

Notice for moving no-confidence motion against Dhankhar

New Delhi: In a first, parties of the INDIA opposition bloc on Tuesday submitted a notice to bring a motion in Rajya Sabha for the removal of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, accusing him of "partisan" conduct as the chairman of the Upper House.

If the motion is moved, these parties need a simple majority to get it passed, but they do not have the requisite numbers in the 243-member House. Opposition members, however, insisted that it was a "strong message to fight for parliamentary democracy".

On behalf of the opposition, Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh and Naseer Hussain submitted the notice signed by 60 opposition MPs -- including from the Congress, RJD, TMC, CPI, CPI-M, JMM, AAP, DMK, Samajwadi Party -- to Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody.

This is the first time that a notice for bringing a motion to remove the Vice President has been moved in the Rajya Sabha. A 14-day notice has to be given and it should be approved by the Deputy Chairman before the motion is taken up.

Notably, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and the floor leaders of various opposition parties are not among the signatories to the notice, the sources said.

Similar notices for removal of the Speaker of



Opposition protest on Adani issue

Several Opposition MPs on Tuesday demonstrated over the Adani issue in Parliament premises, carrying black 'jholas' (bags) with caricatures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and billionaire Gautam Adani printed on it and 'Modi Adani Bhai Bhai' written on the obverse side. This is the latest in the series of unusual protests led by the Congress daily ahead of the sitting of Parliament in the morning.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MPs from the Congress, DMK, JMM, Left, among others, protested in front of the Makar Dwar steps. They were carrying black 'jholas' with caricatures of Modi and Adani printed on one side and 'Modi Adani Bhai Bhai' written on the obverse side of the bag.

Lok Sabha have been submitted in the past, but none against the Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman. Three motions have come in the past against Lok Sabha Speakers -

against G V Mavalankar on December 18, 1954, against Hukum Singh on November 24, 1966 and against Balram Jakhar on April 15, 1987.

While the motions against Mavalankar and Jakhar were negated, that against Hukum Singh was rejected as less than 50 members rose in the chair to take up the motion.

The present move, spearheaded by the Congress, comes in the wake of verbal clashes between opposition parties and the Rajya Sabha chairman.

The opposition has been upset with Dhankhar over multiple issues. The latest trigger was allowing BJP members to raise the allegations of links between Congress leaders and organisations backed by billionaire investor George Soros which the ruling party claims are involved in "anti-India activities".

Noting that the role of the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha is of pivotal importance, the parties said Dhankhar is expected to conduct himself in a non-partisan manner but has instead reduced "the prestige of the position he presently occupies to that of a mere spokesman for the Government of the day".

The opposition said his conduct of the House on December 9, 2024, was particularly one-sided and totally unfair, and said he was "encouraging and provoking" the Treasury Benches to make outrageous remarks. -PTI



Members of various Hindu outfits and other organisations protest rally against atrocities on Bangladeshi Hindus in Dehradun. Pic: PTI

Gyanvapi: Hearing adjourned till Tuesday

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday adjourned till December 17 hearing of a petition challenging the Varanasi court's order that refused to direct the ASI to undertake a survey of the 'wazukhana' area inside the Gyanvapi mosque located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

When the case was taken up, the high court was informed that a related matter before the Supreme Court is likely to be heard on December 16, on which the high court fixed December 17 for hearing.

The order was passed by Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal on a civil revision filed by Rakhi Singh, one of the plaintiffs in Shringar Gauri worshipping suit before the Varanasi court.

The revision plea has been filed challenging the



Fatehpur (UP): Amid tight security, a portion of the 185-year-old Noori Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur district was demolished by local authorities on Tuesday claiming it was illegal and obstructing the widening of the Banda-Bahraich Highway. The mosque's management committee chief, however, claimed that the Noori Masjid in Lalauli town was constructed in 1839 while the road around it came up only in 1956, and said they have already moved the Allahabad High Court which will take up the petition on December 12.

Varanasi district judge's 2023 refusing to direct the order dated October 21, Archeological Survey of

Budaun mosque: Hearing postponed

Budaun (UP): The hearing in the Jama Masjid Shamsi versus Neelkanth temple case here could not be held on Tuesday due to the death of a lawyer of the court.

India (ASI) to undertake a survey of the 'wazukhana' area except for the 'shivling' inside the Gyanvapi mosque.

Rakhi Singh in her revision has pleaded that the survey of the 'wazukhana' (ablution) area is necessary in the interest of justice. It shall benefit the plaintiffs and defendants alike and help the court arrive at a just decision, the plea said. -PTI

One killed in clash over DJ at wedding

Kaushambi (UP): A dispute over playing a song during a wedding in the Kokhraj area here escalated into a violent clash, leaving one person dead and another injured, police said on Tuesday.

Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Srivastava stated that the incident occurred late Monday night in Baghelapur village.

"The argument started between the hosts (gharatis) and the groom's party (baratis) during the ritual of dwar pooja over playing a specific song on the DJ. This led to a fight involving lathis and sticks," Srivastava said.

Two members of the bride's side, Bablu (32), from Barai Bandhwa village in Karari area, and Rohit from Badegaon village in Sandipan Ghat area, were seriously injured in the clash.

Bablu succumbed to his injuries while being taken to the hospital and his body has been sent for post-mortem, the SP said.

Rohit is currently receiving treatment at the Muratganj Health Center.

An FIR will be registered and further legal action will be taken.



Shiv Sena Dogra Front members stage a protest against National Conference government on the Rohingyas issue in Jammu. Pic: PTI

Pakistan-born man gets Indian citizenship after 43 years

Panaji: Karachi-born Shane Sabastian Pereira entered India to live in his ancestral village in Goa just four months after his birth, but it has taken him 43 years to obtain Indian citizenship.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Tuesday handed over the Indian citizenship certificate to the Pakistan-born Christian man under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Shane is the second person from the coastal state to

receive the certificate, after Joseph Francis Pereira, another Pakistani citizen who was granted Indian citizenship in August this year.

Shane, originally from Demello Wado in Anjuna, North Goa, said his parents had migrated to Karachi, where he was born in August 1981. Four months after his birth, the family moved back to Goa, where he completed his schooling. He married Maria Gloria Fernandes, an Indian citizen, in 2012.

He said his attempts to obtain Indian citizenship over the years had been unsuccessful.

"Finally, inspired by Mr Joseph (Pereira), I applied again for citizenship," he said.

The certificate mentions that Shane is registered as a citizen of India under the provisions of section 6B, fulfilling the conditions under section 5(1)(c) of the Citizenship Act, 1955, with effect from the date of his entry into India.

Suave, sophisticated Krishna no more

Bengaluru: Ex-Karnataka Chief Minister and former External Affairs Minister SM Krishna died here early on Tuesday, leaving behind a rich legacy of statesmanship and public service that saw the 92 year-old leader scale heights of political achievements.

Suave, sophisticated and a man with enviable academic credentials, Somnath Malliah Krishna started off his political innings as an independent MLA from Maddur in 1962, stunning a then Congress veteran in the elections. In his later years, he went on to become the state's CM and also the country's External Affairs Minister.

Tributes poured in for the former Maharashtra Governor, who breathed his last at 2.45 am on Tuesday. Krishna had been ailing for quite some time.

