials from entering the lane where the mosque is located. Soon hundreds of people assembled outside Dharavi police station and squatted on the road.

As the situation became tense, trustees of the mosque held talks with civic officials. They submitted a written request to the

BMC's deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner of the G north division seeking four to five days to remove the encroached portion.

During the protest, some individuals allegedly pelted stones at a BMC vehicle, breaking its front glass, an official said. Dharavi, a densely-populated colony, is considered the largest slum sprawl in the country. Additional police personnel were deployed in the area to prevent any untoward incident.

Airport lounge access hit due to disruption

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Adani Group's subsidiary Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL) on Sunday said passengers at airports across the country have been experiencing disruptions in accessing airport lounge, owing to suspension of services by Dreamfolks.

AAHL, in a statement, said it is "actively working" with banks to facilitate the immediate resumption of services, which have not yet been restored.

Acknowledging the "temporary disruption" in its services, Dreamfolk Services Ltd said its team is working to resolve the issue

but clarified that the company is in compliant with all its obligations.

AAHL operates seven airports in the country -- Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru.

"Passengers at airports across India have been experiencing disruptions in lounge access.

This is due to the unexpected suspension of services by Dreamfolks Services Ltd, a lounge access provider partnered with several banks, in violation of its service agreements with the affected airports," AAHL said in the statement.

Narvekar wants new TVC

Mumbai: Former BJP corporator Makrand Narvekar has urged the BMC to appoint new representatives to the Town Vending Committee (TVC).

Narvekar expressed concern that the current members, including representatives from Area Local Management and various NGOs, have been in place for eight years without any fresh appointments.

In a letter addressed to BMC chief Bhushan Gagrani, Narvekar has highlighted the need for new perspectives and voices on the committee, which plays a crucial role in managing street vending in the city.

He stated that fresh appointments would better reflect the current needs.

CJI to lay foundation stone of new HC complex today

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud will lay the foundation stone of the Bombay High Court's new complex in Mumbai's Bandra East on Monday, an official said.

A Maharashtra government release on Sunday said possession of 30.16 acre of land will be handed over the High Court in a phased manner, adding the first tranche measuring 4.39 acres has already been given.

It will have world class infrastructure, including well-designed and spacious court rooms, chambers for judges and registry personnel, an arbitration and mediation centre, an auditori-



um, library, as well as a host of features and amenities for staff, lawyers and litigants, the release informed.

The plan is to enable stakeholders to have access to support services such as banking and telecom, medi-

Traffic curbs have been announced for the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) on Monday as Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud will lay the foundation stone of the Bombay High Court's new complex. As per the notification issued by deputy commissioner of police, (Central), traffic, a new building of the Bombay High Court has been planned on the Government Colony Ground in Bandra East's Kherwadi area. The road to be closed is New English School Road (both directions) connecting Ramkrishna Paramhansa Marg and J.L. Shirsekar Marg. As an alternative, motorists can use Mahatma Gandhi Vidya Mandir Road. The traffic curbs will be lifted after 9pm.

cal facilities, digitisation centre, creche, cafeteria, waiting areas, multi-storey car park, museum and lawyers' chambers, with the design keeping in mind accessibility features for differently-abled stakeholders, the release added.

The land on which the new premises will come up is well located, with proximity to the island city as well as the metropolis' suburbs, the arterial Western Express Highway and the Bandra Kurla Complex, among the country's lead-

ing commercial hubs. The Bombay High Court, founded on August 16, 1862, is currently located in a majestic building near Flora Fountain (Hutatma Chowk) that the court has occupied since November 1878, the state government release added.

The Bombay High Court exercises jurisdiction over Maharashtra through the Principal Seat in Mumbai and benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad as well as Goa. It also exercises jurisdiction over the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

The High Court has a sanctioned strength of 94 judges, while the current strength being 66 sitting judges, the release said.



Bollywood actor Rani Mukerji with cancer-affected children during an event on the eve of World Rose Day, also known as the Day for the Welfare of Cancer Patients in Mumbai. Pic: PTI

Brazilian held with cocaine-filled capsules

Mumbai: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence recovered 124 cocaine-filled capsules from a Brazilian woman who had swallowed them before landing at the Mumbai International Airport, an official said on Sunday.

The value of the seized drug is estimated to be Rs 9.73 crore in the illicit market.

The woman was intercepted after she landed from Sao Paulo on Wednesday on a specific input, a DRI Mumbai zonal unit official said. The passenger admitted to having ingested capsules containing drugs.

BJP will be wiped out in Maha polls, says Malik

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik on Sunday said he will campaign for the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the upcoming Maharashtra polls and claimed the ruling BJP would be "wiped out" in the state elections.

Malik, who had played a crucial role in the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, was speaking to reporters after meeting Shiv Sena (UBT) head and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray at the lat-

ter's residence in Mumbai.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held in November.

The ruling Mahayuti in the state comprises the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, BJP and the Ajit Pawar-headed NCP.

The opposition MVA includes the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP).

Asked about his views on the upcoming Maharashtra polls, Malik said, "The BJP will not just receive a major blow, but the party will be wiped out in the state elec-

tions. Uddhav Thackeray will play the most important role in this election. You need not worry."

"I have extended my full support to the MVA. I will also campaign for it," said Malik, the last governor of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Malik, a vocal critic of the current administration, on Saturday said the upcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra will significantly influence the political landscape of the country and asserted the state poll results would serve as "the last nail in the BJP's coffin".

Koli Bhavan in Navi Mumbai

Thane: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday laid the foundation stone of 'Koli Bhavan' in Navi Mumbai and said his government was committed to the welfare of the fishing community.

Addressing the gathering, he referred to the Koli community as "daryacharaja" (king of the sea) and "bhoomiputra" (sons of the soil) and said infrastructure projects like Atal Setu, the country's longest sea bridge, will enhance their lives.

He also said issues that the community has in connection with the Vadhvan mega port in Dahanu in Palghar district will be resolved on priority.

Devotees' boat capsizes

Mumbai: A boat capsized during the visarjan of 'Andheri Cha Raja' Ganesh idol at Versova on Sunday morning. Around 25-30 people were injured in the incident.

A video of the incident also surfaced which showed the boat losing balance and people falling from the boat.

Unlike other sarvajanik mandals where immersion takes place on Anant Chaturdashi, Andheri cha

Raja keeps Ganpati for fourteen days which explains the late immersion or visarjan.

The boat that capsized was overcrowded, shows the video. As soon as the boat turned, the devotees nearby rushed to their rescue. The boat capsizing incident marks a rare occurrence of mishap during the immersion this Ganpati. As per data, a total of 82,005 Ganesh idols were immersed in the city.

Man arrested for urinating in bag

Thane: A 20-year-old fruit-seller was arrested in Dombivli in Thane on Sunday after a viral video showed him urinating into a plastic bag and then continuing to sell fruits without cleaning up, a police official said.

The accused has been identified as Ali Khan, a Manpada police station officer said. The video is of Nilje area and Khan has been arrested.

Change in platform at Malad from today

Mumbai: The Western Railway (WR) has announced a change in the platform at Malad station because as part of its ongoing work to add a sixth line between Goregaon and Kandivali.

Starting Sunday, fast local trains arriving from Churchgate side are being handled on the east side (right side) of platform number three, instead of



the west side. This adjustment was made after a 10-hour mega block on Sunday, which commenced at midnight and concluded at 10 am as scheduled.

According to WR officials, these changes are crucial to creating the necessary infrastructure for the upcoming 6th line between Goregaon and Kandivali.

The first step of this process began on September 1, when platform number one at Malad station started receiving Down Slow trains on the east side (right side), a shift from the west. Similarly, on September 8, the alignment for platform number two was adjusted to handle Up Slow trains on the west side (right side) instead of east.

Vineet Abhishek, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, explained that these changes are part of WR's efforts to enhance station functionality and improve passenger convenience. Starting today, Down Fast trains will be handled

on the east side of platform number three. Moreover, by September 29, Up Fast trains arriving at platform number four will also see a shift, with passengers boarding and disembarking on the west side (right side).

"We urge passengers to kindly note these changes in platform operations and adjust their boarding and disembarking plans accordingly," stated Abhishek.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The RPI-A has made a list of 18 probable seats, which it will be sharing with the Mahayuti partners in a few days. We expect to get at least 10 to 12 seats in the seat-sharing pact."



Ramdas Athawale, Union MoS for Social Justice

Set to release: play on Shinde's life

Mumbai: In fragmented Maharashtra polity where perception management has become crucial ahead of the assembly polls, a Marathi play on CM Eknath Shinde's life and the sequel to a film on his mentor late Anand Dighe are set to be released soon.

The play, 'Mala Kahi Tari Sangaycha Aahe --Eknath Sambhaji Shinde', is likely to be released after 'pitrupaksh' (a fortnight dedicated to one's ancestors which concludes on October 2) next month,

while "Dharmaveer Mukkam Post Thane 2" will hit the screens on September 27.

The prequel of "Dharmaveer...." was released in May 2022 just before Shinde split Shiv Sena and joined hands with the BJP, leading to collapse of the Uddhav Thackeray-led government.

The biographical drama on Dighe, the charismatic Thane district chief of Shiv Sena revered by legions of Sainiks, showed Shinde and ministers like



Dada Bhuse in a positive light.

"Dharmaveer 2" was supposed to be released in August this year and its trail-

er was released by Shinde in June. The movie, however, missed the scheduled release due to floods in parts of the state.

"We will be releasing the movie across all theatres in the state," said director-writer Pravin Tarde.

"Dharmaveer 2" delves deeper into the life of Dighe. Additionally, it provides a compelling perspective on contemporary politics and its connections to the past.

The Marathi play 'Mala

Kahi Tari Sangaycha Aahe --Eknath Sambhaji Shinde' will be presented by veteran theatre personality Ashok Samel.

Talking to PTI, Samel said the 90-minute play will "very positively" showcase the character of Chief Minister Shinde.

Shinde, who rose from a humble background as an auto-rickshaw driver, works 20-22 hours as the chief minister, he said.

Samel also wants to take forward the flagship schemes of the Shinde gov-

ernment, like the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana that provides Rs 1,500 per month to eligible women in Maharashtra.

"The play will comment on how the undivided Shiv Sena sought votes as part of the alliance with the BJP, but later joined hands with the NCP and the Congress," he said, adding the actors are performing free.

The shows will be presented after 'pitrupaksh', he added.

Drone procurement deal on card

Wilmington (US): US President Joe Biden welcomed the progress made towards India sealing procurement of 31 long-endurance MQ-9B armed drones from American defence major General Atomics, as he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to boost reciprocal supply of military hardware between the two sides.

The US President hosted Modi at his personal home in Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday and the two leaders held wide-ranging talks covering various key aspects of India-US ties including ways to further ramp up bilateral defence and military partnership.

India is procuring the 'hunter-killer' drones (16 Sky Guardian and 15 Sea Guardian) from US Defence major General Atomics at a cost of over USD 3 billion primarily to crank up its surveillance apparatus along the frontier with China as well as in the Indian Ocean region.

It is learnt that the price negotiations for the procurement have been sealed. The remotely piloted drones are capable of remaining airborne for around 35 hours and can be deployed on a range of missions.

Modi and Biden welcomed the teaming of Liquid Robotics and Sagar Defence Engineering for the co-development and co-production of unmanned surface vehicle systems that will strengthen undersea and maritime domain awareness. Biden welcomed India's decision to set a uniform GST of five per cent on the maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) sector, including on all aircraft and aircraft engine parts.

