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Kala Ganpana, Bharatiya Bijganit

UGC draft proposes teaching ancient math

New Delhi: Kala Ganpana (traditional Indian time-keeping), Bharatiya Bijganit (Indian algebra), significance of 'Puranas' in Bharatiya tradition, focus on the mathematical concepts and techniques related to basic arithmetic operations and geometry found in the Narada Puran, are among the concepts that UGC wants undergraduate students to study in mathematics.

According to the draft curriculum, which is aligned with the Learning Outcomes-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he UGC has recommended teaching the history and development of Bharatiya



Bijaganita, division of polynomials using the Paravartya Yojayet Sutra (a traditional Vedic Mathematics technique meaning 'transpose and apply').

The curriculum also includes teaching of concepts such as panchanga (Indian calendar) and how it determines mahurtas (auspicious time) used in rituals

and festivals.

The proposed course blends astronomy, mythology and culture -- bringing India's rich time-science heritage to life. It also covers covers ancient observatories, the prime meridian of Ujjain, and how ancient Indian Vedic time units of Ghatas and Vighatis compare with

modern systems like Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and Indian Standard Time (IST).

"We are confident that this curriculum will be a transformative initiative in the realm of mathematics education in India. It has been meticulously developed through extensive consultation and collaboration, ensuring both academic excellence and practical relevance," said curriculum committee chair Sushil K Tomar.

"It aspires to produce professionally competent graduates, capable of contributing meaningfully to research, innovation, and national development, particularly in addressing interdisciplinary challenges across sciences, economics, environment, and sustainable development," he added.

Divine time cycles

The proposed curriculum dives into texts like the "Surya Siddhanta" and "Aryabhatiyam", explains the structure of cosmic time -- from Yugas and Kalpas to Brahma's day (Brahma Varsa) -- and introduces divine time cycles like Vishnu Varsa and Shiva Varsa.

LOCFs of different subjects will serve as guiding documents for universities and colleges for their curriculum revision in line with NEP 2020.

Under LOCF, every discipline contains three categories of courses of study -- Discipline Specific Core (DSCs), Discipline Specific Electives (DSEs) and Generic Electives (GEs).

DSC courses are compulsory credits within a student's chosen discipline, DSEs are optional credits within the same or related disciplines, and GEs are courses outside the core discipline that provide multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary exposure.

Meanwhile, UGC's draft LOCF for political science proposes 20 four-credit DSC courses, including "Tradition of Political Thinking in Bharat", which introduces students to Vedic traditions, Jain and Buddhist literature, political ideas in the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Thirukkural, as well as the works of Bhasa, Kalidasa, and Kalhana. Other DSC courses cover themes such as India's independence movement, the Constitution, public policy and the Panchayati Raj system.



Privatisation Of BMC School

Demonstration turns tense

LODHA ASKS WHETHER CONGRESS PLANS TO SETTLE BANGLADESHIS IN MALVANI

Mumbai: A Congress-led protest against the alleged handover of a civic school in Malvani area to a private foundation on Saturday turned tense, with police resorting to lathi charge and detaining senior leaders, including MP Varsha Gaikwad and MLA Aslam Shaikh.

Parents, students, and Congress workers gathered outside the school premises and shouted slogans, demanding that the decision be revoked.

They alleged that the civic body has decided to entrust the school to the Sahas Foundation.

"Privatisation of municipal schools poses a direct threat to the future of children. Congress will never allow this move to be implemented. If the decision is not rolled back immediately, the agitation will intensify from the streets to the Assembly," Shaikh said while addressing the gathering.

Gaikwad, a former state education minister, accused the government of siding with private contractors at the cost of underprivileged students.

Angry confrontation

Irate parents attempted to confront Mumbai suburban district guardian minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha, who was in the school for a function. Police tried to disperse the crowd, leading to a baton charge.

Congress leaders argued that the BMC spends crores on building schools, which primarily cater to children from slum and working-class families.

"Handing over such institutions to private organisations would push these children out of the education system," they said.

The Congress has announced that its campaign against the "privatisation" of civic schools will now be intensified, stating that "education is not for sale."

Lodha points to Rohingyas, Bangladeshis

Mangal Prabhat Lodha raised question whether systematic attempts are being made to encroach lands of Municipal schools in Mumbai to settle Rohingyas and Bangladeshis. His statement came after the Congress' protest. "Malad has the largest amount of government land, which is facing massive encroachments. Now, is there an attempt to grab municipal school lands as well? Local MLAs should explain what development they have carried out. How did such a large number of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis settle in Malvani? Who extended such cooperation to them? What is the motive behind it?" Lodha asked.

Rs 2,929 Cr Bank Fraud Case

CBI books Anil Ambani, RCom

CONDUCTS SEARCHES AT HIS RESIDENCE



40,000 crore to various lenders with the public sector bank alone facing a loss of Rs 2929.05 crore, according to 2018 figures.

The agency has booked Ambani and RCom for allegedly committing offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust, the CBI has said.

"It is alleged that the accused persons, in criminal conspiracy, misrepresented and got sanctioned credit facilities from SBI in favour of Reliance Communication Ltd," the CBI Spokesperson said.

She said it was also alleged that there was misutilisation and diversion of loan funds, potential routing of loan funds, inter-company loan transactions, misutilisation of sales invoice financing, discounting of bills of RCom by Reliance Infratel Ltd., movement of funds through inter-company deposits, among others.

The action took place after the CBI registered an FIR on Thursday against Reliance Communication Ltd (RCom), Mumbai, its Director Anil D. Ambani, unknown public servants and unknown others on the basis of a complaint from the SBI, it said.

The searches took place at Ambani's residence 'Sea Wind' at Cuffe Parade in Mumbai, sources said.

According to the SBI complaint, now part of the FIR, the company had an outstanding of over Rs

New Delhi/Mumbai: The CBI searched the Mumbai residence of Reliance Communication Ltd. (RCom) Director Anil Ambani on Saturday after recently registering a case over the alleged defrauding of State Bank of India of Rs 2929.05 crore, officials said.

Teams of CBI conducted the searches at two locations in Mumbai on Saturday -- the official premises of Reliance Communication Ltd., and residential premises of Anil D Ambani, the agency said in a statement.

First In 13 Years

Pak FM in B'desh to rebuild ties

Dhaka: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in Dhaka on Saturday for a rare two-day visit, aimed at rebuilding ties with Bangladesh following the ouster of longtime prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

A special flight carrying Dar, the most senior Pakistani leader to visit Bangladesh since 2012, arrived in Dhaka, with Islamabad calling it a "significant milestone" in bilateral relations.

Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam received Dar at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Hina Rabbani Khar was the last Pakistani foreign minister to visit Dhaka in November 2012 to invite then then premier Hasina to a summit in Islamabad.

The top Pakistani diplomat was scheduled to hold bilateral talks on Sunday with Foreign Affairs Advisor Touhid Hossain, where up to half a dozen agreements and MoU could be signed.

Storytelling in Andaman homestays

Port Blair: Homestays in Andaman and Nicobar Islands are likely to offer visitors exotic tribal cuisines and storytelling sessions about the history and culture of the archipelago, tourism officials said.

While many of the tribal cuisines of the islands are lost, some are still alive and mouth-watering dishes will be offered to the visitors to make their trip memorable, they said.

The tourism department organised an orientation-cum-interaction programme for registered homestay owners on Friday to discuss ways to further improve the quality of stay for visiting tourists.

Speaking to PTI, a senior official said, "The

whole idea is to promote homestays as a complete package where guests can have lifetime memories, starting from a comfortable stay, exotic cuisines, experience of the countryside, to clean sustainable tourism."

"It will also give impetus to the local economy through community engagement. The islands have also gained national recognition, with 86 per cent of hotels in Port Blair receiving Swachhata Green Leaf Ratings. Storytelling sessions organised by the homestay owners for the tourists about the history of Andaman and Nicobar Islands would be a great value addition in the package," he said.

Tourism Department Commissioner cum Secretary, Chanchal Yadav, who was the chief guest of the programme on Friday, said tourists booking homestays look for more than just accommodation -- they seek cultural experiences, local cuisines such as Nicobari 'Kinsola' (sweet steamed Gujia), Sabaline tea (black tea with lemon-grass), 'Hilu-o Hipu' (steamed banana and coconut sweet confectionery) and a meaningful interaction with local people.

"We need to focus on the unique experiences we are offering to our tourists related to this place, so that it prompts them to visit again and again," she said. The official added that it

is encouraging to note that there are more than 100 registered homestays in the islands.

Information, Publicity and Tourism secretary Jyoti Kumari, who was also present on the occasion, said the interaction programme was the first initiative of the tourism department to bring all homestay owners onto a single platform to hear their concerns and gather suggestions on making tourists' stay in the islands more pleasant and memorable.

She said that the tourism department is developing a new, attractive website where all homestays will be showcased on a dedicated page. -PTI

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पर्यावरण व वातावरणीय बदल विभाग

पुरस्कृत

इकोफ्रेंडली

घरगुती आणि गृहनिर्माण संस्था

गणेशोत्सव स्पर्धा - २०२५

चला साजरा

करुया उत्सव बाप्पाचा,

संकल्प करुया

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निकालाची तारीख: २० सप्टेंबर, २०२५

Kolhapur’s Rail Neglect

After circuit bench, people’s struggle is next

By Rajendra Joshi

Kolhapur: India is racing ahead on the tracks of high-speed rail and futuristic technology. The Rs 1.08 lakh crore Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project is nearing readiness, and hydrogen-powered coaches developed in Chennai have successfully been tested. Yet, Kolhapur, despite its economic and cultural significance, continues to be bypassed by the Indian Railways' grand vision.

The contrast is stark. While massive investments are being made elsewhere, the long-pending Miraj-Kolhapur-Vaibhavwadi rail line, requiring just about Rs 3,000 crore, lies in limbo. Three surveys have been conducted, the project was included in the Gati Shakti plan, and even a bhoomipujan was done by then Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu.

But beyond paperwork, no progress has been made. If completed, this project could link southern Maharashtra with the Konkan, providing a lifeline for both freight and passenger traffic. More importantly, with Kolhapur now hosting the circuit bench of the Bombay High Court, better connectivity is an urgent necessity for litigants and citizens



across six districts.

Meanwhile, Kolhapur's existing railway services are shrinking. The Sahyadri Express has been denied permission to travel beyond Pune for the last three years. The Kolhapur-Solapur train, halted during the pandemic, has not been restored even after four years. The Rani Chennamma Express to Bengaluru has been permanently curtailed at Miraj. And the proposed Mumbai-Kolhapur Vande Bharat remains on paper, with six months of "timetable discussions" yielding nothing.

This neglect cannot be explained away by financial feasibility. The Railways has sanctioned doubling and electrification of the Miraj-Pune line but has ignored the last 46-km stretch to Kolhapur, citing cost concerns. Ironically,

the same Railways finds no difficulty in justifying Rs 1 lakh crore-plus for a bullet train. When RajarshiShahu Maharaj brought the first rail line to Kolhapur at his personal expense, he could hardly have imagined that more than a century later, his city would still be fighting for basic connectivity.

Gross reluctance

The official reluctance is not just administrative—it is political. Railway events in recent months have openly revealed the bias against Kolhapur. The deeper problem, however, is the lack of collective political will within the region itself. The lesson of the circuit bench is clear: Kolhapur gets its due only when citizens unite and apply pressure. Without such mobilisation, rail projects will remain stuck,

and the city's development will continue to be throttled.

History offers perspective. The Konkan Railway too was once dismissed as financially unviable. Today, it is the lifeline of the coastal belt. The Miraj-Vaibhavwadi line has the same transformative potential.

It can boost freight movement, decongest existing routes, and make Kolhapur a stronger link between Maharashtra and Karnataka. A Bengaluru-Kolhapur Vande Bharat is not just desirable—it is entirely practical given the heavy passenger and goods traffic along this corridor.

Kolhapur now stands at a crossroads. The city has the capacity, the demand, and the pressing need for better railway infrastructure. What it lacks is an organised public movement. After the hard-fought victory of the circuit bench, Kolhapur has already shown what people's resolve can achieve. It is time to bring that same determination to the railway tracks.

If the people of Kolhapur do not demand their rightful share, they will continue to be left waiting—on the platform, watching development speed past them.



People participate in the 'Kali and Pili Marbat' procession as part of Pola festival celebrations in Nagpur, Maharashtra on Saturday.

Pic: PTI

Patil asks Jarange to hold talks

Mumbai: With Manoj Jarange remaining firm on leading a protest in Mumbai, minister Chandrakant Patil on Saturday appealed to the Maratha quota leader to hold discussions with the government.

At the same time, the Higher and Technical Education Minister warned that action would be taken if anyone staged an illegal demonstration.

Jarange has called for a protest at Azad Maidan in south Mumbai from August 29, demanding reservation for the Maratha community under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. His demand has faced opposition from OBC groups.

"Jarange should sit across the table with the government, with pen and



paper, and discuss the issues related to the Maratha reservation, rather than resorting to fresh protests and hunger strikes," Chandrakant Patil told reporters in Sangli.

"While everyone has the right to protest in a lawful manner, any agitation that strays from that path would compel the state to act," he added.

Ahead of the scheduled demonstration, the state government has reconstituted a cabinet sub-com-

mittee on Maratha reservation with minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil being made its new chairman.

Chandrakant Patil will function as one of the members of the committee.

The committee has been tasked with coordinating on administrative and legal aspects of the Maratha reservation issue, liaising with advocates representing the state in court cases, and framing procedures for implementing judicial orders, officials said on Friday.

It has also been asked to hold consultations with Maratha quota protesters, streamline the process of issuing caste certificates, and review the implementation of welfare schemes

declared for the community.

Patil, meanwhile, said many people had received Kunbi caste certificates when he was the chairman of the committee.

"How long should one person keep doing the same job?" he added.

During the chief minister Eknath Shinde-led government, the state initiated a campaign to trace Kunbi records, enabling Marathas with such lineage to avail OBC benefits.

Last year, the government announced a 10 per cent reservation for the Maratha community, implementation of which is underway. However, the decision has been challenged in the Bombay High Court, where hearings are ongoing.

'Synergy of tradition, technology needed'

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Saturday that India can become self-reliant in agriculture by blending modern technology with traditional farming methods and animal husbandry while rearing indigenous cattle.

Bhagwat addressed the 28th foundation day function of the JyeshthaPashuvaidyaPratishthan here, where farmers, veterinary graduates, and experts were felicitated.

The RSS chief noted that global uncertainties underline the need for India to become self-sufficient in agriculture.