From being a minister on different occasions in the state and at the central government and a Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha member to heading the Congress in Karnataka -- he indeed had a long innings.

He served as a member of the legislative Council and Assembly, and had



been Speaker, deputy chief minister, External Affairs Minister and Governor at different points of time.

"He played a proactive role in putting Bengaluru on the global map," a senior IT industry executive said.

"He gave a boost to the IT sector during his tenure as the chief minister resulting in Bengaluru growing as an alternative to Silicon Valley in California and generating jobs for youths," he added.

Born in Somanahalli in Karnataka's Mandya district on May 1, 1932, Krishna kicked off his electoral foray in style winning as independent from Maddur against Congress stalwart K V Shankar Gowda in the 1962 assembly polls.

He later associated himself with the Praja Socialist Party before joining the Congress.

A graduate of Mahara-

ja's College, Mysuru, he obtained a law degree from the Government Law College here. Further, he studied at Southern Methodist University, Dallas in the US and later at George Washington University, where he was a Fulbright Scholar.

Back home, he worked as a Professor of International Law at Renukacharya Law College. He made his debut in the Parliament in 1968 as a 'Socialist' MP and became a member of the fourth Lok Sabha.

He was chief minister from October 1999 to May 2004 and later served as the Governor of Maharashtra from December 2004 to March 2008. He was inducted as the External Affairs Minister in the Manmohan Singh-led government from May 2009 to October 2012, in the Congress-led UPA II.

In 2017, he joined the BJP, ending his nearly 50-year-long association with the Congress. He retired from politics on January 7, 2023.

Krishna was also a tennis buff. Krishna is survived by wife Prema and two daughters-- Malavika Krishna and Shambhavi.

SC notes Justice's comments

New Delhi: In a significant development, the Supreme Court on Tuesday took note of news reports over the purported controversial statements of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav at a VHP function and sought details from the Allahabad High Court on the issue.

The development assumes significance amid the rising clamour seeking action from Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna against the high court judge for his remarks.

"The Supreme Court has taken note of the newspaper reports of a speech given by Mr Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad. The details and particulars have been called from the High Court and the matter is under consideration (sic)," a statement said.

At a VHP function on December 8, Justice Yadav said the main aim of the uniform civil code was to promote social harmony, gender equality and secularism.

He was addressing a provincial convention of the legal cell and high court unit of the VHP in Allahabad High Court.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I saw that CM sahab and others got up and left in the middle of the show. As soon as they left, all the delegates also left. This is my request to all these politicians that if you yourself do not appreciate your artist then what will the people outside do."



Sonu Nigam, Singer

Odisha to provide homestay options for visiting NRIs

Bhubaneswar: As Odisha is gearing up to host the three-day Pravas Bharatiya Divas from January 8 to be attended by around 7,000 NRIs, the state government is making homestay arrangements for the visitors apart from hotel accommodations.

The homestay owners have been provided training in guest management and safety protocols. "It is a big opportunity for the people of Odisha to host the NRIs. We will also make homestay arrangements for them apart from

hotel accommodation," Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida said.

Odisha's hospitality would be on the like of "Atithi Deva Bhado" (Guest is God), she said.

In order to facilitate the visitors to book their accommodation, Parida said the Odisha Tourism Department has blocked 200 hotels with more than 3,700 rooms in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri.

The families owning homestays, who would host the visiting NRIs, have been provided basic training in



guest management and safety protocols, a senior official said.

The aim is to provide the Indian diaspora with the experience of Odisha's at-

mosphere as well as the culture and tradition in Odia homes.

This apart, in view of cyber frauds in hotel bookings, the state government has advised the delegates to book their accommodation through a dedicated website 'pbndindia.gov.in'.

The state tourism department has shared the names and other details of hotels with the Ministry of Home Affairs for the safety of delegates.

The department has also identified as many as 30 tourist destinations in Bhu-

baneswar, Puri, Konark, Chilika-Satapada and Raghurajpur crafts village where the NRIs may pay visits, the official said.

The PBD event began in 2003 and is being held in Odisha for the first time.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday reviewed the preparations for the programme.

Majhi said the cleanliness of Bhubaneswar should be of international standard. For this, he suggested that a special cleanliness campaign be conducted in the state capital.

All the roads in the city are being renovated, illuminated and decorated, while tourist places are being beautified.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is scheduled to attend the first day on January 8, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 9 and President Droupadi Murmu on January 10.

The event will feature a Plenary Session on topics such as 'Unraveling India's Best Kept Secret' and 'Odisha - the Land of Opportunities'. -PTI

Horrific stories from slaughterhouse Saydnaya

SYRIANS DESPERATELY RUSH TO THE HORRIFIC PRISON IN SEARCH OF MISSING LOVED ONES

Damascus: They came from all over Syria, tens of thousands. The first place they rushed to after the fall of their longtime tormentor, former President Bashar Assad, was here: Saydnaya Prison, a place so notorious for its horrors it was long known as “the slaughterhouse.”

For the past two days, all have been looking for signs of loved ones who disappeared years or even decades ago into the secretive, sprawling prison just outside Damascus.

But hope gave way to despair Monday. People opened the heavy iron doors lining the hallways to find cells inside empty. With sledgehammers, shovels and drills, men pounded holes in floors and walls, looking for what they believed were



secret dungeons, or chasing sounds they thought they heard from underground. They found nothing.

Insurgents freed dozens of people from the Saydnaya military prison on Sunday when Damascus fell. Since then, almost no one has been found.

“Where is everyone?

Where are everyone’s children? Where are they?” said Ghada Assad, breaking down in tears.

She had rushed from her Damascus home to the prison on the capital’s outskirts, hoping to find her brother. He was detained in 2011, the year that protests first erupted against the former president’s

rule – before they turned into a long, gruelling civil war. She didn’t know why he was arrested.

“My heart has been burned over my brother. For 13 years, I kept looking for him,” she said. When insurgents last week seized Aleppo – her original hometown – at the start of their swiftly victo-



rious offensive, “I prayed that they would reach Damascus just so they can open up this prison,” she said.

Civil defense officials helping in the search were as confused as the families over why no further inmates were being found. It appeared fewer were held here in recent weeks, they said.

But few were giving up, a sign of how powerfully Saydnaya looms in the minds of Syrians as the heart of Assad’s brutal police state. The sense of loss over the missing – and the sudden hope they might be found – brought a kind of dark unity among Syrians from across the country.

During Assad’s rule and

particularly after the 2011 protests began, any hint of dissent could land someone in Saydnaya. Few ever emerged.

In 2017, Amnesty International estimated that 10,000-20,000 people were being held there at the time “from every sector of society.” It said they were effectively slated for “extermination.”

Thousands were killed

How is US countering IS group during Syria’s upheaval?

Washington: Massive US airstrikes on Islamic State militants in Syria were meant in part as a message to the group and a move to ensure that it doesn’t try to take advantage of the chaos following the overthrow of President Bashar Assad’s government. The US and its partners want to make sure the Islamic State group, which still has a presence in Syria, can’t step into the leadership void and once again exert control over wide swaths of the country, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Monday. The US on Sunday struck about 75 IS targets in the Syrian desert. The US has had troops in Syria for the last decade to battle IS. The turmoil following a rebel offensive that toppled Assad has raised fears of an Islamic State resurgence.