-PTI

India, US agree to elevate clean energy cooperation



By Lalit K Jha

Washington: The US and India plan to elevate bilateral technical, financial, and policy support to expand complementary manufacturing capacity for building on existing clean energy cooperation between the two nations, according to the White House.

The announcement on Saturday came after the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden at Greenville, Delaware. Prime Minister Modi is in the US on a three-day visit. To launch the partnership for establishing a "shared, resilient, and cutting-edge techno-industrial base" centred on innovative clean energy manufacturing techniques, the US and India are "working to unlock USD 1 billion in new multilateral finance through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for projects, including catalysing India's domestic clean energy supply chain buildout", the White House said in a statement.

The partnership will look to expand complementary US and Indian manufacturing capacity for clean energy technologies and components and lay the groundwork for enhanced cooperation in third countries, with a focus on partnerships in Africa.

This effort will build on existing clean energy cooperation between the US and India, including clean energy initiatives launched during Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US in 2023, and the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership led by the US Department of Energy and Government of India ministries, among other initiatives.

The US-India partnership "sets a strong example for the world and positions our countries to lead clean economic development in the 21st century," the statement said.

"Over time, we seek to mobilise additional financing into priority clean energy manufacturing sectors that harness public and private financial tools and pioneer innovative financial vehicles to meet the

The United States and India share an enduring commitment to deepen our collaboration on issues of shared national and economic security. As an important aspect of our economic growth agendas, we are committed to working together to capture the benefits of the clean energy transition, including the creation of high-quality jobs for our populations, acceleration of clean energy deployment globally, and achievement of global climate goals.

Statement by White House

rapid demand for flexible climate finance solutions," said the White House.

Noting that the United States and India intend to work with relevant government agencies, civil society and the private sector to identify a package of pilot projects across the clean energy value chain, it said that the two nations also pledge to work with industry leaders on the following lines of effort to launch and eventually scale this new partnership.

-PTI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US President Joe Biden at a meeting in Delaware, US. The US side has facilitated return of 297 stolen or trafficked antiquities.

Pic: AP/PTI

US hands over 297 antiquities smuggled out of India

New Delhi: The US has handed over to India 297 antiquities, which were smuggled out of the country, during the ongoing visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officials said on Sunday.

Official sources said the illicit trafficking of cultural property is a long-standing issue that has affected many cultures and countries throughout history, and India has been particularly hit.

Modi said on X, "Deepening cultural connect and strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural properties. I am extremely grateful to President Biden and

the US Government for ensuring the return of 297 invaluable antiquities to India."

With this, the total number of ancient items recovered by India since 2014 has gone to 640, officials said, adding the number returned from the USA alone will be 578.

Apart from the current visit, the earlier visits of Modi to the USA have also been particularly fruitful in return of antiquities to India.

Officials said during his visit to the US in 2021, 157 antiquities were handed over by the US government, including the exquisite bronze Nataraja statue

from the 12th century CE. Also, a few days after his US visit in 2023, 105 antiquities were returned to India.

India's successful recoveries extend beyond the USA, with 16 artefacts being returned from the UK, 40 from Australia among others, they noted.

In stark contrast only one artefact was returned to India between 2004 and 2013, they said.

Further, in July 2024, on the sidelines of the 46th World Heritage Committee, at New Delhi, India and the United States signed the first ever 'Cultural Property Agreement' to prevent and curb the il-

licit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA.

The spectacular achievement over the last ten years demonstrates the government's resolve to reclaim India's stolen treasures and preserve its cultural heritage for future generations, they said.

Modi's personal bond with global leaders has played a pivotal role in securing these returns.

His proactive approach has led to the recovery of significant artefacts, including revered sculptures and idols, reaffirming India's cultural identity, they added.

-PTI

GCCI seeks review of mineral taxation ruling

New Delhi: The Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCI) has demanded an urgent review of the mineral taxation ruling by the Supreme Court, stating that the increased cost of mining will inevitably lead to higher prices for essential commodities, including steel, power and cement.

The Supreme Court last month allowed states to collect past dues on royalty on minerals bearing land from the Centre and mining companies from April 1, 2005 onwards.

"The imposition of further taxes/cesses/levies, if any, as permitted by the ruling, will further impact the economics of mining operations possibly making it unviable with its natural consequences.

"Additionally, the increased cost of mining will inevitably lead to higher prices for essential commodities e.g., steel, power, cement, etc. further fuelling inflation and consequential impact on the nation's economy," GCCI said in a statement.

The possible impact would be a change of goalpost particularly when the

We are compelled to request the authorities to review the verdict in light of the submissions from the industry to find a balanced solution that ensures revenue generation while ensuring the survival of the mining sector.

Shrinivas Dempo, President, GCCI

auction regime is in vogue post enactment of MMDR (Amendment) Act in 2015, while creating an uncertainty in the mineral taxation regime of the country, it said.

It may adversely impact the downstream industries and lead to mining cost push inflation affecting the entire economy.

"The iron ore mining in Goa has just begun and/or looking forward to resume its operations after a long gap of 6 years. The mining companies are required to pay a substantial amount in the form of auction premium for winning the bid."



China's Y-20 transport aircraft is seen at the 2024 Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (AAD) at Waterkloof Air Force Base in Pretoria, South Africa on Sunday.

Pic: AP/wPTI

Vodafone contracts to Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung

New Delhi: Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea on Sunday said it has awarded contracts worth about Rs 30,000 crore to Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of 4G and 5G network equipment for three years.

The deal is the first step towards the roll-out of the company's three-year capex (capital expenditure) plan of about USD 6.6



billion or Rs 55,000 crore announced earlier.

"Vodafone Idea has concluded a mega, about USD 3.6 billion (around Rs 300 billion), deal with Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of network equipment over a period of three years. The capex programme is directed towards expanding the 4G population coverage from 1.03 billion to 1.2 billion, launching 5G in key mar-

kets and capacity expansion in line with data growth," the company said in a statement.

The supplies against these new long-term awards will start in the coming quarter. The top priority for the company is to expand the 4G coverage to 1.2 billion Indians, the statement said.

-PTI

Axis, IDBI withdraw against Zee-Sony merger

New Delhi: Axis Finance, IDBI Bank & IDBI Trusteeship Services have withdrawn their petitions before the appellate tribunal NCLAT filed against the NCLT order approving the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) allowed the withdrawal of the petitions noting that the NCLT earlier this month had already recalled its earlier order of August 10, 2023, approving the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

"Learned counsel for the appellants submit that NCLAT has already withdrawn the merger scheme. Hence the appellants pray that they may be permitted to withdraw the appeals. Prayer is allowed," said an NCLAT bench comprising Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan and Member Barun Mitra.

Earlier this month, the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) recalled its order passed on August 10, 2023, in which it had approved the merger of Zee

Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

NCLT had recalled the order after ZEE applied for withdrawal. It had submitted the Composite Scheme the Merger Cooperation Agreement executed to give effect to this scheme stands terminated and accordingly, the closing date has not occurred and the scheme has not attained any effectiveness.

On August 27, ZEE Entertainment and Sony Pictures Networks India announced settling their six-month-long dispute related to the failed USD 10-billion merger and have agreed to withdraw all claims against each other.

IDBI Bank and Axis Finance have challenged the August 10, 2023, order of the Mumbai bench of the NCLT. While approving the merger, NCLT in its order had dismissed some applications moved by financial institutions opposing the move, including IDBI Trusteeship, IDBI Bank, Axis Finance, JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Co, and Imax Corp.

This was challenged by IDBI and Axis Finance before NCLAT.

-PTI

Global trends, foreign trading major drivers for markets

New Delhi: Investors will keep a track on global trends and trading activity of foreign investors with no major domestic trigger in sight this week, analysts said, and added that markets may face volatility amid the monthly derivatives expiry.

Stock markets had a record-breaking rally last week, largely driven by the US Federal Reserve's rate cut.

Historically, rate cuts in the US have had a positive impact on emerging markets, with India being a favoured bet among global

investors, Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

The highlight of the week was the aggressive buying by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), who poured in over Rs 14,000 crore on Friday alone, he added.

"There are no major triggers expected this week, but upcoming macroeconomic data from the US will be crucial to monitor. FII flows will remain a key factor for the Indian equity market, alongside domestic institutional inflows, which will also play an important

role.

"While markets currently seem unfazed by geopolitical risks, these factors could pose a significant threat to the ongoing bullish momentum. As we approach the September F&O expiry, heightened volatility is likely," Meena said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,359.51 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 84,544.31 on Friday. During the day, it soared 1,509.66 points or 1.81 per cent to hit the momentous intra-day peak of 84,694.46.

The NSE Nifty surged

375.15 points or 1.48 per cent to close at a record 25,790.95 level. During the day, the gauge zoomed 433.45 points or 1.70 per cent to reach an all-time intra-day peak of 25,849.25.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,653.37 points or 1.99 per cent and Nifty surged 434.45 points or 1.71 per cent.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said, "Markets are gradually climbing up and we expect this positive momentum to continue this

week backed by strong FII inflow, healthy domestic macros, and receding concern about the US economy slowing down."

Movement of rupee against the US dollar and global oil benchmark Brent crude will also influence trading in the markets.

"Although the major event of the Fed's rate cut is behind us, attention will remain on the US markets for further direction. Additionally, trends in foreign fund flows and

crude oil price movements will be critical factors for investors to monitor, as they may impact market direction in the coming weeks," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The Singapore office will serve as a dedicated point of contact for companies from the region looking to invest in India, fostering collaboration across sectors. We plan to open more overseas Invest India offices in coming months."



Piyush Goyal,
Union Minister for Commerce and Industries

PMML wants crucial Nehru papers from Sonia

New Delhi: Rizwan Kadri, a member of the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML) Society, on Sunday said he has written to Congress leader Sonia Gandhi to allow physical or digit access to private papers related to former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru that are in her possession.

Kadri, 56, who teaches history at a local college in Ahmedabad, said, he has been vocal in the AGM meetings of the PMML Society -- formerly Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) -- for



My sole purpose is to study Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji and Sardar (Vallabhbhai) Patel in a true scientific historical perspective. Your cooperation in this effort will be invaluable.

Rizwan Kadri, Member, PMML Society

These papers contain records related to exchanges between Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan, Edwina Mountbatten and Albert Einstein, among other personalities. In his letter, Kadri has proposed that these documents could either be scanned under his supervision "with the assistance of two of my qualified aides" or copies of the scanned documents be provided to the PMML.

"reclaiming" the papers that were taken back by Gandhi several years ago.

Nehru, India's first prime minister, lived at Teen Murti Bhawan in central Delhi, which after his death became the NMML, housing a rich collection of books and rare records.

Kadri said that "51 boxes" carrying records related to Nehru's private papers were taken back by Gandhi.

In his letter, dated September 9, to the senior Congress leader, he has said, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji and his father, Pandit Motilal Nehru ji, have left behind significant records of their contributions, which

are fortunately preserved at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Their immense contributions to nation-building necessitate thorough scientific study, for which access to the complete records is essential."

Upon recent inquiry, it was informed that most of these records are housed at the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library, he said.

"It was also conveyed to me that some records were taken by your office, as you were the family's representative and donor. I am confident that this was done in good faith to protect these invaluable docu-

ments," Kadri writes in the letter.

However, it is crucial that these records "remain accessible to ensure a comprehensive understanding of our nation's history", the historian added.

The Ahmedabad-based historian told PTI over phone that the best step would be that all records are sent back to the PMML, but if not "at least digital access" be allowed to those papers.