"By blending modern practices with Indian methods of farming and cattle rearing, farmers will benefit and the country will achieve self-reliance," he said.

Bhagwat said veterinarians know the art of understanding the pain of creatures who cannot speak and resist during treatment and curing them.

"Ancient veterinary expert Shalihotra had described the science of determining a horse's age

and quality. This tradition is a matter of pride for us," he added.

The RSS chief noted that farmers will benefit if the western technology and modernity are adopted wherever necessary, and coordinated with Indian farming and animal husbandry methods.

He said people's confidence in indigenous cattle and traditional farming systems is increasing.

"By developing modern forms of Indian agriculture, we can move towards self-reliance in the farm sector," he added.

On the occasion, agriculturists and veterinary graduates who made notable contributions in the field of animal husbandry were honoured with awards such as Ideal Farmer, Ideal Cattle Rearer, Outstanding Veterinarian, and Ideal Professor.

Students who secured top marks in veterinary science and those who excelled in different fields were also felicitated, and a souvenir was released.

Ashok Diwan, president of the JyeshthaPashuvaidyaPratishthan, traced the organisation's journey from difficult circumstances to prominence.

Tributes to Sanskrit University VC

Nagpur: Governor C P Radhakrishnan and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday paid tributes to Prof Hareram Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor of Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University Ramtek in Nagpur, who died in a road accident with his wife in Uttar Pradesh.

Prof Tripathi (58) and his wife Badami Devi (56) died after their car collided with a trailer truck parked on a road in Dohrighat po-



lice station area of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday morning. They were going from Varanasi to their village in Kushinagar district.

A statement issued by the Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University's spokesperson said Prof Tripathi and his wife were on the way to their native place in Kushinagar when the accident occurred.

The couple's death cast a pall of grief in the university and the academic circle.



Pic: PTI

FIR against Tejashwi for post on PM

Gadchiroli: Police in Gadchiroli district have registered a case against former Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav for tweeting an alleged objectionable post about Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Milind Narote, BJP MLA from Gadchiroli, had filed a complaint against the RJD leader, a senior police official said on Friday.

He said Narote, in his complaint, alleged that Yadav posted an objectionable comment against the prime minister on X ahead of his visit to Gaya, Bihar.

A first information re-

port has been registered under sections 196 (promoting enmity between different groups), 356 (defamation), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke a breach of peace) and 353 (statements that cause public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the official added.

I am not afraid: Tejashwi

Kathihar: Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday asserted that he was "not afraid" of an FIR lodged in BJP-ruled Maharashtra, over his social media post about Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, and he will "continue to speak the truth".

Yadav has been booked in Gadchiroli district for a post on his X handle, ahead of the PM's tour of Bihar on Friday, in which he had alleged that Modi's promises to the people were a "jumla" (rhetoric).

When approached by PTI video for comments, the young leader shot back, "Who is afraid of an FIR? Is jumla an objectionable word? I was simply telling the truth.

And I will continue to do so. They may lodge as many cases against me as they please."

Onion growers allege financial loss

Nashik: Onion growers in the state are facing financial losses due to non-transparent procurement of the crop by a Central agency, an association representing farmers alleged on Saturday.

State Onion Growers' Association president Bharat Dighole said farmers are compelled to stage protests even during festivals and demanded that the government should either ensure fair procurement or stop NAFED's onion purchases.

A farmer from Nashik district staged a unique protest against NAFED on the occasion of the Pola festival with his bullocks.

Pola is a thanksgiving festival celebrated by farmers to acknowledge the importance of bulls and oxen, who are a crucial part of agriculture.

"For several years, NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India) has been procuring onions for buffer stock. However, farmers allege that large-scale financial irregularities occur in this process, depriving them of fair prices and causing losses worth crores of rupees annually," Dighole stated in a



release.

The key demands of agriculturists include transparency in the procurement of onions and setting up a mechanism to guarantee fair and assured prices.

The farmer, Tatyasaheb Pawar, staged a demonstration with "NAFED go back" painted on his bullocks at Dhavaleshwar in Malegaon tehsil.

He said the move was aimed at highlighting the plight of onion growers who suffer heavy losses due to alleged corruption and lack of transparency in buffer stock procurement.

"Onion farmers are demanding a transparent purchase system, guaranteed fair prices, strict action against irregularities, and a clear policy from the Centre and state to ensure remunerative rates," Pawar told reporters.

Pune: Shubhra Renuse beamed with pride as the teenager from a tiny village in Pune district enthusiastically spoke about her upcoming US trip in October.

The 13-year-old is among the 25 students from rural schools in the district who have been selected to visit the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"I am keen to know more about NASA's recent ISS (International Space Station) mission involving Sunita Williams and her team, as well as its future space expeditions," said the Class 7 student from

ZP school students set to visit NASA

Pabe in Bhore tehsil, about 40 km from Pune.

The NASA visit for Shubhra and other students is part of an initiative by the Zilla Parishad, in collaboration with the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), to broaden their horizons, said an official.

A Zilla Parishad is the highest tier in the Panchayati Raj System in rural India, functioning as the district-level local self-government body responsible for developmental schemes

and social justice.

Gajanan Patil, chief executive officer of Pune Zilla Parishad, told PTI that they aim to provide wide exposure to the students through the tour.

"Out of 15,000 students, around 235 were shortlisted through written and oral interviews, and finally 75 were selected. Of them, 25 will visit NASA, while the remaining 50 will tour ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) facilities in India," Patil said.

Another 160 students will be exposed to other in-

stitutions like planetariums, IUCAA, GMRT (Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope), and Rashtrapati Bhavan and Parliament, within India, he said.

Patil said students from Zilla Parishad schools are academically bright but often lack exposure compared to their counterparts in private schools. "We want to increase their interest in space and science and nurture a scientific temperament," he said.

The 25 students are expected to embark on their

journey to America in October, and the process of obtaining passports and visas is underway. Pune Zilla Parishad will fund the entire project, which will cost about Rs 3.5 crore, Patil said.

R Srianand, director of IUCAA, said they helped identify the students through a stringent assessment process involving two written tests and one personal interview.

"The questions were based on science, space, and astronomy from their syllabus. Based on the eval-

uation, the top 25 will visit NASA, while the remaining 50 will go to ISRO facilities," he said.

Although the students come from humble, rural backgrounds, they are bright and intelligent, Srianand said.

"We want the visit to NASA and ISRO facilities to be an enriching experience. Though NASA is a big attraction, we hope these bright minds will contribute to research here in India as they advance in their academic journey," he added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The extent of farm losses is such that no authority has the capacity to reimburse them fully....the government only provides assistance, which falls short of making up for the losses. Farmers must get used to this hardship.”

Pasha Patel, Chairman, Maharashtra Agricultural Prices Commission



Affordable housing takes centre stage

ONE BHK APARTMENTS REGAIN POPULARITY IN MMR

By Bhalchandra Chorghade

Mumbai: For much of the last decade, the narrative of Mumbai Metropolitan Region's (MMR) housing market was dominated by larger apartments and luxury homes. Developers, chasing higher margins, pivoted towards 2BHKs, 3BHKs and premium residences, particularly in prime city locations. However, a quiet but significant shift is now underway: the 1BHK apartment, once considered a starter unit, is back in demand and is beginning to define the affordable housing story across MMR's expanding suburban landscape.

"1BHK apartments are back in demand in MMR, especially in micro-markets like Thane, Kalyan-Dombivli, Vasai-Virar, Panvel and Navi Mumbai," says Keval Valambhia, COO of CREDAI-MCHI. The renewed preference for compact homes stems from three distinct factors—demographic changes, investment dynamics, and large-scale infrastructure projects transforming the region.

According to Valambhia, one of the strongest demand drivers for 1BHKs is the evolving family structure in MMR. The region continues to see a rise in nuclear families, young working professionals and first-time homebuyers who seek affordability without compromising on connectivity. For many in their



20s and 30s, a 1BHK in the suburbs offers a crucial first step on the property ladder.

Thane, Panvel and Navi Mumbai have emerged as magnets for such buyers. These locations balance affordability with urban convenience, offering access to employment hubs through expanding metro corridors and expressways. In comparison, central Mumbai has become prohibitively expensive for first-time buyers, making suburban 1BHKs the practical choice.

This demographic shift also coincides with changing lifestyle aspirations. Younger buyers prefer ownership over long-term rentals, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the security of having a permanent home. Developers catering to this segment are witnessing sustained interest, with 1BHK launches regaining prominence in suburban

project portfolios.

Rental yields

While end-users form a significant share of the demand, investors too are rediscovering the value of smaller apartments. In MMR, 1BHKs typically offer rental yields in the range of 3.5%-5%, outperforming larger units in the same locality. The pandemic-induced shift towards hybrid work models has revived the rental housing market, with young tenants seeking affordable, well-connected spaces.

For investors, compact homes are attractive not only because of their steady demand but also because of their liquidity. 1BHKs, with their lower ticket size, are easier to sell compared to larger units, especially in downturns. Suburban markets like Kalyan-Dombivli and Vasai-Virar, where purchase costs remain accessible, are witnessing heightened

investor interest in this category.

Additionally, the influx of professionals into MMR from Tier-II and Tier-III cities has expanded the rental base. For this mobile workforce, affordability and connectivity outweigh the need for larger living spaces, further cementing the role of 1BHKs in the rental ecosystem.

Attractive suburbs

Perhaps the most decisive factor shaping demand for compact housing is MMR's ongoing infrastructure boom. Projects such as the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), Navi Mumbai International Airport, coastal road development and multiple metro corridors are redrawing the map of connectivity across the region.

Areas that were once considered "far-flung" are now firmly within commuting distance of business districts. For instance,

Panvel is set to benefit immensely from both the upcoming airport and improved road-rail connectivity, while Thane's metro expansion is expected to ease its integration with Mumbai. Such infrastructure upgrades make suburban 1BHKs not just affordable, but also aspirational.

Developers, once hesitant to focus on compact units in peripheral areas, now see a robust future for them. With infrastructure acting as a catalyst, these locations are being positioned as self-sustained micro-markets where affordable homes can thrive.

Contrast to luxury

The revival of 1BHKs is particularly striking given the pre-2020 housing trends. Developers had increasingly shifted focus towards 2BHKs and mid-income housing, driven by higher margins. Simultaneously, luxury housing witnessed unprecedented demand, particularly from high-net-worth individuals seeking larger living spaces and lifestyle amenities.

The pandemic briefly reinforced this trend as work-from-home boosted demand for bigger apartments. However, with affordability becoming the central theme of housing in MMR once again, 1BHKs are reclaiming their importance. They are no longer seen merely as entry-level accommodations but as practical, investment-worthy assets.



CM Devendra Fadnavis at a BJP function in Dadar on Saturday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Ganeshotsav Celebrations

Metro timings extended

Mumbai: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority announced on Saturday that the Metro services on Line 2A and Line 7 will run up to midnight during the Ganapati festival from August 27 to September 6.

The extension in the timings is aimed at catering to the additional rush during the festival, MMRDA said in a release.

While the Line 2A, or the Yellow Line, runs from Dahisar (East) to Andheri (West), Line 7 (Red Line) runs between Dahisar (East) and Gundavali in Andheri (East)

MMRDA said the last train from both terminal stations, Andheri West

(Line 2A) and Gundavali (Line 7), will depart at 12

Mobile app to guide citizens

Thane: The civic body in Thane city has expanded facilities for idol immersion for the upcoming Ganesh festival, along with a mobile application that can guide citizens to visarjan sites in their localities, an official said on Saturday. The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC), in a release, announced that Ganesh idols up to six feet in height have to be immersed in artificial ponds, while those above six feet can be immersed in natural water bodies during the 10-day festival. The civic body said it has increased the number of artificial ponds and mobile immersion systems, and has also modified the Green Immersion App, which will guide citizens to immersion sites in their neighbourhoods.

am instead of the usual 11 pm during the 10-day festival.

As per the release, the decision has been taken due to demands by commuters as the festival is celebrated in the metropolis in a big way.

The Maha Mumbai Metro Operations Corporations Limited (MMMOCL) operates 317 services on the two lines between Monday and Friday with a gap of 5 minutes 50 seconds during peak hours and 9 minutes 30 seconds during non-peak hours.

Uddhav raises hackles over India-Pak cricket

By Quaid Najmi

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena (UBT) unleashed a major offensive against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Central government accusing them of 'betraying national sentiments' by permitting an India-Pakistan teams encounter in the upcoming Asia Cup cricket tournament in Dubai.

Leading the charge was SS (UBT) President and ex-chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, with MP Sanjay Raut, ex-minister Aditya Thackeray, Leader of Opposition Legislative Council Ambadas Danve and others joining him.

A livid Thackeray sought to know why the BJP was ignoring the recent Pahalgam terror attack (April 22) while giving a nod to the restoration of cricket ties.

"People take to the streets for dogs, pigeons and elephants. That is very good... But where was this compassion for the people who were massacred in Pahalgam or the women whose 'sindoor' was erased," demanded Thackeray sharply.



Aiming at Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statements that 'Operation Sindoor' is still on, Thackeray took potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's earlier remarks on patriotism - "hot 'sindoor' is flowing in my blood" - and asked sarcastically, "when did this 'hot sindoor' become cold".

Accusing the BJP-led Centre of dual standards, the SS (UBT) supremo said that "when the Operation Sindoor took place, the entire Opposition sided with the Government".

"Now, how can you even allow the Indian cricket team to play with Team Pakistan. Our armed forces fought and made sacrifices, yet the government takes the credit and permits this," Thackeray said.

Raut shot off a letter to the PM asking: "You once declared that blood and wa-

ter cannot flow together. Will blood and cricket now flow side by side?"

Playing the match motive, Raut noted: "The blood of the Indians killed in the Pahalgam attack has not yet dried, or the tears of their families have not yet stopped. Playing cricket matches with Pakistan ins inhuman."

Questioning the commercial-cum-political motives behind the Indo-Pak match, Raut alleged that usually matches between the two neighbours involved large-scale betting and gambling with BJP members reportedly joining in.

"Jay Shah, son of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and a key figure in international cricket, is steering these affairs. Is there a significant financial turnover for the BJP in this?" he questioned accusingly.

Worli MLA Aditya Thackeray wrote a separate letter to Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, accusing the government of 'hypocrisy'.

Quoting the PM's 1-Day speech remark that "blood and water cannot flow to-

gether", Thackeray Jr pointedly asked: "Is the BCCI above national interest? Above the sacrifice of our jawans? Above the 'sindoor' of the Pahalgam widows?"

