## THE PERFECT VO



**Most of fatal accidents** involve Olectra vehicles



Expect economic growth of 6.5-7 pc this fiscal: Agarwal



At Rs 20.50 lakh, Abhishek Dalhor most expensive buy in ISPL

## At 18, Gukesh youngest world chess champion



Singapore: Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh on Thursday became the youngest world chess champion at 18 years after

beating title-holder Ding Liren in the last game of a nerve-wracking showdown to herald a new era of dominance for the country's chess players.

Taking forward the incredible legacy of the great Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh became only the second Indian to clinch the coveted prize after the iconic player, who owned the crown five times in his career.

After settling into "semiretirement", the 55-year-old Anand, incidentally, played a pivotal role in shaping Gukesh at his chess

Gukesh secured the requisite 7.5 points as against 6.5 of his Chinese rival after winning the 14th and last classical time control

game of the match that seemed headed for a draw for most part. As winner, he will walk away with a whopping USD 1.3 million (approx Rs 11.03 crore) from the 2.5 million prize purse.

"I was dreaming this moment for the last 10 years. I am happy that I realised the dream (and made it) into reality," the soft-spoken Chennai-lad told reporters after the historic triumph here.

"I got a bit emotional because I was not expecting to win. But then I got a chance to press on," he added.

The triumph was expectedly hailed across India with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing it as "historic and exemplary".

"This is the result of his unparalleled talent, hard work and unwavering determination," Modi posted on X.

The reticent teenager grinned widely and raised his arms in celebration after the victory, a stark contrast from the poker face he usually sports while playing.

Even on Thursday, when the analysts had proclaimed that the match, in all likelihood, would go into a tie-breaker, Gukesh's face hardly gave anything away as he gained the upper-hand.

THE ONLY SECOND INDIAN TO CLINCH THE COVETED PRIZE AFTER VISHWANATHAN ANAND

It was a momentary lapse of concentration by Liren in what seemed a drawn endgame and as it happened, the entire chess world was left in a state of shock.

The players were just left with a rook and a bishop and Gukesh had two pawns against one trying to make a foray without much

However, the ability to keep pushing for more gave Gukesh a distinct advantage over the Chinese and the latter simply collapsed to give the title to Gukesh.

Before Gukesh's feat on Thursday, the legendary Garry Kasparov of Russia was the youngest world champion when he won the title at the age of 22, dethroning Anatoly Kar-

Gukesh had entered the match as the youngest ever challenger to the world crown after winning the Candidates tournament earlier this year.

"Every chess player wants to live this dream. I am living my dream," said Gukesh.

Gukesh, who won the 14th game against Liren after 58 moves in four hours, is the 18th world chess champion overall.

If Thursday's game was also drawn, winner was to be decided in shorter duration tiebreaks on Friday.

Gukesh had won the third and 11th rounds before Thursday's decisive game, while the 32-year-old Liren emerged victorious in the

opening and 12th games. All other games were drawn in the match. "I came here suddenly and I lost the first game itself. Luckily while going back I had

Vishy Sir (Anand) in the lift and he said 'I had only 11 games left you have 13'," Gukesh Anand was citing his 2006 first match over Veselin Topalov that he had eventually won after losing the first game. Interestingly,

Anand had won that match in the last Classical (12th) game, with black pieces. Anand lost the title to Norwegian maverick Magnus Carlsen back in 2013. It was on the 55th move that the dye was

cast

New Delhi: In an important development, the Supreme Court on Thursday restrained till further directions the courts in the country from entertaining fresh lawsuits and passing any effective interim or final orders in pending ones seeking to reclaim reli-

"As the matter is subjudice in this court, we deem it appropriate that no fresh suit would be registered and proceedings are undertaken till further orders of this court," the

gious places, especially

mosques and dargahs (a

muslim shrine).

#### CJI-led bench said. **Cases of Religious Places** The direction of a bench

comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan stalls proceedings in about 18 lawsuits filed by various Hindu parties seeking survey to ascertain original religious character of 10 mosques including Gyanvapi at Varanasi, Shahi Idgah Masjid at Mathura and Shahi Jama Masjid at Sambhal where four persons' lives were snuffed

out in clashes.

The special bench was hearing about six petitions, including the lead one filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, challenging various provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act,

The 1991 law prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provides for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.

No court to entertain, pass directions till orders

However, the dispute relating to Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid at Ayodhya was kept out of its purview.

There are several cross petitions which seek strict implementation of the 1991 law to maintain communal harmony and to

tus of mosques, sought to be reclaimed by Hindus on the ground that they were temples before invaders razed them

The bench made it clear that it would be examining the "vires (legality), contours and ambit" of the 1991 law and it was imperative to ask other courts to "stay off their hands" till it passed any further

"In pending suits, the courts will not pass any effective interim or final order, including order of survey, till further orders," the bench said.

Senior advocate J Sai Deepak, appearing for a Hindu party, opposed the order restraining all other courts and said the parties should have been heard before such a direction.

The CJI said it was quite natural to ask courts to not to pass any order as the Supreme Court was hearing the larger issue.

The bench said if parties insisted then, the matter could be sent to a high court.

"Can the trial courts overreach the Supreme Court," asked the bench and said the apex court was already dealing with the validity of the law.

Observing the court couldn't decide the matter without the Centre's response, it asked the government to file its reply to the pleas and cross ones in

It also granted a further of four weeks to other parties to file their rejoinder after the Centre filed its

#### Surgeon dies after marathon

Panaji: A 29-year-old dental surgeon died of a massive heart attack after completing a marathon in Goa, his father said.

Dr Mithun Kudalkar from Vasco city in south Goa, died on Sunday, his father Dr Dynaneshwar Kudalkar, who is former chief medical officer of Mormugao Port Trust hospital, told PTI.

"He felt uneasy after taking part in the Goa River Marathon on Sunday.

A variety

items, called 'Byanjana' in

Odia, offered

at Gour Bihar

Ashram on

Dwadashi'

in Puri on

Thursday.

the occasion

of food

#### Over 1,300 posts vacant in IAS, 586 in IPS

New Delhi: There are 1,316 and 586 vacant posts of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday.

Of the total sanctioned strength of 6.858 IAS, there were 5,542 officers in-position, as on January 1, 2024, he said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

There were 4,469 IPS officers working against their sanctioned strength of 5,055, said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Of the 1,316 vacant posts of IAS, 794 were meant for direct recruit and 522 were promotion posts, he said.

Of the 586 vacant IPS posts, 209 were for direct recruit and 377 were promotion posts. There are 2.151 Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers in-position against their sanctioned strength of 3,193.

Of the 1,042 vacant IFS posts, 503 were for direct recruit and 539 promotion posts, he added

The IAS, IPS and IFS officers are selected through the civil services examination conducted by the UPSC annually.

## Cabinet nod to bills for simultaneous polls

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved two bills, including one to amend the Constitution to implement "one nation, one election", and the draft legislations are likely to be introduced in Parliament in the ongoing winter session, sources said. As of now, the Cabinet

has given its nod to draft legislations to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies only, the sources said. While a high-level com-

mittee led by former president Ram Nath Kovind had also proposed holding the municipality and panchayat polls along with the national and state elections in a phased manner, the Cabinet has decided to stay away, "as of now", from the manner in which local body elections are conducted.

The Constitution amendment bill to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies will not require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the

states, the sources noted. Another Constitution bill proposed by the Kovind panel was aimed at creating



provisions to hold simultaneous elections to municipalities and panchayats, along with the elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, by inserting a new Article

It would have required ratification by half of the state assemblies.

But the Union Cabinet has kept the local body polls out as of now.

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

The second bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union territories that have legislative assemblies -- Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir -- to align the terms of these Houses with other legislative assemblies and the Lok

Sabha as proposed in the

medallion of pink cloth

Constitution amendment

The statutes it proposes

The proposed bill will be

The government is keen mentary committee.

The sources said the government also wants to consult the speakers of various state legislative assemblies

Moving ahead with its "one nation, one election" plan, the government in September accepted the recommendations of the high-level committee for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner.

ment of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act-1991, the Government of Union Territories Act-1963 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019.

an ordinary legislation not requiring a change in the Constitution and will also not need ratification by the

on holding wider consultations on bills that are likely to be referred to a parlia-

through the committee.

Top 10 recommendations by panel ...Page4 Woman kills 1-yr-old son after quarrel

Thane: A woman allegedly killed her one-year-old son by throwing him in a water tank following a dispute with her mother-in-law over the infant's health issues in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place at Kasane village near Vasind in Shahapur taluka on Wednesday and the Padgha police later arrested the woman, they

The child's father, who worked as a security guard at a nearby godown, married the woman in 2022.

Last year, the couple's son was born with a congenital illness and had been receiving treatment at the Wadia Hospital in Mumbai, an official from Padgha police station said.

The woman and her mother-in-law were frequently at odds over the child's care and well-being.

On Tuesday, the child's grandmother, concerned about his health, decided to take him to Titwala during a visit to her daughter.

ver there and his grandmother brought him back to Kasane late Tuesday night, the official said.

However, the child developed a fe-

Later, a heated argument took place between the child's mother and grandmother over his health condition, he

The child's father left for his night shift work after attempting to calm the situation.

When he returned on Wednesday morning, he briefly played with his son before falling asleep. During this time, the child's mother

allegedly drowned him in a water

tank located on the first floor of the house, the official said.

Later, when the man was unable to find his son, he began a search for him along with family members and

In the meantime, the child's mother

approached police with a complaint, claiming her son had gone missing, the official said. Her husband grew suspicious and confronted her. The woman then con-

fessed to him that she had killed their child, he said. The man subsequently contacted

the Padgha police and filed a The body was recovered and sent to

a government hospital for post-mor-

tem, police inspector Bala Kumbhar

## Garland worn by Mahatma open for bids in UK

## By Aditi Khanna

London: A tinselled garland presented to and worn by Mahatma Gandhi during the iconic Dandi March of the Indian freedom struggle in 1930 remains open for bids after it failed to meet its GBP 20-30,000 guide price estimate at a

UK auction this week. The garland, in folded paper wrappers inscribed in Gujarati, is said to have been presented as the Salt March passed near the Ahmedabad home of Gandhi's personal physician Dr Balvantrai N Kanuga and was offered by his wife,

Nanduben Kanuga. It came up for auction as part of an 'Islamic and Indian Art' sale by Lyon & Turnbull in London on Wednesday.

"I am very surprised that the 'Gandhi Garland' did not find a home on the day of the auction," said Kristina Sanne, Head of Sale at the auction house specialising in fine arts and antiques

quite a lot of interest since the sale and hope to sell it to the highest bidder. It deserves a great home," she

"That said, we have had

The garland is composed of a large teardrop-shaped backed on card, applied with silver and gold thread and sequins in an elaborate decorative pattern. It is edged with gold tinsel, with four smaller rectangular medallions and two triangular medallions similarly decorated and all connected with gold threads to form a necklace. It passed on through de-

scent from the collection of

the late Dr Balvantrai N Kanuga, who along with his wife spent extensive periods at Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram as fellow satyagrahis. An amateur photograph of Gandhi



being presented with the garland is inscribed on the reserve to read: "Gandhiji Nanduben Kanuga. On the day of Dandi March. At



Bungalow 12th March

The literature with the auction lot states: "This garland was presented to

Gandhi to mark an auspicious beginning to the Salt March, a major non-violent protest in India in March-April 1930. The Salt March was one of the most successful campaigns in Gandhi's struggle against British rule in India to win equal rights and freedom for Indians.

"Starting at his ashram (religious retreat) at Sabarmati (near Ahmedabad), the march reached Dandi after a journey of some 240 miles. On the morning of April 6, Gandhi and his followers picked up handfuls of salt from along the seashore. In so doing, they

technically 'produced' salt and broke the law."

A photograph accompanying the garland shows Nanduben Kanuga placing the garland around Gandhi's neck and it is said to have been subsequently returned to the Kanugas after the march.

"A few weeks later, Dr Kanuga further contributed to the cause by paying 1600 Rupees for the grains of salt that Gandhi had made at Dandi," reads the footnote.

While the garland remained unsold, the auction attracted fierce bidding for its other highlight lots with

a very fine illustration from a Bhagavata Purana series from Punjab going under the hammer for GBP 27,700 - overshooting its estimate of GBP 15-20,000. A group of six Rajput Equestrian Portraits from Rajasthan exceeded their estimate to fetch GBP 20,160 and an album of Kalighat Paintings sold for GBP 21,420.

"The Indian Art section saw frantic bidding throughout and was over 90 per cent sold. A real testament to the buoyancy of the Indian Art market," said Sanne.

#### 'Is there ban on Tipu's birth anniversary?'

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Thursday sought to know if there was a ban on celebrating 18th century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan's birth anniversary, and directed the Pune rural police to decide on a plea that sought to hold a rally to commemorate the occasion.

The court said concerns relating to law and order cannot be a ground to deny permission for a rally.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and S G Dige was hearing a petition filed by one Faiyaz Shaikh, the Pune unit president of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) party, seeking a direction to the police to grant permission to hold a rally to commemorate the birth anniversaries of Tipu Sultan, freedom fighter Maulana Azad and also the Constitution Day.

As per the plea, the Pune rural police had refused to grant permission for the rally and asked the petitioner to celebrate the occasions at his private place and not in public place.

The police had claimed that such rallies would cause law and order problems.

The bench then asked if holding a rally for such events was prohibited.

"Is there a ban to celebrate the birth anniversary of Tipu Sultan? We understand if the rally cannot be permitted in a particular area citing law and order. You (police) can always ask them (petitioner) to change the route," the court said.

The HC said the police can decide the route and if there was any use of derogatory language or any law and order problem, then necessary action could be taken as per law.

# Uneasy calm in Parbhani; about 50 held for violence

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: An uneasy calm prevailed in Parbhani on Thursday with police detaining around 50 persons for the violent protests that rocked the central Maharashtra city over vandalising of a replica of the Constitution.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the mentally unstable man who allegedly damaged the replica was arrested immediately, yet violence took place which was unacceptable.

Opposition leaders, including Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati and Samaiwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, condemned the `insult' to the Constitution, while Congress in Maharashtra asked the government not to commit "atrocities" on Dr B R Ambedkar's followers in the aftermath of the violence.

Some 20 vehicles were damaged during Wednesday's protests, police

The situation was under control, Parbhani collector Raghunath Gawade told PTI.

"Around 50 people have been detained for vandalism, while a man named Pawar has been arrested for allegedly vandalising the replica of the Constitution. He has mental issues. We have got hold of medical documents confirming his mental condition," the official said.

Police were investigating if there was any political motive behind the violence, he added

A bandh was called on Wednesday after the glass-enclosed replica of the Constitution near Dr B R Ambedkar's statue outside the Parbhani railway station was found damaged the previous evening. But the shut-down took a violent turn when a mob indulged in arson and vandalised shops, vehicles and even the district collector's

"We are going through the footage from CCTV cameras and action will be taken against all those responsible. The intention of the agitators will also



be probed," said Inspector General of Police Shahji Umap.

Prohibitory orders banning gathering of more than five persons continue in the city

Speaking to reporters in Delhi, chief minister Fadnavis said the "mentally unstable man" involved in the vandalising of the replica was arrested promptly. "Still, despite action being taken, there was violence. This is not acceptable. Protests can be held by abiding by the Constitution," he said.