The US has about 900 troops and an undisclosed number of contractors in Syria, largely at small bases in the north and east, with a small number farther south at the al-Tanf garrison closer to the Iraq and Jordan borders.

US special operations forces also routinely move in and out of the country but are usually in small teams and are not included in the official count.

Islamic State militants seized large parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014, declaring a caliphate. The US gathered a coalition of allies and was able to defeat IS in Iraq in 2017. The US partnered with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, and after fierce fighting, ultimately declared an end to the caliphate in Syria in 2019. The US has, over the past decade, routinely targeted IS leaders, camps and weapons in Syria to keep the group at bay and prevent it from coalescing.

In the past year, as Israel’s war with Hamas widened into a broader conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon, attacks by Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria as well as by the Islamic State group have escalated.

in frequent mass executions, Amnesty reported, citing testimony from freed prisoners and prison officials. Prisoners were subjected to constant torture, intense beatings and rape. Almost daily, guards did rounds of the cells to collect bodies of inmates who had died overnight from injuries, disease or starvation. Some inmates fell into psychosis and

starved themselves, the human rights group said.

Five White Helmet teams, with two canine teams, came to Saydnaya to help the search.

They even brought in the prison electrician, who had the floor plan, and went through every shaft, vent and sewage opening. So far, there were no answers, Abu al-Dahab said.

-AP

“ISIS will try to use this period to reestablish its capabilities, to create safe havens. As our precision strikes over the weekend demonstrate, we are determined not to let that happen.”

Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, US

Israeli warplanes pound Syria

Israel carried out a wave of heavy airstrikes across Syria as its troops advanced deeper into the country, drawing to within 25 kilometres of the capital, a Syrian opposition war monitor said Tuesday. Associated Press reporters in Damascus heard heavy airstrikes overnight and into Tuesday on the city and its suburbs. Photographs circulating online showed destroyed missile launchers, helicopters and warplanes. There was no immediate comment from the insurgent groups – led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS – that have taken control of Damascus. Israel had earlier seized a roughly 400-square-kilometre buffer zone inside Syria that had been established after the 1973 Mideast war, a move it said was taken to prevent attacks in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

Israeli warplanes pound Syria as troops advance

Damascus (Syria): Israel carried out a wave of heavy airstrikes across Syria as its troops advanced deeper into the country, drawing to within 25 kilometres of the capital, a Syrian opposition war monitor said Tuesday. Israel denied its forces were advancing toward Damascus.

Associated Press reporters in Damascus heard heavy airstrikes overnight and into Tuesday on the city and its suburbs. Photographs circulating online showed destroyed missile launchers, helicopters and warplanes.

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Israel had earlier seized a roughly 400-square-kilometre buffer zone inside Syria that had been established after the 1973 Mideast war, a move it said was taken to prevent attacks in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

Israel has also said it is striking suspected chemical weapons sites and heavy weapons to prevent them from falling into the



hands of extremists. Israeli officials rarely acknowledge individual strikes.

Israel has a long history of seizing territory during wars with its neighbours and occupying it indefinitely, citing security concerns. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed it in a move not recognised internationally, except by the United States.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has closely tracked the conflict since the civil war erupted nearly 14 years ago, said Israel has carried out more than 300 airstrikes across the country since rebels overthrew Assad over the weekend, ending his family’s half-century rule.

The Observatory, and Beirut-based Mayadeen TV, which has reporters in

Syria, said Israeli troops are advancing up the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon. It was not possible to independently confirm the reports.

Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesperson, said “the reports circulating in the media about the alleged advancement of Israeli tanks towards Damascus are false.” He said Israeli troops are stationed within the buffer zone in order to protect Israel.

Israel’s military had previously said troops would enter the buffer zone “and several other places necessary for its defense.”

Israeli media meanwhile reported that the air force was methodically destroying Syria’s military assets to ensure whoever rules the country next would have to rebuild them.

The operations “have been systematically destroying all that remains of the escaped tyrant’s military,” wrote Yossi Yehoshua, the military correspondent for Israel’s largest daily, Yediot Ahront.

-AP



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays tribute at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow. Pic:AP/PTI

March against attacks on Hindus in B’desh

Washington: A large number of Indian Americans held a march from the White House to the US Capitol over attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh.

Raising slogans like “We want Justice” and “Protect Hindus” the peaceful demonstrators urged the Biden administration and the incoming Trump administration to ask the new government in Bangladesh to take steps to protect Hindus but also take action against those responsible for this.

The march was held on



Monday over attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh.

Organisers of the event -- StopHinduGenocide.org, Bangladeshi Diaspora organisations and HinduAction - demanded that the companies in the US stop

buying garments from Bangladesh, which is heavily dependent on its exports to the US.

Srikanth Akunuri from HinduAction said unspeakable tragedies are happening for the Bangladeshi Hindus.

“We also demand that ISKCON leader Chinmoy Das be released,” he said.

Prasenjit Dutta, head of a Bangladeshi community organisation from Atlantic City demanded the release of ISKCON leader Chinmoy Das.

Mass evacuations of Philippine villages

Manila: About 87,000 people were being evacuated in a central Philippine region Tuesday a day after a volcano briefly erupted with a towering ash plume and superhot streams of gas and debris hurtling down its western slopes.

The latest eruption of Mount Kanlaon on central Negros island did not cause any immediate casualties, but the alert level was raised one level, indicating further and more explosive eruptions may occur.

Volcanic ash fell on a wide area, including Antique province, more than 200 kilometers (124 miles) across seawater west of the volcano, obscuring visibility and posing health risks. Philippine chief volcanologist Teresito Bacolcol and other officials said by telephone.

At least six domestic flights and a flight bound for Singapore were cancelled and two local flights were diverted in the region Monday and Tuesday due to Kanlaon’s eruption, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

The mass evacuations were being carried out urgently in towns and villages

nearest the western and southern slopes of Kanlaon which were blanketed by its ash, including in La Castellana town in Negros Occidental where nearly 47,000 people have to be evacuated out of a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) danger zone, the Office of Civil Defence said.

More than 6,000 have moved to evacuation centres aside from those who have temporarily transferred to the homes of relatives in La Castellana by Tuesday morning, the town’s mayor, Rhumyla Mangilimutan, told The Associated Press by telephone.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said authorities were ready to provide support to large numbers of displaced villagers and that his social welfare secretary flew early Tuesday to the affected region. “We are ready to support the families who have been evacuated outside the 6-kilometer danger zone.”

Scientists were monitoring the air quality due to the risk of contamination from toxic volcanic gases that may require more people to be evacuated from areas affected by Monday’s eruption.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Trump got elected on a commitment to make life better and more affordable for Americans, and I think people south of the border are beginning to wake up to the real reality that tariffs on everything from Canada would make life a lot more expensive.”



Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister, Canada

UK docs want COVID mRNA vaccines suspended

By Aditi Khanna

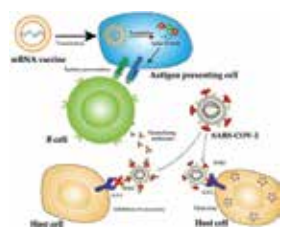
London: Several doctors and healthcare professionals have signed a petition calling for the immediate suspension of all COVID-19 mRNA products because they fear the jabs could be contributing to an alarming rise in excess deaths.