Alternatively, the PMML Society "can return the documents after scanning, making them available for wider public and scholarly access", he added in his letter.

He also said it would be ensured that the documents are handled with "utmost care and efficiency".

"I am willing to bear the cost of digitising them, ensuring that their chronology remains undisturbed. As a member of the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society and an apolitical historian, I am deeply committed to studying these personalities," Kadri further said.

Sonia Gandhi stands accused of taking the crucial papers in her custody saying they were private. She is reluctant to give the papers to the PMML.

-PTI

Tribals pillars of Sanatani society: VKA

New Delhi: RSS-affiliated Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram's national president Satyendra Singh on Sunday described tribals as "pillars of the vast Sanatani society" and cautioned the community members against a "conspiracy" by certain forces to create division among them.

He exhorted the tribals across the country to counter such efforts by setting their own narrative that "aranya sanskriti" (forest culture) is their "core culture".

The conspiracy to create division among the tribals in India is the "gift" of the British, who distorted history through books, he alleged.

Singh was addressing a national conference of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram volunteers and office bearers in Samalakh town in Haryana in the presence of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

"The tribal society is the pillar of the huge Sanatani society. All of us have our roots in the forests. The vanvasi society has also played an important role in creating the ancient Vedas.

"The festivals and worship methods of all the tribal societies are similar to the Sanatani tradition, the essence of which is the same," the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram quoted its national president as saying in his address.

"The conspiracy to create division (among tribals in India) is the gift of the British, who distorted history through books," he said, as he cautioned the tribal community "against the divisive forces trying to create a wedge".

-PTI

Modi in mind, Kejriwal seeks answers from Bhagwat



New Delhi: In a new political strategy, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday demanded answers from the RSS for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions, in an apparent bid to diminish his stature by implying that the parent Hindutva organisation was the master which should keep its child in control. The questions he asked were political softballs but the implication of bringing Bhagwat into his new political narrative is new and unusual.

Kejriwal's questions to Mohan Bhagwat

- Has the son become so big now that it is showing attitude to his mother?
- Does the RSS agree with the BJP's politics of using central agencies to break up parties and topple opposition governments, and inducting "corrupt" leaders into its fold?
- How did you (Bhagwat) feel when BJP president J.P. Nadda said his party did not need the RSS?
- Do you agree with this fact that the rule of retirement at 75 that applied for Advani ji will not be applicable to Modi ji?

HC judge expresses regret over remarks

Bengaluru: Justice V Srishananda of the Karnataka High Court has expressed regret over the alleged objectionable remarks he made recently during judicial proceedings, which have gone viral prompting the Supreme Court to take cognisance of it.

On September 20, a five-judge bench of the Apex court headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud took serious note of two videos in which the HC judge is seen making the comments in open court and sought a report from the Registrar General of the High Court.

In one of the clips, Justice Srishananda referred to an area in Bengaluru as "Pakistan".

On Saturday afternoon, as the court proceedings commenced, Justice Srishananda read out his statement in this connection.

"A few observations made during judicial proceedings were reported out of context on social media platforms. The observations were unintentional and not meant to hurt any individual or any section of society. If such observations hurt any individual or any section of society or community, I express my sincere regrets."

Five held for converting people

Mathura (UP): Five persons have been arrested for allegedly trying to convert people to Christianity here, police said on Sunday.

The police received information regarding a "Dharm Sabha" (religious gathering) being conducted in the Tulsī Nagar Indrapuri colony. They rushed to the spot and found around four dozen men and women gathered for the alleged conversion, Senior Superintendent of Police, Shailesh Pandey said.

The accused were arrested under provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021.

NCPCR bats for ways to protect children online

New Delhi: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) met representatives from major social media platforms to address issues related to the safety of children online and explore ways to protect them.

In a recent meeting with representatives from companies like Google, YouTube, Meta, X, Snapchat, Reddit, Sharechat, and Bumble, the Commission sought to explore ways to protect children from harmful content and online exploitation.

Key issues discussed included mechanisms for age verification, tools for identifying and blocking Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), support for law enforcement agencies, and parameters for reporting cases to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The apex child rights body emphasised the need for enhanced safety features on social media platforms, with a focus on keeping children safe from predators and explicit content.

The letter, which followed the meeting, outlined several recommendations. Notably, it called for



mandatory Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures to verify user identity on platforms and mandatory reporting of CSAM under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

The Commission also stressed the importance of parental consent for minors entering contracts on social media platforms and the need for clear disclaimers warning parents about adult content.

In addition, platforms were urged to collaborate with the NCMEC by providing detailed reports on cases involving child exploitation, including information on child pornography and child abuse.

The NCPCR has requested that social media platforms implement these recommendations and submit an Action Taken Report within seven days of the letter's issuance.

Chiranjeevi enters Guinness World Records

Hyderabad: Megastar K Chiranjeevi on Sunday received the Guinness World Records certificate as the most prolific film star in the Indian film industry.

A representative of the Guinness World Records handed over the certificate to Chiranjeevi at an event here.

"The most prolific film star in Indian Film Industry-actor/dancer is Konidela Chiranjeevi aka Mega Star (India) achieved on 20 September 2024," said a certificate issued by the Guinness World Records.

"I never expected to get Guinness World Records. All these years of my film career, dance had become part of my life," Chiranjeevi said, thanking everyone for the honour.

"Mega star Chiranjeevi has performed 24,000 dance moves in 537 songs in his 156 films in a span of 45 years," sources said. "22 September also happens to be the day when the mega star made his debut in the year 1978," they said.

Chiranjeevi is one of the top stars of the South cinema, having worked in over 150 feature films in Telugu as well as Hindi, Tamil and Kannada.



Members of Guwahati Chakma Students' Union and All Assam Chakma Society takes part in a protest over the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh, in Guwahati on Sunday.

Pic: PTI

Shankaracharya refrains from paying obeisance

Ayodhya (UP): Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati of Jyotirmath, Uttarakhnad refrained from paying obeisance at the Shri Ram temple here on Sunday, asserting that prayers cannot be offered in a partially-constructed shrine.

He said he would offer worship at the Ram temple only when the "shikhar" (topmost part) of the structure is fully constructed.

Asked about not visiting the Ram temple, Saraswati told reporters, "Prayers cannot be offered in a par-

tially-constructed temple. It is incomplete. I will offer worship at the Ram temple only when the shikhar of the temple is fully constructed."

He conducted a special prayer service at the Chineshwarmath temple and performed the circumambulation of the Ram Janmabhoomi complex along the Ramkot locality in Ayodhya.

Saraswati also started a nationwide "Gau Dhvaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra" from Ayodhya.

-PTI

Freeing temples from govt control on VHP agenda

A crucial meeting to take place today

New Delhi: The controversy surrounding Tirupati laddus and the demand for "freeing" temples across the country from government control are among the key issues to be discussed at a meeting of the VHP's apex body in Andhra Pradesh on Monday.

The day-long meeting of the Vishva Hindu Parishad's (VHP) Kendriya Margdarshak Mandal, to be held in Tirupati city, will also discuss the issue of religious conversion, a senior functionary of the organi-

sation said on Sunday.

The meeting will be attended by Hindu seers from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and other southern states, he told PTI.

VHP national Secretary General Bajrang Bagda and other senior functionaries will be present at the meeting, he added.

The meeting is also expected to discuss the issue of "desecration" of the laddu served in the Tirupati

Balaji temple, which is causing "great distress" to Hindu society, and take a decision on the VHP's future course of action.

A senior VHP functionary said the meeting was also likely to deliberate at length the issue of "freeing temples from government control" and work out a plan to resolve it.

More than four lakh temples are currently under government control across

the country, he claimed. "The VHP has been demanding for long that management and control over all these temples be handed over to Hindu society."

PIL seeks SIT probe

A public interest litigation (PIL) matter has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the alleged use of animal fat in Tirupati laddus.

The petition filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, a farmer and the president of the Hindu Sena, has contended that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), by serving "laddu prasadam" prepared using animal fat has ridiculed the Hindu religion and outraged the sentiments of Hindus.

Mild tension prevailed at the residence of YSRCPL leader Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy in Tadepalli after some of the BJYM workers staged a protest over the issue.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If we give disaster funds, it should go to the CM Relief Fund but everyone knows that it goes to the Sonia relief fund. Acts of the son of a king are known to everyone and people are tired of potholes on roads."



Kangana Ranaut, MP, BJP

Omar faces tough fight from PDP, ex colleague

By Sheikh Suhail

Ganderbal (J-K): National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah is facing a battle of prestige in his bid to reclaim the Ganderbal Assembly segment, considered a family bastion that was represented by his grandfather Sheikh Abdullah, father Farooq Abdullah and himself in the past.

Having lost the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from the Baramulla constituency, the former chief minister is leaving nothing to chance and has filed his nomination from both Ganderbal and Budgam



seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls. The importance that Abdullah

is according to his re-election from Ganderbal, which he represented during his tenure as chief

minister, can be gauged from the fact that made an emotional appeal from the people when he filed his nomination.

Addressing a workers' meeting at the party office in Ganderbal, the NC vice president took off his cap and held it in his palms urging people to vote for him as his "honour lay in their hands".

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister's sons, Zahir and Zamir, are canvassing for their father. NC president Farooq Abdullah has also addressed rallies to drum up support for his son.

When Omar Abdullah took on

the mantle of the NC from his father in 2002, he contested the assembly polls from Ganderbal but was defeated by the PDP's Qazi Mohammad Afzal. He, however, wrested the seat from Afzal in the 2008 polls and went on to become the youngest chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the 2014 Assembly polls, Omar Abdullah decided to leave Ganderbal and field Ishfaq Jabbar who was a new entrant to the NC. While Jabbar won the polls, he was expelled from the NC for anti-party activities in April 2023.

-PTI

THE PERFECT VOICE SPECIAL

Challenges in rhino conservation – climate change, poaching, site diversity



By
Esha Lohia

As the world marked World Rhino Day on Sunday, the 2024 State of the Rhino Report offers a sobering assessment of the conservation efforts and challenges facing these species. Currently, less than 28,000 rhinos remained worldwide across all five species. According to the 2024 State of the Rhino report by the International Rhino Foundation, every rhino species faces distinct conservation challenges due to environmental, socioeconomic, and political factors in their respective regions from Africa to Asia.

Greater One-Horned Rhino, India

The report sheds light on the Greater One-Horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), which pri-

marily inhabits India and Nepal, with occasional sightings in Bhutan. The species' population stood at 3,262 at the end of 2021 and is still classified as vulnerable due to reasons like poaching, prevalence of invasive species, climate change, limited space and resources.

India along with Nepal and Bhutan work together to implement a transboundary management strategy for this species. "Thanks to this collaboration and strict government protection, the Greater One-Horned Rhino population has steadily grown from fewer than 100 animals a century ago to around 4,014 today, increasing by 20 per cent over the last decade," the report says.

Impact of Climate Change

Furthermore, the report highlights concerns that Greater One-Horned Rhinos could be among the hardest hit by climate change. "Stronger monsoon seasons, combined with limited space and resources, disrupt habitats and increase the risk of human-wildlife conflict."

The increase in temperature, too much or too little rainfall,



are the factors related to climate change that have to be monitored for a longer duration to ascertain the impact on the greater one-horned rhino population and habitats. "Alien invasive plant species have already acted as a threat to grassland habitat of rhinos. As such long-term monitoring of rhino's health and habitats that provide nutritious food is very crucial to ascertain the impact of climate change on the species and habitat," says Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, CEO of Aaranyak and Chair of IUCN/SSC. The research team at Aaranyak has already started monitoring rhinos to assist management in the coming future with possible interventions to be needed.