Referring to other nations which have isolated aggressor states in the sports arena for greater causes, Aditya said that "terrorism is one such cause", but the BCCI, driven by money and advertising revenue, has chosen cricket over the nation's dignity.

Rooting with the SS (UBT) stance, Danve declared: "There should be no India-Pakistan match — not a series, not even a one-off contest."

Thackeray Jr. took a swipe at the BCCI by referring to the new NCERT textbooks lessons on the Pahalgam attacks, asking the cricket body officials to 'read it'.

"We had sent delegations to isolate Pakistan globally, but now our own cricket board is legitimizing them," he said, as the Ss (UBT) attempted to nail nationalism - the BJP's prime political plank.

Ward Delimitation BMC, TMC invite suggestions

Mumbai: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has invited suggestions and objections from citizens regarding draft geographical boundaries of wards for the upcoming civic elections.

Suggestions and objections will have to be submitted by 3 pm on September 22. The BMC published the draft geographical boundaries of all 227 wards late on Friday night.

Civic commissioner and state-appointed administrator Bhushan Gagrani has signed the document.

The civic body will publish the final ward boundaries after taking all suggestions and objections into consideration.

Elections to the general body of the BMC, the richest civic body of the country, have been pending since March 2023.

The civic body in Thane city has published draft geographical boundaries of wards for the upcoming civic elections and invited suggestions and objections from citizens. The TMC said that the details will be available at ward offices, civic headquarters and the corporation's website.

Seven held for misusing accounts

Thane: Police in Thane city have busted a cyber fraud racket with the arrest of seven persons from Goa, who allegedly cheated job aspirants by misusing their bank accounts and SIM cards for illegal activities, an official said on Saturday.

The arrests were made based on a probe into a complaint lodged by a man who alleged that a bank account and SIM card in his name were used for cyber fraud, the official said.

"The accused lured the victim under the pretext of offering him a job. They opened a bank account in his name and took away the passbook, ATM card, and SIM card linked to it. These were later sent to Goa for use in cyber crimes," Inspector Atul Adurkar said.

When the victim did not get a job, he enquired with the bank and discovered that his account had been misused for illegal transactions, he said.

The accused had similarly cheated at least 80 job aspirants, he said.

Acting on a tip-off, the police team raided a hotel in South Goa and arrested the seven accused on the spot, the official said.



The accused Anand Ashok Meghwani (34) and Saurabh Sharma (40) hail from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, while Bhola Pradeep Yadav (21), Lalchand Mukhia (25), Gaurav Yadav (25), Rohit Yadav (21), and Rajakumar Yadav (21) are from Bihar.

During the raid, the police seized two laptops, 30 mobile phones, bank passbooks in the name of 11 persons from Nagpur, ATM cards, and several SIM cards.

"The gang opened bank accounts in the names of job aspirants by paying them Rs 5,000 each. The kits with passbooks, ATM cards, and SIM cards were handed over by local agents. These accounts were then used for cyber fraud transactions and on-line gaming fraud. To evade arrest, the gang would remain in one location for 15 days before shifting base," the official said.

Body of 4-year-old boy found

Mumbai: The body of a four-year-old boy was found in a garbage bin kept inside the toilet of an express train at the Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) in Mumbai early on Saturday, officials said.

The body was found in an air-conditioned coach of Kushinagar Express (22537) that runs daily between Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh and the LTT.

A public relations officer of the Central Railway the cleaning staff found the body of the boy in one of the toilets of B2 coach of the express around 6 am during the sanitation process.

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) immediately contacted the Government Railway Police (GRP) about the recovery of the body and a complaint was lodged, he said.

"The GRP is carrying out an investigation into the matter. The RPF has filed a complaint after the recovery of the body," he said.

Kushinagar Express is one of the popular trains connecting North India from Mumbai.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“On the hoardings, ‘Devabhau’s’ (CM Devendra Fadnavis) photo is on one side, Ajit Pawar’s is on the other, but the photo of the person who put them up is far bigger than ours. I have given orders in Baramati. No illegal hoardings will be installed. Those who work do not need banners.”

Ajit Pawar, Deputy CM



IIT Bombay students map Moon’s chemistry

Mumbai: Students of Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have successfully charted the Moon's surface chemistry using the data collected by Chandrayaan-2, it said on Saturday.

It was part of Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) challenge given during the Inter-IIT Tech Meet, IIT Bombay said in a statement.

The Moon, with no atmosphere to protect it, is constantly hit by strong X-ray radiation from the Sun. When these X-rays hit the lunar surface, elements present there emit their own unique light,

like a natural form of X-ray fluorescence.

This helps scientists identify what the Moon is made of.

Chandrayaan-2's Large Area Soft X-ray Spectrometer (CLASS) uses this effect to scan the Moon from 100 km above, collecting data in wide strips during each orbit.

Over the years, CLASS has mapped almost the entire lunar surface, producing a rich dataset available on ISRO's Pradan portal, but much of its scientific value had gone unexplored until now.

"It was simultaneously exhilarating and humbling to be working



with data from ISRO's flagship Chandrayaan mission. Every step felt like we were contributing to something monumental -- a once-in-a-lifetime experience that connected us directly to India's space exploration legacy," said Ravi Kumar, the lead student from the winning team at the IIT Bombay.

"Our students applied advanced astrophysics and data analysis techniques to extract meaningful surface chemistry information from complex X-ray spectra. Their dedication to transforming competition results into publishable research exemplifies the best of scientific inquiry," said Prof Varun Bhalerao, the IIT

Bombay faculty member who guided the post-competition research.

IIT Bombay students have demonstrated that when given the opportunity, they consistently rise to meet the most challenging scientific problems," said Prof Shireesh Kedare, Director, IIT Bombay.

"As we celebrate the second National Space Day, this achievement perfectly showcases how India's young talent will drive our nation's space program to new heights through innovation and excellence," said IIT Bombay Deputy Director Prof Milind Atrey.

-PTI

Deficit in democracy; Constitution under challenge: Reddy

By Sanjeev Chopra

New Delhi: Opposition vice presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy on Saturday said there is a "deficit in democracy" in the country and the Constitution is "under challenge" as he pledged to defend and protect it.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview with PTI, Reddy dwelt on a range of issues -- from how his candidature came about, the debate on the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble to the Constitution and to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's accusation that he supported Naxalism.

Calling himself a liberal constitutional democrat, the Opposition's nominee for the vice presidential election said he does not subscribe to the RSS ideology and he is far away from it.

He said disruptions in Parliament were essential in a democracy, but cau-



tioned that they must not become an integral part of the democratic process.

Reddy also sought to downplay the debate on the vice presidential election emerging as a "South versus South" contest, saying both he and NDA

nominee C P Radhakrishnan were citizens of one country but lamented that the country's "polity stands fractured", leading to this contest.

He talked about bringing back all black money stashed abroad, asserting that the nation's wealth

must come back and said it was "work still in progress".

The former Supreme Court judge said earlier there was a talk of "deficit economy", but now there is a "deficit in democracy", and claimed that though India continues to be a constitutional democracy, it is "under strain".

He, however, welcomed the debate on whether the Constitution is under attack.

Contest of ideologies

The VP election is not a contest between him and Radhakrishnan, but a contest representing "two different ideologies".

"... Here is a person, a quintessential RSS man... So far as I am concerned, I do not subscribe to that ideology and I am far, far, far, far away from it. I am essentially a liberal constitutional democrat. This is the area or rather the arena for the contest where the fight goes on," he said.

-PTI

ED raids 'illegal' call centre operatives

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday said it has conducted searches against some persons based in the National Capital Region (NCR), who allegedly duped US nationals through an "illegal" call centre to the tune of about Rs 130 crore.

"The accused persons live in luxury houses allegedly purchased using illegally earned money through a cyber scam. They also acquired numerous assets valued at more than Rs 100 crore from the proceeds of crime," the federal probe agency said in a statement.

The ED raided the premises linked to the accused in Delhi and Gurugram on August 20, the statement said.

The money laundering case stems from a CBI FIR that said the accused, in a criminal conspiracy with each other, operated illegal call centres in Delhi and adjoining areas with the intent of targeting mainly US nationals and subjecting them to a "tech fraud" between November 2022 and April 2024.

The accused – Arjun Gulati, Divyansh Goel and Abhinav Kalra – ran an "illegal" call centre in Noida and Gurugram to target US citizens in the guise of providing them technical support, the ED said in the statement.

The accused gained "unauthorised" access to the victims' bank accounts and transferred funds to multiple foreign shores before routing them to their Indian accounts through a web of transactions involving more than 200 accounts, the agency said.

-PTI



Group Captains Shubhanshu Shukla and Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair with others during the unveiling of first look of the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) in New Delhi. Pic: PTI

Import Tariffs War

European postal services suspend shipment to US

Athens: Multiple postal services around Europe announced Saturday that they are suspending the shipment of many packages to the United States amid a lack of clarity over new import duties.

Postal services in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Italy said they will stop shipping most merchandise to the US effective immediately. France and Austria will follow Monday, and the United Kingdom Tuesday.

Under a decree signed by President Donald Trump last month, international goods that were previously exempt from US tariffs — those valued under USD 800 — will be subject to import duties from August 29.

Letters, books, gifts and small parcels worth less than USD 100 will continue to be exempt.

A trade framework agreed by the US and the European Union last month set a 15 per cent tariff on the vast majority of

products shipped from the EU.

Many European postal services say they are pausing deliveries now because they cannot guarantee the goods will enter the US before August 29. They cite ambiguity about what kind of goods are covered by the new rules, and the lack of time to process their implications.

Starting Saturday, Deutsche Post and DHL Parcel Germany said they "will no longer be able to accept and transport parcels and postal items containing goods from business customers destined for the US."

Postnord, the Nordic logistics company, and Italy's postal service announced similar suspensions effective Saturday.

"In the absence of different instructions from US authorities ... Poste Italiana will be forced, like other European postal operators, to temporarily suspend acceptance of all

shipments containing goods destined for the United States, starting August 23. Mail shipments not containing merchandise will continue to be accepted," Poste Italiane said Friday.

Shipping by services such as DHL Express remains possible, it added.

Bjorn Bergman, head of PostNord's Group Brand and Communication, said the pause was "unfortunate but necessary to ensure full compliance of the newly implemented rules."

In the Netherlands, PostNL spokesperson Wout Witteveen said the Trump administration is pressing ahead with the new duties despite US authorities lacking a system to collect them. He said that PostNL is working closely with its US counterparts to find a solution.

"If you have something to send to America, you should do it today," Witteveen told The Associated Press.

Salwa Judum judgment not mine

A day after Home Minister Amit Shah attacked him over the Salwa Judum judgement and accused him of "supporting" Naxalism, Opposition vice presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy on Saturday said he did not wish to join issues, asserting that the verdict was not his but that of the Supreme Court. Reddy, along with Justice S S Nijjar, was part of an apex court bench that had in July 2011 ordered the disbanding of Salwa Judum, ruling that using tribal youths as Special Police Officers in the fight against

Maoist insurgents was illegal and unconstitutional. Citing the judgment, Home Minister Shah accused the former judge of the Supreme Court of 'supporting' Naxalism and said that had it not been there, Left Wing extremism would have ended by 2020. Reddy said that Shah would not have made the remarks had he read the complete judgement. Reddy said there was another judge sitting with him on the bench and repeated attempts to get it "overruled" did not fructify. "On merits of the judgement, I would

not speak because I am trained by my peers that one should not speak about the greatness of one's own judgement. It is for the people to judge. It is not my personal document. Speaking in Kerala on Friday, BJP leader Shah said, "Sudershan Reddy is the person who helped Naxalism. He gave Salwa Judum judgement. If the Salwa Judum judgement had not been given, the Naxal terrorism would have ended by 2020. He is the person who was inspired by the ideology that gave Salwa Judam judgment."

UP to celebrate Vimukt Jati Diwas

Lucknow: In a bid to integrate the 'Vimukt Jati' community, which has faced historical marginalisation, into the mainstream, the Uttar Pradesh government will celebrate 'Vimukt Jati Diwas' on August 31 here, according to an official statement.

Minister of State for Social Welfare (Independent Charge) Aseem Arun, in the statement, said that members of the Vimukt Jati community from across Uttar Pradesh will participate in the upcoming event, which will serve as a symbol of social inclusion and empowerment.

He recalled that on August 31, 1952, the Government of India abolished the draconian Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, a colonial-era law that had unjustly branded several communities as criminals and deprived them of their basic rights.

Arun said the double-engine government in Uttar Pradesh will celebrate the day as 'Vimukt Jati Diwas', giving these communities respect and a new identity. For the upliftment of the Vimukt Jati, the government is implementing several schemes in the



fields of education, health, and employment.

To make the communities self-reliant, the state government is allotting them land on lease. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh government has prioritised inclusive development for Vimukt Jati communities. The schemes being run by the social welfare department are providing these communities with opportunities in education and employment.

Through the expansion of health facilities and housing schemes, efforts are being made to raise their standard of living.

The minister also said that the government aims to integrate the Vimukt Jati community into mainstream society, ensuring their children gain access to higher education and administrative services, the statement added. -PTI

Fund raiser Syrian national held

Ahmedabad: Police have arrested a Syrian national allegedly part of a gang involved in raising funds from mosques in Gujarat in the name of victims of the Gaza war, prima facie to fund their lavish lifestyles, an official said on Saturday.

The Ahmedabad crime branch said that such activities can pose a threat to the country's internal security, and central and state government agencies are trying to identify the motive.

The crime branch detained Ali Meghat Al-Azhar, who is in India on a tourist visa, the official said.

"A member of a Syrian gang was detained for raising money from mosques in the name of Gaza victims. Three of his accomplices are absconding," the crime branch said.

According to the crime branch, the accused had travelled to India on tourist visas and were indulging in acts that violated the country's tourist visa rules. During interrogation, the arrested accused revealed that the gang was raising money to fund their lavish lifestyle, it stated.



Parents of Seventh Day Adventist School students hold placards during a protest after a class 10 student of the school was recently stabbed to death in Ahmedabad. Pic: PTI

Misbehaviour With Army Personnel

NHAI terminates toll contract

New Delhi: State-owned NHAI on Saturday said it has terminated the contract of a toll collection agency and debarred it from bid participation for one year, after its staff at the Bhuni Toll Plaza misbehaved with army personnel earlier this month.

In addition, NHAI said, it has imposed a penalty of Rs 20 lakh on the toll collecting agency and its performance security of Rs 3.66 crore will be encashed towards the repair/replacement cost of the damaged equipment and infrastructure at Bhuni Toll Plaza on the Meerut-Karnal section of NH-709A.