State Congress president Nana Patole demanded suspension of the Parbhani Superintendent of Police and stringent punishment for those behind the "desecration" of the Constitution replica.

"While Parbhani was burning, the CM and two deputy CMs were busy distributing ministries....People who do not respect the Constitution are in power, it is leading to such incidents," the Congress leader said, asking the government to stop "atrocities' against Ambedkar's followers.

Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sushma Andhare also accused the government of targeting Ambedkar's followers in the name of combing operations for arresting those who took part in the violent protests.

Maharashtra does not have a home minister (as cabinet expansion is awaited) and questions have arisen about the law and order situation, she

A local traders' association claimed that police did not act in time to curb

Suryakant Hake, president of the Parbhani Vyapari Mahasangh, said, "We voluntarily participated in the bandh on our own. But those who had called the bandh were not stopped by the collector and SP (when violence began)....They gave a free hand to the people till 1 pm.

"The collector and SP should be suspended and transferred....Until action is taken against the culprits, we will not open the markets," he said.

#### 59 students hospitalised due to fumes

Mumbai: As many as 59 students and a woman were affected after exposure to fumes from a storage tank at a company in Ratnagiri district on Thursday.

While police said the tank was in JSW Energy's thermal power plant, the company said no such incident took place on their premises. The affected students are from the Jaigad Vidya Mandir school, which is near the plant.

Of the 250 students who were in the school, 53 boys, six girls and a woman were admitted to different hospitals after they complained of eve irritation, restlessness and nausea following exposure to fumes coming from the cleaning process of the tank, officials said.

"Three students are in the ICU though their health is stable. Compared to the others, they are experiencing more restlessness and nausea, and have complained of an aggravated stomach ache," a health official from the district civil hospital told PTI.

The students are under observation and will most likely be discharged on Friday afternoon. Doctors will conduct a thorough checkup before letting the children go home.

The fumes were from ethyl mercaptan, which is a colourless, flammable, and highly odorous liquid that is used as an odorant for natural gas and as a starting material for plastics, insecticides, and antioxidants, a police official said.

"At JSW Energy, we prioritize the safety and wellbeing of our employees, the community, and the environment. We adhere to stringent safety protocols and continuously monitor our operations to ensure they meet highest standards," JSW Energy said.

## Ajit greets uncle Pawar on birthday



Mumbai: With eyebrows raised over Ajit Pawar meeting his estranged uncle Sharad Pawar on his birthday, NCP leader Anil Patil on Thursday said the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister's act was appropriate as he greeted the senior Pawar on behalf of the people of the state.



He said Ajit Pawar has won the mandate of the people in the recently-held Maharashtra assembly Sharad Pawar on Thurs-

day turned 84 and celebrated his birthday with members of his family and well-wishers, including estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, in Delhi.

The former Union minister cut the birthday cake with a sword at his 6, Janpath residence in the national capital surrounded by party workers. Ajit Pawar, who parted ways with the senior Pawar last year and handed out a resounding defeat to the veteran leader in the state assembly polls, was present at the birthday celebrations along with his family members.

Aiit Pawar's wife and Rajya Sabha member Sunetra Pawar, and their son Parth, visited the senior leader along with NCP leaders Praful Patel, Chhagan Bhuibal and Sunil Tatkare there.

The meeting between the leaders of the rival factions raised eyebrows in political

Talking to a TV channel, Anil Patil, who is NCP's chief whip in the state assembly, said Sharad Pawar was a senior leader and greeting him on his birthday was his duty.

"He will always be respectable to us," the MLA from Amalner assembly segment in north Maharashtra's Jalgaon district said.

To a question on why Ajit Pawar visited his estranged uncle on his birthday this year, Patil said, "Ajit Pawar has got people's mandate in the assembly polls and it was appropriate to call on Sharad Pawar to wish him on behalf of the people."

"Even though several leaders in the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) are troubled over the election results, they may not switch sides immediately," he said.

"Wait and watch," Patil added.

## BJP's list of probable ministers ready: Fadnavis



New Delhi: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday said the names of the probable ministers from the BJP in his cabinet have been shortlisted and the final decision will be taken by the party's central leadership.

Fadnavis, who was on a two-day visit to Delhi, held discussions on the expansion of his cabinet with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda and senior party leader B L Santosh here on Wednesday night. Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule was also present.

"We are yet to decide on a date for the cabinet expansion. The formula has been decided and you will know about it soon," Fadnavis, who took oath as the chief minister of Maharashtra last week, said.

Separately, Nationalist congress Party (NCP) chief Ajit Pawar said the expansion of the Maharashtra cabinet could take place on December 14.

The BJP-led Mahayuti registered a landslide victory in the Maharashtra Assembly polls last month. The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP coalition won 230 seats while smaller outfits, part of the alliance, emerged victorious on five seats

Besides Fadnavis, Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar were sworn in as deputy chief ministers in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a galaxy of leaders from the arenas of politics, industry and entertainment.

Fadnavis brushed aside reports of differences among the ruling alliance over power-sharing.

#### Harbour line disturbed

harbour line were affected on the second day in a row on Thursday due to techni-

A snag in a suburban train at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at around 5:50pm affected services, leading to delay on the route and overcrowding in trains and at platforms during the evening peak hours, he said.

"To compound problems, the Auxiliary Warning System of a CSMT-bound train got activated at Sandhurst Road for a few minutes and again near Chunabhatti a couple of times.

Mumbai: Dharavi Social Mission

(DSM), a social initiative under

Dharavi Redevelopment Project, or-

ganised a stress management work-

shop at Maharashtra Nature Park.

The event evoked enthusiastic par-

ticipation from Dharavi residents,

who were equipped with valuable

strategies to navigate their daily

mental health challenges more

practical tools to handle stress and

lead a healthier and balanced life-

style at the workshop, held on No-

vember 30, 2024. The DSM organised

workshop offered a holistic mix of

expert-led discussions, interactive

exercises, and mindfulness

sion was a transformative experi-

ence. "The practices like deep

breathing and mindfulness intro-

duced during the workshop are

helping me in my daily life," shared

45-year-old Sangeeta Manohar

Khade. "I have started practicing

them regularly and believe they will

help me manage stress better in the

hardship. Living in one of the most

Dharavikars are no strangers to

For many participants, the ses-

Hundreds of Dharavikars learnt

effectively.

techniques.

long run."

## Chhatrapati Sambhaji-

nagar: A case of extortion has been registered against a Nationalist Con- er First Information Regress Party (NCP) leader and two others in Beed district for allegedly demanding Rs 2 crore from a wind energy firm, police said on Thursday.

the case are also wanted in connection with the murder of a village sarpanch in Kej tehsil of the district two days ago, po-

lice said On Monday, Santosh Deshmukh, sarpanch of Massajog village, was abducted and murdered. Police named Vishnu Chate and Sudarshan

Ghule among the six ac-

On Wednesday, anothport was registered at Kej police station against Valmik Karad, Chate and Ghule for allegedly demanding money from an official of wind power firm Avaada Energy to allow its wind farm to operate in the vicinity of

of the NCP led by Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

month, and asked the company to stop its operations, warning of dire consequences if it did not.

Ghule came to his office on the same afternoon, and threatened him, the complaint said.

A few days ago, Valmik Karad called Shivaji Thopte, who is involved in the same project, to Parli and demanded Rs 2 crore if the company wanted to continue its operations in the area, the complaint said.

Kej police registered an FIR against Karad, Ghule and Chate under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita section 308 (extortion) and other relevant provisions.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE** THIS PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given

that Mrs. Anuradha Sandeep Chalke owned, possessed Flat No. 202, "E" Wing, in "New Patankar Park Co-Op. Hsg. Soc. Ltd.", Nilemore, situated at, Nallasopara (West), Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar, Pin. 401 203

The said flat was originally owned by Mr. C. B. Narsingarao, who died on dated 15/04/2016 leaving behind his only legal heirs namely (1) Smt. Kamal C. B. Narsingarao (Wife), (2) Mrs Anuradha Sandeep Chalke (Daughter) the said Smt. Kamal C. B. Narsingarao is also died on dated 03/08/1993 therefore the legal heirs of the said Late C. B. Narsingarao and Late Kamal C. B. Narsingarao namely Mrs. Anuradha Sandeep Chalke has got transferred the share certificate from society on he name and by Agreement for Sale dated 25/11/2024 the said flat sold/transferred to Mr. Balu Tukaram Dhavale and Mrs. Mohini Balu Dhavale, the said Agreement for sale is duly registered at Sub Registrar office at Vasai-3 having its Doc. Sr. No. 24028/2024 dated 26/11/2024.

said Flat or any part thereof by way of sale, gift, lease, inheritance, lega lien, trust, possession, easement attachment or otherwise howsoeve are hereby required to make the same known to my office within 14 days from the date hereof, failing which my client will not held liable/responsible for such claim/objection and no claim will be entertained thereafter, which please

Place: Mumbai Date 13/12/2024

if any: Bhairavi Keshav

Nairi Jointly with Leena Keshav

Madhur M. Giri Advocate

Flat No. A-103. Paradise Apartment Opp. Panchmukhi Hanumanj Temple, S. T. Depot Road Nallasopara (West) Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar Pin No. 401203

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

All persons claiming an interest in the

neirship, exchange, mortgage, charge

#### Notice is hereby given to public at large that my client Empire Industrial

Estate Co-operative Society Limited bearing registration No. PLR/VSI/ HSG (O)/1737/YEAR2022- 23 dated 27/07/2022 having registered address at Khandipada, Kaman, Bhapane Link Road, Vasai West, Taluka - Vasai District Palghar, are intended to enter into conveyance Deed in respect of Land Property bearing Village Kamar Tal. Vasai, Survey No. 24. Hissa No. 1/1, area admeasuring about 174.00.00 H.R. Sq. Mtrs., assessment Rs.1740.00/- and Survey No. 24 Hissa No. 1/2, area admeasuring about 183.60.00 H.R. Sq. Mtrs. assessment Rs. 1836.00/- from the Land Owner namely (1) Mr. Javed Yasin Kojar, (2) Mr. Saced Yasin Kojar and (3) Mr. Salim Jamal Patel who are the owners and occupier of the said Land Property and in peaceful and vacate possession of the said property

Any person having any claim or right in respect of the said Land Property by way of inheritance, share, sale mortgage, lease, lien, license, gift, possession or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby called upon to intimate to the undersigned within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice of their such claim of any with al supporting documents failing which no claim certificate will be issued in favour of my client without reference to such claim & the claims, if any of such person shall be treated as waived 8 not binding upon my client Dated: 13/12/2024

Place : Vasai

Adv. Ramzanali Malik Having office at: Shop No. 15, Sanskruti Building. Near G.G. College, Off. Court Road Vasai West, Taluka - Vasai District - Palghar, Pin code-401 201 Mobile No. 8369183620

Email- ramzanmalik13@gmail.com

Sd/

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"Only Ajit Pawar is capable of handling the finance department. He has presented 10 budgets and knows how to maintain fiscal discipline. If



Ajit Pawar is not made the finance minister, this government will have no relevance."

> Amol Mitkari, Spokesperson, NCP

#### Mumbai: Suburban services on Central Railway's

cal glitches, an official said.

The train was "non responsive" for almost 25 minutes on platform number 2 at CSMT, he said.

## NCP leader booked over extort from wind power firm

Two of the accused in

cused in the case.

Massajog. Karad is a local leader

Sunil Shinde, project officer of Avaada Energy, that Chate called him at

claimed in his complaint Karad's behest last

## empowers Dharavi residents

densely populated areas of Mumbai, they face challenges ranging from economic uncertainty to overcrowding and limited personal space. Amid these pressures, stress becomes a constant companion, often

Stress management workshop

unacknowledged and unresolved. Mental health awareness remains a relatively new concept in Dharavi, where daily survival often takes precedence over emotional well-being. For many, this was their first encounter with formal stressmanagement techniques, and the impact was immediate and

Seema Pakhare, 45 and a resident of PMGP Colony said, "I cried during the meditation course and felt lighter afterward. It reminded me how important it is to take five minutes for ourselves—to sit in silence,

profound.

remember the almighty, and be grateful."

Santosh Agavne, another local, said, "The techniques were explained very well. I have already started applying them to reduce stress in daily life. I will recommend this workshop at my workplace as well, as we all need such sessions."

DSM is a flagship initiative of Dharavi Redevelopment Project Private Limited, dedicated to fostering wholesome development of Dharavi residents encompassing social, economic and infrastructure dimensions. The Mission has special emphasis towards youth, women, industries and underprivileged groups.

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## Most of fatal accidents involve Olectra vehicles

Mumbai: Olectra electric buses were involved in 10 of the 12 fatal accidents of wet-leased buses in civicrun BEST's fleet in the current financial year, officials said on Thursday.

On December 9, an Olectra bus went out of control on an arterial road in Mumbai's Kurla West area and rammed into several vehicles, killing seven and injuring more than 40

Of the 12 fatal accidents in 2024-25, eight involved 12-metre long electric buses from EVEY TRANS, while two each belonged to Olectra Greentech and Tata Motors, as per data from Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking



The December 9 accident involved a 12-metre Olectra bus registered with EVEY TRANS.

According to sources, insufficient training of drivers of wet-leased buses may be among the major reasons for the accidents involving vehicles from BEST's fleet, with many of them getting just 15 days' training against the 3-month course provided to the undertaking's own





Drivers of wet-leased buses are provided by the operator and are not BEST

BEST officials said the undertaking has more than 700 electric buses hired on wet lease from Tata Motors, Switch Mobility (double deckers) and Olectra. These comprise

340 from Tata Motors, 315 from Olectra and 50 from Switch Mobility.

Currently, BEST's fleet consists of 2,913 buses, comprising 1,013 owned buses and 1,900 wet-leased buses. Of the wet-leased buses, 705 are electric ones while 1,195 run on fossil fuels and are sourced from two wet-lease operators, the officials added.

EVEY TRANS and Olectra Greentech are subsidiaries of electric bus manufacturer Olectra, they said.

Earlier, Olectra Greentech provided 40 nine-meter long buses, and this year, EVEY TRANS supplied 275 twelve-meter long electric buses, the official informed.

## Newbies in the House Part-4

## Strong opponent to Dharavi Project

By Ruddhi Phadke

aving to manage the herculean task of finding a solution to the long-awaited and debated Dharavi redevelopment is the new MLA from here, Jyoti Gaikwad. The 47-year-old daughter of veteran Congressman Eknath Gaikwad and sister of the incumbent MP, Varsha Gaikwad. An Ayurveda practitioner who graduated from RA Podar Medical College(Ayurved), she is currently pursuing her PHD from Tilak Col-

Gaikwad points out that she is not new to social work and politics and that she has learnt a lot from her father Eknath Gaikwad. Besides, her medical profession has always given her a pool of opportunities to serve the people. She said she has been a part of several medical camps and has volunteered during covid crisis. "As the head of the anatomy department of Sion Ayurved Hospital which is very close to the Dharavi area, I have closely watched the problems of Dharavi residents and have always had an urge to do something for them," she says.

With her sister in Parliament, Jyoti jumped into the fray to retain the Dharavi assembly constituency within the family. "It was necessary that someone from the Gaikwad family won the Dharavi seat otherwise the Adani project will end up ruining the lives of a lot of innocents. We will not allow a builder to elevate his standard of living even further by pushing these innocent people to build their homes in deplorable lands like dumping grounds and salt pans. We are not against redevelopment; we are against the way residents of Dharavi are planned to be relocated," she says.