Persisting Threats

Although Africa's total rhino count has continued to increase despite poaching, certain species in Asia face an existential threat. The population of greater one-horned rhinos is growing however, poaching remains a significant threat. "The species has been driven from many areas where it once thrived, and full recovery depends on not just

- In Africa Rhino poaching increased by 4 per cent from 2022 to 2023, with at least 586 African rhinos poached in 2023—one every 15 hours
- While some black rhino populations thrive, the total population declined slightly due to heavy poaching in Namibia and Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park in South Africa
- Despite ongoing poaching, White rhino populations in South Africa are on the rise
- Greater One-Horned Rhinos are benefiting from improved habitats and wildlife corridors
- Two Sumatran rhino calves were born at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas National Park in September and November 2023
- Since July 2023, Indonesian authorities have been investigating and prosecuting Javan rhino poaching groups who confessed to killing 26 rhinos in Ujung Kulon National Park between 2019 and 2023

protecting the rhinos but reintroducing them to regions where they have disappeared," the report adds.

Compared to 41 rhinos killed in 2013, the hunting has been remarkably controlled in India to about two or three in the past few years. In Assam, the frontline staff strengths in rhino bearing areas have been further enhanced. Vigil, in and around rhino bearing areas, has been further intensified by law en-

forcement agencies leading to prevention of rhino hunting cases. "However, law enforcement agencies, especially the forest department, need to give extra efforts to increase the rate of conviction of arrested suspects involved in rhino hunting cases," says Talukdar who is also a Senior Advisor of International Rhino Foundation (for Asian rhinos).

"As per Wildlife Protection Act, punishment for poaching of

rhinos can lead to jail term of seven years or more and fine of Rs 50,000. However, in Assam, punishment for poaching is stricter i.e jail term of ten years and fine upto Rs 100,000," says Dr Bhaskar Choudhary, Head veterinarian at Wildlife Trust of India.

Site Diversity

Rhino range expansion programme is extremely crucial to ensure gene flow and also to give more space to growing numbers of rhinos. This is what Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (in 2005) aims at. India currently has a network of 998 Protected Areas covering about 5.28 per cent of its total geographic area. "The current challenge that persists is the shortage of land. We need connectivity within protected areas for not just rhinos but other species of wild animals to conduct their natural act of dispersion," says Dr. Choudhary.

The protected areas for wild animals are relatively small and as the population increases, there will be a requirement for more space for diversity of resources and dispersion. "Conservation success always leads to more possibilities of conflicts as dispersal for wild animals is a natural phenomenon. As we are trying to achieve 30 per cent of the land inside forest cover, the forest cover also includes man-made forest, plantation etc. The wild animals except a few don't lead to these man-made forests simply due to lack of diversity in food and resources. How much land can we spare for wildlife and is 30% of the land feasible?" questions Dr. Choudhary.

Earlier most rhino populations in Assam were connected through natural corridors. In recent years, the Assam Government has taken important steps to expand the area of Kaziranga NP, Burhachapori WLS and Orang National Park. With added areas, at least three rhinos from Orange NP in Assam have naturally moved to Laokhowa and Burhachapori WLS through riverine connectivity in December 2023. It can be anticipated that more rhinos shall naturally disperse among these rhino bearing protected areas which shall further enhance gene flow to build stronger progeny of rhinos.

"Despite annual floods often being portrayed as very detrimental for Kaziranga or other rhino bearing areas in Assam, in reality, annual floods are very much essential for floodplain ecosystems like Kaziranga NP. Few wild animals die during the annual flood, which looks bad, but this is the natural selection process of survival of the fittest," says Talukdar. He adds that without annual flood, these floodplain ecosystems won't be able to sustain wild animals, including rhinos in Assam as it energizes the ecosystems in Kaziranga NP or other rhino areas along river Brahmaputra. "Floods in terms of wildlife in the floodplain ecosystem should be seen as ecological services essential to maintain conditions suitable for wild animals. What is needed is to ensure the natural ecological process operates without much human hindrance to allow natural movement of wild animals based on their natural instinct," adds Talukdar.

22 No of greater one horned rhinos reintroduced by RV 2020 since 2008

19 No of rhinos reintroduced in Manas NP from Kaziranga's Centre for Wildlife and Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC)

38 No of calves born in Manas NP since 2008

50 No of rhino estimated at Manas in 2022

Satyarup Siddhanta chosen for adventure award

Kolkata: Well-known climber Satyarup Siddhanta has been selected for the prestigious 'Brigadier Gyan Singh National Adventure Award 2024', instituted to honour achievers in adventure sports, including mountaineering.

Satyarup is the Guinness World Records holder for being the youngest person in the world to have climbed the tallest mountains and volcanoes of all the seven continents and is also the first from India to do so, National Adventure Foundation (NAF) said in a statement on Sunday.

'Brigadier Gyan Singh National Adventure Award' will be given at New Delhi on Sunday, NAF executive director Wg Cdr KK Verma, (Retd) said.

This year, Satyarup, along with his team members from West Bengal, climbed a virgin peak, Mount Gupt Parvat in Himachal Pradesh, the statement said.

Last year, he climbed



Mount Brammah in Kishtwar region of Jammu and Kashmir, the second time the peak was climbed successfully after 43 years. Satyarup and his team, led by seasoned mountaineer Rudra Prasad Halder, climbed this mountain through a new route.

Satyarup has already explored the South Pole. Last year, he climbed Nelion Peak of Mount Kenya and attempted Batian Peak of Mount Kenya this year.

NAF was founded by Padma Shree awardee Brigadier Gyan Singh who was the leader of the first Indian expedition to Mount Everest.

Swiss voters to decide on biodiversity

Geneva: Switzerland, known for natural beauty like pristine lakes and majestic Alpine peaks, ranks among the world's richest countries whose plant and animal life is under the greatest threat. Environmentalists are seeking better protections for the country's biodiversity in a nationwide vote that culminates Sunday.

The latest polls suggest that initial enthusiasm has waned for the proposal that would boost public funding to encourage farmers and others to set aside lands and waterways to let the wild develop more. The contest, which is mostly decided by mail-in ballots followed by a morning of in-person voting Sunday, still looks tight: A poll by the respected agency gfs.bern for the Swiss public broadcaster published September 11 showed support falling to 46 per cent in early September from 51 per cent survey in an earlier poll.

Guwahati: More than 36 per cent of Dibru-Saikhowa National Park in Assam have been eroded in its 25 years of existence, shrinking it to only 216.53 sq km at present, according to official records.

In the park, 36 species of mammals have so far been recorded. It is also an identified Important Bird Area (IBA) having more than 382 species of birds. The park is renowned for natural regeneration of Salix trees. From November to April every year, migratory birds also visit the Park.

Spread across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts in Upper Assam on the bank of Brahmaputra, 340 sq km of the forest was declared as National Park in 1999. However, satellite imag-

Dibru-Saikhowa National Park's 36 pc area eroded



The area was declared as Dibru Reserved Forest in 1890. In 1920, an additional area was added to the Dibru Reserve Forest. On the other hand, Saikhowa Reserve Forest was declared in 1929. In 1933, more area was added to the Dibru RF. In 1986, an area of 650 sq km was preliminarily declared as a wildlife sanctuary, out of which finally 340 sq km was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1995. Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve was declared in 1997 with an area of 765 sq km that included the 340 sq km of sanctuary area as the core. In 1999, the 340 sq km of sanctuary area was declared a National Park.

es of 2023 obtained by the Environment and Forest Department of Assam showed that the Park's present area is 216.53 sq km only.

"That means Dibru-Saik-

howa National Park's 123.47 sq km of land out of its declared area of 340 sq km have been eroded in these years," the document said.

Besides, 6.53 sq km of land is under encroach-

340 sq km
Original area of Dibru-Saikhowa National Park in 1999

216 sq km
Present area of the National Park 1,925

No of visitors at the National Park in 2023-24
1,423

No of visitors at the National Park in 2022-23

Dibang. "That is why it is largely affected by floods during monsoon season. During flood time, there is scarcity of shelter places for the wildlife," it added.

The Park authorities have already made requests to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority through Tinsukia District Disaster Management Authority to provide mechanised rubber boats for rescuing animals during flood, the document said.

The official records also showed that when the forest was declared as National Park, 35.84 per cent of land was under tree cover.

"Out of present 216.53 sq km available land area, 38 per cent is under forest cover," it added. The government has prepared a 10-year park management plan from 2024-25 in order to prevent further erosion by the Brahmaputra.

Climate Group urges countries to tax oil, gas imports

New Delhi: International non-profit organisation Climate Group kicked off the annual Climate Week NYC on Sunday, urging countries to tax imports of oil and gas to fund the green transition, remove barriers to renewable energy expansion, and rapidly reduce methane emissions.

Organised by Climate

Group in partnership with the United Nations, Climate Week NYC is an annual event held in New York City that brings together world leaders, businesses, activists, and organisations to discuss and accelerate global climate action.

Releasing a seven-point to-do list to get the world on track with climate goals, Climate Group said the UN climate negotiations and the implementation of agreements alone are not delivering the speed of emissions cuts needed to avoid breaching the 1.5 degrees Celsius guardrail.

"But global emissions continue at their dangerous levels despite the rapid growth of renewables and the sale of electric vehicles. Coal and oil usage have gone up. Even



the US, with its most ambitious administration on climate in history, only reduced emissions by 1.9 per cent in 2023," Climate Group said in a statement.

"It's time for a reality check. We can't keep making ambitious commit-

ments but then only half implementing them... Climate discussions often focus on targets we need to reach by 2030, or even 2050. These are important milestones, but when it comes to the results we need right now, we're still collectively

falling," said Climate Group CEO Helen Clarkson.

The group urged G20 countries to agree on a minimum new "import tax on oil and gas" to support the energy transition and to dismantle barriers to the rapid deployment of renew-

able energy to meet the 2030 target of tripling renewable energy capacity.

It also called for governments to rapidly cut down methane emissions and create a powerful global agency to monitor and reduce methane leaks.

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with over 80 times the warming impact of CO2 over a 20-year period. It is responsible for nearly a third of the rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution.

The non-profit advocated for greater compensation for workers to ensure a just transition away from coal and demanded a ban on the relining of coal-based steel furnaces. "Electric furnaces and the production of green hydrogen should be

43 per cent
The amount required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

the norm from now on," it said.

Climate Group suggested that governments and businesses prioritise buying low-carbon products and renewable energy, and that all businesses aim to be five per cent more efficient in a year by upgrading buildings and using electric vehicles.

-PTI

Centre sanctions 111 urban forests in 100 days

New Delhi: The environment ministry on Sunday said it sanctioned 111 urban forests in six states and one Union Territory within the first 100 days of new government.

The scheme provides financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh per hectare for the creation and maintenance of urban forests, encouraging the involvement of citizens in managing these green spaces. The size of the urban forests ranges between 10 and 50 hectares. Each urban forest must have at least two-thirds of its area under tree cover and include components such as biodiversity parks, Smriti Vans, butterfly conservatories, and herbal gardens.

QUAD's stern message to China

Joint declaration strongly opposes destabilising, unilateral actions that seek to change status quo by force or coercion

By Lalit K Jha

Wilmington (US): The four-member Quad is a force for good and is more strategically aligned than ever before, a joint declaration issued after the meeting of the grouping's leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has said.

Hosted by President Joe Biden, the Quad Leaders' Summit took place on Saturday in his hometown Wilmington, Delaware. It was attended by Prime Minister Modi, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia, and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan.