According to NHAI, a 'show-cause notice' was issued to the toll collecting agency M/s Dharm Singh, seeking an explanation about the incident.

"The reply from the agency was not found to be satisfactory. The agency was found to be in direct violation of contract obligations, involving misconduct by toll staff, physical altercation, damage to public property and disruption of fee collection

operations," it said.

To avoid recurrence of such incidents in the future, the National Highways Authority of India said it has instructed all toll collection agencies to take strong action against their employees who indulge in such behaviour with the road users and public representatives.

NHAI said it has also issued directions to all toll collection agencies to provide training to toll plaza staff for good behaviour with the National Highway users.

Fake marriage racket busted

BRIDE AMONG FIVE ARRESTED

Jammu: Five persons, including a woman from Uttar Pradesh, were arrested after police busted an inter-state racket involved in orchestrating fake marriages to extort money from unsuspecting grooms here, officials said on Saturday.

So far, five such cases – three from Akhnoor and two from Nagrota – have come to light, a police spokesman said.

Terming the arrests, which also included two locals and two outsiders, a "major breakthrough", he said police registered an FIR on August 11 at the Akhnoor police station after receiving a complaint about a fraudulent marriage.

Deepak Kumar, a resident of Dhana Chapri, approached the complainant, Rashpal Chand from nearby Dori Dager, with a marriage proposal from outside the Union territory and demanded Rs 3 lakh, the spokesman said.

After the marriage was solemnised, the bride, along with her accomplices, fled within two days.

A probe revealed that

the gang was operating a fraudulent nexus under the guise of a marriage bureau.

The racket managed everything, including arranging the bride, priest, and related formalities, the spokesman said, adding that shortly after marriage, the bride would desert the groom on one pretext or the other.

Due to social stigma, many victims refrained from reporting.

Police have arrested Deepak Kumar and Vikas Kumar, both from Poonch, Arun Kumar, a native of Bihar, and Istakhar and Kusum Lata, the "bride", both from Uttar Pradesh, the spokesman said.

Four similar cases surfaced during the probe from Akhnoor and Nagrota, he said. The spokesman appealed to the people to remain vigilant against such fraudulent activities and promptly report any such incident to their nearest police station. The nexus primarily targeted vulnerable individuals, especially those unable to find a suitable match or overage for marriage.

Global spiritual tourism conclave in Ujjain

New Delhi: Ujjain -- the holy city of Mahakal in Madhya Pradesh -- will host a global spiritual tourism conclave on August 27 that will provide a platform for dialogue on strengthening infrastructure and the impact of AI and virtual reality in the sector.

The event is being organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, and the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, a tourism ministry statement said on Saturday.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will inaugurate the second Global Spiritual Tour-

ism Conclave -- 'Ruhmantic' -- in the presence of Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the statement said.

Gauranga Das Prabhu, a spiritual leader, will deliver the keynote address.

Senior officials, including Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, and Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, will also address the gathering.

A highlight of the event will be the release of the PHDCCI-KPMG report on spiritual tourism titled



'Faith and Flow: Navigating Crowds in India's Sacred Spaces'. A government-industry roundtable, to be chaired by Chief Minister Yadav, will provide a platform for dialogue on strengthening infrastructure, responsible hospitality, and cultural promotion in spiritual tourism, the statement said.

The day-long deliberations will include thematic sessions on 'Temple Economies: Where Faith Meets Livelihood', examining how temple circuits sustain local economies; and 'Mahakal's Mandala: Ujjain's Spiritual Power and Urban Future', which will explore heritage and modernisation.

The other sessions include

'Mind, Body and Soul: Wellness as the New Spiritual Frontier', integration of yoga, ayurveda and wellness; and 'Divine in the Digital - Spirituality 2.0' -- impact of AI, virtual reality, and digital apps on spiritual access.

Besides, another session on 'Guardians of the Sacred Axis - The Jyotirlinga Circuit' will trace the cultural significance of the 12 Jyotirlingas.

The delegates will also visit the Mahakaleshwar temple and the Kal Bhairav temple, experiencing Ujjain's spiritual heritage, the ministry said.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"India plans to launch more than 100 satellites over the next 15 years, and it will be a mix of government technology missions and private sector-led operational missions. The roadmap will guide India's space journey to 2040 and beyond."



Jitendra Singh, Union Minister, Science and Technology

J&K govt takes over schools linked to JeI

Srinagar: Teams of officials accompanied by police visited schools affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) across the 10 districts of Kashmir as the J-K government on Saturday took over their management.

According to officials, the entire process was conducted “peacefully and smoothly”, without disturbing the education of the students.

The School Education Department had on Friday ordered the takeover of 215 schools affiliated with JeI and its Falah-e-Aam Trust, where over 51,000 students are enrolled, in order to “safeguard their academic future”.

On Saturday morning, officials of district administrations, principals of the respective nearest high and higher secondary schools, accompanied by police teams, reached these schools. The administrative teams took charge of the schools, checked their documents and the infrastruc-



ture, as well as interacted with the staff.

A teacher at one of such schools in south Kashmir’s Anantnag district welcomed the government move.

“I think it is a good step. We used to face a lot of difficulties, but now I think everything will be streamlined,” Mohammad Ishaq, teacher at Hanfia Islamia Institute at Tachloo area of the district, said.

He said the district magistrates used to frame the managing bodies of the schools in the 1980s as well.

A student at the school, Aliya Irshad, said the move will benefit the students and the staff. “The school will improve and prosper,” she said.

She also demanded that the government increase the salaries of the staff as they work very hard for the students.

The Friday order said, “The Managing Committee of the 215 schools shall be taken over by the District Magistrate/ Deputy Commissioner concerned who shall propose a fresh Managing Committee in due course for the concerned schools after getting these duly verified.”

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs, on February 28, 2019, and again on February 27, 2024, declared the JeI as an unlawful association under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

-PTI

Opposition parties criticise move

Political parties in Kashmir on Saturday reacted sharply to the J&K government’s takeover of the 215 schools affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI).

Peoples’ Conference chief and MLA Handwara Sajad Lone said, “Shame and shamelessness have assumed new meanings in this government.”

“215 schools forcibly taken over by the J and K Government. And no prizes for guessing. The elected government has passed the order. Shame and shamelessness have assumed new meanings in this government.

“They are setting new standards in servility. And just to recall the sermons the edicts that this party passed against their opponents,” Lone said in a post on X.

He asked the people to be “under no illusions” as the elected government “is a party to all acts undertaken”.

Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti said JeI has always been the first target of the NC when in power.

Woman’s body found in waste pit

Kochi: The partially decomposed body of an unidentified woman has been discovered in a waste pit at an unoccupied house in Ernakulam district, police officials said on Saturday.

The body was found in Oonnukal, near Neriamangalam, in the Ernakulam district and it is suspected that the woman was murdered, they added.

Police officials suspect the deceased could be a 61-year-old woman from Vengoor in Ernakulam district, who had been reported missing several days earlier.

According to them, the house belongs to a Christian priest residing in Kuruppampady, Ernakulam. On Wednesday, the priest noticed that the kitchen’s exit door had been forced open, indicating that someone had broken into the premises.

He informed the police, and a case was registered at the Oonnukal police station. When the owner returned to the property on Friday, he detected a foul smell emanating from the waste pit and alerted the police, sources said.

A police team soon arrived and recovered the partially decomposed body. Police officials said that bloodstains were also found inside the house and near the pit.

“We have registered a case of murder and launched an investigation. The body is in a decomposed state, and identification can only be confirmed after further examination. We suspect it is the missing woman from Vengoor,” a senior officer said.

Following the inquest, the body was shifted to Ernakulam Government Medical College.



Visitors at a stall during the unveiling of first look of the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) on the occasion of the National Space Day, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday. Pic: PTI

‘Illegal’ Betting Case

ED arrests Karnataka Congress MLA

Bengaluru/New Delhi: Karnataka Congress MLA K C Veerendra ‘Puppy’ was arrested on Saturday under the anti-money laundering law from Sikkim in an alleged illegal online and offline betting case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

The federal probe agency also said it seized Rs 12 crore in cash (including about Rs crore in foreign currency), gold jewellery worth Rs 6 crore, silver about 10 kg along with four vehicles following raids launched on Friday in multiple states.

The agency did not specify exactly what was seized from where. A picture issued by the agency showed huge wads of currency notes kept on a casino table.

The ED said the 50-year-old MLA from Chitradurga Assembly seat in Karnataka was taken into custo-

dy from Sikkim’s capital Gangtok on Friday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in an “illegal” online and offline betting case.

The legislator had gone to Gangtok along with his associates on a business visit to lease a casino, the agency said. He was produced before a designated magistrate and a transit remand was obtained for producing him before the jurisdictional court in Bengaluru, the agency said.

The Bengaluru zone of the ED is investigating the case. There was no immediate reaction from the MLA’s legal team or the Congress party.

“Many property-related documents were also seized from the premises of Veerendra’s brother K C Nagaraj and his son Pruthvi N Raj.

“His other associates

like another brother K C Thippeswamy are handling operations of online gaming from Dubai.”

The agency concluded the raids on Saturday from 31 locations that included Chitradurga, Hubballi and Bengaluru in Karnataka, Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Sikkim, Mumbai and Goa.

Five casinos in Goa named Puppy’s Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy’s Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino were also raided.

Veerendra, according to the ED, is accused of running online betting sites like Kings567, Raja567, Puppy’s003, Rathna Gaming, etc. and his brother K C Thippeswamy is alleged to be “operating” three business entities from Dubai named Diamond Softtech, TRS Technologies and Prime9Technologies.

-PTI

Dharmasthala Probe

SIT arrests complainant

Mangaluru (Karnataka): The complainant, who had alleged multiple murders, rapes, and burials in Dharmasthala over the past two decades, was arrested on Saturday by the SIT probing the charges, officials said.

The complainant, who had so far appeared before the probe panel wearing a mask, has been identified as C N Chinnaiah, they said.

He was produced before Judicial First Class Magistrate Vijayendra, and the SIT sought 10 days’ custody for further investigation. The court granted the request, officials added.

The SIT, led by Pranab

Mohanty, had questioned Chinnaiah late into Friday night. Officials said the arrest followed inconsistencies found in his statements and documents. He was later taken for a medical examination after prolonged interrogation.

Chinnaiah, a former sanitation worker, claimed he had worked in Dharmasthala between 1995 and 2014, during which he was allegedly forced to bury several bodies, including those of women and minors. He alleged that some of the victims showed signs of sexual assault and had given a statement before a magistrate.

As part of the probe, the

SIT has been carrying out excavations at multiple sites identified by the complainant. Skeletal remains were recovered from two locations.

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara recently told the Assembly that action could be taken against the complainant if the SIT found his allegations to be false. He also said that, so far, only ground searches had been carried out and that “the probe hasn’t even started.”

The SIT alone, and not the government, would decide on the need for further digging, he added.

-PTI



SDRF personnel and others remove a fallen tree at a disaster-hit area after heavy rainfall, at Tharali, in Chamoli district in Uttarakhand on Saturday. Pic: PTI

Monsoon Mayhem

Five dead, one missing

Ranchi/ Seraikela: Five people were killed, one person was missing, and several others were injured as heavy rains wreaked havoc in parts of Jharkhand, officials said on Saturday morning.

A woman and her seven-year-old son died after their house collapsed in Seraikela-Kharsawan district on Friday night, they said.

Eight more people were injured in the incident, which happened in Dandu village in Rajnagar block, they added.

“The woman and her son died during treatment at the MGM Hospital in Jamshedpur. Eight others were also injured as the kuchcha house of one Santosh Lohar collapsed,” Rajnagar’s BDO Malay Das told PTI.

The incident happened when relatives were visiting Lohar’s house, a police officer said.

In another incident in the district, a five-year-old died and three others were injured as the wall of a house collapsed on Saturday morning, police said. The incident happened

around 4 am in Kol Shimla in the Kharsawan police station area, they said.

“The wall of the house of one MunnaBodra collapsed. His five-year-old son died on the spot, while Bodra, his wife and their two-year-old daughter were injured. They have been admitted to the Serai-kela Sadar Hospital,” Kharsawan police station’s officer-in-charge Gaurav Kumar said.

In Chatra district, a couple was washed away in the swelling Siyari river on Friday, police said.

Police summon YouTuber after court grants bail

The police have issued a notice to YouTuber M D Sameer, who is under the scanner of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), directing him to appear before the investigating officer on August 24, officials said on Saturday. Police said the notice, pasted at his residence in Ballari, came after a Mangaluru court granted Sameer anticipatory bail on August 21. Sameer faces criminal

charges over content related to the Dharmasthala case. A case has been registered against him at the Dharmasthala police station under Sections 192 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 240 (giving false information) and 353(1) (b) (statements conducting to public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. According to police, the charges stem from a video uploaded by Sameer in which

he made allegations linked to the case. The SIT is also examining his role as part of its ongoing probe, officials said. Sameer, who commands a sizeable online following, has maintained that his videos highlight issues ignored by mainstream media. Authorities, however, allege his recent content amounted to provocation and the spread of misinformation, with the potential to disturb public order.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project is without doubt a maha ecological disaster. Now comes fresh evidence that the administration has falsely claimed that the rights of local tribal communities under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 have been identified and settled.”

Jairam Ramesh, Leader, Congress



India’s health crisis: Surge in diabetes, cancer

New Delhi: India is on the cusp of a health crisis, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer reaching epidemic proportions, a group of Padma awardee doctors has said.

At a session hosted recently by Pacific OneHealth, the doctors warned that without immediate action, India will be overwhelmed by this NCD epidemic.

Padma Shri Dr DS Rana, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, underlined the need for

universal access and ethical regulation.

“Our ultimate goal should be universal healthcare. While India has progressed, disparities persist. We need strong ethical practices and regulatory courage, particularly in drug pricing and hospital costs, to make healthcare equitable,” Dr Rana said.

On the rising burden of heart disease, Padma Shri Dr Praveen Chandra, Chairman, Interventional and Structural Heart Cardiology, Medanta, said the heart is the common path-



way for multiple diseases.

“Emergency angioplasty within the golden hour can save countless lives, and advanced cardiac interventions are now accessible even to patients in their 80s and 90s,” he said, even as emphasised the im-

portance of preventive health.

Endocrinologist and diabetologist Dr Anoop Misra, a Padma Shri awardee, raised his concerns over diabetes.