A petition known as the HOPE Accord attracting signatures from around the world went online recently to alert the international community on the continued use of the COVID mRNA vaccines. These

vaccines, using gene-based technology, were given emergency use authorisation as one of the tools to address the coronavirus pandemic.

“A growing body of evidence suggests that the widespread rollout of the novel Covid-19 mRNA vaccine products is contributing to an alarming rise in disability and excess deaths,” reads the Hope Accord petition.

“This new technology was granted emergency use authorisation to address a situation that no



longer exists. Going forward, the burden of proof falls on those still advocating for these products to compellingly demonstrate that they aren’t resulting in net harm. Until such evidence is presented, regulators should suspend their use as a matter of standard

medical precaution,” it notes.

The petition has been followed up by an open letter this week to the General Medical Council (GMC) of the UK, drafted by British Indian Consultant Cardiologist Dr Aseem Malhotra who has long campaigned for a more evidence-based approach to all COVID vaccines.

“Serious harms from the vaccine have been confirmed from a combination of clinical, mechanistic, randomised controlled trials, observational, phar-

macovigilance, and autopsy data. In these studies, the majority of deaths that occurred within two weeks of taking the vaccine died as a result of the mRNA product,” he writes.

“There is undeniable evidence that there are serious risks associated with COVID-19 vaccine for at least some individuals...As of right now, the data is clear that the vaccines cause greater harm than benefit,” he cautions.

Meanwhile, the online petition calls for independent investigations to be

properly resourced to allow a comprehensive re-evaluation of all COVID-19 vaccine products.

It states: “There must be a full exploration of mechanisms of harm to provide insight into their impact on the human body, both short and long term.

Effectiveness must be reassessed through a comprehensive review of actual clinical impact on illness and mortality, as opposed to synthetic results based on modelled assumptions.

-PTI

EDITORIAL

Polarising Rhetoric

Iltija Mufti, the scion of a political dynasty deeply entrenched in Jammu and Kashmir's contentious politics, has sparked a fresh controversy by labelling Hindutva a "disease." While she claimed her remarks drew a distinction between Hindutva and Hinduism, they have predictably ignited a storm of condemnation from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has demanded an apology for her derogatory language.

Iltija has alleged that Hindutva, a political ideology championed by figures like Veer Savarkar, is allegedly 'distorting' Hinduism's essence by weaponizing faith for political gain. Her comparison of the 'Jai Shri Ram' slogan with incidents of mob have opened a Pandora's box of religious and political sensitivities.

Iltija's outrage rings hollow when viewed against the historical backdrop of Islam's bloody conquest of Kashmir. In the 14th century, the region witnessed a violent transition as Sultan Sikandar Shah Miri's reign brought forced conversions, the destruction of Hindu temples and the imposition of Islamic laws. Kashmiri Pandits, the indigenous Hindu community, suffered centuries of persecution, culminating in their mass

Hinduism, by contrast, has long been recognized as a religion of peace, inclusivity and philosophical depth. It has thrived on a foundation of tolerance, embracing diverse beliefs and practices under its broad spiritual umbrella. Hinduism itself has consistently offered a framework of coexistence, advocating principles of ahimsa (non-violence) and sarva dharma samabhava (equality of all religions). To conflate the two, as Ms. Mufti has done, is to grossly distort the essence of a tradition that has nurtured pluralism for millennia.

The PDP, the party to which she belongs, has often been accused of pandering to separatist sentiments. For decades, its leadership, including Ms. Mufti's mother, Mehbooba Mufti, has walked a tightrope—voicing support for secularism while appeasing elements sympathetic to Pakistan. The PDP's selective outrage over Hindutva conveniently ignores the Islamist extremism that has plagued the Valley for decades, eroding its pluralistic ethos.

Iltija's language, vilifying an entire belief system and an ancient civilization considered to be among the world's most tolerant to score petty political points, is appalling to say the least. The debate over Hindutva and its implications for India's social fabric is not new.

But the moral authority of Iltija mufti's critique is completely undermined by her family's history of courting Islamist sympathies. For those watching from the sidelines, Ms. Mufti's pronouncements may seem less like a principled stand and more like another move in a high-stakes game of political chess. If the PDP truly seeks to champion secularism, it must first confront its own historical baggage. Only then can its critique of others carry any weight. As things stand, Iltija Mufti's remarks appear less about fostering a genuine dialogue and more about perpetuating a cycle of division that serves no one except opportunistic politicians.

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Leave the 'Brain Rot' behind in 2024



By Aditi Pai

As the year draws to a close, news-magazines and papers do a round-up of the year's biggest newsmakers; events and people that captured our collective attention. Growing up in the 1990s in the age of Channel V and MTV, I eagerly awaited their charts which had the biggest hit songs of the year. It is all about collating the highs of the year and crystallizing them into a ranking or a list. Another year-end ritual I await is the Oxford Dictionary's word of the year which makes it to the lexicon of what is considered the ultimate authority on the English language. British English, as we were strictly taught to follow in school.

This year's word is something I love and a feeling or condition that may resonate with many. It's 'brain rot'; loosely described as the "cause or effect of spending hours online viewing trivial information. It communicates concerns about the impact of consuming excessive amounts of low-quality online content, especially on social media". Brain rot seems to be the new 'pandemic' of

In an era of constant connectivity, the silent toll of mindless scrolling is felt in our strained attention and fading focus

our digitally-obsessed times.

Watching, commenting, liking reels that project the air-brushed lives of celebs and ordinary folk, mindlessly scrolling through social media feeds and consuming news that we weren't interested in to begin with, are contributing to mental and emotional fatigue. In the course of my journalistic career, a topic that I have frequently written on is the impact of the digital world on human health and relationships. Mental health-care experts have, time and again, stressed on the harmful effects of excessive screen time. Fatigue, sleepless nights, lethargy, an inability to focus are some of the initial warning signs. Forgetting thoughts, tasks and words is the next level. What else is brain rot, if not this?

"My brain felt dead," was how a young woman described her condition when she landed up in the couch of a Mumbai-based psychiatrist. Until she realised a deteriorating physical condition, stemming from lack of sleep, anxiety and a total disinterest in real-world social interactions, the 28-year-old was glued to her mobile phone for up to 10 hours in a day. Mindless scrolling numbed her brain and senses.

Brain rot is having a huge impact on mental health. And before we think it's not affecting young adults who are typically expected to be more 'tech and digital savvy', this condition is probably equally widespread in an older age group too. It's not uncommon to see retired septuagenarians obsessively discovering new features on social media apps and following random content. The digital world has successfully managed to wean people off face-to-face conversations, sports and hobbies like reading and painting. Movies are all about laptop and tab screens rather than travelling to the cinema hall, watching strangers and munching on popcorn. A mental health counsellor once told



me that digital media and technology are making people forget the functions of their brain. We no longer push our brain to delve into its deepest corners to recollect a forgotten name or place; we simply 'Google it'. Phone numbers that were etched in our memory to make late-night calls to friends are merely saved in our phone's memory and we no longer memorise or write down a number or a message; we quickly 'screen-shot it'. Our brain has little to tax it; little to do. It only consumes a barrage of images, colours and sounds that are thrown at it.