Jyoti also listed a few other issues that have been concerning Dharavi for years like toilets inside the house, public BMC built toilets to be allowed to be open all night, water crisis, and sanitation. Even as Jyoti denies lack of safety being a concern in Dharavi, a domestic help working in Mumbai and a resident of Dharavi anonymously told The Perfect Voice, "My daughter once went to my brother's place in the city for a sleep over at his newly



Jyoti Gaikwad

bought house in a proper housing colony. Since then, she refused to come back to Dharavi and moved to my brother's home permanently. Eve teasing, constant fear of being sexually abused right in the backyard of your own house keep most of us in terror and we are scared to leave our daughters alone at home while at

Jyoti says her campaign focussed on real issues of everyday living rather than a religious plank. "A place where people are so concerned about not having enough water running in their taps, who cares about being Hindu or Muslim. Dharavi is a secular place where residents from all communities happily live together. They are struggling for basics,"

When asked about the heated discussions over dynasty politics, Jyoti says: "I believe that if someone is not competent and he/she gets an opportunity due to a political backing then that's wrong. However, any highly educated young aspirant must get an opportunity to work for the society. The criteria should be educational qualification and commitment towards

While Jyoti has promised to not let Adani take over settlements of the innocent and poor people, it is not going to be an easy battle for her. With BJP-led Mahayuti coalition's big win in Maharashtra's assembly elections and Devendra Fadnavis returning as chief minister, among all other stalled projects that are set to get expedited, Dharavi Redevelopment Project is also ready to get a fresh push.

## Video shows man stealing victim's valuables

Mumbai: An unidentified person allegedly stole the claimed her bangles were gold jewellery of a woman under the pretext of helping her as she was fatally wounded in the BEST bus accident in Mumbai, police said on Thursday.

A viral video showed a man telling others that he was taking the woman's jewellery for safe custody and will inform her relatives about it.

Based on her family's complaint, police have registered a case of theft of her valuables, the police said.

Fatima Kaniz Ansari (55) was among the seven persons who died after being mowed down by the BEST bus in Kurla area here on Monday, they said.

Ansari, who worked as an attendant at a hospital, was hit by the speeding BEST bus when she was waiting outside a building on the S G Barve Marg, an official said.

She was found trapped under a car, the official said, adding the unidentified man took away her gold bangles and mobile phone while pretending to help her.

Ansari's relatives stolen by an unidentified person after her death while her mobile phone was returned.

The Mumbai police on Thursday registered a case against the unidentified culprit under sections 303 (theft) and 315 (dishonest misappropriation of property possessed by deceased person at the time of death) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the official said.

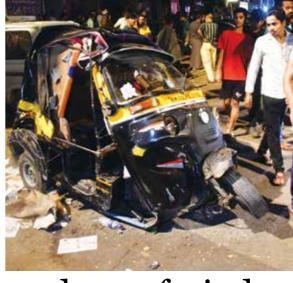
A probe was on into the case, the police added.

The out-of-control electric bus operated by the civic-run Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking rammed into pedestrians and vehicles at around 9.30 pm on Monday on the SG Barve Marg in Kurla

Besides killing seven persons and injuring 42 others, including four policemen on 'bandobast' duty, the accident also wrecked 22 vehicles.

The bus driver has been arrested for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, according to police.





## More collected backpacks, jumped out of window

Mumbai: The CCTV footage of the BEST bus that mowed down seven persons in Mumbai's Kurla area shows driver Sanjay More collecting two backpacks from the cabin and jumping out of a broken window after the accident.

Four to five video clips with a duration of 50 seconds to over 1 minute went viral on social media on Wednesday.

The visuals show passengers panicking as the electric vehicle (EV) ran amok, hitting vehicles and pedestrians on Monday night on a busy street in Kurla. Some passengers tried to tightly hold on to the poles and grab handles, while others rose from their seats to fathom what was happening on the streets as the bus moved forward.

After the bus swerved to a halt, several passengers jumped out of the shattered windows.

A clip shows Sanjay More coming out of the bus cabin holding two black backpacks, and jumping out of a broken window on the left side of the bus.

The bus conductor got down from the rear side

The out-of-control electric bus operated by the civic-run BEST undertaking rammed into pedestrians and vehicles at around 9.30 pm on Monday on the SG Barve Marg in Kurla.

Besides killing seven persons and injuring 42 others, including four policemen on 'bandobast' duty, the accident also wrecked 22 vehicles.

The bus driver has been arrested for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and remanded in police custody till December 21.

According to details that have emerged so far, More had no experience in driving electric vehicles and underwent only a 10-day

training for steering EVs. Top officials of BEST and

the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) held meetings on Wednesday with private operators who supply buses to government agencies under the wet lease model and affirmed to focus on driver training and taking extra safety

steps BEST will also make breath analyser test mandatory for drivers in the wake of the Kurla crash.

At the meetings, the private operators were asked to provide details of training given to drivers, their

appointment criteria, training infrastructure and modules, officials said.

Another meeting was held between senior BEST officials and the Maharashtra transport commissioner, who directed BEST to conduct an internal investigation and submit a report, which will be sent to the state government.

Under the wet lease model, the responsibility of providing drivers and carrying out maintenance of hired buses remains with private contractors. The state-run transport bodies, on their part, pay them a specific amount for the buses.

#### Man who caused pedestrian's death held

Mumbai: Police apprehended a 20-year-old man on Thursday, a day after his motorcycle rammed into a pedestrian that resulted in the latter falling down and being run over by a civic transport bus in Mumbai, officials said.

The accident occurred around 4.30 pm on Wednesday near the Chhatranati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai.

The deceased, identified as Hasenar Anduhi, hailing from Kasaragod district in Kerala was first hit by the motorcycle and then run over by the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking's bus, an official said.

"On the basis of technical inputs, the motorcyclist, Mohammed Sahil Siddique, a resident of Dongri in Mumbai, was apprehended by the MRA Marg police on Thursday," he

Anduhi was walking when he was hit by Siddique's motorcycle, which ultimately resulted in his death under a rear wheel of the BEST bus, he said.

After the incident, the police registered a case and launched a search for the motorcyclist, he said.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"Had the police decided. they could have averted Santosh Deshmukh's murder. Police and the



to be hand in glove. Police can't do anything here because of the terror of some people."

Dhananjay Munde, Leader, NCP

## **ABVP protests at Mumbai University**

Mumbai: Members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad on Thursday protested at Mumbai University's Kalina campus over alleged administrative irregularities and mistreatment of students by officials of the varsity's examination department.

ABVP, the student wing of the BJP, accused the university of suppressing students' voices and neglecting their constitutional rights, and levelled many other allegations, including a few concerning hostels.

A university official has

so far responded to one allegation tied to the hostels.

According to ABVP members, the students who raised concerns about alleged inefficiencies in the university's examination department were served disciplinary notices instead of receiving resolutions.

The students had cited a delay in the issuance of essential documents. The documents should have been provided within eight days but they often take up to 25 days, ABVP said.

Two female students seeking updates on their

documents were allegedly subjected to rude behaviour and obscene language by an official and their papers were reportedly thrown away, claimed the student body.

It also accused examination controllers of refusing to address complaints or engaging with the aggrieved students.

ABVP said in a statement that Mumbai University officials met their members after a protest two days ago and gave verbal assurances but later issued a notice to Prashant Mali, their Mumbai metropolitan secretary who had led the demonstration. The move prompted the student organisation to stage another protest on Thursday.

ABVP said attempts are being made to protect "corrupt" and "inefficient" officials. "Why is the university trying to suppress the voices of students? Are students not allowed to protest against the inconveniences and atrocities they face? Does the university not value democratic norms," Mali asked.

ABVP activists have also



claimed irregularities in the university's hostels, including unauthorised installations of an LED TV and an air conditioner in a student's room. An open pit has remained unattended for five months near the hostel for blind students, it

The student organisation claimed that its members spotted "piles" of liquor bottles on the university premises.

A university official told PTI that they allowed a student to install a TV and AC on medical grounds after following all rules.

### **Gukesh World Chess Champion**

## Velammal Vidyalaya gets ready to welcome its most famous student

Chennai: The Velammal Vidyalaya at Mogappair in the western suburbs of the city slipped into a celebratory mood on Thursday evening, as D Gukesh, now the most famous name in the school muster. scripted history, becoming the youngest ever chess world champion.

Gukesh outwitted Ding Liren 7.5-6.5 to unseat the Chinese from the highest seat in world chess.

It's the shiniest moment in the long history of the Velammal Institutions, the catalysing force behind the chess revolution in the city.

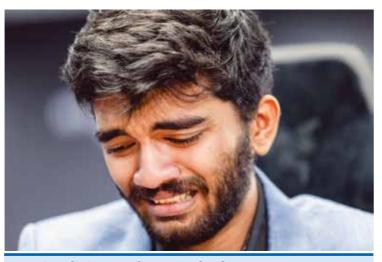
While Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa remain the brightest prodigies, the school offers expert training to hundreds of budding chess

"Chess has always been a part of the city's culture and the decision to make chess a part of the curriculum has really helped it to boom. Of course, they also have a champion like Anand to look up to," S Velavan, the chess co-coordinator at the Velammal, said.

"Since most of the children coming here have a genuine interest in chess, we don't have to push them. They combine studies and chess well, and, in fact, the students who play chess have done even better in their studies," Velavan added.

What he refers to here is the '7 to 17 programme' introduced in schools by former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa in 2013, coinciding with that year's World Chess Championship between Viswanathan Anand and Magnus Carlsen which was held in the city.

Their dedicated approach has produced matching results too as Velammal Institutions won the World School Chess championship



#### I am just living my dream: Gukesh

Singapore: "I am just living my dream," said newly-crowned world chess champion D Gukesh on Thursday, his unassuming persona shining through even after a history-scripting performance that made him the youngest ever to achieve the triumph. "I was dreaming this moment for last 10 years. Happy I realised this dream," Gukesh said after his incredible victory. "I got a bit emotional because I was not expecting to win. But then I got a chance to press on," he added. "I've been dreaming about this and living this moment since I was 6 or 7. Every chess player wants to live this moment. I'm living my dream. I'd like to thank God from candidates till the championship." He also praised his opponent Liren.

"To me Đing is a real world champion. He fought like a true champion and I'm sorry for Ding and team. I would like to thank my opponent," Gukesh said. Regarding his parents' contributions, Gukesh said, "The dream of winning world chess championship is bigger for them than for me.' Liren, on his part, said, "I think I played my best tournament in the year."

for five successive years and both Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa were part of their squad in 2021.

It's not surprising then to see that several Grandmasters have come out of this school since 2005 -- SP Sethuraman, Leon Mendonca, K Priyadharshan, B Adhiban, Vishnu Prasanna, Visakh NR, Vignesh NR, M Karthikeyan, C Aravindh, Karthik Venkataraman, V Pranav, S Bharath, Arjun Kalyan, P Karthikevan, N Srinath.

Prominent women GMs from the school are Varshini S, daughter of Velavan. Vaishali R. sister of Praggnanandhaa, R Rakshitta, B Savi-

"What we do here is to ensure that the children play regularly in

tournaments so that they don't break away from the sport for a longer duration. It will not be good for their growth (as players) and they need to play at all junior levels like under-11, under-15 or under-17," Velavan said.

"It keeps them mentally prepared for tougher competitions in their way and they will not be in awe of their opponents or a competitive atmosphere," he notes.

But, a challenge has arisen for them, that is, more children are trying to enroll into the school to make a career out of chess.

Velavan said the Velammal Institutions are trying to bring in more

#### Historic and exemplary: PM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday congratulated D Gukesh on becoming the youngest world chess champion and said his triumph has not only etched his name in the annals of chess history but has also inspired millions of young minds to dream big and pursue excellence. In a post on X, Modi said, "Historic and exemplary! Congratulations to Gukesh D on his remarkable accomplishment. This is the result of his unparalleled talent."

coaches from outside to cater to the needs of a larger pool of players, and arrange more modern facilities and chess literature available for

Chennai's surge as the chess capital of the country has not one bit amazed the fraternity, and AICF vice-president DP Anantha traces the journey back to the 1970s.



Skaters at the Lakkar Bazar ice rink in Shimla on Thursday.

## Pinkathon to inspire women in Mumbai

**By Correspondent** 

Mumbai: JBG Invincible Women's Run and Pinkathon will be organised in Mumbai to inspire women across all walks of life to embrace a healthier lifestyle and take charge of their financial independence.

Milind Soman, creator of Pinkathon, and Ankita Konwar founder of Invincible Women's Run, highlighted the transformative impact of this initiative. Joining them was Dr. Nikita V. Raut, Deputy General Manager - Sustainability, Ethics & ESG, Bank of Baroda, & Ravindra Rai, MD & CEO of BOBCARD Limited.

Milind Soman said, "The JBG Invincible Women's Run and Pinkathon aim to encourage women to prioritize health and fitness, creating a community of support and inspiration. Participants can choose from categories like the 3K,



Lifelong 5K and 10K runs as well as ultra-distances such as the Limitless 100K, Super 75K, Fabulous 50K and 100K relay. The initiative also raises awareness about critical women's health issues, including breast cancer."

Soman also expressed his excitement about the partnership, stating, "Pinkathon has always been a movement that combines health, strength, and empowerment."

Ankita Konwar added, 'The Invincible Women's Run provides a safe, inclusive platform for women to challenge themselves, connect with a like-minded community, and celebrate laborations like these make it possible to reach more women and inspire positive change.

Various engaging preevent activities, including the Fearless Midnight Run, Surya Namaskar in Saree, and the Aatya Maushi Run, have been organized to inspire women to participate enthusiastically and promote the importance of both physical and mental well-being. Additional events are planned for the coming week, building momentum and further encouraging women to prioritize fitness and holistic wellness ahead of the main

## One nation, one election: Top 10 recommendations by panel

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved bills to implement "one nation, one election".

A high-level committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind had made recommendations on simultaneous elections which were accepted by the Cabinet in September.

The top 10 recommendations are:

- 1. The government must develop a legally-tenable mechanism in order to restore the cycle of simultaneous elections.
- 2. In the first stage, elections for the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies can be held together.
- 3. In the second step, the elections to municipalities and panchayats will be synchronised with the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in such a way that the polls to municipalities and panchayats are held within 100 days of the holding of the parliamentary and Assembly elections.
- **4.** For the purpose of synchronising the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the president shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha



Cong opposes The Congress on Thursday

reiterated its opposition to the very idea of simultaneous polls and accused the government of trying to divert attention from "questions being raised on the electoral integrity of the democratic system". after a general election

as the "appointed date".

- 5. The tenure of all state assemblies formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha will only be for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls. After this onetime transitory measure, all Lok Sabha and Assembly polls will be held simultaneously.
- 6. Fresh elections could be held to constitute a new Lok Sabha in the event of

a hung House or a noconfidence motion or any such event.

- 7. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the tenure of the House will be "only for the unexpired (remaining) term of the immediately preceding full term of the House".
- 8. When fresh elections are held for state legislative assemblies, then such new assemblies -- unless sooner dissolved -- shall continue up to the end of the full term of the LS. 9. A single electoral roll
- and elector's photo identity card (EPIC) shall be prepared by the Election Commission (EC) in consultation with the state election commissions and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by the EC.
- 10. For making logistical arrangements for the conduct of simultaneous elections, the EC may draw up a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make necessary arrangement.



Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel serves food at the newly inaugurated Shramik Annapurna Kendra in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

## Maharashtra to set up desk for investors

"Efforts will be made to

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government will set up a dedicated 'country desk' as a special unit to assist domestic and international

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has asked the administration to focus on developing investment policies aligned with global and regional trends, an official release informed on Thursday.

The 'country desk' special unit will provide advice and assistance to investors for their proposals, it said.

enhance coordination between the state government and major industrial groups to improve industrial collaboration. Dialogue with potential investors is being actively established to prioritise investments in Maharashtra. Continuous assistance will be provided to facilitate investments," the release

The implementation of previously signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) will be expedited, and awareness will be created about investment opportunities in the state, it added.

The initiatives include increasing collaboration with multilateral institutions and development banks, enhancing coordination with embassies and trade organisations, encouraging the Marathi diaspora to invest in Maharashtra, and prioritising sectors such as electronics, textiles, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals, the re-

## 'Har Ghar Jal' village at Mahakumbh

Mahakumbh Nagar (UP): Uttar Pradesh government will set up a unique 'Har Ghar Jal' village at Mahakumbh 2025 to showcase the state's achievements under the Jal Jeevan Mission, officials said on Thursday.

Spread over 40,000-squarefoot area and themed "Solution to Drinking Water: The Identity of My Village", the initiative will feature a 'Jal Mandir', symbolising the life-giving essence of water and promoting its conservation, they said.

The initiative will narrate the inspiring journey of providing tap water to every household in Bundelkhand under the Jal Jeevan Mission, once grappling with severe water scarcity, the officials said.

Devotees, tourists, and Kalpvasis will witness transformation journeys of 'New Villages' in a 'New Uttar Pradesh' as part of a 'New India', they said.

The Rural Water Supply and Namami Gange Department are preparing an exhibition at the village, running from January 5 to February 26, to highlight these achievements, an official statement said.

It will feature 51 programs and serve as a plat-



form for rural women from Bundelkhand to share firsthand accounts of the region's transformation.

Once drought-stricken, Bundelkhand now has access to pure drinking water, resolving a decades-old crisis. Clean water has revitalized lives in villages like Banda, Jhansi, and Chitrakoot, where once marriages were delayed due to water scarcity, the statement

Women from Mahoha and Lalitpur, who once suffered severe health issues due to carrying water, will narrate their stories of empowerment under the double-engine government, it said.

The exhibition will provide information in Hindi. English, Bengali, Telugu, and Marathi to ensure accessibility for the diverse visitors attending Mahakumbh, it added.

## ISRO's C20 cryogenic engine passes critical test

Bengaluru: ISRO on Thursday said it has achieved a major milestone after its C20 cryogenic engine passed a critical test in ambient condition, featuring restart enabling systems.

This success was a vital step for future missions.

"ISRO has successfully carried out the sea level hot test of its CE20 Cryogenic Engine featuring a nozzle area ratio of 100 at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu on November 29," the Indian space agency said in a statement.

The indigenous CE20 cryogenic engine developed by the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre is

powering the upper stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3) and has been qualified to operate at a thrust level of 19 tonne, ISRO explained.

It said that this engine has successfully powered the upper stage of six LVM3 missions so far.

"Recently, the engine was qualified for the Gaganyaan mission with a thrust level of 20 tonne and also to an uprated thrust level of 22 tonne for the future C32 stage, towards enhancing the payload capability of LVM3 launch vehicle," ISRO said.

Gaganyaan is ISRO's first manned mission.

According to the space agency,



the performance of a multi-element igniter that is required for engine restart capability was also demonstrated during this test.

'Testing the CE20 engine at sea level poses considerable challenges, primarily due to the high area ratio nozzle which has an exit pressure of approximately 50 mbar," it said.

Millibar is a unit to measure

atmospheric pressure and is commonly used in meteorology.

ISRO said that the main concern during testing at sea level included flow separation inside the nozzle, which leads to severe vibrations and thermal problems at the flow separation plane leading to possible mechanical damage of the nozzle.

In order to mitigate this issue, the flight acceptance tests for CE20 engines are currently being performed at the High-Altitude Test (HAT) facility, thereby adding complexity to the acceptance testing procedure, it added.

"To reduce the complexity related to the testing at HAT, a sea

level test utilising an innovative 'Nozzle Protection System' was devised that has paved the way for a cost-effective and less complex procedure for acceptance testing of the cryogenic engines," the space agency explained.

According to it, restarting a cryogenic engine is a complex process and the major challenges are vacuum ignition without nozzle closure and use of multi-element igniter.

"ISRO has demonstrated vacuum ignition of CE20 engine without nozzle closure in earlier ground tests. In this test, the multi-element igniter performance was also evaluated.

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"It's a great feat. To become the world champion at the age of 18 is no small feat. It was a great sight to see him celebrating after the win.



Hopefully, this will inspire a lot of aspiring players."

> Vishwanathan Anand, Chess Champion

## Fifth murder in Delhi in a fortnight

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man was shot at by a group of attackers, allegedly due to a long-standing enmity between their families, police said on Thursday.

Two of the three suspects have been apprehended in the case, they said.

The incident occurred on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday when the victim, Ravi Yadav, was warming his hands by a bonfire near his home in the Trilokpuri area, police said.

Yadav sustained multiple bullet injuries and was rushed to Max Hospital, where his condition is reported to be critical.

A caller, identified as Virender Yadav, informed the police that his nephew had been shot.

PTI over phone.

outside the banquet hall's gate.

provisions of the Arms Act.

Girl killed in celebratory firing

#### Pregnant woman shot dead by miscreants

Bhubaneswar: A pregnant woman was shot dead by two unidentified persons in Odisha's Sundargarh district, police said.

The deceased was identified as Soumyamayee Behera, wife of Deben Behera of Jhirdapali village under Tikayatpali police station in the district. She was seven months pregnant, they added.

According to preliminary investigation, two unidentified persons knocked on Soumyamayee's door late on Tuesday night. When she opened the door, they snatched her gold ornaments and shot her when she raised an alarm, a police officer said. Soumyamayee was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her dead, the officer added.

A forensic team and dog squad have been sent to the crime spot, and further investigation is ongoing to nab the accused, the police officer said. "When I was sleeping in the bedroom last night, I heard a sound like the bursting of a bomb and woke up. When I went to check, I saw my wife lying on the floor in a pool of

ing advocate in Karkar-

According to a police statement, he alleged that Sunil Gupta, alias Golu, and two of his associates were involved in the firing.

Chandigarh: A 13-year-old girl was killed after suffering bullet injuries during celebratory

The girl along with her family was attending the function at a banquet hall located on

Bhiwani road in Charkhi Dadri when the incident took place on Wednesday night, they

During preliminary investigations, it has come to fore that some youth were celebrating

and dancing...We are going through the video footage of the marriage event to identify

the accused," SHO of Police Station (City), Charkhi Dadri, Inspector Sunil Kumar told

Police said a complaint was lodged by the girl's father, who hails from Bahu village in

The complainant has stated that after attending the event, he along with his wife and

children was preparing to return to their home when some youth were firing in the air

The bullet fired by one of them hit the girl and she fell on the ground bleeding, the

The girl, identified as Jiya, was rushed to a hospital along with her mother who also

A case has been registered under BNS Sections 106 (causing death by negligence)

and 287 (Negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and under the

sustained injuries. The girl was declared brought dead, police said.

"The girl died in the celebratory firing incident. Her mother also suffered an injury.

firing at a wedding function in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri, police said on Thursday.

blood," Deben said.

dooma Court in east Delhi. "Ravi and his family have a long term enmity with the "The victim was involved family of Golu," said Virender Yadav, who is a practic-

in an attempt to murder case where he and his associates assaulted Golu with a knife and sticks in March this year," police

It is alleged that Golu's brother, Vipin, lost his job recently due to multiple complaints and RTIs filed by Virender Yadav, police

On Wednesday, lawyers representing both families had a heated confrontation at Karkardooma Court over ongoing disputes, they added.

The police are still verifying the facts and an investigation is underway, an officer said

"Two of the three named suspects have been apprehended and are currently being questioned," he said.

A case has been registered under section 109/3 (5) (attempt to murder) of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, he added.



A fan of actor Rajinikanth stands outside his residence on his birthday in Chennai on Thursday.

#### Assam 'banana republic': Oppn Seven **Naxalites GOVT'S DECISION TO LINK NRC WITH AADHAAR CRITICISED**

killed Guwahati: Opposition Congress and Trinamool Narayanpur: At least sev-Congress on Thursday criten Naxalites were killed in icised the Assam governan encounter with security ment's decision to make forces in Chhattisgarh's NRC application a pre-con-Narayanpur district on dition for obtaining an Aad-Thursday, a senior police haar card, stating the state official said has turned into a "banana The gunfight broke out republic" under CM Him-

around 3 am in the forest of anta Biswa Sarma and BJP. south Abujhmaad when a In an effort to link the joint team of police and the Aadhaar card with the Na-Central Reserve Police tional Register of Citizens (NRC), the Assam govern-Force was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, he said. ment on Wednesday decided that all applications for Personnel of District Rethe unique identity card

serve Guard (DRG) of police from Narayanpur, Dantewada, Bastar and Kondagaon districts besides CRPF teams were involved in the operation, the official said.

tempts by citizens of trou-After the exchange of ble-hit Bangladesh, Sarma fire stopped, the bodies of said at a press conference. seven Naxalites wearing "The problem of fake uniforms were recovered. beneficiaries is huge in As-

sam. Government data itself shows how crores of public funds was wasted in the implementation of PM Kisan," deputy leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said on X.

Sharing a news link of PTI on the Aadhaar-NRC decision by Assam Cabinet, he said people in the state are paying GST, cess and various other duties. "...but the entire money is being funnelled into the pockets of BJP party members.'

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev, who hails from Assam, said the NRC has not been notified by the Registrar General of India to date and questioned making it the basis for Aadhaar. "Secondly, even noncitizens in India get AAD-HAR cards if they have stayed 182 days in the 12

months before applying.

Lastly, unless the government declares a person an illegal migrant, how can they refuse AADHAR? Assam is a banana republic under @himantabiswa & @ BJP4India," she posted.

Though it is not officially stated that NRC is linked with Aadhaar card, the Assam government's move will practically set NRC application as a pre-condition for new applicants to get the unique identity cards.

According to the new Standard Operating Procedure the state government will verify the submitted documents and return them to UIDAI online within 45 days of receipt. The final NRC was released on August 31, 2019 by excluding 19,06,657 people. A total of 3,11,21,004 names were included out of 3,30,27,661 applicants.

## Panchamasali agitation over OBC intensifies

Belgaum (Karnataka): Soudha in Belgaum. masali Lingayat community demanding their inclusion in the 2A category of Other Backward Castes (OBC) intensified on Thursday with the BJP backing

The Panchamasali Lingayat community led by the pontiff of Kudalasangama Panchamasali Math Basava Jayamruthyunjaya Swami is demanding their inclusion in 2A category. The community is presently placed under the 3B category, which gets five per cent reservation in government iobs and education institutions, whereas the 2A category, to which they want to be migrated, gets a 15 per cent reservation.

The agitators were lathi charged by the police on Tuesday, drawing sharp criticism from various quarters, including the

The Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, R Ashoka, staged a protest against the police high-handedness in front of the statue of BR Ambedkar near Suvarna Vidhana

The Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, BJP state chief B Y Vijayendra and several MLAs and MLCs too joined Ashoka in the protest.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashoka said the government responded with a lathi charge when Panchamasali Lingayats demanded reservations under 2A category.

Panchamasali Math pontiff staged a demonstration near the toll plaza at Hirebagewadi in Belagavi on the Pune-Bengaluru National Highway 4. They raised slogans calling Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy 'anti-Lingayat'.

Due to the road blockade, several vehicles, including three ambulances, were stuck in the traffic jam. After the police requested the pontiff, the blockade was

In Hubballi, a human chain was formed at President Hotel Circle and tyres were set on fire to block the road. Slogans were raised against the Congress gov-



Union Minister Giriraj Singh stage a protest over Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's alleged links with an organisation funded by the George Soros Foundation in New Delhi on Thursday.

## Woman leader alleges cyberbullying over viral video

Kollam (Kerala): A woman leader of the ruling CPI(M) has alleged that she was subjected to cyberbullying after visuals of her drinking water from a reusable bottle, which resembled a beer bottle, during the party's Kollam district conference surfaced on social media.

In a Facebook post, CPI(M) state committee member Chintha Jerome said that when someone mistakes a bottle of karungali water (a herbal drinking water) for beer, their mental state should be questioned.

She explained that the

CPI(M)'s conferences are designed in adherence to the green protocol, setting an example for green

"As part of this, plastic bottled water was replaced with reusable bottles filled with karungali drinking water, distributed in the conference hall," she said.

Talking to the media here on Thursday, Jerome, a former chairperson of the Kerala State Youth Commission, said that when she was drinking water from a bottle, it was filmed by a TV camera crew present there, which made her uncomfortable, and the footage was subsequently circulated on social media

'These images are being circulated on social media by left-wing detractors as if it was a beer bottle. This beer bottle mockery is a testimony to how falsehoods are propagated in posttruth politics," she said in the Facebook post.

Jerome alleged that the opponents of the Left wing, "afflicted with political blindness," propagate lies.

"They should be prepared to examine their mental state at the earliest," she said.

#### Kejriwal does a Shinde

will be rejected if the appli-

cant or their family had not

The decision was taken

in view of infiltration at-

applied for the NRC.

New Delhi: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced the launch of the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojna to give a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 to women in Delhi, and promised the amount would be raised to Rs 2,100 after the elections.

However he clarified the elections are likely to be announced soon and therefore the money could be credited in beneficiaries' accounts only after the polls.

The announcement comes as Delhi gears up for assembly elections in February 2025, with AAP eyeing a third consecutive term.

Kejriwal said the Delhi Cabinet led by Chief Minister Atishi has approved the scheme and women can begin their registration from Friday.

He also announced that the amount under the scheme would be increased to Rs 2,100 per month if the Aam Aadmi Party wins the elections.

The scheme was initially announced in the 2024-25 budget with an allocation of Rs 2,000 crore.

"This scheme is for empowering women and addressing their financial

## 'No songs on alcohol': Advisory to Diljit

**Chandigarh:** Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CCPCR) has advised singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh, set to perform here on Saturday, to refrain from singing alcohol-themed songs during his live show, citing their adverse impact on children of impressionable age.

The advisory issued by the CCPCR chairperson Shipra Bansal on Thursday, specifically mentioned songs like 'Patiala Peg', '5 Tara', and 'Case' etc, cautioning against even altered versions that promote alcohol, drugs or violence.

"Avoid performing the songs i.e. Patiala Peg, 5 Tara, Case etc, even with twisted words in which alcohol drugs and violence are promoted. These songs affect the children of impressionable age," the advisory read.

This follows a similar directive issued last month by the Telangana government during Dosanjh's live show in Hyderabad, where he was advised against promoting alcohol and drugs. The notice also restricted from inviting children on stage due to loud sounds and flashing lights.

The singer began the India leg of his Dil-Luminati Tour from Delhi in October

In the Chandigarh advisory, the CCPCR chairperson said, "It has come to our notice that Diljit Dosanjh is going to perform in his live show scheduled for December 14, at Exhibition Ground, Sector-34, Chandigarh.'