“One in three Delhi residents is diabetic, with another 30 per cent pre-diabetic. This is nothing to be proud of -- prevention and early control are critical. Drugs like Ozempic may show promise, but lifestyle and awareness remain the strongest tools we have,” said the Chairman, Fortis C-DOC Hospital for Diabe-

tes and Allied Sciences, and a former Professor (Medicine) at Delhi AIIMS.

Padma Shri Dr Mohsin Wali, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, stressed the importance of trust-based care, and cited his own hospital’s non-profit model that, he said, embodies the motto ‘Healthcare As It Should Be.’

“By adopting such models, we can effectively address the growing burden of NCDs and make significant strides towards a

healthier India,” Dr Wali said.

Dr Swadeep Srivastava, President and Co-Founder, Pacific OneHealth, observed that healthcare must evolve from a privilege to a promise, rooted in ethics, powered by innovation, and centred on the patient.

“At Pacific OneHealth, we believe the future lies in bridging preventive, primary, and tertiary care seamlessly, while ensuring no one is left behind,” Srivastava said.

-PTI

Anil Ambani Booked

Money diversion
main charge

New Delhi/Mumbai: According to the SBI complaint, now part of the FIR, Reliance Communications Ltd. (RCom), Reliance Infratel Ltd. (RITL), a step-down subsidiary of RCOM and Reliance Telecom Ltd. (RTL), a subsidiary of RCom, cumulatively received Rs. 31,580 crores from banks.

The forensic audit done in 2020 mapped the utilisation of funds obtained from banks which flagged deviations in funds received and utilised by RCom. The utilisation was not as per the terms of sanction, it alleged.

It is alleged that Rs. 13667.73 crore (44 pc) were utilised for repayment of loans and other obligations to Banks and FIIs, and Rs 12692.31 crore (41 pc) were utilised to pay to connected parties.

The audit underlined that Rs. 6265.85 crore obtained from banks through loans were utilised for repayment of other bank loans, Rs. 5501.56 crore of loans were used for paying related and connected parties and investment of Rs. 1883.08 crore were made from the loans received from various banks, it alleged while giving details of a number of other irregular transactions.

"Most of these investments were liquidated immediately and utilised for payments to related and non-related parties," it said.

Capital advances given to Netizen Engineering Pvt. Ltd. -- a group compa-



ny of Reliance ADA Group -- were written off. Besides, fictitious debtors were created and written off, the CBI Spokesperson said in the statement.

The red flag

The audit had red-flagged a capital advance of Rs 5525 crore extended to Netizen Engineering Pvt Ltd (Netizen) in 2015-16.

"In 2017-18, Netizen acquired two assets (one tangible worth Rs. 3041.24 crore and a receivable worth Rs. 3042 crore) from Millennium Private Network Ltd. (MPNL), one of which was immediately transferred to RCIL.

"The valuation of these assets is not clear. On transfer of this asset, RCom wrote off the capital advance it had given to Netizen against receivable balance from RCIL," the audit report submitted by the SBI for registration of the FIR said.

In addition, multiple other accounts have been

assigned to Netizen to reduce its receivable balance by RCom and RTL, it is alleged.

The financial background of Netizen is not commensurate with the scale of activities as shown in the books RCom. Netizen and RCOM appear to be closely connected entities, the audit report alleged.

"Further money transferred by Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. (RJIO), the flagship telecom arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) on the sale of spectrum to RCom was also transferred to Netizen, which was further transferred to entities with a weak financial background. Thus, the possibility that the account of Netizen was utilised to siphon money could not be ruled out," it alleged.

The audit said that Netizen transactions do not appear genuine or conducted in the normal course of business.

"Transactions appear to be an attempt at diversion of funds by manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious accounts and fictitious entries. It appears that they have committed the offences of misappropriation of funds and breach of trust with dishonest intention," the audit report alleged.

Case history

The CBI obtained search warrants from the Special CBI court, Mumbai, on August 22, 2025, following which searches were conducted on Saturday.

The SBI had classified the account and promoter Anil Ambani as 'fraud' on November 10, 2020 and filed a complaint with the CBI on January 5, 2021.

However, the complaint was returned in view of the 'status quo' order dated January 6, 2021, by the Delhi High Court.

Meanwhile, a Supreme Court judgement dated March 27, 2023, in State Bank of India and Others Vs Rajesh Agarwal and Others case mandated that lenders provide borrowers with an opportunity to represent before classifying their accounts as fraud.

The fraud classification in the account was reversed by the bank on September 2, 2023.

The fraud classification process was re-run, and the account was again classified as 'fraud' after following the due process as per the RBI circular dated July 15, 2024.

-PTI

Trade Deal With US

We have
certain
red lines:
Jaishankar

New Delhi: India has certain "red-lines" in its trade negotiations with the US and New Delhi will not compromise on protecting the interests of farmers and small producers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday.

Jaishankar said the negotiations for a trade deal between the two sides are underway.

Speaking at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum, Jaishankar also said that US President Donald Trump's way of dealing with the world is a very major departure from the traditional way of doing so and the entire world is facing this issue. "We've not had a US president who has conducted foreign policy as publicly as the current one. That itself is a departure that's not limited to India," he said.

The external affairs minister said trade is "really the major issue" between the two countries.

"The negotiations are still going on and the bottom line is we have some red lines. The red lines are primarily the interest of our farmers and to some extent small producers. So when people pronounced that we succeeded or failed etc., my answer to this is -- we as a government are committed to defend the interests of our farmers and small producers. We are very determined on that. That's not something we can compromise on," he said.

The external affairs minister also rejected observations that India's relations with China are improving in view of strain in New Delhi-Washington ties.

MONEY MATTERS

Modak and the Art of Investing



By
Kaustubh Kale



As the aroma of freshly steamed Modaks fills homes during the festive season, this humble sweet offers more than just a delectable treat. My mouth is already watering at the thought!

Modak, traditionally prepared to honour Lord Ganesha, carries within its delicate layers profound lessons about investing.

At first glance, the Modak may appear simple, with a soft rice flour shell filled with jaggery and coconut. However, the process of making it requires patience, precision, and a balance of ingredients. These qualities are equally essential for successful investing and financial planning.

The Importance of Patience

Just as preparing Modak takes time and care, successful investing requires patience. Investments, like the Modak dough, need time to settle before they can be shaped. Rushing the process often leads to imperfections, both in the sweet and in your portfolio. Investors must resist the temptation of quick returns, understanding that true wealth is built gradually, much like the slow cooking of the jaggery filling.

Precision in Diversification

The Modak's structure also teaches the value of precision and diversification. The thin outer layer of rice flour must be just the right thickness to hold the sweet filling without breaking. If it is too thick, the Modak becomes tough; if it is too thin, it risks falling apart. Similarly, an investment portfolio must be carefully diversified. Over-concentration in one asset exposes you to undue risk, while

too much diversification can dilute returns. A well-balanced financial plan, like a well-made Modak, holds together and provides both security and growth.

The Value of Tradition and Adaptability

While Modak is deeply rooted in tradition, it has also adapted to modern tastes with flavours such as chocolate, kesar, and dry fruits. This adaptability offers an important lesson for investors. Traditional products like FDs and insurance policies have their role, but modern investments such as stocks, mutual funds, and even alternatives like startups or derivatives are crucial to beat inflation and achieve long-term goals. Blending tradition with adaptability helps create lasting wealth.

Enjoying the Fruits of Effort

Just as a perfectly crafted Modak brings joy to those who eat it, a well-executed investment strategy brings financial peace of mind. The reward for patience, precision, and adaptability in investing is security and the ability to enjoy life's sweetest moments.

As we prepare Modaks for this Ganesh Utsav, let us reflect on the lessons they offer about investing. Like crafting the perfect Modak, financial success lies in patience, balance, and enjoying the journey. Wishing you a joyful Ganesh Utsav filled with Modaks and prosperity. Ganpati Bappa Morya!

(The author is a Chartered Accountant and CFA (USA). Financial Advisor. Views personal. He could be reached on 9833133605.)

CM rich list spotlights NCN

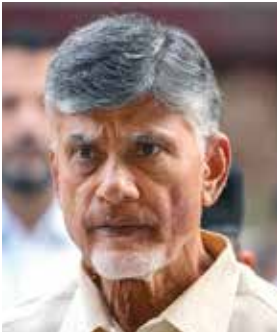
New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has once again topped the Association of Democratic Reforms' (ADR) annual list of India's richest CMs, with most of his declared Rs 931 crore wealth coming from his family's stake in a pure-play dairy retail firm he founded 33 years ago without any state support.

The ADR report, based on affidavits filed by chief ministers before the last assembly elections they contested, lists West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the bottom on the list.

While Naidu does not own any shares in Heritage Foods Ltd - the milk and dairy product retailer set up in 1992 with a seed capital of just Rs 7,000 and listed on bourses in 1994 - his wife Bhuvaneshwari Nara owns a 24.37 per cent stake, which is counted as the Andhra chief minister's wealth.

Nara family (promoters) own a total of 41.3 per cent of Heritage Foods which has seen market capitalisation rise from just Rs 25 crore in 1995 to Rs 4,381 crore (based on Friday's closing price of shares on the BSE).

The market capitalisation reached its highest



ever Rs 6,755 crore during June 2024, with life-time high shareholders of 1,81,907.

Explaining the context, Heritage Foods officials said the company is a pure-play dairy products retailer and not in any crony capitalist sector like infrastructure.

A retail firm, which does not get any government subsidy or other support, can only grow if its products are accepted by masses. And this company was set up when Naidu was just an MLA. He became chief minister of the state much after the firm got listed on stock exchanges.

They said in the early 1990s Naidu's home district of Chittoor in united Andhra Pradesh was the state's largest milk producing district.

In 1992, there was a milk surplus and there was a marketing crisis for the

milk farmers.

Heritage foods

Spurred by this opportunity, Naidu set up Heritage Foods in 1992 with an authorised capital of Rs 1 crore and paid-up capital of Rs 7,000.

Heritage commenced its operations during 1993 and brought an initial public offering (IPO) in the following year. It was oversubscribed 54 times, and shares were listed on the BSE and NSE. An amount of Rs 6.50 crore was raised from the IPO.

During the first year of its operations, Heritage Foods set up its first milk chilling unit at Chittoor with an investment of Rs 1.60 crore, they said adding it handled 19,000 litres of milk per day and clocked revenue of Rs 4.36 crore in its maiden year of operation with a profit (PAT) of Rs 19 lakh.

The turnover of the company crossed Rs 100 crore by FY 2000 (April 1999 to March 2000 financial year), Rs 500 crore by FY 2008, Rs 1,000 crore by FY 2011, Rs 2,000 crore by FY 2016, Rs 3,000 crore by FY 2023, and Rs 4,000 crore by FY 2025. The net worth of the company grew from Rs 9.99 crore (1994) to Rs 972 crore (2025).

-PTI



A woman sells idols of Lord Ganesha ahead of the 'Ganesh Chaturthi' festival at Mayur Vihar area in New Delhi on Saturday.

Pic: PTI

Rs 3 lakh fine on VLCC

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed Rs 3 lakh fine on VLCC Ltd for publishing misleading advertisements related to slimming treatments.

In a statement on Saturday, the Department of Consumer Affairs said the penalty has been imposed on VLCC "for publishing misleading advertisements regarding fat-loss

and slimming treatments through the use of the US-FDA approved CoolSculpting procedure/machine."

The department said the VLCC matter came into notice through a complaint and monitoring of ads in the beauty sector.

"On examination, it was found that VLCC was making exaggerated claims of drastic weight loss and inch reduction within a single session, which went

Goa govt to
draft policy
for taxis

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that the state government will draft a comprehensive taxi policy by September 10 to address issues of transparency, security and rate rationalisation in the sector.

The chief minister and his cabinet colleagues held a meeting with representatives of taxi associations at the Mantralaya in Porvorim on Friday evening.

Talking to reporters, Sawant said, "I have heard all the issues raised by taxi operators. The government will come up with the state taxi policy."

Closing Auction Session

SEBI proposes
new framework

New Delhi: Markets regulator SEBI has proposed a new framework for the Closing Auction Session (CAS) in the equity cash market, starting with highly liquid derivative stocks to determine the closing prices of shares.

The proposal, if implemented, is expected to reduce volatility, improve fairness, and make it easier for large and passive investors to execute trades.

In its consultation paper, SEBI proposed that CAS would be applied in a phased manner, beginning with stocks available in the derivatives segment-- those with sufficient liquidity--and later extended to all stocks based on experience gained.

A closing auction session is a short trading period held at the end of the day to determine the final price of a security.

The regulator proposed that session will be held separately for 20 minutes, from 3:15 pm to 3:35 pm, unlike an earlier proposal that suggested conducting it after market hours, between 3:30 pm and 3:45 pm. The session would be di-

vided into four phases --reference price calculation, order entry, random close, and final matching. Index derivatives would continue to close at 3:30 pm, while near-month stock derivatives would close at 3:35 pm on expiry days.

To maintain orderly trading, CAS will operate within a 3 per cent up or down band of the reference price, determined using the VWAP of trades between 3 pm and 3:15 pm.

Execution rules will also change, with market orders receiving priority over limit orders--unlike in the pre-open session. Any unexecuted limit orders from the continuous session will automatically move to CAS but cannot be modified, only cancelled.

To enhance transparency, SEBI has proposed the dissemination of real-time data during CAS. This would include the indicative equilibrium price, cumulative buy and sell quantities, and imbalance data-- both total and specific to market orders--helping participants make better-informed decisions.

Govt's push for clay idols gives artisans lifeline

Panaji: With the Ganesh festival just around the corner and the ban on Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols, the government's subsidy scheme for clay idol makers has given a new lease of life to Goa's artisans.

The government introduced a subsidy scheme providing Rs 200 per clay idol for up to 250 idols to support traditional artisans and preserve their craft, said Damodar Morajkar, managing director of the Goa Handicrafts, Rural and Small Scale Industries Development Corporation

Ltd. (GHRSSIDC).

Talking to PTI Videos, he explained that the scheme was born out of both cultural and environmental concerns.

"PoP idols don't dissolve during immersions and end up polluting water bodies. Clay idols, on the other hand, dissolve easily without harming the environment," Morajkar said.

The Pramod Sawant-led government has been promoting this scheme extensively.

Morajkar said that as many as 450 artisans from



Goa are registered with the corporation under this scheme.

He said the financial assistance was increased from Rs 100 to Rs 200 in the

last two years, considering the inflation.

The scheme also helps artisans procure clay-mixing machines, which are essential to ready the raw

material before idols are crafted, he added.

The official said in some communities, the craftsmanship has been passed down through generations, and the scheme also aims to ensure that they don't abandon traditions.