Medical practitioners will call it mental fogginess or cognitive decline. Lay people will simply describe it as a dumbing down of the human race. It's evident all around. People find it difficult to comprehend spoken messages; the not-so-fine print in emails is conveniently overlooked and few remember what they've read an hour ago. We don't jot down or remember important messages in conversations; those are recorded on the phone. I overheard a conversation at a hotel concierge recently where the young woman behind the desk repeated the breakfast timings thrice to the guest

who mindlessly kept asking her the same question.

Students now turn to ChatGPT to get points for essays and I know of journalists who have turned to AI to write perfect copies. What's brain rot if not what's happening to our race?

With the winters here and the weather getting more pleasant, maybe its time to leave the screens behind and head into the outdoors. Fresh air, a good jog and watching the skies, clouds and birds may help us regain some healthy space in our brains. Get the children to take up hobbies not just to pad up admission submissions for universities abroad but to soak in the real joy of playing a sport, playing a music piece or feeling wet clay on their hands. Watch the different flowers, fruits and birds when you travel rather than watching Netflix on your screens in a swanky hotel room. And most importantly, we must make time to feel the troughs and crests in our real world rather than hide in a virtual fantasy world.

It's possible that brain rot may get reversed and 2025 may have a more cheerful word to celebrate next December.

GLOBAL WATCH

A Nation Held Hostage

Haiti, a nation long plagued by instability, has reached a grim nadir. Over the weekend, a massacre in Cite Soleil claimed nearly 180 lives, a macabre crescendo in a year that has seen over 5,000 fatalities due to gang violence. The attacks, reportedly orchestrated by a gang leader on suspicions of witchcraft, reveal the horrifying grip of criminal networks on the nation.

This tragedy is not isolated. October's massacre in Pont-Sonde by the Gran Grif gang, in retaliation for local resistance, was a chilling reminder of how gangs operate with impunity. The gangs, often better armed than Haiti's police, have turned entire neighbourhoods into lawless fiefdoms. They impose taxes, extort businesses, and kidnap for ransom, all while terrorizing residents through indiscriminate killings and assaults. Haiti's political class, mired in infighting, has proven incapable of combating these powerful armed groups. International interventions, including a Kenyan-led security mission, have been underwhelming, hamstrung by insufficient resources and political gridlock in the United Nations.

Haiti's crisis is deepened by the humanitarian fallout. With over 700,000 displaced people and half the population food-insecure, the collapse of public services has turned basic survival into a daily battle. Less than half of healthcare facilities in Port-au-Prince are functional, and humanitarian organizations face relentless threats to their operations. The closure of major facilities, such as the State University of Haiti Hospital, underscores the dire situation. Disease outbreaks, including cholera, now loom ominously over overcrowded

Haiti's unravelling demands a global reckoning, not another chapter of neglect.



and unsanitary displacement camps.

This is not the first time Haiti has been caught in the vice of external neglect and internal dysfunction. After the catastrophic 2010 earthquake, billions in pledged aid were mismanaged, entrenching mistrust in international efforts. The latest crisis, however, is uniquely severe. Armed groups wield increasingly modern weaponry, much of it trafficked from the United States. Meanwhile, political paralysis has thwarted Haiti's attempts to organize elections or establish a functional government. A transitional government has tentatively set elections for 2025, but without security, these plans are more aspirational than realistic.

The violence is also undermining what remains of Haiti's fragile social fabric. Humanitarian workers warn that targeted attacks on healthcare infrastructure are not only exacerbating the immediate crisis but also eroding long-term prospects for recovery. A generation is growing up amid unrelenting violence, displacement, and fear, with few opportunities for education or stability.

The international response has been tepid at best. A U.N.-backed Multinational Security Support mission, led by Kenya, remains under-resourced and lacks a robust mandate. Meanwhile, calls for con-

verting the mission into a full-fledged U.N. peacekeeping force have stalled, blocked by China and Russia in the Security Council. The White House has echoed calls for greater international support, but pledges have yet to materialize. Humanitarian assistance, too, falls woefully short of needs.

What Haiti requires now is a reimagined international approach. The Kenyan-led mission must be bolstered with financial and logistical support, as urged by both the United Nations and the United States. More importantly, this mission must evolve into a full-fledged peacekeeping operation with the mandate to dismantle gangs and restore order. Efforts to curb arms trafficking, particularly from the United States, must also be redoubled. This would require robust international coordination and stricter enforcement mechanisms, both of which have been lacking so far.

At the same time, the Haitian government must take responsibility for accelerating its political transition. The longer it delays substantive reforms, the more entrenched gang rule becomes. The world has abandoned Haiti before, and the results are on harrowing display. The choice for the international community is stark: intervene meaningfully or bear witness to the disintegration of a nation in slow motion.

STATES WATCH

A Move Towards National Leadership?

In a theatrical flourish at the West Bengal Assembly, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently took aim at provocative claims from certain Bangladeshi politicians who suggested that their country has a legitimate stake in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. In a sharp rebuttal, she sarcastically wondered whether Indians would "have lollipop" when external forces tried to occupy Indian lands.

Her retort seemed to underscore a deft balancing act of apparently defending India's sovereignty while preaching restraint to her constituents. Yet, her carefully calibrated rhetoric also hints at ambitions that extend beyond Kolkata.

Banerjee urged West Bengal's citizens not to fall prey to inflammatory rhetoric emanating from Dhaka, where a Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader's statement had stirred emotions on both sides of the border. In an unusual display of unity, she highlighted how even imams in her state condemned the attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh, presenting West Bengal as a beacon of harmony. "The same blood flows in the veins of Hindus and Muslims," she reminded her audience, emphasizing collective responsibility to maintain peace.

At the same time, her critique of Bangladeshi provocateurs was tempered with a swipe at her

domestic rivals. She urged media houses to act responsibly, contrasting West Bengal's media freedoms with the heavy-handedness of Uttar Pradesh. Her appeal to calm extended beyond the political spectrum, reminding all parties that destabilization in the region would reverberate across borders, affecting the lives



WEST BENGAL

of families with ties in both nations.

Banerjee is no stranger to political recalibration. Facing accusations of minority appeasement from the BJP, which has made steady inroads into her state, she has sought to counterbalance the narrative by apparently speaking out on behalf of the persecuted Hindus in Bangladesh. Her latest remarks, directed as much at the BJP as at the Hindu electorate, aim to reclaim ground lost to the saffron juggernaut. By invoking the issue of minority persecution in Bangladesh—a topic that resonates with Hindu nationalist sentiment—

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's measured rhetoric over the Bangladesh issue reveals a leader eyeing domestic stability and national prominence.

Ms. Banerjee deftly signals empathy for a constituency that has largely eluded her grasp.

Most notably, Banerjee's tone and substance reflected a careful adherence to the central government's policy on Bangladesh. She framed her approach within the parameters of India's official diplomatic stance. By deferring to the Ministry of External Affairs and referencing Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's recent high-level talks in Dhaka, she projected an image of a leader attuned to national interests.