"As four leading maritime democracies in the Indo-Pacific, we unequivocally stand for the maintenance of peace and stability across this dynamic region, as an indispensable element of global security and prosperity," it said, adding

Not against anyone
Narendra Modi has said that the Quad is not against anyone, but for a rules-based international order and respect for sovereignty, in a veiled reference to China. "We are not against anyone. We all support a rules-based international order, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of all issues," Modi said, without naming any country.

the grouping strongly opposes any destabilising or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion, in a veiled reference to China.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

Modi meets Japanese, Australian PMs

Narendra Modi held "very good" meetings with his Japanese and Australian counterparts on the sidelines of the Quad Summit here and exchanged views to deepen bilateral cooperation further for mutual benefits and the 'peace, stability, and prosperity' of the Indo-Pacific region.

Modi met Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Wilmington on Saturday.

The three leaders met at the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit, hosted by US President Joe Biden. Modi and Albanese reaffirmed their commitment to "further deepen" bilateral ties, with the Indian leader saying that he "cherishes the time-tested friendship" with Australia. This was a farewell summit for the Japanese PM as he nears the end of his term in office on October 1. This was Biden's farewell summit as his term as the US President will end on January 20, 2025.



President Joe Biden greets from left, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Biden, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at the Quad leaders summit. Pic: AP/PTI

China testing us, Biden caught telling Quad

US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic telling leaders of the Quad nations that China was testing them, thus reflecting upon the American seriousness of the emerging Chinese threat. "We believe Xi Jinping is looking to focus on domestic economic challenges and minimise the turbulence in China," Biden told the leaders at the Summit. His opening remarks were caught on the hot mic as pool reporters were leaving the Summit venue. Biden was heard saying that Chinese President Xi Jinping is "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest." Biden added that China continues to "behave aggressively, testing us all across the region on several fronts, including on economic and technology issues".

It claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims.

"We condemn recent illicit missile launches in the region that violate UN Security Council resolutions. We express serious concern over recent dangerous and aggressive actions in the

maritime domain. We seek a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated—one where all countries are free from coercion, and can exercise their agency to determine their futures," the declaration said.

The four nations are committed to upholding a "stable and open" interna-

Modi-Biden exchanges views on global issues

Narendra Modi held an "extremely fruitful" meeting with Joe Biden during which the two leaders discussed ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest and exchanged views on global and regional issues including Indo-Pacific region and beyond. "The United States' partnership with India is stronger, closer, and more dynamic than any time in history. Prime Minister Modi, each time we sit down, I'm struck by our ability to find new areas of cooperation. Today was no different," Biden said in a post on X. A joint statement issued after the meeting said the India-US partnership is "decisively delivering on an ambitious agenda that serves the global good", calling it the "defining partnership of the 21st century".

tional system, with its strong support for human rights, the principle of freedom, the rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and peaceful settlement of disputes and prohibition on the threat or use of force under international law, including the UN Charter. The Quad Leaders' Sum-

mit this year was earlier supposed to be held in India, but President Biden was keen to hold the event in his hometown.

The US, Japan, India, and Australia had in 2017 given shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China's aggressive be-

- The leaders announced the Quad Cancer Moonshot, a groundbreaking partnership to save lives in the Indo-Pacific region. The Quad Cancer Moonshot will focus initially on combatting cervical cancer—a preventable cancer that continues to claim many lives—in the Indo-Pacific region while laying the groundwork to address other forms of cancer as well.
- India has committed to providing Human papillomavirus (HPV) sampling kits, detection kits, and cervical cancer vaccines worth USD 7.5 million to the Indo-Pacific region. Prime Minister Modi, announcing the grant, asserted that it was made under India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health'.
- The QUAD nations announced a new regional Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI), to enable their partners in the region to maximise tools provided through Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) and other Quad partner initiatives to monitor and secure their waters, enforce their laws, and deter unlawful behaviour.
- The QUAD nations also announced that the US Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard, Australian Border Force, and Indian Coast Guard plan to launch a first-ever Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission in 2025, to improve interoperability and advance maritime safety and continue with further missions in future years across the Indo-Pacific.
- They also announced the launch of a Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network pilot project to pursue shared airlift capacity among the four nations and leverage the collective logistics strengths to support civilian response to natural disasters more rapidly and efficiently across the Indo-Pacific region.
- Announcing the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership, which will harness the grouping's expertise to support sustainable and resilient port infrastructure development across the Indo-Pacific in collaboration with regional partners, the declaration said that they intend to hold a Quad Regional Ports and Transportation Conference, hosted by India in Mumbai.

haviour in the Indo-Pacific region.

The four-member Quad, or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, advocates

upholding a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. China claims that the grouping aims to contain its rise.

-PTI

Hezbollah fires over 100 rockets at Israel

Nahariya (Israel): Hezbollah launched more than 100 rockets early Sunday across a wider and deeper area of northern Israel, with some landing near the city of Haifa, as Israel launched hundreds of strikes on Lebanon. The sides appeared to be spiralling toward all-out war following months of escalating tensions.

The rocket barrage overnight set off air raid sirens across northern Israel, sending thousands of people scrambling into shelters. The Israeli military said that rockets had been fired "toward civilian areas," pointing to a possible escalation after previous barrages had mainly been aimed at military targets.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said that one person was killed and another wounded in an Israeli strike near the border.

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said that it treated four people for shrapnel wounds, including a 76-year-old man

who was moderately wounded in Kiryat Bialik, a community near Haifa where buildings were damaged and cars set on fire. It wasn't immediately clear if the damage was caused by a rocket or an Israeli interceptor.

The barrage came after an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Friday killed at least 45 people, including one of Hezbollah's top leaders as well as women and children. Hezbollah was already reeling from a sophisticated attack that caused thousands of personal devices to explode just days earlier.

The Israeli military said that it carried out a wave of strikes across southern Lebanon over the past 24 hours, hitting about 400 militant sites, including rocket launchers. Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said those strikes had thwarted an even larger attack.

Israel's Health Ministry said that all hospitals in the north would begin

moving operations to protected areas or shelters within the medical centres.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire since the outbreak of the war in Gaza nearly a year ago, when the militant group began firing rockets in solidarity with the Palestinians and its fellow Iran-backed ally Hamas. The low-level fighting has killed dozens of people in Israel, hundreds in Lebanon, and displaced tens of thousands on both sides of the frontier.

Neither side is believed to be seeking a war. But in recent weeks, Israel has shifted its focus from Gaza to Lebanon, and vowed to bring back calm to the border so that its citizens can return to their homes. Hezbollah has said that it would only halt its attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly elusive as long-running talks led by the United States, Egypt and Qatar have repeatedly bogged down.



Emergency workers clear the rubble at the site of Friday's Israeli strike in Beirut's southern suburb on Sunday. Pic: AP/PTI

Mass shooting kills four in nightlife area

Birmingham (US): A mass shooting killed four people and wounded 18 others in a popular nightlife area in Birmingham, Alabama, with many of the victims caught in the crossfire, police said early Sunday. No one was immediately arrested, and police asked the public for information.

The shooting happened shortly after 11 pm Saturday in the city's Five Points South entertainment district, Officer Truman Fitzgerald said in an email. Officers arriving at the

scene found two men and a woman on a sidewalk with gunshot wounds, and they were pronounced dead there. An additional male gunshot victim was pronounced dead at a hospital, Fitzgerald said.

A preliminary investigation showed that "multiple suspects fired upon a large group of people who were outside in a public area," Fitzgerald said.

"Detectives believe the shooting was not an isolated incident where multiple

victims were caught in the crossfire," Fitzgerald said.

Injured people began showing up at hospitals, Fitzgerald said. By early Sunday, police had identified 18 other victims with injuries, some of them life-threatening.

There were no immediate arrests, and investigators had not yet determined the intended targets, Fitzgerald said. Anyone with information was asked to contact authorities, and a reward was possible, police said. -AP

Israel raids, shuts down Al Jazeera bureau

Dubai: Israeli troops raided the offices of the satellite news network Al Jazeera in the Israeli-occupied West Bank early Sunday, ordering the bureau to shut down amid a widening campaign by Israel targeting the Qatar-funded broadcaster as it covers the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Al Jazeera aired footage of Israeli troops live on its Arabic-language channel ordering the office to be shut for 45 days. It follows an order issued in May that saw Israeli police raid Al Jazeera's broadcast position in East Jerusalem, seizing equipment there, preventing its broadcasts in Israel and blocking its websites.

The move marked the first time Israel has ever shuttered a foreign news outlet operating in the country. However, Al Jazeera has continued operating in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, territories that the Palestinians hope to have for their future state.

The Israeli military didn't respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press. Al Jazeera denounced the move as it continued broadcasting live from Amman, Jordan. Armed Israeli troops en-

tered the office and told a reporter live on air that it would be shut down, saying that staff needed to leave immediately. The network later aired what appeared to be Israel troops tearing down a banner on a balcony used by the Al Jazeera office. Al Jazeera said it bore an image of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American journalist shot dead by Israeli forces in May 2022. "There is a court ruling for closing down Al Jazeera for 45 days," an Israeli soldier told Al Jazeera's local bureau chief, Walid al-Omari, in the live footage. "I ask you to take all the cameras and leave the office at this moment."

The Palestinians secured limited self-rule in Gaza and parts of the occupied West Bank through the 1993 Oslo agreements. While Israel occupies and controls vast areas of the West Bank, Ramallah is under full Palestinian political and security control, making the Israeli raid on the Al Jazeera office that much more surprising.

The Palestinian Authority administers parts of the West Bank. Its forces were driven from Gaza when Hamas seized power in 2007, and it has no power there.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"British Asians are a driving force behind much of the social, cultural and economic innovation we see in Britain today. You represent so many of the values that help our communities thrive."



Keir Starmer, Prime Minister, Britain

AKD: Lanka's first-ever Marxist President

Colombo: Marxist leader Anura Kumara Disanayake rose from a humble background to the pinnacle of leadership in Sri Lanka, presenting himself as a transformative leader to young voters and those tired of the "corrupt politics" of the traditional politicians.

Disanayake, 56, popularly known as AKD, was on Sunday declared the winner of Saturday's presidential election.

His accession to the post is a remarkable turnaround for his half-century-old party Janatha Vimukthi Pera-

mona (JVP), which had long remained on the margins. He is Sri Lanka's first-ever Marxist party leader to become head of state.

The leader of the JVP's broader front, the National People's Power (NPP), Disanayake's anti-corruption message and his promise of a change in political culture resonated strongly with young voters who have been demanding system change since the economic crisis.

The NPP's popularity has risen sharply since 2022 after securing only around three per cent of the vote in



the last presidential election in 2019.

Disanayake, who hails from rural Thambuttegama in the North Central province, is a science graduate from the Colombo suburban Kelaniya University.

He joined the JVP, the mother party of the NPP, in

1987 at the height of their anti-Indian rebellion.

The JVP eliminated many activists of all democratic parties that supported the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987.

The Rajiv Gandhi-J.R. Jayawardena pact was the direct Indian intervention to solve the Tamil demand for political autonomy in the country. The JVP dubbed the Indian intervention as a betrayal of Sri Lanka's sovereignty.

However, Disanayake's visit to India in February this year is seen as a change

in the NPP leadership's approach towards India, expressing alignment with foreign investment interests.

With JVP's taking up democratic politics in the late 90s, Disanayake got a place in the JVP central committee.

In the 2000 parliamentary election, he entered Parliament from the JVP. He has been an opposition livewire since 2001.