For artisans, the scheme has become a means for survival and a medium to keep their craft alive.

Ramesh Harmalkar, who has been making idols for five decades with his brothers, said the government's timely subsidy and provision for a clay-mixing

machine have eased their efforts.

The Harmalkar brothers live in Chimbel village near Panaji.

"The scheme has also helped artisans control the prices of idols. If the government had not provided the subsidy, we would have had to increase the prices of idols to meet the inflated cost of raw materials," he said.

He said that idols cost anywhere between Rs 1,500 and Rs 50,000, depending on the height and other aspects.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are seeing an increasing number of mediation cases from India, which is a global market and a leading member of the global supply chain. This means there is an urgent need to build mediation capacity in the country."



Chuan Wee Meng, CEO, SIMC

Female political prisoners in Belarus face abuse, humiliation

By YurasKarmanau

Tallinn(Estonia): AntaninaKanavalava says her four years in a Belarusian penal colony as a political prisoner were filled with a fear and anguish that still haunts her.

She nearly lost parental rights to her two young children when she was initially arrested. Her eyesight deteriorated from sewing military uniforms in a dimly lit room. Denied access to even basic needs like feminine hygiene products, she used rags or whatever she could find amid unsanitary conditions.

“Women in prison go through hell and can’t even complain to anyone,” Kanavalava, 37, told The Associated Press after her release in December. “The head of the prison told me straight out that people like me should be put against the wall and shot.”

Belarus has nearly 1,200 political prisoners. While all endure harsh conditions like unheated cells, isolation and poor nutrition and health care, human rights officials say the 178 women behind bars are particularly vulnerable.

Authoritarian President Lukashenko has ruled Belarus for over three decades, living up to his nickname of “Europe’s last dictator” by silencing dissent and extending his rule through elections the West calls neither free nor fair. A harsh crackdown followed a disputed 2020 vote, when hundreds of thousands took to the streets. Over 65,000 people were arrested,



ed, thousands were beaten by police and hundreds of independent media outlets and nongovernmental organisations were closed and outlawed. Opposition figures are either imprisoned or have fled abroad.

A mother’s trauma

Kanavalava was a confidant of opposition leader SviatlanaTsikhanouskaya, who challenged Lukashenko in the 2020 election but later fled the country amid the subsequent protests.

With her husband also jailed, Kanavalava was convicted of “participating in mass riots” and sentenced to 5 1/2 years. Authorities threatened to send her 6-year-old son, Ivan, and 4-year-old daughter, Nasta, to an orphanage at the start of her sentence.

“For a mother not to see her children for four years is real torture,” she told AP. “The authorities know this and rub salt into this maternal wound every day, demanding I sign confessions and cooperate.”

The UN experts said female prisoners in Belarus

were subject to “arbitrary punishment, including solitary confinement and incommunicado detention without contact with their children.”

Kanavalava likened it to being a “hostage,” saying she was forced to cooperate with authorities because “I wanted to survive for the sake of my children.” Their grandmother ultimately took them to Warsaw, where they were reunited with their mother following her pardon and early release in January.

Abuse, hunger strikes

The UN experts expressed particular concern for ViktoriyaKulsha, who was initially sentenced to 2 1/2 years for moderating a Telegram messaging channel that urged drivers to block streets during the 2020 protests. Four more years were tacked on for allegedly disobeying prison officials.

Human rights groups say the 43-year-old has gone on at least six hunger strikes protesting abuses in Penal Colony No. 24 in Za-

rechcha. The UN experts said her condition “has been life-threatening for some time now.”

Sharenda-Panasiuk, who was in the same penal colony, said she saw a guard in 2023 punch Kulsha in the back, causing her to fall. The same guard later choked her by grabbing her from behind, she added. Conditions in Penal Colony No. 24 are among the harshest.

Lasting effects

Kanavalava, who lives in Warsaw with her family, admits that “prison is not over yet” for her because her husband still has nearly two years left on his sentence.

Neither is the anxiety. She said “the fear of losing my own children haunts me even in my dreams.”

“It is impossible to get used to the tyranny of the Belarusian authorities, but it is even harder to explain to children and to yourself the high price that Belarusians pay for their desire to be free,” Kanavalava said. -AP

Parole denied to Menendez brothers’

Los Angeles: Lyle Menendez received the same recommendation as his brother Erik when he was denied parole after serving decades in prison for the murder of their parents in 1989.

A panel of two commissioners denied Menendez parole for three years, after which he will be eligible again, in a case that continues to fascinate the public.

The brothers were sentenced to life in prison in 1996 for fatally shooting their father, Jose Menendez, and mother, Kitty Menendez, in their Beverly Hills mansion almost exactly 36 years ago on August 20, 1989. While defence attorneys argued that the brothers acted out of self-defence after years of sexual abuse by their father, prosecutors said the brothers sought a multimillion-dollar inheritance.

A judge reduced their sentences in May, and they became immediately eligible for parole. The parole hearings marked the closest they have come to winning freedom since their convictions almost 30 years ago.

Erik Menendez, who is being held at the same prison in San Diego, was denied parole Thursday after commissioners determined his misbehavior in prison made him still a risk to public safety.

A day later, Lyle Menendez told the parole board details about the abuse he suffered under his parents. He cried, face reddened, while delivering his closing statement. He seemed to still want to protect his “baby brother,” telling commissioners he took sole responsibility for the murders.



Palestinians carry sacks of flour unloaded from a humanitarian aid convoy on the outskirts of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza Strip on Saturday. Pic: AP/ PTI

Syrian Security Forces

Religious minorities, Kurds get recruited

Afrin(Syria): Young Kurdish men, including members of religious minorities, recently signed up to join the Syrian government’s General Security forces in Afrin, an area in the country’s north from which Kurds were forcibly displaced years ago.

The push to recruit ethnic and religious minorities comes as the government in Damascus faces increased scrutiny after outbreaks of sectarian violence in recent months during which there were widespread reports of government-affiliated fighters killing and humiliating civilians from the Alawite and Druze sects.

Minorities are increasingly wary of the new authorities in Damascus, who are led by Sunni Muslim Islamist former insurgents who overthrew President Bashar Assad in December after a nearly 14-year civil war.

Abbas Mohammad Hamouda, a Kurdish Alawite, was among the young men

lining up at a recruitment center in Afrin on Wednesday.

“I came with young men from my district to join the new state,” he said. “We will stand together, united, and avoid problems and wars from now on.”

The Kurds in Afrin “have been subjected to a lot over the past eight years,” Hamouda said, adding, “I hope that the youth of Afrin will not think badly of us because of this affiliation” with the new authorities.

Formerly a Kurdish-majority area, Afrin was seized by Turkish forces and allied Syrian opposition fighters in 2018, following a Turkey-backed military operation that pushed fighters from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and thousands of Kurdish civilians from the area.

Arabs displaced from other parts of Syria have settled in the area since then and the Kurds who stayed have complained of

discrimination against them.

When asked for the numbers and percentage of minorities joining the security forces, Nouredine al-Baba, spokesperson for the Syrian Ministry of Interior, told The Associated Press “competence and patriotism are the criteria used, not sectarian quotas.”

Skepticism galore

The recruitment effort drew scepticism in many quarters.

The Afrin Social Association, an initiative providing support to people displaced from Afrin in the Kurdish-controlled northeast, said in a statement posted on Facebook that “enrollment of some young people in the General Security Forces, without any guarantees to protect Afrin’s communities and ensure the dignified and voluntary return of the displaced, is an irresponsible act.” -AP

Former Prez Kabila’s War Crimes Congo’s prosecutor asks for death penalty

Goma (Congo): Congo’s public prosecutor on Friday asked for the death penalty for former President Joseph Kabila, who is being tried in absentia in a treason case that includes war crimes charges related to his ties to the M23 rebel group.

Kabila, who led Congo from 2001 to 2019, has been on trial since July, charged with war crimes, murder and rape. He took office at the age of 29 — after his father and former President Laurent Kabila was assassinated — and extended his mandate by delaying elections for two years after his term ended in 2017.

He is accused by the Congolese government of supporting the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels who have seized major cities and towns in the country’s east in recent months.

Kabila had been in self-imposed exile since 2023 until April, when he arrived in the rebel-held city of Goma following its seizure in a rapid rebel offensive. His supporters say the trial is politically motivated. Kabila’s presidential immunity was revoked in May. His current location is unknown.

In court on Friday, Gen Lucien Rene Likulia, representing the prosecution, also asked, in addition to the death penalty, for a 20-year sentence for Kabila’s alleged condoning of war crimes and 15 years for conspiracy. The general did not elaborate on those charges or say what they referred to. No date has yet been set for the announcement of the verdict.

Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi last year accused Kabila of backing the rebels and “preparing an insurrection” with them, a claim Kabila denies.

Ferdinand Kambere, a former minister under Kabila and current head of his party, the PPRD, said revoking Kabila’s immunity as senator-for-life was the start of the campaign against him.

“What we saw was truly a disgrace for the Republic,” Kambere told The Associated Press by phone.

Henry-Pacifique Mayala, a researcher and coordinator of the Kivu Security Tracker, told the AP that the prosecution’s demands seem to be “more of a settling of scores session than a quest for truth.” -AP

Bus rollover kills five

New York: A tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls with 54 people, including Indians, aboard crashed and rolled on its side on an interstate highway, killing five passengers and injuring many others, authorities have said.

The driver apparently became distracted, lost control and overcorrected before the bus went into the right shoulder and flipped over shortly before 12:30 pm on the eastbound side of Interstate 90 in Pembroke, New York, about 40 km east of Buffalo, state police Maj Andre Ray said at an evening news conference on Friday.

He did not say how the driver became distracted, adding that the cause remains under investigation.

Ray said the passengers ranged in age from 1 to 74. Multiple people were ejected from the bus during the crash, and five people — all adults — were pronounced dead at the scene, Ray said.

Many others became entrapped in the wreck and were rescued. Dozens were taken to hospitals. Ray said it didn’t appear any other people had life-threatening injuries.



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, center left, and his wife Kim Hea Kyung, center right, arrive at the Haneda airport in Tokyo, Japan on Saturday. Pic: AP/ PTI

Tensions arise between Koreans

Seoul: North Korea accused South Korea of a “serious provocation” Saturday after South Korean troops fired warning shots at North Korean soldiers setting up barriers along their tense border.

Ko Jong Chol, vice chief of the North Korean People’s Army’s General Staff, noted that Tuesday’s warning shots coincided with the South Korea-US summertime military drills and accused Seoul of deliberately trying to raise tensions.

Shortly after Ko’s statement, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed it

had fired warning shots Tuesday afternoon at North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line in the central border region while carrying out unspecified construction work.

The South’s military said the soldiers returned to North Korean territory without incident and that the North didn’t return fire.

In recent months, South Korea’s military has occasionally used loudspeaker warnings and fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers crossing the military demarcation

line.

The incidents were largely seen as accidental as North Korean troops build anti-tank barriers, plant mines and carry out other work to reinforce border defences amid heightened tensions.

Ko said the North Korean soldiers were conducting a “barrier project to permanently block the southern border,” as part of broader efforts of “completely separating” the territory between the Koreans, when the South responded with an audio warning and warning shots.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The renewed prospect of your return to your native archipelago is an encouraging sign and a powerful symbol on the international stage: all peoples, even the smallest and weakest, must be respected by the powerful in their identity and rights.”

Pope Leo XIV

Hawaiian volcano shoots lava for 31st time

Honolulu: Hawaii’s Kilauea volcano resumed erupting by shooting an arc of lava 30 metres into the air and across a section of its summit crater floor.

It was Kilauea’s 31st display of molten rock since December, an appropriately high frequency for one of the world’s most active volcanoes.

The north vent at the summit crater began continuously spattering in the morning, and then lava overflowed a few hours later. The vent started shooting lava fountains in

the afternoon.

The eruption was contained within the summit crater, and no homes were threatened.

A few lucky residents and visitors will have a front-row view at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Hundreds of thousands more will be watching popular livestreams made possible by three camera angles set up by the US Geological Survey.

Kilauea is on Hawaii Island, the largest of the Hawaiian archipelago. It’s about 320 kilometres south



of the state’s largest city, Honolulu, which is on Oahu.

Here’s what to know about Kilauea’s latest

eruption:

Towering fountains

A lower magma chamber under Halemaumau Crater is receiving magma directly from the earth’s interior at about 3.8 cubic metres per second, said Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. This blows the chamber up like a balloon and forces magma into an upper chamber. From there it gets pushed above ground through cracks.

Magma has been using the same pathway to rise to

the surface since December, making the initial release and subsequent episodes all part of the same eruption, Hon said.

This is the fourth time in 200 years that Kilauea has shot lava fountains into the air in repeated episodes. They took place in 1983 with 44 sessions of shooting fountains. The other two occurred in 1959 and 1969.

Kilauea’s future

Scientists don’t know how the current eruption will end or how it may change. In 1983 magma built enough

pressure that Kilauea opened a vent at a lower elevation and started continuously leaking lava from there rather than periodically shooting out of a higher elevation. The eruption continued in various forms for three decades and ended in 2018.

Something similar could happen again. Or the current eruption could instead stop at the summit if its magma supply peters out.

Park visitation has risen all eight months of the year so far, in part because of the eruption. -AP

NEWSMAKER OF THE WEEK

The Unbroken Captain



By
Kiran D. Tare

Imran Khan has never been one for half-measures. As a cricketer, he led Pakistan to its sole World Cup triumph in 1992, retiring at the peak of his fame. As a politician, he rebranded himself as the incorruptible outsider, promising to cleanse Pakistan's politics of dynastic rot and military manipulation. Today, at 72, he remains both the country's most charismatic figure and its most polarising.

His long-running clash with Pakistan's Army and its current chief Asim Munir, has been the most dramatic in Pakistan's long history of civil-military tussles.

Earlier this week, Pakistan's Supreme Court threw Khan a lifeline by granting him bail in eight cases linked to the violent protests of May 9, 2023. As a yardstick of his popularity, his supporters stormed military installations and government buildings on August 22 in an eruption of fury that rattled the army's long-unchallenged dominance in politics.

Few leaders before Imran, whether Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s or Nawaz Sharif

Imran Khan's political innings continues in defiance against Pakistan's generals.

in the 1990s, have survived a head-on collision with the generals. Bhutto was hanged, Sharif exiled. But Khan, jailed after being ousted in 2022 and barred from public office, still dominates the national conversation. His party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), splintered under pressure. Yet even from prison, Khan remains the rallying point for millions, his voice amplified through social media and loyalists.