"After going through the representation received by the Commission, the CCP-CR has decided to issue the following advisory in best interest of the children."

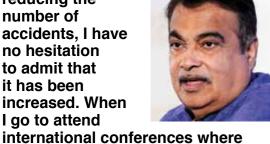
The advisory noted that as per the World Health Organization's (WHO) report, adults should not be exposed to sound with a peak pressure level above 140db (decibel).

"For children, the level is reduced to 120 db. It is advisable to not invite children on stage during live show where peak sound pressure level is above 120db which is harmful for children," the advisory

The commission's advisory also asked to ensure that people aged below 25 vears are not served alcohol as it is which is punishable under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and other provisions of law.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"Forget about reducing the number of accidents, I have no hesitation to admit that it has been increased. When I go to attend



there is a discussion on road

accidents, I try to hide my face."

Nitin Gadkari, **Union Minister** 

## All-women panel wins JNU executive council

New Delhi: In a first at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, an allwomen panel has been elected to the three seats reserved for teachers in the Executive Council (EC), the varsity's teachers body said on Thursday.

Previously, these seats have seen one or, at most, two women representatives, the JNUTA said.

"Women in all three posts is a first. Earlier, it was usually one or two," a member of the JNU Teachers' Association (JNUTA) said.

The newly elected members include Professor Chirashree Das Gupta from the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Associate Professor Veena Hari-



haran from the School of Arts and Aesthetics, and Assistant Professor Santana Khanikar from the Centre for International Politics, Organisation, and Disarma-

ment in the School of International Studies.

The election for Teacher's Representatives to the EC was held on December 9, with an impressive

voter turnout of over 90 per cent, as 634 faculty members cast their ballots, as per the JNUTA.

According to the results, Gupta secured 141 votes in the professor category, Hariharan won with 84 votes in the associate professor category, and Khanikar received 121 votes in the assistant professor category.

Representing the JNUTA, the all-women panel focused its campaign on key issues such as restoring and strengthening institutional norms and practices that respect teachers' dignity, acknowledge their contributions, and ensure their active participation in university governance.

They have pledged to address concerns related to Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) promotions and probation, among other pressing matters.

JNU's EC, the highest decisionmaking body of the university, comprises 14 members, including the Vice-Chancellor as Chair and the Registrar as Secretary.

While four deans hold permanent positions, other members are selected by rotation. Three seats are reserved for teachers, with one each for a professor, associate professor, and assistant professor, elected through direct

## **Expect economic** growth of 6.5-7 pc this fiscal: Agarwal

5.4 per cent GDP growth in the second quarter as a "temporary phenomena", FICCI President Harsha Vardhan Agarwal on Thursday said the industry body expects India to achieve 6.5-7 per cent economic growth in the current financial year, while projecting a pick up in private investment.

In an interview to PTI, Agarwal, who is also the Vice Chairman & Managing Director of Emami Ltd, said the RBI needs to manoeuvre a "tight-rope balancing act" between inflation and economic growth. as he opined that the central bank has been doing a prudent job.

Notably, the FICCI President shared that he sees "less of a challenge" for India once the Donald Trumpled administration in the US assumes office next month.

Trump, during his election campaign, had alleged that India, among all major countries, imposes the highest tariffs on foreign products and he had vowed to introduce a reciprocal tax if elected to power.

"Geo-politically now every country is working towards a policy where the primary focus is their interest, their countries' interest which comes first. But yes, going forward we see less of a challenge for India particularly because a lot of the challenges, what Trump is saying regarding the tariffs etc., might be more for countries like Mexico, China etc.

"Yes, there might be some cases, some areas



what we have seen is, around 74-75 per cent (level

of capacity utilisation) pri-

vate companies, industry, is

very much now comfortable

looking at new investments.

So from that perspective we

believe private investment

should pick up," the FICCI

He further said "it is a

tightrope balancing act

which the RBI needs to do

and they have been manag-

ing it quite well. Inflation

has to be controlled be-

cause otherwise it has an

impact on the consump-

tion... It is a balance that

RBI has to do between infla-

tion and (economic)

growth. They (RBI) have

been very prudent in this

that "from the perspective

of growth rate, I think the

RBI has brought down the

expected growth rate to 6.6

per cent for the current

year. Q2 was a temporary

phenomena (5.4 per cent

GDP)... We don't expect this

kind of a growth rate in Q3

be significantly higher than

Q2 and even in Q4 and on an

average yearly, we still ex-

pect somewhere around 6.5

to 7 per cent GDP growth

-PTI

for this fiscal".

"We believe that Q3 will

Agarwal, however, noted

regard".

and Q4

President said.

here or there, where we might face some issues, but broadly, in fact I feel there might be many areas where opportunities might be thrown up for Indian industries," Agarwal said.

According to him, investment in capital expenditure by the private sector in India should pick up going forward, with the level of capacity utilisation reaching almost 75 per cent.

"Our assessment is and what we have seen is, around 74-75 per cent (level of capacity utilisation) the private companies, the industry, is very much now comfortable looking at the new investments. So from that perspective we believe private investment should pick up," the FICCI President said.

Sharing FICCI's wishlist for the upcoming Budget, Agarwal said the chamber has recommended that the government should increase its capex by 15 per cent next fiscal.

Besides, he said, FICCI has also suggested tax reforms including simplification of TDS (tax deducted at source) rate, and a boost in the budgetary allocation towards green energy and

circular economy. "Our assessment is and

#### **NLCI's first** supercritical power plant

New Delhi: State-owned NLC India Ltd (NLCIL) on Thursday said its first supercritical thermal power plant in Uttar Pradesh has begun commercial

The 1,980 MW Ghatampur Thermal Power Plant (GTPP) in Uttar Pradesh is developed by Nevveli Uttar Pradesh Power Ltd (NUP-PL), a joint venture between NLC India Ltd and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd.

"The first unit success fully completed its trial operation on December 7, 2024, and started commercial operations on December 12, 2024," the PSU said in a filing to BSE.



Prasanna Kumar

With the commercial operation of the first 660 MW unit of the power plant, the total installed power generation capacity of NLC India Ltd and its group companies has increased from 6,071 MW to 6,731

"The successful commissioning of the first supercritical power plant of NL-CIL at Ghatampur marks a historic milestone in our journey towards energy sustainability....We remain steadfast in our resolve to operationalise the remaining units," NLCIL CMD Prasanna Kumar Motupalli



A vendor displays miniatures of Santa Claus ahead of Christmas celebrations in Nadia of West Bengal. Pic: PTI

## IIP growth slows to 3.5 pc in Oct

New Delhi: India's industrial production (IIP) growth slowed to 3.5 per cent year-on-year in October 2024, mainly due to poor performance of mining, power and manufacturing, as per official data released on Thursday.

The IIP recorded a growth of 11.9 per cent in October 2023, according to a statement by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

However, on a sequential basis, the factory output in October 2024 rose to 3.5 per cent from 3.1 per cent in September and a contraction of 0.1 per cent in August this year.

The growth in the factory output, measured in terms of the IIP, in April-October worked out to be 4 per cent against 7 per cent in the year-ago period, the data showed.

As per the data, the min-

#### Economic growth will be back on track: Goyal Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday

expressed confidence that India's economic growth by end of this fiscal will be back on track despite global uncertainties. He said that this year also India will be the world's fastest growing economy. "We had an election in the first quarter and during the election, obviously policy making and decisions on next steps of growth or infrastructure spending does slow down and there is a lag effect. "But from what the initial numbers for this quarter, the third quarter show, the festive spending, the rebound in rural growth, the way banks are now seeing traction back again, the way infrastructure spending has come back on track, I think by the time we close the year in March, we will be back on track," Goyal said at Times Network's India Economic Conclave here.

ing output growth decelerated to 0.9 per cent in October from 13.1 per cent expansion in the year-ago

The manufacturing sector's growth decelerated to 4.1 per cent in October from 10.6 per cent a year ago. Similarly, in power gen-

from a 20.4 per cent growth a year ago. As per use-based classifi-

cation, the capital goods segment growth decelerated to 3.1 per cent in October 2024 from 21.7 per cent in the year-ago period.

eration, the output growth

slowed sharply to 2 per cent

In October this year, consumer non-durables output growth slowed to 2.7 per cent compared to a 9.3 per cent growth in October 2023.

Consumer durable goods production grew by 5.9 per cent during the reporting month against a 15.9 per cent expansion in October

According to the data, infrastructure/construction goods reported a growth of 4 per cent in October 2024, down from a 12.6 per cent expansion in the year-ago period.

The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged a 2.6 per cent growth in October this year against 11.4 per cent a year earlier.

The expansion in the intermediate goods segment was 3.7 per cent in the month under review, lower than the 9.5 per cent a year

## Opposition continues protest over Adani issue

New Delhi: Several opposi- rose in the other, as they tion MPs on Thursday urged the ruling party to staged a protest inside Parliament complex carrying placards of different Hindi letters that jointly read 'desh bikne nahin denge' and raised slogans to reiterate their demand of a joint parliamentary probe into the Adani issue.

This is the latest in a series of unusual daily demonstrations led by the Congress over the Adani issue.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MPs from the Congress, DMK, and the Left parties, among others, stood in front of the Makar Dwar steps and in front of Samvidhan Sadan with most of them carrying the placards that together read 'desh bikne nahin denge.

They raised slogans against the alleged collusion between Modi and Adani and demanded a joint parliamentary committee probe into matter.

On Wednesday, several opposition MPs greeted their BJP counterparts in Parliament premises with a tricolour in the form of a card in one hand and a red

ensure that the House functions and all issues, including the Adani matter, are discussed.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also offered the tricolour in the form of a card to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh when the latter was entering the main Parliament building.

On Tuesday, MPs carried dark blue 'jholas' with caricatures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and industrialist Gautam Adani printed on one side and "Modi-Adani Bhai-Bhai" written on the obverse.

On Monday, leaders of some INDIA bloc parties had protested in Parliament complex over the Adani row, with Rahul Gandhi conducting a mock "interview" over the issue with Congress members wearing masks of Modi and

The opposition protests on the Adani issue have been taking place in Parliament complex since the start of the Winter



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh and others during a meeting in New Delhi

## Cumulative capex of airports expected to grow 12 pc

capex (capital expenditure) of Indian airports is expected to grow 12 per cent at Rs 60,000 crore in the three years through FY27 from Rs 53,000 crore during 2022-2024, to add required infrastructure for about 65 million passengers per annum, ratings agency CRISIL said.

CRISIL said 70 per cent of this capex is expected to be funded through debt.

The ratings agency said its projections are based on a study of 11 private airports in the country that account for 60 per cent of the total passenger traffic

In addition to the expected growth in passenger traffic, increase in tariffs and spending within the airport ecosystem will lift revenue of private Indian airports at an average growth rate of 17 per cent between FY25 and FY27, it said.

That, coupled with improved funding access and a predictable regulatory regime, will support the strong credit profiles of pri-

gers at Indian airports is expected to clock a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8-9 per cent over fiscals 2025-2027 from 376 million last fiscal. Growth in domestic traffic, which comprises over 80 per cent of overall volume, will ride on rising demand from the business and leisure segments and government push to increase penetration of air travel," said Manish Gupta, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer, CRISIL.

#### FIU helped detection of Rs 11k cr

New Delhi: The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has helped in detection of undisclosed income of Rs 11,000 crore and seizure of 461 kg of narcotic drugs, the finance ministry said on Thursday.

The FIU under the finance ministry collects, analyses and disseminates information to law enforcement agencies about suspicious financial transactions pertaining to money laundering, terror and proliferation financing. The intelligence shared

by FIU-IND with agencies has led to Rs 983 crore worth of assets attached, Rs 2,763 crore worth criminal proceeds identified and Rs 10.998 crore undisclosed income detected.

Besides, it helped in seizure of 461 kg of narcotic/ psychotropic substances, levy of Rs 39.14 crore penalty and 184 arrests in money laundering and terror financing cases

In a post on X, the finance ministry also said 46.31 per cent higher refunds were issued between April-November 27, 2024, during FY25. Refunds amounting to Rs 3.08 lakh crore issued during this

## MyBharat digital platform to offer job opportunities

**New Delhi:** Union minister to the government. Thursday said the newly created MyBharat digital platform will be turned into a single-window access for jobs, training, networking and business opportunities.

Speaking at AIMA's Young Leaders Council summit here, the Minister of Labour & Employment, and Youth Affairs & Sports noted that the present government is youth-oriented and wants to develop India according to the wishes of the country's youth.

"We want India's youth to look at MyBharat in the morning and not Whatsapp," Mandaviya said.

He stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will spend two days in January listening to the winners of a youth competition about defining the Viksit Bharat in 2047.

"Viksit Bharat should be built according to your aspirations," he told the young business leaders.

The minister asked AIMA to share the key ideas and insights from the Young Leaders Summit so that he could present those

the present government has changed the mindset of Indian youth from one of going overseas for higher education and career to returning from overseas for opportunities in India.

He asserted Startup India, Stand Up India, Khelo India and such programmes are enabling the country's youth to aspire and realise their aspirations.

Elaborating on the job scenario. Mandaviva stated that the government has ensured a 7-8 per cent GDP growth enabling jobs.

He argued that 7-8 per cent GDP growth means growth in manufacturing. agriculture, services, and infrastructure.

Apollo Hospitals MD Suneeta Reddy said that while Indians are leading trillion dollar companies in the US, there is a need for the youth to build trillion dollar companies in India.

Listing the key tasks for India's young leaders, she pointed to India's low ratings on per capita income and gender parity.

## 'India needs USD 2.2 trillion investment on infra'

New Delhi: India will require an investment of USD 2.2 trillion for infrastructure development to become USD 7 trillion economy by 2030, Knight Frank India said on Thursday, while stressing on the need of radical measures to encourage private participation in this area.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank India released a report, 'India Infrastructure: Reviving Private Investments', which mentioned that "an estimated investment of USD 2.2 trillion into infrastructure de-

velopment is imperative to support India's GDP size to expand to USD 7 trillion by

To achieve an economic size of USD 7 trillion by 2030, India's economy is required to grow at a CAGR of 10.1 per cent between 2024-2030, it added.

Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Baijal said, "Strong impetus on infrastructural development and increased budgetary allocation by government has led to India's ranking in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) improve from 54 in



2014 to 38 in 2023.'

In the last few years, he said, there has been aggressive push by the policy makers to significantly expand India's infrastructure.

Baijal said this widens the scope for private players to actively participate in India's infrastructure development and economic growth.

"However, there are certain bottlenecks limiting this scope. Hence, radical measures are required to

induce a higher allocation of private investments towards infrastructure development to balance fiscal prudence to the government's budget and bring inclusive and long-term sustainable economic growth in the country," he said.

Knight Frank's report said that the central and state governments' heavy reliance on infrastructure investments could strain fiscal deficit targets.

"Private participation in infrastructure development in India has decreased significantly, from USD 160 billion (46.4 per cent of total investments) between 2009-13 to USD 39.2 billion (7.2 per cent) between 2019-23," the consultant pointed out.

This shift has led to a larger share of governmentled investments, potentially widening the fiscal deficit, it added.

"Maintaining a controlled fiscal deficit is crucial for long-term economic stability and effective debt management. The central government aims to reduce its gross fiscal deficit to below 4.5 per cent by 2025," the report said.

### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"If the Indian economy is growing at seven per cent and if the world is growing at 3-3.5 per cent... then obviously India will be requiring more of consumption, more of imports."