Disanayake re-entered Parliament from the north-western district of Kurunegala after the 2004 election

in an alliance with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He was appointed the minister of agriculture.

With the JVP leaving the government over a joint mechanism with the LLTE on sharing the 2004 Tsunami relief aid to the North, then controlled by the rebel group, Disanayake became the parliamentary group leader of the JVP in 2008.

Historically, the NPP has opposed International Monetary Fund programmes, but its recent endorsement of the current programme, although with a renegotiation of its terms, marks a significant shift.

-PTI

EDITORIAL

Hunger Games

As the Maharashtra Assembly election looms large, Manoj Jarange-Patil, the face of the Maratha quota movement, has once again thrust himself into the political spotlight. His indefinite hunger strikes have become a recurring motif in Maharashtra's political theatre, each one apparently resonating with the aspirations and frustrations of the Maratha community.

The Maratha quota conundrum is compelling the Eknath Shinde-led government to scramble for solutions in a bid to balance the need to appease the Maratha community with the technical challenges of implementing a constitutionally sound quota.

Since August last year, Jarange-Patil has taken on the mantle in an almost messianic style of aggressively seeking reservations in education and government jobs for the Maratha community, which constitutes a significant portion of the state's populace. His hunger strikes have kept the issue alive in the public eye, whilst increasing the discomfiture of the ruling Mahayuti.

Emboldened with each hunger strike and the Mahayuti's dismal performance in the Lok Sabha election, Jarange-Patil has signalled his intention to influence candidate selection across all segments. His promise to prop up candidates in all 288 Assembly segments has meant a shift from grassroots activism to overt political involvement. But as he sits on the fence between the fields of advocacy and electoral strategy, the pressing question remains which political camp does he ultimately align with - the ruling Mahayuti alliance or the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA)?

This raises the larger question of whether Jarange-Patil is a genuine advocate for the Maratha cause, or merely a pawn in a larger political chess match?

Jarange-Patil's detractors have long alleged his 'ties' to NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, the architect of the MVA. Critics of the activist have accused the activist of playing a dual game, using his protests as a platform for personal ambition while aligning himself with established political players, casting doubt on the sincerity of his advocacy.

Despite the release of a film detailing his exploits and seemingly selfless devotion to the Maratha quota, many former allies within the reservation agitation movement have lambasted Jarange-Patil for exploiting the emotions of his followers and the Maratha community for personal gain.

Moreover, Jarange-Patil's aggressive rhetoric, which initially went unchallenged, has increasingly been met with counterprotests from the OBC community, a significant vote bank for the ruling BJP in Maharashtra. Feeling threatened by Maratha demands, OBC leaders have organized their own demonstrations, arguing that Jarange-Patil's push for OBC status undermines their hard-won rights. As for Jarange-Patil, while he has made himself relevant with his latest hunger strike, he needs to emerge from the shadows and declare which side he is on. Aligning with the MVA may offer short-term gains, but it could dilute his narrative as a champion of Maratha rights, potentially framing him as a pawn in a broader political struggle.

AGE OF EXTREMES
Assassination as Statecraft: Israel's Evolution in Targeted KillingsBy
Shoumojit Banerjee

It took 70 years since Israel's founding in 1948 for an intrepid journalist to comprehensively detail the Jewish state's history of targeted assassinations - an indication of just how jealously the Children of Zion guard their secrets.

In his stunning 'Rise and Kill First' (2018), investigative journalist Ronen Bergman laid bare for the first time in astounding detail how Israel's intelligence intelligence community has long relied on targeted assassinations as a central tool of national security and its intelligence services - the Mossad (overseas intelligence), the Shin Bet (internal security) and Aman (military intelligence) - have used extrajudicial killings to eliminate perceived threats.

As electronic devices explode in Lebanon, unnerving the leadership of the militant Hezbollah, one realizes that such operations conducted with surgical precision and secrecy, have long shaped Israel's defense doctrine and international standing.

The use of assassination as a tool of statecraft is neither unique nor new, but Israel's scale and mastery of the method

Since its inception, targeted assassination has not only shaped Israel's military and intelligence strategies but has become an integral pillar of its national security policy.

stand apart. As Bergman notes, assassination has become embedded in the Israeli defence doctrine, sending a chilling message to its adversaries: if you are a threat, we will find you, wherever you are. This ruthless logic has imbued Israeli intelligence with a fearsome reputation.

To fully understand this reliance on assassination, one must look back at the roots of modern Zionism. Founded in 1896 when Theodor Herzl published 'Der Judenstaat' (The Jewish State), Zionism emerged as a political movement to establish a safe homeland for Jews in response to pervasive anti-Semitism in Europe.

Herzl was particularly affected by the 1894 Dreyfus Affair in France, where Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer, was wrongfully convicted of treason, underscoring the vulnerability of Jews in Europe.

Although Herzl's vision of a Jewish state faced resistance from Western Europe's Jewish elite, it strongly appealed to oppressed Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, who saw in Zionism a means to achieve self-determination amid ongoing pogroms, particularly in the Tsarist Russian Empire where mobs of the anti-Semitic 'Black Hundreds' terrorized Jewish settlements.

This philosophy would later influence the early Jewish defense groups in Palestine, such as the Haganah, which adopted aggressive tactics against Arab forces. An early example occurred in 1923, when a hit squad from Haganah assassinated Tewfik Bey, an Arab police officer implicated in the 1921 Jaffa riots. These early acts of targeted killings, framed as retaliation for attacks on Jewish communities, foreshadowed tactics that would become central to Israel's defense strategy.

During World War II, the participation of the Jewish Brigade in the British Army would further shape the future Israel state's military doctrine. Members of the Brigade, upon encountering the horrors of the Holocaust, concluded that Jews could only ensure their survival through the establishment of an independent state. The perceived existential threat to the Jewish



people, reinforced by the Holocaust, became a driving force behind the adoption of more extreme measures.

After the war, the experience of the Holocaust intensified Israel's sense of vulnerability, leading to the belief that Jewish survival required aggressive self-defense. This mindset formalized targeted assassinations as a key tactic, shifting from extremist groups like Irgun and Lehi to mainstream Israeli strategy under leaders like David Ben-Gurion. Many guerrilla fighters and assassins from this era later became pivotal in shaping Israel's armed forces and intelligence community.

Fast forward to the present, and the legacy of these tactics is unmistakable. During the early 2000s, as violence erupted in the Second Intifada, Israel escalated its campaign against Palestinian militants. The killing of Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, in 2004 marked a pivotal moment in this strategy. The airstrike that took his life was framed as a necessary response to the ongoing threat of terrorism.

Bergman details how Israeli intelligence has perfected the art of assassination, with operations ranging from the killing of Iranian nuclear scientists to thwarting arms shipments destined for Hamas in Gaza. In July 2011, for example, Mossad agents assassinated Darioush Rezaeinejad, a senior researcher for Iran's Atomic Energy Organization. In 2011, an explosion at a Revolutionary Guard base west of Tehran, at-

tributed to Israeli intelligence, killed General Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, Iran's missile development chief.

While Israel has honed these methods over decades, the influence of its intelligence operations has extended far beyond its borders. The United States, in its post-9/11 war on terror, adopted many of Israel's techniques, from intelligence gathering to the use of drones for targeted killings. The same tools used to eliminate threats to Israel now form the backbone of America's counterterrorism strategy.

One may argue that a paradox of Israel's intelligence success is that it has become a victim of its own capabilities. Leaders who have seen the efficacy of assassinations in neutralizing immediate threats have, at times, elevated these tactics above the pursuit of comprehensive peace agreements. Meir Dagan, former Mossad chief, came to realize this late in his career.

He argued that only a two-state solution with the Palestinians could ensure Israel's long-term survival. Without such a political solution, Israel risks becoming a binational state, where the Zionist dream of a Jewish-majority democracy is fraught with constant internal conflict.

Today, as Hezbollah retaliates to the pager explosions with rocket strikes in Nazareth, one wonders whether Israel's over-reliance on assassination has sidelined broader political solutions needed to achieve lasting peace.

GLOBAL WATCH

China, Japan and a reservoir of bitterness

A deeply unsettling incident has shaken China's southeastern city of Shenzhen, where a 10-year-old Japanese boy, enrolled in a local Japanese school, was fatally stabbed by a 44-year-old Chinese man. The unprovoked attack, which occurred in broad daylight, has sent shockwaves through both nations, raising questions about safety, xenophobia, and the delicate balance of Sino-Japanese relations. Officials in Japan and China have expressed condolences, but the event has inevitably triggered the memory of historical animosities that have long haunted ties between the two East Asian powers.

The brutal murder evokes a painful legacy of mistrust and unresolved grievances that date back to Japan's occupation of China in the early 20th century. For many Chinese, memories of Japan's invasion in 1931 and the atrocities that followed remain an open wound. The Nanking Massacre of 1937, in which an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed by Japanese troops, stands as a particularly painful chapter in this bloody history. Japan's postwar governments have issued apologies over the years, but these gestures have often been viewed by China as insufficient, lacking the contrition expected for the scale of the atrocities committed.

The tragic stabbing in Shenzhen taps into this deep historical reser-



voir of bitterness. While Chinese officials have not suggested a motive rooted in nationalism or anti-Japanese sentiment, the timing and context are significant. The boy's death occurred on the anniversary of Mukden Incident of 1931, which is viewed as a pretext for Japanese military aggression that first led to the occupation of Manchuria and later set the stage for further expansion into mainland China in 1937. Japanese textbooks have been criticized in China for downplaying the severity of the wartime occupation, while official visits by Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine - where convicted war criminals are enshrined - have further strained relations.

The Chinese Communist Party, though officially condemning acts as the Shenzhen stabbing, has long nurtured a narrative of victimhood at the hands of foreign invaders, Japan chief among them. Anti-Japanese sentiment often flares up during anniversaries of wartime events or when disputes arise over territorial claims in the East China Sea.

In 2012, a wave of anti-Japanese protests swept across China, triggered by the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which are claimed by both nations. Japanese businesses were targeted, and citizens were advised to exercise caution. Violent incidents involving

Japanese nationals, though rare, have been recorded in the intervening years, with attacks often linked to diplomatic flare-ups. The death of the Japanese schoolboy Shenzhen may be an isolated case, but it is nonetheless a painful reminder of the fragility of Sino-Japanese relations.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has sought a comprehensive explanation and sought assurances from Chinese authorities on the safety of Japanese citizens in China. Beijing, for its part, expressed regret over the incident and promised swift justice.

Beneath these official statements lies a complicated dynamic. Japan remains one of China's largest trading partners, and Shenzhen, a global hub of technology and innovation, is home to a significant Japanese expatriate community. Economic interdependence has often acted as a buffer, preventing diplomatic tensions from escalating into full-blown crises. Yet, nationalism in both countries remains an unpredictable variable. In Japan, public opinion has hardened in recent years, particularly over issues like Chinese territorial ambitions in the South China Sea and the increasing military presence near the Senkaku Islands. Meanwhile, Chinese state media has continued to remind its citizens of Japan's wartime atrocities, ensuring that the scars of history never fully fade.

BY INVITATION

Cash Crunch for Defected Minister's Election Funds

By
Mamta Sen

An old associate of one of the present top ministers in the ruling Maharashtra government is worried. He says the minister is at his wit's end on ways and means to secure funding for the upcoming elections and has been running from pillar to post.

He claims most of the minister's previous donors have backed out this time while blaming the minister's ex-political boss and party leader. The minister's earlier boss was a successful fundraiser and would often extend a generous amount of money during elections to the minister. However, since the minister defected to another party along with his MLAs, he is struggling to raise funds from sources outside his former constituency.