The Pakistani army has long been the real arbiter of power, shaping governments and crushing those who challenged its authority. Khan himself was once its favoured protégé, elevated in 2018 with the generals' blessing as a pliant alternative to the Sharifs and Bhuttos. But he grew unpredictable. His populist defiance of America, his refusal to toe the military's line on foreign policy, and his unwillingness to accommodate Munir, whose appointment as army chief he initially opposed, turned an alliance into enmity. By April 2022, a parliamentary no-confidence vote, orchestrated with military backing, removed him from office.

For most Pakistani leaders, such a fall would have spelled irrelevance. Yet Khan's resilience lies in his cultivated image as a man apart. He rails against corruption, portrays himself as a victim of elite conspiracies, and taps into an electorate weary of dynasties. His cricketing past still colours his politics when he

speaks of strategy, stamina and fair play, presenting himself as a captain who will not abandon his team. His rhetoric resonates with a generation of young voters, half of whom are under 30.

The costs, however, are steep. The army has hit back hard. Khan's imprisonment on corruption and 'state secrets' charges has crippled his direct participation in politics. Dozens of his allies have defected under pressure. The military establishment has sought to erase him from the electoral field. Yet poll results have proved that Khan's charisma cannot be excised from Pakistan's politics. His enduring popularity complicates the generals' plans for a compliant civilian order.

History offers grim warnings. Civilian leaders who challenge the army rarely emerge unscathed. The army has repeatedly reasserted its supremacy, whether by coup or coercion. And yet, Khan's defiance has exposed cracks in this pattern. Unlike Bhutto or Sharif, he commands a digitally savvy base that refuses to accept the military's narrative. His image as a sporting hero, philanthropist and nationalist makes it harder for his opponents to vilify him outright.

Still, his path is fraught. Pakistan's economy is on life support, dependent on IMF bailouts. Inflation and unemployment fuel public anger. For all Khan's charisma, he offers little by way of policy beyond slogans of justice and sovereignty.

Yet one fact is undeniable: Imran Khan remains the centre of gravity in Pakistani politics. He is the cricketer who refuses to retire even when the umpires of Rawalpindi have already raised their finger.

AROUND THE WORLD

The Game of Trades



By
Priya Samant

As American tariff walls continue to rise, supplies to the U.S. market are reportedly shrinking. The new imported materials are either eating profits or driving up prices on American streets. This rise in core inflation would soon compel policymakers to increase interest rates, dramatically opposed to Trump's demand for lower borrowing costs for American business. May God bless the Fed Chair Powell and, of course, the Trumpian MAGA dream.

In February, Trump outlined his ambitious plan to build a new economic corridor connecting India to the USA and Europe, vowing to double U.S.-India trade to \$500 billion. Fast forward six months, and he calls India "a dead economy" and hampers US-India trade with double tariffs.

The Indian economy is not dead, nor is a double tariff on India confirmed. However, the uncertainty surrounding the U.S. tariff regime and the fickle Trumpian foreign policies will surely kill the trust of America's trading partners and undermine its foreign economic relations.

The United States has accused India of financing the Russian war and has imposed a penalty tariff for importing oil from Russia. The trade data from the past four warring years, however, expose nothing but Western hypocrisy. While professing support for Ukraine peace, Western nations have prioritised their own economic interests, continuing to import Russian goods directly or through India. They settled their Russian import bills while simultaneously showering Ukraine with loans and military aid, all without facing any American penalty. This clearly indicates that India is being unjustly penalised for maintaining neutrality in the Russia-West rivalry and for not fueling the Ukrainian war machine like the West-



ern countries.

Some experts argue that India could not bag the best bargain as it did not rush to the White House to sign a trade deal! However, a closer look at U.S. trade agreements with those early birds reveals a troubling trend: all these agreements proclaim, "Buy my weapons, buy my Boeing, put my oil and let your funds fly to me!" These trade deals are inexplicit and seem to be one-sided, with America being the major beneficiary. Haste makes waste. It's worth noting that these early trade partners contribute only 40 per cent of the US trade. Whereas, Canada, China and Mexico, the top US trade partners, are still negotiating for a fair deal, much like India, taking a thoughtful strategic approach to beat the bully.

Additionally, there are underlying hints that Trump's tariff penalties on India may be linked to India's rejection of his claim on brokering the India-Pakistan ceasefire. It is evident that Trump is wielding tariffs as a coercive economic tactic to force India into accepting an unfair trade deal. Meanwhile, he has significantly reduced tariffs on Chinese imports, slashing them from 145 per cent to 30 per cent and from 125 per cent to 10 per cent. Unexpectedly, he did not impose penalties on China, the largest Russian importer; instead, he agreed to an extended tariff ceasefire. America is realigning, some may contend, but wait, they have yet to read Trump's chip deals.

The Unipolar moment of America is over. Trump's US-Japan trade deal is going nowhere. Japan has wisely opted to invest in India and support the Global South, rather than giving \$500 billion hafta to the USA to secure a tiny trade quota that yields no real return. At the same time, China restricted Nvidia over a 'backdoor threat' shortly after the U.S. opened the

market to the chip manufacturer for a 15 per cent cut on Chinese sales. Furthermore, China rejected 300000 tons of America's soybean shipment. Now that the Chinese prefer Brazilian soybeans in their dark sauce, American policymakers will soon land in the soup. Just five days after the Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska, Russia escalated its military strikes and targeted U.S. investments in Ukraine. The message is loud and clear: America's coercive statecraft is losing its strength against its adversaries. The Trump Tariff Walls are so high and tight that they left no passage to a "friend" to trade with ease, pushing old allies closer to America's rivals. Now, India is working to mend ties with China and strengthen its trade with Russia, defying Trump's threats to increase tariffs. The repercussions of Trumpian short-sighted deals are becoming apparent with each passing day.

The EU has opened its market and pays flattery to the American President, freely, ensuring that America continues to share its security burden and does not pull out from the Ukraine deal. This would be a strong deviation from what Trump had promised to scale down America's military involvement. Nevertheless, this trade relation is and will remain vulnerable to Trumpian unpredictability and randomness.

In stark contrast to this chaos, India remains an exemplar of stability and trade worthy, calm and committed in its every domestic and international commitment. It has diversified its markets and is working to build its own supply chain. Soon, India will gain the economic advantage that America has lost.

(The writer is a foreign affairs expert. Views personal.)

BARREL POLITICS

India's Energy Policy and the Global Price Puzzle



By
Akhilesh Sinha

Energy has always been the invisible current of civilisation, powering economies and shaping empires. Today, its most visible form is crude oil, not just a tradable commodity, but the fulcrum on which global politics, economic stability and power balances rest. On this fulcrum, India has become indispensable. It is both a colossal consumer, sustaining the needs of 1.4bn people, and the world's fastest-growing major economy. That dual role makes one question unavoidable: what if India stopped buying Russian oil? The answer is more than a matter of statistics. It is a test of the stability of the global energy order.

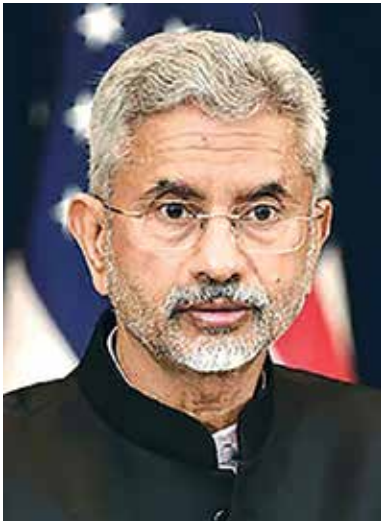
This balance has been continuously challenged by U.S. President Donald Trump. His tariff policy unwittingly recalls the cruel ploys of a predatory usurer in a village where prosperous farmers arranged for canal water to reach the fields of marginal farmers to ensure prosperity for the whole village. The greedy usurer despised this and, under cover of

New Delhi's oil strategy is reshaping global markets and checking great-power rivalries.

darkness, sent his henchmen to cut the small embankments and channels created, ruining the crops of marginal farmers, entrapping them in a web of exploitation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy has made it clear that whether in international trade or strategic partnerships, relations will be conducted with respect and equality, regardless of the country involved. Indian interests will align with global welfare. While chairing the G20, India emphatically declared this in the Delhi Convention and extended invitations to countries of the African continent, guided by the ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family).

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar categorically rejected the arguments surrounding Trump's tariff policy and the purchase of Russian oil. During a press conference in Moscow, he clarified, "We are not the largest buyers of Russian oil. That is China. We are not the largest buyers of LNG. That is the European Union. We are not the country that has seen the biggest surge in trade with Russia post-2022; I believe some countries in the south have. India's decision to buy Russian oil aligns not only with national interests but also supports the efforts to stabilize the world energy market encouraged by the United States. In fact, the U.S. itself has been telling us for years to do everything possible to stabilize the global energy market. Incidentally, India also buys oil from the U.S., and this volume has been increasing. So frankly, we are quite surprised by the narrative the media is promoting." Additionally, at the India-Russia Business Forum in Moscow, Jaishankar urged Russian companies to deepen collaboration with Indian firms, noting that India's fast-grow-



ing economy and 'Make in India' initiative offer new opportunities. He invited Russian companies to participate in ensuring the supply of crucial goods such as fertilizers, chemicals, and machinery.

The reality of India's energy needs is that it imports nearly 90 percent of its crude oil. In the fiscal year 2023-24 alone, its import bill reached nearly 140 billion dollars. This figure alone demonstrates how even a slight rise in oil prices adversely impacts India's economic structure. The U.S. remains comparatively resilient during the European crisis because it can print dollars, but countries like India must consider both the welfare of their citizens and balance of payments when making every decision. This wisdom and restraint define India's distinctive policy.

The Ukraine war in 2022 shook the energy markets, driving crude oil prices up to 137 dollars per barrel. Western nations faced a dilemma—either completely ban imports from Russia and let prices soar or find a balanced solution. In this effort, the



G7 set a price cap of 60 dollars per barrel. Concurrently, India pragmatically turned toward Russian oil. Before the Ukraine war, Russia's share in India's total imports was a mere 0.2 percent, which rose to 36-40 percent by 2024-25. This move was not only vital for India's energy security but also proved essential for global price stability. Initially, even the U.S. appreciated India's balanced stance. In 2022, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen had said America "was happy that India is buying as much Russian oil as it wants... even above the cap."

India has upheld a policy of never shirking global responsibilities. In 2007, when India imported 12 percent of its crude oil from Iran and sanctions were imposed, India fulfilled its responsibility by stopping imports. Contrarily, China continues to import 1.4 million barrels daily from Iran, disregarding sanctions. The same is true with Russia, where China now accounts for nearly 40 percent of Russian exports. If India were to stop buying oil from Russia, Russia would sell even greater discounts to

China, benefiting it and destabilizing global prices once again. India, through prudent balance, has averted such a scenario.

India's average daily crude oil import of two million barrels from Russia is a robust economic strategy. India currently receives an average discount of 3.5 dollars per barrel from Russia, saving approximately 10 billion dollars annually—directly benefiting India by roughly 25-30 thousand crore rupees. Conversely, if price stability were disturbed, India would need to spend an additional 10 billion dollars. Clearly, this policy is critical not only for India but also for stabilizing global markets. The Modi government's energy and economic policies have instilled great confidence in India. This is why S&P Global upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BBB(-)' to 'BBB' and its short-term rating from 'A-3' to 'A-2.' This is not merely a numerical upgrade but a reflection of the world's faith in India's policy and management capabilities. India now stands on the global stage not just as a con-

sumer but as a partner and policymaker.

If India were to cease buying oil from Russia, it would affect not only India but the entire world. In 2024-25, Russia's crude oil production averaged approximately 10.45 million barrels per day (BPD), about 10 percent of global supply, with around 4.5 million BPD exported. Should India stop buying Russian oil, various problems would arise: first, global prices would surge as crude oil could increase by up to 15 dollars per barrel due to supply shortage. Second, India's economy would feel the strain. Its import bill would become unbalanced, impacting inflation and growth. Third, China would gain a significant advantage as Russia would naturally offer bigger discounts to China, strengthening its energy security.

Then, India would have to compete with already established consumers in the Middle Eastern market. Clearly, such a situation would cause imbalance not only for India but for the entire world.

To return to our village analogy, India has made it clear that it will not tolerate the whims of global bullies, just as the village's driver did not allow the oppressive usurer's tricks to succeed. Today, India is neither completely aligned with the West nor blindly imitates the East. It has woven a balancing bridge with its decisions, which, if broken, will undoubtedly cause massive turmoil in the global energy market. Our choices are inspired by the welfare of its citizens, yet their impact is global. India is no longer just a consumer; it has become an indispensable pillar of the world energy balance.

(The writer is a senior Delhi-based journalist and political analyst.)



KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Students visit an exhibition titled "From Ancient Skies to Modern Horizons" on the occasion of 'National Space Day' at Science Centre in Guwahati, Assam on Saturday.
2. A rickshaw puller carries passengers amid rainfall in Kolkata.
3. People move around in vehicles amid rainfall in Prayagraj on Saturday.
4. An artist performs as he participates in the 'Kali and Pili Marbat' procession as part of Pola festival celebrations in Nagpur on Saturday.
5. Children during the morning assembly at a school in Anantnag on Saturday.

All Pictures: PTI, AP

INDIA'S ELECTION

Elections and the Constitution: A Voter's Guide



By
Wishwanath Garud



Recently, a flurry of allegations and counter-allegations has emerged around the election process, the Central Election Commission, and the electoral rolls. These developments are amplified daily through social and traditional media, often leaving voters with more confusion than clarity.

At such a time, it becomes essential for us, as ordinary citizens, to understand what the Constitution and the law actually provide. Who can be a voter? How are electoral rolls prepared and updated? What powers does the Election Commission really hold?

To answer these questions, this series will look at the key provisions of the Constitution of India, the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951, and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961. The aim is not to offer legal commentary but to present these provisions in a clear and accessible manner that every voter can relate to.

This first part begins with the constitutional foundations of India's election system.

Part 15 of the Constitution of India contains detailed provisions regarding elections. Articles 324 to 329 contain provisions regarding elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Article 324 (1) vests all powers for the preparation of electoral rolls for the elections to both Houses of Parliament, both Houses of State Legislature, the President and the Vice-President, and for conducting such elections in the Central Election Commission.

Under Article 324(2), the Commission consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and such other Election Commissioners as may be appointed. Parliament has the authority to make laws governing these appointments. In exercise of this power, it enacted the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Tenure) Act, 2023.