Sunil Barthwal, Union Secretary, Commerce

## Israeli airstrikes kill 28 in Gaza

Jerusalem: Palestinian medical officials say Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 28 people in the Gaza Strip, including seven children and a woman, hours after the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

One of the strikes overnight and into Thursday flattened a house in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Al-Agsa Martyrs Hospital in the nearby city of Deir al-Balah, where the casualties were taken.

Two other strikes killed 15 men who were part of local committees established to secure aid convoys. The committees were set up by displaced Palestinians in coordination with the Hamas-run Interior Ministry.

On Wednesday, the UN General Assembly approved resolutions demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and expressing support for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees that Israel has moved to ban. General Assembly



Syrians wait to cross into Syria from Turkey at the Oncupinar border gate near the town of Kilis in southern Turkey on Thursday.

resolutions are not legally binding, although they re-

when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 people. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be

Israel's offensive has

flect world opinion. children, according to the The war in Gaza began Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. The Israeli military says it has killed over 17,000 mili-

ians in Gaza, more than

half of them women and

night and into Thursday

flattened a house in the

built-up Nuseirat refugee

camp, according to the Al-

Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in

the nearby city of Deir al-

Balah, where the casualties

were taken. An Associated

Press reporter saw the bod-

ies at the hospital's morgue.

15 men who were part of lo-

cal committees established

to secure aid convoys. The

committees were set up by

displaced Palestinians in

coordination with the Ha-

Two other strikes killed

tants, without providing evidence. Palestinian medical officials say Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 28 people in the Gaza Strip, including seven children and a woman. One of the strikes over-

killed over 44,800 Palestin-

#### Attack on Israeli bus kills child

Israeli hospital officials say a young boy died after being wounded in a shooting attack in the occupied West Bank that also wounded two adults. An Israeli bus came under fire from a suspected Palestinian attacker late Wednesday, the military said, and Israeli forces are searching for the shooter. The shooting took place just outside Jerusalem in an area near major Israeli settlements. Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem said the boy was 12 years old, after initial reports said he was 10. A spokesperson for the hospital did not immediately respond to a request for clarification. The hospital said two other people, ages 24 and 55, were also wounded.

#### **UNGA demands** ceasefire in Gaza

The UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved resolutions Wednesday demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and backing the UN agency for Palestinian refugees that Israel has moved to ban. The votes in the 193-nation world body were 158-9 with 13 abstentions to demand a ceasefire now and 159-9 with 11 abstentions to support the agency known as UNRWA. The votes culminated two days of speeches overwhelmingly calling for an end to the 14-month war between Israel and the militant Hamas group, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, though they reflect world opinion. There are no vetoes in the assembly. Israel and its close allv. the United States, were in a tiny minority speaking and voting against the resolutions.

mas-run Interior Ministry. The Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan

Younis received the bodies and an Associated Press reporter counted them. The hospital said eight were killed in a strike near the southern border town of Rafah and seven others in a strike 30 minutes later near Khan Younis. - AP



The Military Wives Choirs conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton, perform for King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Buckingham Palace in London.

## Tight security for Taliban minister's funeral

Kabul: Tight security measures were in place Thursday for a Taliban minister's funeral in Afghanistan after he was killed in a suicide bombing claimed by an affiliate of

the Islamic State group.

Cabinet member Khalil Haqqani was the most highprofile casualty of an assault in the country since the Taliban seized power three years ago.

He died in a blast Wednesday at the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation in the capital, Kabul, along with several other victims. Officials have not given the latest toll for the dead and injured.

Haqqani is the uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting interior minister and the leader of a powerful faction within the Taliban. The US placed a bounty on both their heads.

In a statement carried by the Amaq News Agency, the IS affiliate said one of its fighters carried out the suicide bombing. The fighter waited for Haqqani to leave his office and then detonated his device, according to the statement.

The minister's funeral is Thursday afternoon in Garda Serai district, eastern Paktia province, which is the heartland of the Haqqani family.

Hamdullah Fitrat, the government's deputy spokesman, said Thursday that top officials will attend and security measures are in place.

 $A\,video\,purportedly\,from$ the scene of the funeral showed a vast but empty patch of land with a row of guards and armoured vehicles on one side. A fire truck is on standby.

The UN Mission in Afghanistan was among those to condemn the ministry attack. "There can be no place for terrorism in the quest for stability," the mission said on the X platform.

The IS group's affiliate, a major rival of the ruling Taliban, has previously carried out bombings across Afghanistan.

But suicide attacks have become rare since the Taliban seized power in August 2021 and US and NATO forces withdrew. Such assaults have mostly targeted minority Shiite Muslims, especially in the capital.

#### Prez Biden pardons 39

Washington: President Joe Biden is commuting the sentences of roughly 1,500 people who were released from prison and placed on home confinement during the coronavirus pandemic and is pardoning 39 Americans convicted of nonviolent crimes.

It's the largest single-day act of clemency in modern history.

The commutations announced Thursday are for people who have served out home confinement sentences for at least one year after they were released.

Prisons were uniquely bad for spreading the virus and some inmates were released in part to stop the spread.

At one point, 1 in 5 prisoners had COVID-19, according to a tally kept by The Associated Press.

### Russian mercenaries abused Mali civilians

Dakar: Mali's armed forces, supported by Russian mercenaries, committed abuses against civilians since the withdrawal of a UN peacekeeping mission late last year, Human Rights Watch said in a report released Thursday.

Malian armed forces and the Russia-backed Wagner Group deliberately killed at least 32 civilians, including seven in a drone strike, kidnapped four others, and burned at least 100 homes in towns and villages in central and northern Mali since May, the rights group said.

Human Rights Watch also accused jihadi groups in the region of having summarily executed at least 47 civilians and displaced thousands of people since June. It said the groups burned thousands of houses and looted livestock. which is vital to the survival of the nomadic communities in the region.

"The Malian army with the Wagner Group and Islamist armed groups have been targeting civilians and their property in violation of the laws of war," Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Sahel researcher at Human Rights Watch, said in the report.

Mali, along with its neighbors Burkina Faso

and Niger, has for over a decade battled an insurgency fought by jihadi groups, including some allied with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Following military coups in all three nations in recent years, the ruling juntas have expelled French forces and turned to Russia's mercenary units for security assistance.

Wagner has been present in Mali since late 2021 following a military coup, replacing French troops and international peacekeepers to help fight the militants. At the same time, the mercenary group has been accused of helping to carry out raids and drone strikes that have killed civilians.

In December last year, the United Nations ended its decade long peacekeeping mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA following the government's request that alleged the force was inadequate to respond to the insurgency.

"Since MINUSMA left Mali a year ago, it has been extremely difficult to get comprehensive information on abuses, and we are deeply concerned that the situation is even worse than reported," Allegrozzi



Water is dropped onto the Franklin Fire by helicopter in Malibu on Wednesday.

#### Serbia Prez: Won't flee like Assad

Belgrade: Serbia's president accused Tuesday foreign intelligence services of trying to unseat him in the wake of spreading protests in the Balkan state and that he wouldn't flee the country like the ousted Syrian leader Bashar Assad.

President Aleksandar Vucic posted a video message on Instagram saying: "I will fight for Serbia and serve only my Serbian people and all other citizens of Serbia, I will never serve foreigners, those who seek to defeat, humiliate, and destroy Serbia," he added.

Opponents of the populist leader compared him to Assad who fled to Moscow following a stunning rebel advance, ending his family's half-century of iron

Vucic's opponents in Serbia have compared him to Assad and other world dictators, predicting that he may also try to flee the country if he loses his firm grip on power amid the protests triggered by a rail station roof collapse in the northern city of Novi Sad that killed 15 people on

The protesters in Novi

Sad, Belgrade and other Serbian cities have blaming the deadly collapse on rampant corruption in the country that led to sloppy renovation work on the station building in Novi Sad — part of a wider deal with Chinese state companies involved in a number of infrastructure projects in the Balkan country.

The canopy collapse has became a flashpoint for broader dissatisfaction with Vucic's growingly autocratic rule, reflecting public demands for democratic changes in the

#### Horrific tales of migrants **Beirut:** Isatta Bah wakes The Kafala system has long been criticized by hu-

up from a nap in a crowded shelter on the outskirts of Beirut, clutching her baby, Blessing.

The 24-year-old from Sierra Leone spends her days waiting for an exit visa that could put her and her 1-year-old on a plane back to the West African nation. She wants to reunite with her family after what she called exploitative work conditions and sexual violence, along with the recent horrors of war in Lebanon.

"My experience in Lebanon is not good for me. I am really tired," Bah said. "I want to go home.'

Hundreds of migrant workers in Lebanon are waiting to be repatriated after the ceasefire ending the 14-month war between the Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Israel went into effect last month.

Lebanon has long drawn migrant workers dreaming of building better lives for their families. Enticed by promises of stable jobs and decent pay, they enter Lebanon via recruitment agencies under a sponsorship $based\,labour\,system\,known$ as Kafala — only to find themselves often trapped with confiscated passports, long hours, withheld wages and, for many, abuse.

man rights groups, but the government rarely if ever addresses the criticism. But Bah knew little of that when she came to Lebanon in 2022. She was promised a job at a supermarket with a \$200 monthly salary, she said. Instead, she was sent to care for an older woman once she arrived.

Within a month of her arrival her 3-year-old son back home fell ill and died. She said she was not given the time to grieve and fled her employer's house. Since her employer held her passport and other documents, Bah said she had to leave them behind.

Her experience in Lebanon then took a darker turn. One day she and five housemates were picked up by a taxi driver who said he would take them home. Instead, she said, the driver dropped them at the wrong spot. As they tried and failed to find another cab, a group of men chased them and raped them.

Not every migrant worker escaped the attacks. An estimated 37 have been killed and 150 wounded since October 2023, said Joelle Mhanna with the UN's International Organization for Migration.

There were few places to

turn. Most governmentrun shelters refused to take in displaced people who were not Lebanese, said activist Dea Hajj Shaheen. After supporting migrant women during previous crises in Lebanon, she stepped in again along with other volunteers

To house over 200 women from Sierra Leone including Bah, they repurposed an abandoned space owned by her family — a former car dealership that was later a venue for pop-up events and named The Shelter.

The kitchen was alive with activity as women cooked, some dancing to Nigerian music. In another area rows of thin mattresses lay in the dim light from broken windows. Despite the modest conditions, the women set up a Christmas tree crafted from sticks.

While some migrants have been accepted at government-run shelters, there were regular reports of others being evicted or denied access.

Some migrants hesitate to approach the government shelters for fear of detention or deportation, Mhanna said. "As a result, most are being hosted by embassies, NGOs and community-based organizations including churches."

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"I will fight to the end to prevent the forces and criminal groups that have been responsible for paralysing the country's government and disrupting

the nation's constitutional order from threatening the future of the Republic of Korea."

> Yoon Suk Yeol, President, South Korea

## London: British military veterans who were dis-

charged or suffered other forms of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity will receive up to 70,000 pounds (USD 89,300) under a government compensation programme announced Thursday.

sonnel who were discovered to be lesbian, gay or trans were forced to leave the military under policies that designated them as unfit to serve in the armed forces. Many others were

Prior to 2000, service per-

subjected to brutal investigations into allegations about their sexual orientation.

"The historic treatment of LGBT veterans was a moral stain on our nation,' Defence Secretary John Healey said in announcing the compensation. "Our government is determined to right the wrongs of the past and recognise the hurt that too many endured.'

Former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak last year apologised for the past mistreatment of gay service members and accepted the



Gay veterans win compensation amid 'moral stain'

recommendations of an

nancial compensation. independent review, in-Thursday's announcement cluding the principle of fiprovides 75 million pounds

for the compensation

Veterans who were dismissed from the military because of their sexual orientation or gender identity will receive 50,000 pounds, with additional payments of up to 20,000 pounds for those who were negatively affected by the ban in other

Advocates for gay veterans said the programme didn't go far enough.

Craig Jones, whose charity Fighting with Pride was among those calling for compensation, said the

amounts are too low compared to what service personnel suffered.

"In my years of serving, I watched many of my colleagues marched away by the Special Investigation Branch of the Royal Military Police, and I watched that happen with great sadness,' Jones said. "I was lucky not to get caught, but it's been a privilege and an honour to go back, as we do in the armed forces, and find those who have not fared so well and to support them."

### **EDITORIAL**

## **Fragile Harmony**

www.symbols in India resonate as deeply as the Constitution and the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. They embody not just the legal framework of the nation but also the aspirations of its marginalized communities. In Maharashtra's Parbhani district, that potent symbolism turned combustible following the vandalism of a replica of the Constitution near a statue of Ambedkar that sparked two days of unrest, highlighting the simmering tensions that underlie public order in India.

The incident began with a drunken act of desecration—or so the authorities claim. Protests swelled into mob violence, with vehicles set ablaze, shops attacked, and roads and railway tracks blocked.

This unrest lays bare two glaring issues. First, the sluggishness of local administration in responding to such incidents. Despite the initial uproar on Tuesday, authorities failed to take pre-emptive action to prevent Wednesday's escalation

Second, the incident reveals a deeper malaise: the swift politicization of such actions. While authorities attributed the miscreant's actions to mental instability, political leaders and activists questioned this narrative, accusing the police of attempting a cover-up. Calls for narco-analysis tests and conspiracy theories abound, further polarizing an already volatile situation. This reflects a broader trend where incidents involving symbols of Dalit identity, such as Ambedkar statues, often ignite social unrest.

The violence in Parbhani also underscores the fragility of communal harmony. Acts of vandalism targeting Dalit symbols frequently carry the potential to trigger widespread unrest, fuelled by decades of marginalization and mistrust. The question remains whether the police's response to such provocations is measured and just—or prone to stoking resentment through perceived bias.

Maharashtra, with its long-standing Ambedkarite legacy, has seen such tensions before

The authorities must investigate the incident with transparency, ensuring that the truth is brought to light. At the same time, local administrations need to adopt proactive measures to defuse tensions before they spiral out of control. Empty condemnations and reactive policing will not suffice.

Dr. Ambedkar once warned against the fragility of social harmony in a deeply hierarchical society. The events in Parbhani are a stark reminder of how easily that harmony can be shattered when symbols of equality are defiled. Anything less risks emboldening those who would exploit such acts for their gain—and further alienating communities whose faith in the system already hangs by a thread.

## NATIONALISM FIRST

## From Independence to Insecurity: Can Bangladesh reclaim Mujib's vision?



Rajeev Puri

angladesh, a South Asian star not long ago, once boasted the region's fastest growth rate and celebrated pulling more than half its population out of poverty within a decade. Yet today, it finds itself plunged into near-anarchy, where mobs roam the streets with impunity, targeting its Hindu minorities and members of the deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League.

This unravelling, while seemingly abrupt, has its roots in the country's complicated history. The ideological warnings of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, loom large over the nation's present crisis. His prescience is captured in Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Rebel to Founding Father, a biography by Syed Badrul Ahsan, who was family confidant and a former speechwriter for Sheikh Hasina, Mujib's daughter and the country's long-serving prime minister.