Her remarks carry a subtext of political ambition. Having recently expressed dissatisfaction with the INDIA bloc's cohesion, she hinted at her capacity to lead the opposition alliance, even while managing her responsibilities as Chief Minister. The timing of her statements hints at ambitions that stretch beyond Bengal. In the INDIA bloc's fractious coalition, Banerjee has positioned herself as a leader capable of uniting disparate factions over the Congress' impotent leadership, as evinced by the latter party's debacles in Haryana and especially the Maharashtra Assembly polls.

Her appeal to Hindu voters may be aimed at neutralizing the BJP's advantage in projecting the opposition as beholden to minority interests, thus bolstering her credibility on a national stage. This dual messaging—a commitment to regional stability paired with veiled national aspirations—is quintessential Mamata Banerjee.

Her response to the Bangladesh issue allows her to court Hindu voters, counter BJP narratives and position herself as a potential all-India leader. Whether this strategy yields dividends or alienates her core base—the minorities—remains uncertain. What is clear is her intent to emerge as both West Bengal's 'protector' and a national political force.



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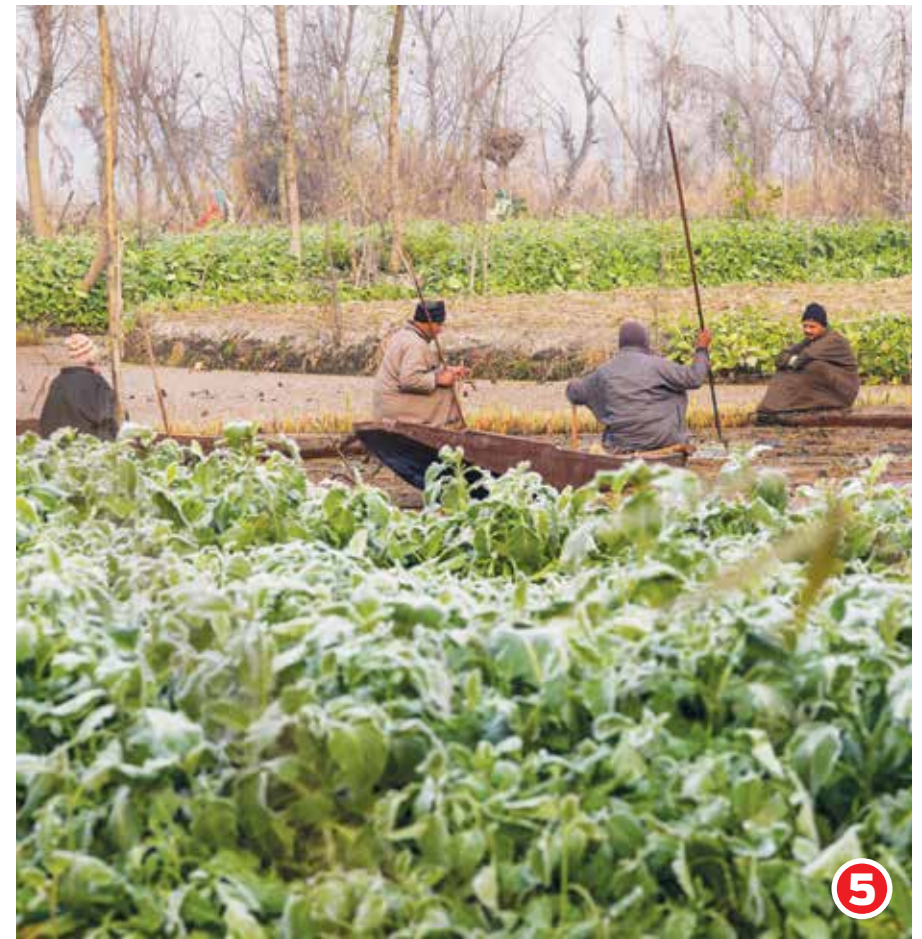
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KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Tourists pose in the snow after fresh snowfall in Solang Valley in Manali of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Bollywood actor-couple Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal arrive at the Jodhpur airport for their wedding anniversary celebration.
3. Singer and actor Diljit Singh Dosanjh offers prayer at the historical Mahakaleswar temple, in Ujjain of MP.
4. People from the Tibetan community pray for their Spiritual leader Dalai Lama in Dhanbad of Jharkhand.
5. Farmers work at a field on a winter morning in the interiors of Dal Lake in Srinagar of J&K.



5

All Pictures PTI, AP

TALKING SENSE

Why Maharashtra needs a separate Science & Technology department?



By
Chaitanya Giri

Maharashtra is India's biggest and most industrialised state economy, and it will reach the 1 trillion dollar state gross domestic product mark before 2035. Through its two registrars of companies - Mumbai and Pune - Maharashtra will increasingly house numerous R&D-intensive industries, including enormous data centres, semiconductor OSAT and ATPs, electronics, automobiles, new energy, large pharmaceutical and biotechnology plants, space, aerospace, and defence companies, speciality chemicals, and other manufacturing and high-end artificial intelligence-based services. Of course, industrial investments are a state subject, but attracting high-end global industries in times of global geoeconomic and geopolitical flux, and harbouring them in Maharashtra, among other states, and encouraging the indigenous ones to follow suit is going to be a national priority for New Delhi. It was not without a reason that the system decided to have a massive show of strength at the oath-taking ceremony of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar. But how prepared is Maharashtra?

There's a new government in Maharashtra, which, at the outset, is very stable, very accommodating, and likely to be speedy in terms of decision-making and executions. What was evident from the oath-taking ceremony was that it would be a 'double-engine' sarkaar. If one is to make a strategic recommendation in



the larger national interest, this Fadnavis-Shinde-Pawar Mahayuti government may pay heed to it. The government must swiftly establish a sought-after ministerial portfolio with a scientific research and technological development mandate.

Maharashtra is looking towards solving its inherent problems and finding answers for national and global ones. Our farmers of the state are eager to find solutions to environmental stresses that affect agriculture; the solutions can come out of R&D. The under-privileged and middle classes are seeking better houses, transportation, sanitation and next-generation skills - this could again come from R&D; the state is seeking better performance on matters of environmental sustainability, reducing the government's overall carbon footprint, expansive forests, fully decarbonised public transport, and clean air and water bodies, again solutions lie in R&D. To add, the ambitious task of connecting every district with an expressway would also demand attracting world-class R&D-intensive industries in Maharashtra and create new growth centres.

In a world where geoeconomic multipolarity is becoming a reality, India and, for that matter, the Maharashtra government cannot expect scientific and technological

solutions to the issues and challenges affecting the state to come from overseas. A would-be trillion-dollar industrialised state economy must set an example by promoting, financing, and end-using scientific and technological solutions through startups, MSMEs, and corporate R&D labs.

In post-independence India, science and technology were accorded a national mandate. It was the central government that cultivated career scientists and technologists through proper recruitment and career progression processes. At this point, Maharashtra has several laboratories run by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Defence Research Development Organisation, the Indian Council on Agricultural Research, the Indian Council on Medical Research, the Department of Atomic Energy, the Ministry of Earth Sciences, and the Department of Science and Technology, all entities belonging to the central government. Maharashtra, or no state for that matter, can create a new Ministry of Science and Technology without a dedicated workforce and institutions. But what the Maharashtra government can practically do, at a quick pace, is parallelise the mandates of its Department of Industries (MoI) and Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation (DSSEI).