Although no longer in power, his boss remains a force to be reckoned with in India's political landscape. He has instructed everyone in business and trade circles to halt all funding to the MLAs who defected with the min-

Defected MLAs struggle to get fresh funding for their upcoming state elections. A large number of them may even miss out on contesting again due to lack of money.

ister. "We have no voter base in Mumbai, but in rural areas, we can win if we pool in the proper amount of money. Unfortunately, we aren't receiving any funds, which is the biggest concern," says the associate, adding that elections in rural areas are costlier than in cities, mainly due to transport issues. Contesting an MLA seat in rural Konkan, for example, can cost no less than ten crores!

According to whispers in closed political circles, a 'fatwa' of sorts was issued to stop all funding to every single defected MLA in the upcoming state elections. The dictat of 'Not in Cash and definitely Not in Kind' has been made known to every donor who may have donated to every MLA belonging to the Maha Vikas Aghadi at one point in time.

For any political party to function smoothly or for any candidate to win an election, the availability of resources like funds and manpower remains an all-important factor. The need is even more crucial during election periods. More than manpower, funds top the list of priorities, and while there are funds available everywhere, routing these funds to the winning candidate is an art in itself.

A party flush with funds can not only successfully manoeuvre itself through difficult situations but can also take care of its workers well and survive in the long run. While seeking donations during rallies or through relief funds are some ways funding is sought, many untraditional fundraising methods have faced criticism over the years. Although the most common ways to raise funds are through individuals, the public, and corporations, unions are a key funding source for political parties. A party that controls more unions not only influences the people within them but also gains access to the funds they generate.

For example, the communist party that ruled Mumbai in the late sixties and seventies declined only after its

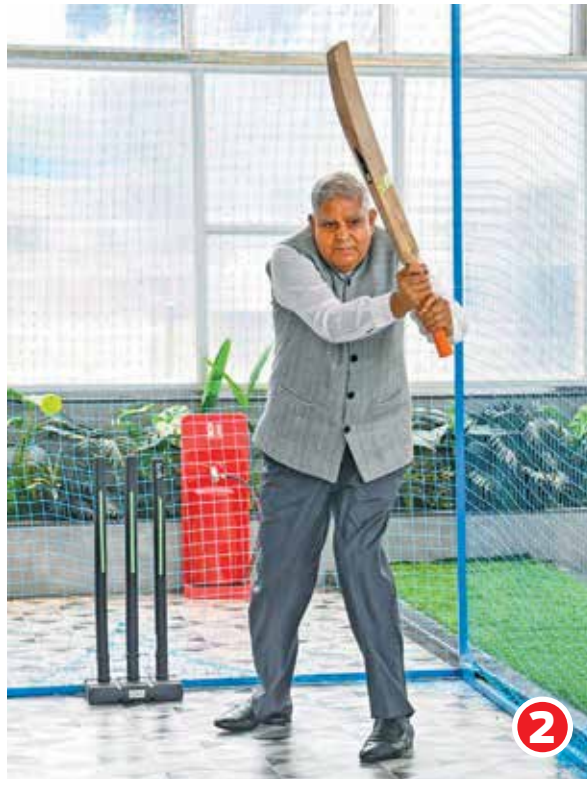


unions, largely of mill workers, were decimated following the mill worker's strike. The strike, which continues to exist on paper even today, led to a large number of workers shifting their affiliations to other newly formed political parties then, such as the Shiv Sena, led by its founder, the late Hon. Shri Balasaheb Thackeray. In fact, over the years, political parties, to attract funding from all avenues, have taken to forming 'cells' within their party. For example, while an IT cell is set up to attract those from the IT sector, similarly, the corporate cell targets corporate membership and funding. Regional cells concentrate on attracting funding from states (e.g., BJP's Bihar cell attracts entrepreneurs and workers from Bihar).

Interestingly, appointments to key party positions are often influenced not only by the candidate's caste but also by their ability to generate funds for the party. For instance, a certain national political party is always known to appoint its party presidents who belong to the business community so they can get access to easy and quick funding whenever needed, especially during elections.

All said and done, it will surely be interesting to see what steps this minister will take now that his routine set of funding has taken a backseat. Will he go back to his political boss and ask for forgiveness? Or will he just continue to knock on more new doors? Only time will tell.

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



KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Indian and American military personnel during the 20th edition of India-USA joint military exercise 'YUDH ABHYAS', at Foreign Training Node in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan on Friday.
- 2 Vice President Jagdeep Thakkar plays cricket during a visit to the Yatri Niwas Flyover Underspace in Silvassa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.
- 3 Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by members of the Indian community upon his arrival at a hotel in Wilmington, USA on Saturday.
- 4 Urgyen Tamang, a resident of West Bengal's Kalimpong district, who was allegedly forced by the Russian army to join the war against Ukraine, with his family after returning to India, in Siliguri on Saturday. Tamang was taken to Russia by an agent with the promise of getting him a job as a security guard.
- 5 A Royal Bengal tiger yawns at the National Zoological Park in New Delhi on Sunday.



All Pictures PTI, AP

FILMS & ME

The Changing Face of Sex Workers in Bollywood Cinema

EXPLAINER

Why Is The Outlook At UN General Assembly Gloomy?



By Shoma A. Chatterji



Prostitution in Indian cinema has a hidden charisma, like a film that has been banned, and the banning becomes a tantalising invitation to the film that depicts or deals with prostitution. It is a part of everyday sexism. In constructing certain specific representations of women, it codes women as an object of the male gaze.

Chetna (1971), directed by the late B.R. Ishara, was perhaps the first Hindi film to represent a sex worker who stepped into the profession out of greed and was not embarrassed about it. But the guilt of having married one of her clients who fell in love with her proves her undoing. It was an extremely bold film for the time, encapsulating very bold cinematographic frames and a brilliant performance by Rehana Sultan.

Parched
Bijlee in *Parched*, directed by Leena Yadav, is part of a touring entertainment group that performs item numbers for the village men. She also sleeps with some of them in exchange for money. The owner of the company who pimps her gets a fair cut. She has a beautiful figure enough to set the men's hormone levels rising. Additionally, she is a delightful woman who

loves to return to the village to meet her friend Raneer, a young widow. She is not embarrassed about her job, flaunts her charms proudly, and gives courage to other women.

Bijlee is a sparkling beauty and crackles like fireworks with her naughty, teasing charm she veils her inner pain with. She throws up alternative ways of behaviour and thinking, changing female-prefixed abuses men generously use by substituting them with male prefixes and shouting these from the top of a hillcock with her friends. Bijlee offers visions of freedom to Lajjo and Rani from the prison they are caged in. But simmering inside her is the pain of the trap that, for her, is a no-exit situation where love is as much a mirage as it is for Rani and Lajjo.

Akira
Maya in *Akira* is a high-class call girl. She is not ashamed of trading her body for money. She is strong and courageous enough to strike back when a corrupt and murderous cop blackmails her into offering her services for free. All because he set her free from being jailed once. She tries to avenge this wrong by capturing on video one of his corrupt dealings but is killed by the same cop and his team. Strangely, reviews of *Akira* do not even mention the way her character unfolds and the brilliance of her performance, who has no sad story to back up her being in the profession.

Badlapur
In *Badlapur*, Jhimli (Huma Qureshi) is portrayed as a confident sex worker who, despite her deep affection for Liak (Nawazuddin Siddique), remains committed to her profession. She ultimately becomes the mistress of a wealthy man, showcasing her assertive nature and lack of desire for marriage or settling down.

But underneath her flashy clothes and loud make-up, Jhimli is very fond of Liak, though he is a killer on the run. The only time we find her broken is when the hero rapes her with vengeance. Huma Qureshi as Jhimli gives an outstanding performance as a sex worker who is not embarrassed about her profession. There is an irony when placed next to a character who is a social worker who sleeps on the sly with men who she has business with. Jhimli comes across as a bold woman, in love with one of her clients but with no plans of marrying him or giving up her profession.

The prostitute, on celluloid as in real life, has her saleability in common. With other culturally prevalent representations of women such as the sacrificing or the ruthlessly selfish wife, new Indian filmmakers, men and women, have reinvented and created new codes of non-voyeuristic vision through the character of the prostitute in their films.

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

Prostitution in Indian cinema often challenges traditional views, blending allure with everyday sexism.

Facing a swirl of conflicts and crises across a fragmented world, leaders attending this week's annual U.N. gathering are being challenged: Work together — not only on front-burner issues but on modernizing the international institutions born after World War II so they can tackle the threats and problems of the future.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued the challenge a year ago after sounding a global alarm about the survival of humanity and the planet: Come to a "Summit of the Future" and make a new commitment to multilateralism — the foundation of the United Nations and many other global bodies — and start fixing the aging global architecture to meet the rapidly changing world.

The U.N. chief told reporters last week that the summit "was born out of a cold, hard fact: international challenges are moving faster than our ability to solve them." He pointed to "out-of-control geopolitical divisions" and "runaway" conflicts, climate change, inequalities, debt and new technologies like artificial intelligence which have no guardrails.

The two-day summit starts Sunday, two days before the high-level meeting of world leaders begins at the sprawling U.N. compound in New York City.

Whether it takes even a first step toward the future remains to be seen. There was no final agreement Saturday on its main outcome document — a lengthy pact that requires support from all 193 U.N. member nations to be adopted. Diplomats said Russia and a few others still had objections to the final text.

"Leaders must ask themselves whether this will be yet another meeting where they simply talk about greater cooperation and consensus, or whether they will show the imagination and conviction to actually forge it," said Agnès Callamard, the secretary-general of Amnesty International. "If I miss this opportunity, I shudder to think of the consequences. Our collective future is at stake."



Biggest week of the year

The summit is the prelude to this year's high-level meeting, held every September. More than 130 presidents, prime ministers and monarchs are slated to speak along with dozens of ministers, and the issues at the summit are expected to dominate their speeches and private meetings, especially the wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan and the growing possibility of a wider Mideast war.

"There is going to be a rather obvious gap between the Summit of the Future, with its focus on expanding international cooperation, and the reality that the U.N. is failing in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan," said Richard Gowan, U.N. director for the International Crisis Group. "Those three wars will be top topics of attention for most of the week." One notable moment at Tuesday's opening assembly meeting: U.S. President Joe Biden's likely final major appearance on the world stage, a platform he has tread upon and reveled in for decades.

At the upcoming meetings, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters this week: "The most vulnerable around the world are counting on us to make progress, to make change, to bring about a sense of hope for them."

To meet the many global challenges, she said, the U.S. focus at the U.N. meetings will be on ending "the scourge of war." Roughly 2 billion people live in conflict-affected areas, she said.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Britain's new prime minister, Keir Starmer, will be at the United Nations this week along with Biden. But Russian President Vladimir Putin and China's President Xi Jinping are sending their foreign ministers instead. Neither Putin nor Xi attended last year, either.

Last September, the war in Ukraine and its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, took center stage at the U.N. global gathering. But as the first anniversary of Hamas' deadly attack in southern Israel approaches on Oct. 7, the spotlight is certain to be on the war in Gaza and escalating violence across the Israeli-Lebanon border, which is now threatening to spread to the wider Middle East.

Iran supports both Hamas in Gaza and Lebanon's Hezbollah militants. Its new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, will address world leaders on Tuesday afternoon. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to speak Thursday morning and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday afternoon.