In December 1971, just after Bangladesh's independence and when his popularity was at its zenith, Mujib offered Hasina a stark caution: the forces of opposition-comprising Jamaat-e-Islami ideologues and pro-Pakistan sympathizers—remained sizable, albeit subdued by the Pakistani military's overreach during the war. He warned that their resurgence could imperil the country, urging constant vigilance and ruthless suppression when necessary. His fears, dismissed by many as overly cautious at the time, have tragically

Mujib's mistrust of ideological adversaries was not unfounded. As a young man, he was inspired by fiery orators like Syed Badrudduja, who championed the cause of Muslim rights in undivided India, and even

cycled 1,000 kilometers to meet Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Ironically, both figures left Mujib disillusioned. Badrudduja remained in secular India after Partition, while Mujib's mentor, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, did little to support East Pakistan during his tenure as Pakistan's prime minister in the late 1950s.

The treatment of Bengalis by the Punjabi-dominated Pakistani establishment cemented Mujib's resolve for autonomy. East Pakistanis endured humiliation, both culturally and politically, as the ruling elite lampooned their food, language, and lifestyle. The imposition of Urdu as the state language in 1952 sparked violent protests, deepening the chasm between East and West Pakistan.

Field Marshal Ayub Khan's 'Single Unit' policy in the 1960s, merging provinces in the west to counterbalance the population of the east, exacerbated tensions. East Pakistan was rendered defenceless during the 1965 Indo-Pak war, further alienating its people. By the time Cyclone Bhola devastated the region in 1970, Islamabad's callousness had become unforgivable. The Awami League's sweeping electoral victory that December was as much a rejection of West Pakistan's hegemony as an endorsement of Mujib's leadership.

Pakistan's brutal crackdown in March 1971, 'Operation Searchlight', unleashed unspeakable atrocities on East Pakistanis. Hindus were the first targets, followed by Awami League supporters and intellectuals. Looting, rape, and indiscriminate killings became the norm, driving all Bengalis, regardless of ideology, into a united front against the Pakistani

This unity, however, was fragile. The euphoria of independence masked ideological divisions that quickly resurfaced after Mujib's assassination in 1975. The very forces he had warned against—the Jamaat-e-Islami and pro-Pakistan elements—began to regroup, exploiting the weaknesses of successive governments.

Sheikh Hasina, who survived the 1975 coup by being in India, returned to Bangladesh years later to continue her father's



mission. During her first tenure as prime minister (1996-2001), she kept Mujib's ideological adversaries in check. Her second stint, from 2009 onwards, was marked by an even firmer crackdown, including the execution of senior Jamaat leaders for war

Mujib's concerns about the latent strength of Jamat-e-Islami and pro-Pakistan elements were not unfounded. These groups, relegated to the periphery after Bangladesh's independence, reemerged during periods of political instability. The

military-backed governments of the 1980s provided fertile ground for their resurgence. By the 1990s, their political arms had consolidated power, influencing policy and societal narratives. Sheikh Hasina, echoing her father's foresight, moved decisively to suppress their activities. Her administration's war crimes tribunal, which convicted and executed several Jamat leaders, was hailed by her supporters but sharply criticized by international human rights groups for procedural shortcomings.

However, Hasina's authoritarian streak also alienated sections of society, particularly students protesting against reservation policies. What began as localized dissent soon spiralled into a nationwide agitation, bolstered by support from Jamaat and alleged Pakistani intelligence operatives. These protests devolved into targeted violence against Hindus and Awami League members, culminating in the current chaos. One of the most visible casualties of Bangladesh's political upheaval has been its Hindu minority. Numbering nearly 20% at independence, their proportion has dwindled to less than 9%

The point is that Mujib's fears, dismissed as paranoia decades ago, have been vindicated in the most tragic manner. The ideological rifts he identified remain raw and unresolved. threatening to undo the progress Bangladesh has made. The descent into quasi-anarchy underscores the enduring relevance of his cautionary words.

Bangladesh's journey from economic darling to cautionary tale is a stark reminder that historical grievances and ideological fault lines, if left unaddressed, can unravel even the most promising nations. Whether Sheikh Hasina can restore order or whether Bangladesh is destined for further turmoil remains uncertain. The lessons of its founding father, however, echo louder than ever.

(The author is a political commentator and global affairs observer with a keen eye on South Asia's evolving dynamics. Views

## **GLOBAL WATCH**

## **Cleaning Up the Soviet Mess**

azakhstan's announcement L Laminated 363,000 cubic metres of Soviet-era oil waste on the shores of the Caspian Sea is a step forward in addressing Central Asia's grim ecological inheritance. Yet, it is a drop in a polluted ocean. The region's environmental hazards, a relic of Soviet planning and industrial overreach, continue to haunt its present and threaten its

The Soviet Union, with its singular focus on industrial growth and resource extraction, treated the environment as expendable. Central Asia, with its vast mineral and energy reserves, was a key victim of this mindset. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Caspian Sea, the world's largest inland body of water. Over decades, oil extraction and poor waste management turned stretches of its coastline, particularly in Kazakhstan's Mangystau region, into industrial wastelands. Marine ecosystems suffered greatly while surrounding communities endured the consequences of poisoned soil and water.

The Caspian's plight mirrors a broader pattern of environmental devastation across the region. Pollution from the oil and gas industry is compounded by climate change, which is causing the inland sea's water levels to fall at alarming rates. The shrinkage echoes the tragic fate of another of the region's

As Central Asia struggles to undo decades of environmental damage caused by Soviet industrial excess, Kazakhstan takes the lead in undoing this toxic Cold War-era legacy.



water bodies, the Aral Sea. Once the world's fourth-largest lake, the Aral was sacrificed to irrigate Soviet cotton fields. Beginning in the 1960s, Moscow rerouted the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers to meet its agricultural ambitions, causing the sea to shrink to a fraction of its size. The desiccation left behind toxic dust storms laced with salt and pesticides, devastating health outcomes for nearby communities and ruining their economic lifeblood.

The scars of Soviet mismanagement extend beyond water. In Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, millions of cubic metres of radioactive waste remain stored in decaying Soviet-era facilities, a byproduct of the USSR's relentless uranium mining. These sites, many situated near rivers that flow into populous areas, pose a constant risk of contamination. The mountains of toxic sludge are a stark reminder of the environmental costs of Soviet industrialization.

Efforts to remediate this toxic legacy have gained momentum in recent years, particularly with international support. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has led initiatives to stabilize hazardous sites in Kyrgyzstan. But progress has been slow, funding is scarce and the scale of the problem is daunting. Meanwhile, communities living near these sites bear the brunt of the environmental risks, often with little recourse to help or relocation.

Kazakhstan's efforts to reclaim its polluted shores provide a glimmer of hope. At the Karazhanbas field in the Mangystau region, the state-owned energy company Kaz-MunayGas has cleaned nearly 363,000 cubic metres of oil waste over four years. The project involved removing oil-contaminated soil and cleaning above-ground storage facilities. This is a laudable start, but the problem is far from resolved. Other oil-producing regions in Kazakhstan continue to grapple with the dual burdens of pollution and global warming.

The Soviet disregard for environmental stewardship was not unique, but its scale in Central Asia was particularly egregious. Resourcerich nations like Kazakhstan have inherited a toxic legacy that collides with their current development

Cleaning up the Soviet mess is a monumental task, but it is also an opportunity. Kazakhstan's reclamation work shows that progress is possible with state commitment and adequate resources.

Central Asia's ability to reconcile its past with the demands of sustainability will determine not only its ecological survival but also its standing in a world increasingly defined by green accountability.

#### **STATES WATCH**

## Down, But Not Out

2024 Lok Sabha elections, has quickly recalibrated its strategy to remain a key player in Telangana's political ecosystem. The party's performance was dismal, failing to win a single seat despite a strong showing in the earlier Assembly elections. However, rather than retreating into irrelevance, the BRS has made notable strides in reorganising its structure and refocusing its efforts on reconnecting with voters, particularly in rural areas where it lost considerable support.

Despite its founder, K. Chandrashekar Rao, staying largely out of the public eye, the BRS leadership, led by K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) and T. Harish Rao, has been relentlessly targeting the Congress government. The ruling party in Telangana, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, is grappling with its own list of unfulfilled promises, offering ample ammunition for the BRS to launch sustained attacks. Whether it is the delay in disbursing agricultural subsidies or the unfinished business of the crop loan waiver, the BRS has made sure to highlight these gaps in governance, presenting itself as the party of accountability.

One of the most persistent issues raised by the BRS is the Congress's failure to implement its election guarantees. KTR has vocally criticised the Congress for

After a humbling defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, the BRS is reinventing itself as a fierce opposition to a faltering Congress government in Telangana.

he Bharat Rashtra Samithi unot fulfilling its promises, from trying to defend its record, the BJP youth. He has also sharpened his attacks on the Congress's handling of issues like the Musi Riverfront Development Project, which has seen the demolition of poor and middle-class homes.

(BRS), reeling from an stalled loan waivers to the unkept seems less inclined to take ignominious defeat in the pledge of creating jobs for the advantage of this turmoil. Although it has made occasional noises. particularly around issues like the Musi Riverfront, the BJP has been largely aloof, even content to let the BRS do their job in cranking up the pressure on the Congress. In contrast, the BRS continues to maintain a strong public presence,

> managed to rally its leadership, who have organized protests and social media campaigns that keep the government on edge. The Congress's failure to respond decisively to these attacks only highlights BRS's the

even without KCR's direct

involvement. The party has

growing political

> influence. However, the path ahead is far from smooth for the

BRS. The ruling party is not only dealing with internal dissatisfaction but also with inquiries into its past government's actions, particularly around irrigation and power deals. These investigations present a real challenge for the BRS, as they could undermine its ability to portray the Congress as the sole failure in the

That said, the party's determination to rebuild and its consistent focus on the government's shortcomings are proof that it is far from out of the race. While the coming months will be crucial in shaping the party's future, it is clear that the BRS is positioning itself as the key challenger to Congress in Telangana. The Congress may hold the reins for now, but the BRS is watching, waiting, and biding its

## TELANGANA

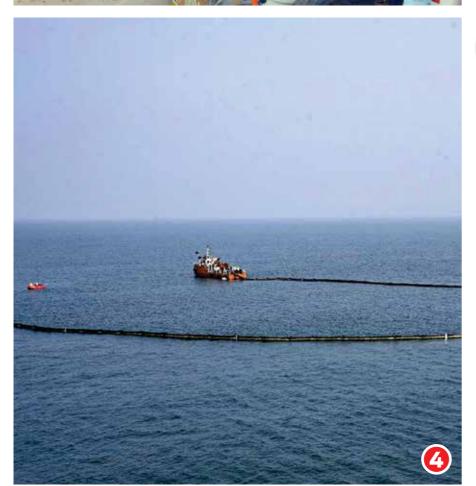
KTR's open letter on the first anniversary of Congress rule is perhaps the most direct and scathing attack the party has made against the incumbent government. He accused the Congress of betraying the people of Telangana, from farmers to women, through its failure to deliver on core promises. The Congress has found itself on the defensive, with the BRS pushing the narrative of incompetence and mismanagement.

While the Congress has found itself hemmed in a reactive position,









## **KALEIDOSCOPE**

- 1. A wall being painted in preparation for upcoming Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Wednesday.
- 2. Actor and dancer Asha Sharath performs 'Bharatanatyam' during the 'Changampuzha Mahotsavam 2024' in Kochi on Wednesday.
- 3. Bollywood actors Aaman Devgan and Rasha Thadani with director Abhishek Kapoor promoting their upcoming film 'Azaad'.
- 4. Indian Coast Guard personnel during **Regional Level Pollution Response Exercise RPREX-24 in Goa.**
- 5. An aerial view of Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Department's island resort 'Sarsi' in Shahdol district on Wednesday.





### **FILMS AND ME**

## **Fifty Years of Girish** Kasaravalli's Ghatasraddha



Shoma A. Chatterii

ot a single print of the original celluloid print of Ghatasraddha (Kannada) remained for today's audience to be able to watch the film. The YouTube prints are not only very blurred but the English sub-titles are also very bad. Thankfully, the late Dr. P.K. Nair had managed to hold on to a single print of the film which fortunately for the persistence of Shivendra Singh Dungarpur, has now been revived by the Film Heritage Foundation," said Girish Kasaravalli himself before the restored print was screened at a special screening of the film at the 30th Kolkata International Film Festival this week.

Added Kasaravalli, "This marks the 47th year of the film and I am extremely grateful to Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Project stepped in to restore it, setting a precedent for his commitment to preserving cinematic history worldwide.'

Ghatashraddha (The Ritual, Black & White, 1977) was Girish Kasaravalli's first feature film. The film won him the President's Golden Lotus for the Best Feature Film in 1978. The then-27-year-old became, and remains, the youngest film director to win a President's Golden Lotus, at a time when Satyajit Ray, Adoor Gopal Krishnan, Mrinal Sen and others were at the height of their film-making careers.

The film carries the hallmark of a filmmaker who knew how to tell a story on film in his unique way, placing hard-hitting subjects in as subtle and as low-key a manner as possible.

Ghatashraddha is launches a scathing attack on several social evils that dogged society during the

period in which the story is placed. One of them is child-marriage, an evil custom that victimized the girlchild by marrying her off to a much older man. When the old man died, the girl was forced to lead the life of a widow filled with extreme forms of abstinence in the form of food, clothes, treatment, sex and shelter. If she broke the virginity rule, like the child-widow, then a teenager, Yamuna did it without realizing the consequences with her "lover" leaving her in the lurch, not only was she driven out of the village to live a life of extreme penury on the outskirts, but was doubly humiliated. Her father, a rigid Brahmin who ran a school to train Brahmin boys in Sanskrit and religious texts, agreed with the other village heads to ritually perform her shraddha or death rituals using a pot (ghata) as a symbol to officially claim that she was "dead" to everyone and was therefore, an outcast. Most young girls who got pregnant or engaged in any affair as they turned young, would die of hunger, poverty and socially structured negligence which amounted to inhumanity by one group of humans against a single child-woman.

Ironically, Udupa, Yamuna's father who ran a pathshala in the village, not only performed the ghatashraddha but also agrees to marry a very young girl from the Brahmin community to "rescue" the girl from an unmarried status. This was a practice dominated and controlled by Brahmins driving home the point that Brahmin girls too, were not spared from barbaric treatment that often led to an untimely and tragic death. All this comes across in the film. Strange, that this same Udupi had once saved his daughter's life from snake-bite. And he is the one who not only agrees to perform the ghatashraddha of his living daughter but also throws her out of the village forever after having her head shaved completely.

There is a powerful sub-plot that merges into the main story. It is about a very soft and affectionate relationship that evolves between Yamuna and Nani, a boy who joins the pathshala. Yamuna looks after him with motherly care. They de-

velop a mutual bond, whereas other older students like Shastry and Ganesh would harass Nani all the time. The film is set against a rural backdrop in Karnataka sometime

Girish Kasaravalli himself wrote the script of the film during his training at the FTII. It is based on a Kannada short story by Dr. U.R. Ananthamurthy. B.V. Karanth scored the music and S. Ramachandra handled the cinematography. Meena Kuttappa as Yamuna and Master Ajit Kumar as Nani played the lead roles.

Kasaravalli says, "It was a very powerful and an extraordinary story. It spoke of rituals and traditions in Brahmin families. It was my first film after I graduated from the Pune Film Institute. I read this novel when I was a student of the FTII and it had remained in my mind. I chose Meena Kuttappa, who was a student at that time, for the role of Yamunakka. It won some state awards also.'