The DSSEI has a tidy Maharashtra State Innovation Society that has been working towards encouraging early-stage innovators, offering them finances through the Maharashtra Innovation and Technological Development Fund, managing a network of startup incubators, and harnessing necessary skills among budding innovation entrepreneurs. However, the DSSEI does not directly facilitate the potential of MSMEs and large-scale industries, which are better endowed to carry out in-house corporate R&D and work on innovations reaching higher levels of commercial readiness than startups do. This falls under the mandate of the Department of Industries.

The Department of Industries (DoI) runs a one-stop promotion body called the Maharashtra Industry, Trade and Investment Facilitation Cell, also known as MAITRI. MAITRI helps investors set their industrial units based on the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators. However, these Indicators do not include facilitation for ramping up corporate R&D.

Moreover, the DoI's MAITRI platform apparently does not currently offer exemptions, tax holidays, or incentives for specifically promoting corporate, large-industry, and MSME-level R&D.

Now, to address the parochial question often asked by perennial naysayers? Why should the government help the corporates? Every state in India should give their utmost to appear on the global rankings of the world's greatest innovation ecosystems. Apart from the strategic thinking of the central government to increase India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index, which India has been steadily rising in the past 10 years, the states also have a role to play. The DSSEI is setting the foundation for low-technology readiness level innovations from its mandate area; the DoI must do the same if Maharashtra intends to attract R&D-intensive companies into its realms. If DoI enables corporate R&D, the same corporates will be better poised

to source and finance low-TRL innovations happening in incubators supported by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society. Where the DSSEI supports low-TRL innovation, the DoI would support high-TRL innovation marching towards commercial readiness.

To that end, the Fadnavis-Shinde-Pawar triumvirate should consider reforming the Department of Industries into the Department of Industries, Science and Technology. Such a step would only benefit the young, the aspirational, and the talented citizens of the land of the Metres, Talpades, Mashelkars, Kakodkars, and Naralikars, among other scientific greats our Maharashtra has raised. And lead India's growth story on all fronts possible.

(Dr. Chaitanya Giri is a Space and Emerging Technology Fellow at the Centre for Security, Strategy and Technology, Observer Research Foundation, Mumbai.)

Shami in focus as Bengal face rampant Baroda in quarters

Bengaluru: Continuing his fine run in his comeback from ankle surgery, India pacer Mohammed Shami will be in the spotlight as Bengal face strong challenge from a rampaging Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 quarterfinal here on Wednesday.

Shami played a key role in Bengal's thrilling three-run win over Chandigarh to help them enter the last-eight stage.

Batting at No. 10, Shami hit a crucial unbeaten 17-ball 32 to lift Bengal to 159 for 9. With the ball, he bowled a tight spell, taking 1/13 in his initial three overs.

In all, Shami has now played nine domestic games -- one Ranji Trophy (42.3 overs) and eight SMAT T20 games (31.3 over) -- after returning to action. He has bowled a total of 64 overs and taken 16 wickets.

But, Baroda have sounded warning as they sizzled with the bat in the competition by setting a world record for the highest total in men's T20 cricket, posting 349/5 against Sikkim to storm into the quarterfinals.

They also broke the record for most sixes in a T20 innings, hitting 37.

Bhanu Pania led the charge with a blistering 134 off 51 balls, supported by Shivalik Sharma (55 off 17) and Vishnu Solanki (50 off 16).

Baroda's bowlers, led by skipper Krunal Pandya, has been in fine form as well and Bengal will have their task cut out.

The evening match here will see Delhi take on Uttar Pradesh who defeated Andhra Pradesh to make the cut.

Rinku Singh and Vipraj Nigam have been in fine form for UP as the duo added 48 runs in just three overs to seal their four-wicket win.

Delhi have been dominant in the group stage, securing six wins from seven matches to confirm their last-eight berth.

Priyansh Arya, with one century and one fifty, has been their leading run-getter (252), while the likes of Yash Dhull (185), Himmat Singh (179) and Ayush Badoni (102) will also look to play a key role in batting.

At Alur, Madhya Pradesh will take on Saurashtra, while Mumbai will face Vidarbha.

All eyes will be on skipper Shreyas Iyer as Ranji giants Mumbai won five out of six to top their Group E.

In-form Iyer has led from the front with 278 runs, including one century and one fifty, and averages 69.50 at a strike rate of 200.

Mumbai have dropped all-rounder Shams Mulani for the knockout stage.

Saurashtra, who secured direct qualification by being the best second-placed side in the group stages, will face Madhya Pradesh, led by India batter Rajat Patidar.

Patidar has been in fine form with three fifties in the tournament to be the leading run-getter (253) for his side.

Venkatesh Iyer will also be in focus, having become the third most expensive buy at Rs 23.75 crore in the IPL Mega Auction.

Quarterfinal Lineups:

At Alur: Madhya Pradesh vs Saurashtra (9am); Mumbai vs Vidarbha (1.30pm).

At Bengaluru: Baroda vs Bengal (11am); Delhi vs Uttar Pradesh (4.30pm). -PTI



Sumit Tomar (right) a member of the Army Service Corps (ASC) 'Tornadoes' of the Indian Army, rides a motorcycle in an attempt to break the world record for the 'longest no-hands motorcycle wheelie' in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

MSSA partners with Dream Sports Foundation

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Dream Sports Foundation (DSF) announced a five-year partnership with the Mumbai School Sports Association (MSSA), one of India's oldest and most prestigious school sports organizations. This collaboration will span across 20 sports with a focus on Hockey, Football, Cricket, Athletics, Table Tennis and Badminton.

MSSA has played a historic role in the growth of sports in the city with legends like Dilip Vengsarkar, Sachin Tendulkar, Ajit Agarkar, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Prithvi Shaw, Chirag Shetty and many more, participat-



ing in tournaments in their youth.

Through this partnership, DSF will help MSSA promote fitness and discipline among thousands of school-going students in Mumbai while enhancing the quality of their existing championships. In addition to this, the DSF will curate training programs for young athletes, PE teachers

and coaches.

Commenting on the collaboration, Bhavit Sheth, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, Dream Sports said, "We're thrilled to partner with an association that is integral to Mumbai's grassroots sporting culture and has made the city proud. In line with our vision to Make Sports Better, we're excited to support

young athletes and help unlock their potential while contributing to India's vision of becoming a sporting superpower."

Rev. Fr. Jude Rodrigues, President, Mumbai School Sports Association said, "We are excited to take another step forward in improving Mumbai's sporting future by joining hands with Dream Sports Foundation.

This collaboration will help Mumbai athletes stay ahead of the curve while adhering to the foundation's vision and mission. This partnership marks the beginning of an exciting journey to add to Mumbai's illustrious sporting legacy."

Indian batters focus on red-ball preparations

Adelaide: Reeling from their humiliating 10-wicket defeat in the pink-ball Test, the under-fire Indian batters, led by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, turned their attention to red-ball preparations with an intensive net session here on Tuesday, aiming to bounce back in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

While Australia moved to Brisbane for the third Test from Saturday, the Indian team chose to stay back, focusing on honing their red-ball skills, particularly their defensive techniques and judgment in leaving deliveries.