Zelenskyy will get the spotlight twice. He will speak Tuesday at a high-level meeting of the U.N. Security Council — called by the United States, France, Japan, Malta, South Korea and Britain — and will address the General Assembly on Wednesday morning. -AP

Jadeja is a fire. I envy him, says Ashwin

By G Unnikrishnan

Chennai: At 38, Ravichandran Ashwin's preparation for a "tough" long season ahead differs from what it used to be a decade ago, and the star spinner on Sunday admitted that it is now more about taking one match at a time than fitting the whole season in a single frame.

Till June, 2025, India will play nine more Tests, including a possible World Test Championship (WTC) Final in vastly differing conditions.

It motivates Ashwin to reinvent himself after each match and be ready for the next challenge.

"Like you rightly said, it's a long season. It's tough. Sometimes when you look so far ahead, it can be quite difficult. You're playing like 3-4 months of cricket, and 10 Test matches," Ashwin told reporters after the first Test against Bangladesh here.

"But sometimes you can't think like that. You have to stack it up (one match at a time). I did put in a bit of work getting into it. I need to have some re-

serves in the tank," he added.

The Chennaiite also wanted to use the breaks in between Tests or two series to keep himself in the optimum physical condition.

"There are good breaks between games. Hopefully, we'll get small windows for me to keep ironing it out (fitness). More than skill, I think it's about physically being able to go through the season which is of utmost importance for me," he noted.

Accordingly, Ashwin has tweaked his fitness routine as well.

"It's not the same as if you play 25, 26, 30 or even 35. 38 is different to 35. Every bit of work that you put, you have to put in doubly hard to earn the right to be there.

"So, I have reduced my strength training sessions. I work differently on mobility and other aspects of life. I do a bit of yoga. It's good," he explained.

Ravindra Jadeja the mate

However, the story of Ashwin remains incomplete without the mention



of Ravindra Jadeja - his loyal Jean Passepartout in bowling and batting for over a decade now.

While Ashwin hogged the limelight for his all-round show - a hundred and six wickets in the Chepauk Test - Jadeja quietly supported him from the other end, bagging five wickets.

"He's been a very inspirational story. Many of these occasions over the last 3-4 years, when he's walked in to bat, I feel so calm and composed in the dressing room. It's such an inspirational story about how he's found his off-stump, how he's contributed," Ashwin began on his trusted partner.

The veteran off-spinner then went into detail the importance of Jadeja, the fielder.



I make a living by bowling, so bowling comes first. Batting is something that comes naturally but I have focused my thoughts with batting over the last few years.
- R. Ashwin

one to discover the better self of himself. "Sometimes, when you're in the race along with your co-cricketers, you want to

get ahead of one another, even inside a team. It's like brothers growing in arms, right? And then you slowly start admiring one another. "Now, that admiration has gone one step higher, knowing that I can never beat Jadeja. So, I'm comfortable in my skin, but totally inspired by what he's done," he added.

Ashwin also reserved a word of praise for Rishabh Pant, who made a hundred on his return to Test cricket for the first time since 2022.

"I don't think Rishabh's form or ability was ever going to be in question at all. I think the way he's come back and put himself on the field is quite miraculous. I

Team with strong bowling options
Indian captain Rohit Sharma on Sunday emphasised on building his team around "strong bowling options" in order to take the conditions out of the equation as they gear up for the challenges that lay ahead in the run-up to the World Test Championship. Riding on a brilliant all-round performance, India cantered to a massive 280-run victory in the first Test against Bangladesh with five sessions to spare. Senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin completed a memorable all-round outing with a six-wicket haul as a dominant India crushed Bangladesh, after Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill struck fluent hundreds. "We want to build our team around strong bowling options, we have to be ready to face whatever the conditions offer," Rohit said at the post-match presentation.

don't think there was any pressure on him.

"He's entertaining. Not the greatest of sights for people sitting behind him to go into bat. I don't know when his turn will come. But yeah, I think he's only going to get better. He's always had the backing of the team," he added.

Pant says belongs to test

The swashbuckling Rishabh Pant on Sunday asserted that Test cricket is where "I belong the most" after marking his return to his favourite format with a sensational hundred against Bangladesh. Pant hit his sixth Test century, his first since returning to competitive cricket after recovering from injuries he suffered in a horrific car accident in December 2022, on the third day of the opening Test against Bangladesh.

"100 was special because I love playing in Chennai. After injury I wanted to play all three formats and this was my first Test. Hope to get better every day," Pant said after the India's 280-run win.

"It was emotional, I wanted to score each and every match which didn't happen but wanted to do well in Tests, which is where I belong the most. Being on the field gives me pleasure more than anything else." Playing in the manner that defines his batting, Pant struck a fluent 109 off 128 balls, lacing his innings with 13 fours and four sixes. The keeper-batter added 167 runs for the fourth wicket with Gill (119 off 176 balls) and helped lift India from 67/3 to 287/4 declared in their second essay.



Members of Ghodbunder Riders Masters at GMR Cycle Ride in Thane on Sunday.

Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Grace Brown wins time trial

Zurich: Olympic champion Grace Brown finally won the women's time trial at the cycling world championships in Switzerland on Sunday.

The 32-year-old Australian, who had finished runner-up at the worlds in the previous two years, com-

pleted the 29.9-kilometer (18.5-mile) course from Gossau to Zurich in 39 minutes, 16 seconds.

She finished 17 seconds ahead of Dutchwoman Demi Vollering and 56 ahead of defending champion Chloe Dygert of the United States, who also fin-

ished third in the time trial at the Paris Olympics last month.

Brown was also national champion this year and won the prestigious Liège-Bastogne-Liège classic, where Vollering placed third. The men's time trial was later Sunday. -AP

Anmol Kharb wins back-to-back titles

New Delhi: The talented Anmol Kharb achieved a remarkable feat by securing her second consecutive title on Sunday, winning the Poland International with a straight-game victory over Switzerland's Milena Schneider in the women's singles final held in Lublin.

The 17-year-old, who clinched her maiden international title at the Belgian International the previous week, produced yet another dominant show in the USD 5,000 tournament, outclassing the seventh seed Schneider with a commanding 21-12, 21-8 win in the final.

The Indian clinched the title without dropping a game, continuing her stellar



run following her breakthrough victory in Belgium. Her recent successes have propelled Kharb's rise in the rankings, with a significant leap of 55 positions following her Belgian victory.

Currently ranked 165th, the Faridabad teenager displayed dominance throughout the 33-minute final, never allowing Schneider to gain any significant advantage. -PTI

Manoharan's hat-trick does trick for ICL

Mumbai: Harwood Champions League revived after few years gap started with a bang for India Culture League who beat Kalina Rangers 5-3 in the opening match at Cooprage Ground.

Sandeep Manoharan's hat-trick played a crucial role in ICLs win. Sturdy striker Sunil, got the equaliser for ICL in the 33rd minute with a fine header following a cross from the right. Kalina Rangers took the lead in the 1th minute through Seon D'souza's goal and they had more of more control in the mid-field. Sandeep gave ICL lead just before the half time 2-1. Sandeep scored his third goal in the 58 minute to complete his hat-trick.

New Delhi: Retired hockey legend PR Sreejesh manned the Indian goal like a wall and made some crucial saves during the country's bronze-winning campaign at the recent Paris Olympics and he said each one of his efforts was made for the entire team and the nation.

The 36-year-old Sreejesh, who retired from the game after a glorious 18-year international career, was nominated for the prestigious FIH Men's Goalkeeper of the Year Award 2024 after playing a pivotal role in India's campaign in the Olympics. "Every save I made in

Umesh wins gold at Indonesia para Badminton

New Delhi: Umesh Vikram secured gold in the SL3 event, while the trio of Sukant Kadam, Sivarajan Solaimalai, and Mandeep Kaur claimed silver medals in their respective categories at the Indonesia Para-Badminton International on Sunday.

Sukant bagged the silver in the men's singles SL4 event, while Sivarajan won the silver in men's singles SH6 category.

Mandeep clinched the silver in women's singles SL3 category.

India delivered a stellar performance in Sarakarta, Indonesia, winning as many as 34 medals in the International Level 2 tournament.

In men's singles SL3, Umesh triumphed over compatriot and top seed Nehal Gupta, winning 12-21 21-8 21-19 in the final.

Sukant, who had missed out on a bronze medal in Paris after losing to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan in the play-off, fell short again in the SL4 final, losing 14-21 14-21 to the Indonesian.

"I gave my best in the fi-



nal, but Fredy played an exceptional game," Sukant said.

"It was a great learning experience, and I'll keep pushing to aim for gold in future competitions."

Sivarajan, who had lost to Great Britain's Krysten Coombs in Paris, faced a tough challenge from top-seeded Indonesian Subhan Subhan in the SH6 final, ultimately losing 19-21 15-21.

Mandeep, who had suffered a defeat to Nigeria's

Mariam Eniola Bolaji in Paris, also finished with silver after losing 10-21 5-21 to Indonesia's top seed Qonita Ikhtiar Syakuroh in the SL3 final.

Despite the silver medal finishes, the Indian contingent's overall performance was strong, with Umesh claiming the lone gold in singles. Jagadeesh Dilli added to India's success by securing bronze in the same category, making it a sweep for India with seven players reaching the quarterfinals.

In women's singles SL3, Mandeep's silver was complemented by Neeraj's bronze. In the men's singles SH6 category, Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy also earned bronze, while Sivarajan secured silver.

Among other Indians in fray, Naveen Sivakumar won bronze in men's singles SL4 category, while Ruthick Ragupathi claimed silver in the men's singles SU5. Koshika Devda secured bronze in the women's singles SU5.

In the mixed doubles SL3-SL4 category, Nehal

and Naveen Sivakumar earned silver, while Umesh and Surya, along with Harshit and Kartik, claimed bronze. The men's doubles SU5 saw Hardik Makkar and Ruthick Ragupathi claim gold.

In the women's wheelchair WH1 category, Pallavi Kuluvehalli secured gold, with Prema Vishwas and Anusha Chidananda taking bronze. Alpha James clinched gold in the women's singles WH2 category, and Shabana took home bronze. The mixed doubles WH1-WH2 category saw Poorna Rao and Munna Khalid win bronze.

In the men's WH1 category, Prem Kumar Ale secured bronze, while Neeraj and Arati Patil, along with Vaishali Nilesh and Germany's Irina Whalers, claimed bronze in the women's doubles SL3-SU5 category. Additionally, Alpha James and Pallavi Kuluvehalli, along with Anusha Chidananda and Shabana won bronze in the women's doubles WH1-WH2 category. -PTI

Every save I made was not about me, but for team, country

that tournament was not just about me; it was about the entire team and our country's support," Sreejesh said.

"Being nominated for this award is a reflection of our collective spirit and the incredible journey we've had together. I hope my career inspires future generations to chase their dreams on the hockey field."

The nomination is the latest in a series of accolades for the legendary goalkeeper, often referred to as the 'Great Wall of Indian Hockey.'

In what was his final international tournament, Sreejesh displayed excep-



tional skill and resilience, making crucial saves during key moments and helping India secure a bronze medal. It was India's first

back-to-back Olympic medals in over five decades, since the 1972 Munich Olympics. "It's a special recognition

for me, especially as I conclude my journey in international hockey," said the affable player from Kerala in a Hockey India release.

"The Paris Olympics was an emotional and unforgettable experience, and this nomination serves as a reminder of the hard work, dedication, and passion that went into every match."

Sreejesh's nomination came after his remarkable show at the Paris Olympics, where he stood firm in front of the goalpost, particularly during India's intense quarterfinal clash against Great Britain. -PTI