The school having shut down for want of funds and also for the scandal involving Yamuna, Nani's father comes to take him back home. On the way back, the small boy suddenly catches a glimpse of Yamuna Akka peeping from behind a tree, her head completely shaved. We see him looking back again and again, his eyes filled with tears, looking at his Yamunakka with her shaved head looking back at him. His father has to drag him along with him because he visibly hates to leave her alone and go away to his village.

The music that holds the film together is quite low-key and subtle vet runs like the waters of a spring. Both Meena and Master Ajit Kumar are gifted with large, almond eyes which are very expressive too.

The best moment captured in the film is when, just before the climactic scene, the Shudra slave tells the main priest, "he saved his daughter even from snakes, but could not save her from a Brahmin" thus summarizing the tragedy of Yamuna in one

(The author is a senior film critic based in Kolkata. Views personal.)

### **EXPLAINER**

## Why Is Protecting Communication **Through Encryption Suggested?**

fter a sprawling hacking campaign exposed the communications of an unknown number of Americans, US cybersecurity officials are advising people to use encryption in their communications.

To safeguard against the risks highlighted by the campaign, which originated in China, federal cybersecurity authorities released an extensive list of security recommendationsforUStelecomcompanies—such as Verizon and AT&T — that were targeted. The advice includes one tip we can all put into practice with our phones: "Ensure that traffic is endto-end encrypted to the maximum extent possible."

End-to-end encryption, also known as E2EE, means that messages are scrambled so that only the sender and recipient can see them. If anyone else intercepts the message, all they will see is a garble that can't be unscrambled without the

Law enforcement officials had until now resisted this type of encryption because it means the technology companies themselves won't be able to look at the messages, nor respond to law enforcement requests to turn the data over.

Here's a look at various ways ordinary consumers can use end-toend encryption:

#### **Texting**

Officials said the hackers targeted the metadata of a large number of customers, including information on the dates, times and recipients of calls and texts. They also managed to see the content from texts from a much smaller number of victims.

If you're an iPhone user, information in text messages that you send to someone else who also has an iPhone will be encrypted end-to-end. Just look for the blue text bubbles, which indicate that they are encrypted iMessages.

The same goes for Android users sending texts through Google Messages. There will be a lock next to the timestamp on each message to indicate the encryption is on.

But there's a weakness. When iP-



hone and Android users text each other, the messages are encrypted only using Rich Communication Services, an industry standard for instant messaging that replaces the older SMS and MMS standards.

Apple has noted that RCS messages "aren't end-to-end encrypted, which means they're not protected from a third party reading them while they're sent between devices.'

Samsung, which sells Android smartphones, has also hinted at the issue in a footnote at the bottom of a press release last month on RCS, saying, "Encryption only available for Android to Android communication."

#### Chat apps

To avoid getting caught out when trading texts, experts recommend

using encrypted messaging apps. Privacy advocates are big fans of Signal, which applies end-to-end encryption on all messages and voice calls. The independent nonprofit group behind the app promises never to sell, rent, or lease customer data and has made its source code publicly available so that it can be audited by anyone to examine it "for security and correctness.'

Signal's encryption protocol is so reputable that it has been integrated into rival WhatsApp, so users will enjoy the same level of security protection as Signal, which has a much smaller user base. End-to-end encryption is also the default mode for Facebook Messenger, which like WhatsApp is owned by Meta

#### What about Telegram?

Telegram is an app that can be used for one-on-one conversations, group chats and broadcast "channels" but contrary to popular perception, it doesn't turn on end-to-end encryption by default. Users have to switch on the option. And it doesn't work with group chats.

Cybersecurity experts have warned people against using Telegram for private communications and pointed out that only its opt-in secret chat' feature is encrypted from end-to-end. The app also has a reputation for being a haven for scammers and criminal activity, highlighted by founder and CEO Pavel Durov's arrest in France.

#### Making calls

Instead of using your phone to make calls through a wireless cellular network, you can make voice calls with Signal and WhatsApp. Both apps encrypt calls with the same technology that they use to encrypt messages.

There are other options. If you have an iPhone vou can use Facetime for calls, while Android owners can use the Google Fi service, which are both end-to-end encrypted.

The only catch with all these options is that, as with using the chat services to send messages, the person on the other end will also have to have the app installed.

WhatsApp and Signal users can customize their privacy preferences in the settings, including hiding IP address during calls to prevent your general location from being guessed.

## At Rs 20.50 lakh, **Abhishek Dalhor** most expensive buy in ISPL

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Abhishek Kumar Dalhor emerged as the most expensive buy in the Indian Street Premier League (ISPL) Season 2 auction after Majhi Mumbai, owned by Amitabh Bachchan, successfully outbid the competition with an impressive hid of ₹20.50 lakh. The 15-year-old Sharik Yasir, the youngest player in the auction, was bought for ₹3lakh by Akshay Kumar-owned Srinagar Ke Veer.

The ISPL Season 2 auction witnessed intense bidding wars as six teams used the opportunity to build strong teams for the upcoming second season of the league, scheduled to be played at the Dadoji Kondadev Stadium in Thane from January 26 to February 15.

The exciting mega auction took place in Mumbai today with 350 players, selected from 55 cities through extensive trials, going under the hammer. As the bidding gathered pace, a total of 96 players were selected by six teams. As the auction drew to a close, the six franchises had spent more than ₹5.54

The pioneering tennis-



Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan along with Team Majhi Mumbai (C) during the ISPL Season 2 auction in Mumbai

ball T10 cricket tournament, which was launched earlier this year with the inaugural edition, brings the excitement of street cricket to the stadium, providing a professional platform for talented players in the country.

This year's auction also saw the introduction of the Right-to-Match (RTM) and Icon Player rule as the teams were allowed to add one icon player into their squad and also retain two players from their last season's squad as part of the

Vijay Jaysing for ₹13.75 lakh (Majhi Mumbai, owned by Amitabh Bachchan) and Krishna Satpute for ₹8.50 lakh (Falcon Risers Hyderabad, owned by Ram Charan), Deepak Dogra for ₹6 lakh (Chennai Singams, owned by Suriya), Saroj Paramanik for ₹16.25 lakh (KVN Bangalore Strikers, owned by Hrithik Roshan), Dilip Binjwa for ₹6 lakh (Srinagar Ke Veer, owned by Akshay Kumar), Bhavesh Pawar for ₹8.50 lakh (Tiigers of Kolkata, owned by Kareena Kapoor Khan & Saif Ali Khan) were bought as icon players by the teams to bolster their respective

squads. Sachin Tendulkar, Core Committee Member, ISPL, said, "It is encouraging to see the growing interest in ISPL from across the country. Tennis-ball cricket is an exciting format, and ISPL has provided a competitive platform for players to showcase their skills. The inaugural season highlighted some special performances, and this year, the league has expanded to more cities to identify emerging talent. I hope these players make the most of this chance and receive the recognition they deserve.

Suraj Samat, League Commissioner, ISPL, said, "With a team of experts of the game, we want to spot and nurture talents from every corner of the country. And I am happy to announce that we will be conducting trials in 101 cities



## Treesa-Gayatri pair keep semifinal hopes alive

Hangzhou: The Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gavatri Gopichand defeated the Malaysian combination of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in straight games in their second Group A tie to keep alive their semifinal hopes at the BWF World Tour Finals here on Thursday.

Treesa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the season-ending tournament, beat their opponents 21-19 21-19 in just 46 minutes to stay afloat in the competition.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Indians had lost to in the third season of ISPL. i world No.1 Liu Sheng Shu



and Tan Ning of China in their opening group match.

Treesa and Gayatri had lost 20-22 22-20 21-14 to Sheng and Tan, who had claimed a silver medal at the Paris Olympics.

Treesa and Gayatri started on an aggressive note and surged to a 6-2 lead in the opening game before the Malaysians roared back and it went neck-and-neck after that

But the Indians kept their composure in the final stages to pocket the first

The second game too was a close affair till the first five points before the Malaysians took a slender lead.

It was again a tight battle till 19 points but the Indians once again held their nerves and pocketed two consecutive points to seal the match.

## Prasar Bharati to broadcast Hockey India League



New Delhi: The upcoming Hockey India League, which is being revived after seven years, will be telecast live on the country's national broadcaster, Prasar Bharati.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard was signed in a ceremony between Abhishek Agarwal, Deputy Director General Sports, Prasar Bharati, and Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh.

Set to commence on December 28 in Rourkela, HIL will be broadcast live across the nation through Doordarshan and Prasar Bharati's new OTT platform -- Waves.

This edition of the HIL is path-breaking because it will feature the inaugural season of the women's league alongside the men's competition.

While the men's competition will be played in Rourkela, a four-team maiden tournament for the women



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will be hosted at Ranchi. Navneet Sehgal, chairman Prasar Bharati, em-

phasised the importance of

this partnership.

"This is a proud moment for hockey, a sport that has captured the hearts of millions of Indians, and for Prasar Bharati as we come together to bring the Hockey India League to every corner of the country. Our goal is to showcase this prestigious league to households across India, including remote towns and villages where future hockey stars are

emerging. "With Doordarshan's extensive reach and our OTT platform, Waves, we will ensure that the Hockey India League becomes a national celebration, inspiring a deeper connection between the sport and its fans. Together, we aim to elevate hockey's prominence and turn it into a true festival for the entire

nation," he said.

### Tambe GT's bowling coach

Ahmedabad: Gujarat Giants on Thursday appointed former leg-spinner Pravin Tambe as their bowling coach, while Australian Daniel Marsh joined the side as batting coach ahead of Women's Premier League 2025.

Michael Klinger, who ioined the team last season will continue as the Giants' head coach. Tambe, who made his IPL debut at the age of 41 back in 2013 for Rajasthan Royals, brings substantial coaching experience, having worked with Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow Super Giants.

"I'm eager to work with this talented group of players to sharpen their skills and help them excel," said

Marsh carries loads of experience, having served as head coach of the Tasmania men's team from 2013 to 2017 and was appointed as the assistant coach of the Australian women's cricket team in

"I look forward to developing a fearless approach to our batting with the aim of making our team one of the strongest batting units of the WPL," said Marsh.

Ahead of the WPL 2025 auction to be held in Bengaluru on Sunday, the Giants had retained players such as Ashleigh Gardner and Beth Mooney.



of a ITC-Nimyle campaign in Hyderabad on Thursday.

#### Niki Prasad to lead India U-19 in Asia Cup

New Delhi: Niki Prasad will lead India U-19 in the inaugural edition of the junior women's Asia Cup scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur from December 15 to 22.

All matches will be held at the Bayuemas Cricket Oval. Sanika Chalke has been named vice-captain while lanky Gujarat Giants seamer MD Shabnam has also been included in the

India U19 are placed in Group A along with Pakistan and Nepal, while Group B consists of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and hosts

India will meet arch-rivals Pakistan on the opening day of the competition on December 15 followed by game against Nepal. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the Super Fours and the top two from Super Four will play in the final on December 22.

Squad: Niki Prasad (Captain), Sanika Chalke (Vice-captain), G Trisha, Kamalini G (WK), Bhavika Ahire (WK), Ishawari Awasare, Mithila Vinod, Joshitha VJ, Sonam Yadav, Parunika Sisodiya, Kesari Drithi, Aayushi Shukla, Anandita Kishor, MD Shabnam, Nandhana S.

#### **Tendulkars** inaugurate sports facility in Satara

Mumbai: The Sachin Tendulkar Foundation (STF), partner Mann Deshi Champions, inaugurated a modern sporting facility in Satara this week.

The event marked Sara Tendulkar's first visit as a director of STF, showcasing her commitment to taking the foundation's mission forward.

The new facility, inaugurated by Tendulkar, his wife Aniali and daughter Sara. features world-class amenities including courts for basketball and badminton, indoor wrestling and boxing areas, classrooms, administration offices, and hostels for 150 athletes.

It aims to empower rural youth by providing them with access to high-quality sports training and opportunities.

Sara, accompanied by her parents, expressed her admiration for the transformative impact of sports on young lives and shared some moments with the children there.

Mann Deshi Champions has a proven track record of nurturing rural talent, with over 100 athletes joining the army, police, forest, and railways through their programs.

## Indian women to reach final LET qualifier



Marrakech (Morocco): At least four Indian women golfers playing at different venues are in a good position to reach the final qualifier at Lalla Aicha Q-School for the Ladies European

The Indians are current-

ly placed second behind the

Chinese and will need to

win against the Japanese

pairing of Nami Matsuy-

ama and Chiharu Shida on

Friday to book their semifi-

They are Sneha Singh, Vidhatri Urs, Amandeep Drall and Avani Prashanth. while Ridhima Dilawari and Nayanika Sanga can make a last round dash to get into the final qualifier as the Top-23 and ties are likely to make the final

Sneha, winner of the domestic Hero Women's Order of Merit in 2023, is lying second at the Par-73 Noria Golf Club in Marrakech with rounds of 69-73 and trailed leader, Annika Borrelli of South Africa, who carded 69-70, by three shots.

Ridhima (79-77) was T-35, Jasmine Shekar (77-88) was T-55 and Oviya Reddi (80-

Also well placed to make it to the final qualifier was Vidhatri Urs (68-77), who was tied for the lead after the first round. She slipped in the second but is very much in line to make the final stage at Samanah. Neha Tripathi (80-80) was

At the Rotana Golf Club, Amandeep (71-73) was even par at the Par-72 course, while Avani (73-72) at 1-over was T-14. Nayanika (77-74)

At Palm Ourika India's Shweta Mansingh (73-80) was T-40 and Durga Nittur (73-82) was T-48.

England's Rosie Belsham is in front at Samanah with Finland's Elina Nummenpaa and French amateur Vanessa Bouvet top at Rotana, while Wales' Darcey Harry leads at Palm Golf

Meanwhile, American Annika Borrelli is in front

## Kohli addresses team, Rohit bats against semi-new, new ball

the cynosure of all eyes at training sessions during his captaincy days and Virat Kohli was once again the centre of attention as he addressed his teammates here on Thursday.

After the demoralising 10-wicket defeat in the Adelaide day/night game, the visitors needed a bit of inspiration going into the crucial third Test of the series, and the youngsters in the side couldn't have got a better mentor than 'King' Kohli himself to guide them with his words

The team huddles before the start of the training session has been a constant feature for years now and Kohli used to do a lot of talking during his days in charge.

He did take a back seat once he left captaincy but with skipper Rohit also under immense pressure after four straight defeats,

the senior-most player (in terms of Test debut) had to take the initiative ahead of the match starting here on Saturday.

With vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah by his side, Kohli was seen speaking animatedly to the group and everyone, including Rohit, listened to him with rapt attention.

Rohit faces both new and semi-new ball in nets Unlike before the pink ball Test, Rohit looked in

far better shape during his net session at the Gabba but question marks remain over whether he would be back to opening the innings or stay put at No. 6, which isn't his preferred slot.

On the day, while KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal once again faced the new ball at the nets, Rohit took on a slightly older Kookaburra at the beginning. Having faced that for some time, he did change nets

with Rahul and also played a brand new red cherry for a while.

The Gabba pitch has a decent grass cover and has always been one of the most traditional Australian wickets with both seam and bounce being on offer. Rohit's susceptibility has been against the moving deliveries more than bounce, and hence, it would be interesting to see if he takes on the challenge head on.

After his session, Rohit and head coach Gautam Gambhir were immersed lengthy

chat and a from a distance, it looked like they were discussing technique. Gambhir was seen shaping up for some shadow drives, with Rohit watching him intently.