"It's time to look ahead. Preparations for the Brisbane Test starts right here in Adelaide," the BCCI posted on X, sharing a video of Team India's practice.

Struggling with poor form, having scored just 142 runs with only one fifty (52) in his last 12 innings, the Indian skipper, who rejoined the team after the birth of his son, aimed to quickly regain his rhythm as he faced both Indian spinners and pacers.

Dropped himself to No 6, Rohit capped scores of three and six in Adelaide; first, he was adjudged LBW to a fuller delivery that nipped back, while in the second essay he was cleaned up by a length ball

from his Aussie counterpart Pat Cummins that held its line and clipped the off stump.

Kohli, who ended his 16-month century drought with a hundred in Perth, fell victim to edging two deliveries -- first to second slip and then to wicketkeeper in the pink ball Test.

The star Indian batter looked full of intent as had a watchful start to his net session before slowly finding his flow.

KL Rahul looked more subdued, focusing more on his defence, while Rishabh Pant played a few pick up shots.

Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who starred with a 161 in India's massive 295-run win in the opening Test, was the aggressor among the all, displaying his cheeky shots and even stepped out to the Indian bowlers.

The bowling unit consisted the likes of Harshit Rana, Akash Deep, Yash Dayal and the spin trio of Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Washington Sundar, while there were a few throwdown specialists as well.

The key Indian pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj along with seam-bowling allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy looked to have a lean day. -PTI



Indian (in blue) and Chinese players during the 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship 56th place match in New Delhi on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

Chennaiyin, Hyderabad desperate for a win to revive campaign

Chennai: Struggling at the bottom-half of the table both Chennaiyin FC and Hyderabad FC will look to revive campaign when they clash in the Indian Super League on Wednesday.

The two teams are in an urgent need for a shift in momentum, with two-time former champions Chennaiyin FC dropping to ninth in the standings following one draw and three defeats on the trot. A win can take them to the seventh spot.

Hyderabad FC have also suffered three losses in a row to be one place ahead of the laggards Moham- medan Sporting with seven

points from 10 games.

The Owen Coyle-coached Marina Machans have endured a challenging run, going three games without a goal, a streak they'll aim to break.

Despite scoring 16 goals in 11 matches this season, Chennaiyin's attack has faltered recently, and they have failed to score in their last two meetings with Hyderabad.

Head coach Owen Coyle, on the verge of completing 50 ISL matches in charge, will be eager to mark the milestone with a victory.

Connor Shields will have to play a key role in the midfield as his delivery

from the flanks will be crucial in supplying chances to forwards like Daniel Chima Chukwu, who has a strong record against Hyderabad, including five goals in previous encounters.

Hyderabad FC has also struggled for consistency, conceding 11 first-half goals this season - more than any other team. Their defensive frailty often force them into catch-up mode, disrupting their rhythm.

Hyderabad have failed to score in four of their last six games. Their only wins in this stretch came when they found the net, underscoring the importance of converting chances.

Pune Paltan rope in Thakur as assistant coach

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Going through difficult times, defending champions Pune Paltan have roped in Ajay Thakur in the role of an assistant coach to change his fortunes in the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL).

According to the team officials, Thakur brings with him a wealth of experience and a deep emotional connection to the squad with whom he spent two seasons.

Speaking about his return, Thakur expressed his excitement by saying, "I feel really good because when I was playing, I was also part of this team. Now, in the third phase of my career, I've returned to the same team."

The timing of his return

is particularly significant. With the team at a crucial juncture in the tournament, Thakur's expertise could be the catalyst they need. The defending champions have had a tough season and are seventh on the points table having lost their last three matches on their home ground.

Team CEO Kailash Kandpal highlighted the strategic thinking behind bringing Thakur on board. "We always believe in building our team for the long term. The management sees him not just as a coach, but as a guiding force who can provide invaluable insights to the current players," he explained.

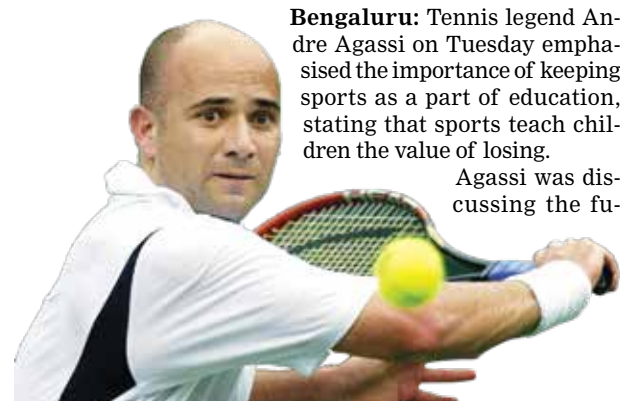
Thakur represented the Purneri Paltan from season 3 and 4, playing 30 matches, scoring 115 Raid Points

across both seasons. Ironically, he also made his debut as a coach against the Dabang Delhi K.C., the team with whom he won the PKL trophy in 2021, alongside their current head coach Joginder Narwal.

His return to the PKL mat was also lauded by Dabang Delhi K.C.'s head coach Joginder Narwal, who said, "Ajay is someone I've played with for many years, both in national and international tours and in Pro Kabaddi. We were even roommates when we were on the same team. He's not just an excellent kabaddi player, but also a great person. I'm very happy to see him return as an assistant coach, and he definitely has the capability to contribute to the team."



Sports teaches value of losing: Andre Agassi



Bengaluru: Tennis legend Andre Agassi on Tuesday emphasised the importance of keeping sports as a part of education, stating that sports teach children the value of losing.

Agassi was discussing the fu-

ture of sports and education as a foundation for excellence at the TiE Global Summit 2024 in Bengaluru.

"Even when you have a failure, you have to get up and play again the next day. So, what sports is teaching you is that focusing on winning and losing is really a distraction from what we need to be thinking about. We need to be thinking about how to get better," he said.

Agassi, who has been investing in education for the "disadvan-

taged" since 2001, shared that he has helped build 130 schools for about 80,000 kids in the United States, a feat he attributes to pushing himself to stay ahead of challenges.

"Sports is all about problem-solving. Tennis taught me how to navigate a very intense environment and maintain my objectivity and problem-solving abilities. It forces me to be present, but also to understand the context of what I'm doing," Agassi said.

Speaking about his rebellious

phase, Agassi said it was something he had to go through to reach where he is today.

"Vulnerability is essential for growth, and I think vulnerability eventually leads to humility."

The session, called Marathon Mindset, also featured Aakash Chaudhry, Co-Founder and Chief Mentor of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), who discussed the future of EdTech in India.

Agassi agreed that technology in education will play a signifi-

cant role in filling the huge gap in personalised learning that every child deserves. He said this belief is part of the reason why he invested in the Indian EdTech firm, Square Panda.

"I think technology can play an essential role, not just in scalability, but also in optimising personalised learning. That's why I got involved with Square Panda. We are here because of the sheer scale of impact the technology will bring to education," he said.

The tennis legend mentioned

that he has been traveling frequently to India—at least two to three times a year over the last few years—"to understand the ground realities". He hopes to "make an impact in English language learning in India in the near future."

"If a child can just be conversational in English in India, it can bring about generational change. What I hope to do is provide a vehicle for that scale and growth in literacy and English as a second language here," Agassi added.