Earlier, in the case of Anup Baranwal v. Union of India, the Supreme Court directed the formation of a committee to select election commissioners. The committee comprised the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India. Following this verdict, the Central Government enacted the 2023 law under Articles 324(2) and (5).

According to this act, a three-member selection committee was constituted. It includes the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet minister nominated by the Prime Minister. Based on the committee's recommendations, the President appoints the Election Commissioners.

It is important to note that from 1950 until 2023, there was no law on the appointment of election commissioners. During this long period, the Chief Election Commissioner and other Commissioners were appointed at the discretion of the Central Government of the day.

According to Article 324(5), the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only through impeachment. This may be done in exceptional circumstances and follows the same procedure and grounds as the removal of Supreme Court judges.

The provision is intended to ensure the Chief Election Commissioner can perform duties independently. The same article also states that the other election

commissioners cannot be removed except on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

Article 324(6) places the responsibility of providing staff for the Election Commission's work on the President and the Governor. The Commission has no permanent staff of its own and relies on employees from the Central and State Governments during elections.

Article 325 stipulates that each constituency must have an electoral roll and that no one shall be excluded from registration on the grounds of religion, caste, creed, or sex.

Article 326 establishes the principle of adult suffrage. Every Indian citizen aged 18 years or above is entitled to vote in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, provided their name appears on the electoral roll. Parliament has the power to legislate on this subject.

Articles 327 and 328 empower Parliament and the State Legislature, respectively, to make laws governing elections to their Houses. These primarily deal with the preparation of electoral rolls, delimitation of constituencies, and related matters.

Article 329(a) provides that the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies cannot be challenged in any court. This is the only such provision in the Constitution that reflects the independence of the Election Commission. Although judicial review is part of the Constitution's basic structure, the framers deliberately kept the courts away from this process.

Article 329(b) states that elections to Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies can be questioned only through an election petition, and not by any other means. Parliament has been empowered to legislate. Under Section 80A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, such petitions may be filed only before the High Court of the concerned state. This section came into effect on 14 December 1966.

The Constitution, therefore, lays down detailed provisions relating to the Election Commission, the Chief Election Commissioner, the electoral rolls, and the laws governing them.

(The writer is an author and digital journalism teacher. Views personal.)

EXPLAINER

Why Experts Warned That Gaza Was At Risk Of Famine

The Gaza Strip's largest city is now gripped by famine, according to the world's leading authority on food crises.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, said Friday that famine was occurring in Gaza City, and is likely to spread to the southern cities of Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah without a ceasefire and an end to restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Aid groups and food security experts have warned for months that Gaza was on the brink of famine, yet this is the first official confirmation.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of transferring aid to the territory, said in its report that there was famine in Gaza and said that in recent weeks significant steps had been taken to expand the amount of aid entering the strip.

Situation has vastly deteriorated

The IPC report said that from early July until mid-August it has seen the most severe deterioration since it began analysing food insecurity and malnutrition in Gaza. And despite the "unprecedented pace" over that time frame, the IPC expects the situation to get worse.

One third of Gaza's population is expected to experience catastrophic levels of hunger by the end of next month, the IPC said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied there is hunger in Gaza, calling reports of starvation "lies" promoted by Hamas.

Famine occurs in these conditions

The IPC was first set up in 2004 during the famine in Somalia. It includes more than a dozen UN agencies, aid groups, governments and other bodies.

Famine can appear in pockets, sometimes small ones, and so a formal classification requires caution.

The IPC has only confirmed famine a few times — in Somalia in 2011, and South Sudan in 2017 and 2020, and last year in parts of Sudan's western Darfur region. This is the first confirmed famine in the Middle East.

It rates an area as in famine when all three of these conditions are confirmed:

- 20 per cent of households have an extreme lack of food, or are essentially starving.
- At least 30 per cent of children 6 months to 5 years old suffer from acute malnutrition, based on a weight-to-height measurement; or 15 per cent of that age group suffer from acute malnutrition based on the circumference of their upper arm.
- At least two people, or four children under 5, per 10,000 are dying daily due to starvation or the interaction of malnutrition and disease.

A major challenge

Gaza has posed a major challenge for experts because Israel severely limits access to the territory, making it difficult to gather data.

In a separate report Friday, the Famine Review Committee, or FRC, said it, too, had concluded there was famine in part of Gaza. The FRC is a group of independent international food



security experts regularly consulted by the IPC.

The group acts as an added layer of verification when the data shows there could be famine.

The data analysed between July 1 and August 15 showed clear evidence that thresholds for starvation and acute malnutrition have been reached. Gathering data for mortality has been harder, but the IPC said it is reasonable to conclude from the evidence that the necessary threshold has likely been reached.

Most cases of severe malnutrition in children arise through a combination of lack of nutrients along with an infection, leading to diarrhoea and other symptoms that cause dehydration, said Alex de Waal, author of "Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine" and executive director of the World Peace Foundation.

"There are no standard guidelines for physicians to classify cause of death as 'malnutrition' as opposed to 'infection,'" he said.

When famine occurs, there are often relatively few deaths from hunger alone. Far more people die from a combination of malnutrition, disease and other forms of deprivation.

All of these count as excess deaths — separate from violence — that can be attributed to a food crisis or famine, he said.

-AP

Master Rights Agreement

SC asks AIFF, FSDL to end row

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has asked the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) to sort out the issue concerning renewal of master rights agreement which has affected the Indian Super League this season.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi, which heard the matter on Friday, directed AIFF and FSDL to discuss the issue and come out with a solution by August 28, the next date of hearing.

On August 18, the top court agreed to hear the matter involving a row between the AIFF and FSDL over the fate of 11 ISL clubs due to the non-renewal of their contracts with the national federation and the tournament's organisers.

The 11 ISL clubs have warned the AIFF that they "face the real possibility of shutting down entirely" if the impasse regarding the future of the top-tier domestic competition is not resolved soon.

The bench had agreed to hear the plea after amicus curiae and senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan submitted that during the tenure of the contract, FSDL has to honour it by conducting the ISL.

The clubs wrote a letter to AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey last week, saying the crisis arising out of the non-renewal of the master rights agreement (MRA) between the national federation and the ISL organ-



isers, FSDL, has "paralysed professional football in India."

"Over the past 11 years, through sustained investment and coordinated effort, clubs have built youth development systems, training infrastructure, community outreach programmes and professional teams that have elevated India's footballing credibility both domestically and internationally," the clubs wrote in the letter.

"This progress is now in imminent danger of collapse. The current standstill has created immediate and severe consequences. With operations suspended and no certainty on league continuity, several clubs face the real possibility of shutting down entirely."

The crisis

The crisis surfaced after FSDL, the ISL organisers as well as the AIFF's commercial partner, put the 2025-26 season "on hold" on July 11 due to uncertainty over the renewal of the



MRA, prompting at least three clubs to either pause first-team operations or suspend player and staff salaries.

The letter was signed by Bengaluru FC, Hyderabad FC, Odisha FC, Chennaiyin FC, Jamshedpur FC, FC Goa, Kerala Blasters FC, Punjab FC, NorthEast United FC, Mumbai City FC, and Mohammedan Sporting.

Kolkata heavyweights Mohun Bagan Super Giant and East Bengal did not sign the letter.

The clubs said the impasse will also impact India's readiness for international matches, adding that "without a functioning league, our national team will be severely disadvantaged in upcoming AFC and FIFA tournaments."

They also said that without the ISL, they will not be

able to play a minimum number of competitive matches for participating in continental competitions, thereby risking the suspension of Indian clubs from Asian Football Confederation tournaments. On April 30, the top court reserved its verdict on the issue of finalisation of the AIFF draft constitution prepared by former apex court judge L Nageswara Rao.

The draft constitution, prepared by Justice Rao on the top court's directions, proposed some radical changes, including a person holding the office for a maximum period of 12 years during his lifetime, subject to serving a maximum of two successive terms of four years each.

While it said a four-year cooling-off period had to be observed after eight years as an office-bearer of the AIFF, it also mentioned that a person cannot remain a member of the sports body after attaining 70 years of age. **-PTI**

Arjun-Elavenil pair bags gold

Shymkent (Kazakhstan): India's Arjun Babuta and Elavenil Valarivan bagged the gold medal in 10m air rifle mixed team event of 16th Asian Shooting Championship here on Saturday.

The Indian pair outclassed China's Dingke Lu and Xinlu Peng 17-11 to finish on top of the podium.

The Chinese pair was leading in the initial round but the Indians, who faltered early with shots of 9.5 and 10.1, made a stirring comeback in the later rounds to claim the gold.

The effort meant that both Tamil Nadu's Elavenil and the 26-year-old Babuta from Punjab have now won two gold medals each at the prestigious tournament.

Elavenil had finished on top the table in the 10m air rifle women's competition, while Babuta had combined with Rudranksh Patil and Kiran Jadhav to clinch the team gold in men's 10m air rifle event.

Meanwhile, the Indian pair of Shambhavi Shrivastava and Naraen Pranav grabbed the gold medal in 10m air rifle mixed team junior event. They beat China 16-12 after a dominant show the latter part of the series.

The Indian team had finished third behind the two Chinese teams in the qualification but since only one team from a nation can compete, the Chinese 2 team, comprising Tang Huiqi and Han Yinan, qualified for the final after topping the qualification.

The Indian team totalled 629.5 to finish behind China 2 (632.3) and China 1 (630).



FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, prepares to hand the FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy to President Donald Trump during an announcement in the Oval Office. Pic: AP/PTI

Argentina to play FIFA friendly in Kerala

Kochi: Putting speculation to rest, reigning world champions Argentina have announced that they will play a FIFA friendly against an unnamed opponent in Kerala in November this year.

The match will take place between November 10 and 18, and it could happen in Kochi or Thiruvananthapuram.

"The Argentine national team, led by Lionel Scaloni, will have two FIFA friendlies in the remainder of 2025. The first, in October, from the 6th to the 14th, will be played in the United States (opponents and cities to be determined)," the Argentine football association wrote on its official X handle.

"The second, FIFA friendlies in November, from the 10th to the 18th,

will be played in Luanda, Angola, and Kerala, India (opponents to be determined)," the statement read.

Kerala Sports Minister V Adburahaman later confirmed the development, saying the World Cup holders, including skipper Lionel Messi, will come to the state in November.

"The Argentinian national football team has announced that the team will play in Kerala in November during the FIFA window. The team which won the World Cup under Lionel Messi, the whole squad, will play here.

"We thank the Argentina Football Association for this. It's a truly historical moment for Kerala football and the entire sports sector," Adburahaman said in a statement.

However, the statement of AFA did not have any mention of Messi or the details of the national squad.

It may be recalled that the Argentine football association had also thanked their supporters from Kerala after winning the 2022 FIFA World Cup, beating France in penalties.

Earlier, Argentina's visit to the state was in doubt after the country's football association did not confirm the tour and it had put the blame on the Kerala government officials for the failure to ink a contract.

The move to bring Messi-led Argentina to Kerala gained steam in September 2024 when Adburahaman travelled to Spain to meet officials of the Argentine Football Association (AFA) to work out the details.

MSSA Inter-School Football Aditya Birla crowned boys' champions



By Correspondent

Mumbai: Aditya Birla World Academy (Tardeo) lifted the title in the Boys U16 Division II category in the Dream Sports MSSA Inter-School Football Tournament at the Wings Sports Centre, Bandra.

In a hard-fought final, Aditya Birla edged past Jamnabai Narsee (Vile Parle) 1-0, courtesy of a decisive strike from Aakarsh Gubbi.

Thakur Public School (Kandivali) sealed third place with a 2-0 victory over St. Lawrence (Borivali), thanks to goals from Arnav Singh and Arsh

Shetty.

In the Girls U16 Division II, Carmel of St. Joseph (Malad) dominated Ryan International ICSE (Malad) 5-0, driven by a hat-trick from Lavanya Patil and a brace from Gouri Roy. Nahar International (Chandivali) registered a 2-0 win over Podar International CBSE (Powai), with Ekvira Painoli scoring both goals. Ryan International CBSE (Kandivali) also impressed, defeating Gokuldham (Goregaon) 2-0, while The J.B. Petit (Fort) and Gopal Sharma International (Powai) played out a goalless draw.

Vishal eyes podium finishes in 2026 CWG

New Delhi: After breaking the national record, quartermiler Vishal TK now hopes to secure a podium finish in next year's Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Vishal shattered the national record in the men's 400m event at the National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships 2025 in Chennai on Thursday en route to a gold.

"I tested myself, I did hard work and if you do hard work it will come through," Vishal told PTI in an interaction.

The 21-year-old athlete won the gold medal with a time of 45.12 seconds, eclipsing the previous national mark of 45.21s, set by Muhammed Anas Yahiya at the 2019 Czech Athletics Championships.

"Next year, I have Commonwealth Games and Asian Games and we have to work for it. I am still learning. I will end this season after this competition and the coach is already planning for the next season. My goal is to get medals in individual and relays in CWG and Asian Games," he added.

-PTI



Players of NorthEast United FC (in white) and Diamond Harbour FC vie for the ball during the Durand Cup 2025 final match in Kolkata on Saturday. Pic: PTI

World Archery Championship Gatha, Sharvari win bronze

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Maharashtra's Gatha Khadke and Sharvari Shende, along with Giana Kumar, won a bronze medal at the ongoing World Archery Championship in Canada.

Indian girls won the bronze medal in the under-18 recurve event by registering a resounding 6-0 victory over the USA team. India did not give the USA a single chance by sealing the win with scores of 55-53, 59-56, 55-52. The



coach of the Indian teams was Prof. Ranjit Chamle. The bronze medal winning team included Gatha

Khadke of Solapur, Sharvari Shende of Pune and Giana Kumar of Chandigarh.

India was in fourth place in the qualification round. In the prequarter finals, they defeated Mexico by 6-0 sets to make a winning start to the competition. India then defeated a strong Japanese team by 5-3 sets in the quarterfinals. In the semi-finals, the Indian team gave the Korea team a tough fight. But, finally, Korea won by 1 point.

Maria, Bryan brothers in Tennis Hall of Fame

London: Maria Sharapova has never been the type to look back on her accomplishments. Joining the International Tennis Hall of Fame has given her a chance to do just that.

"Wow, there was a lot of sacrifice. There was a lot of hard work," she said on Friday, a day before she was to be enshrined along with the dominating doubles brothers, Bob and Mike Bryan.

"And, boy, was it worth it."

One of 10 women ever to win an individual career Grand Slam, the telegenic Sharapova became an instant star when she won Wimbledon in 2004, beating two-time defending champion Serena Williams in the final. She also won the US Open in 2006,

the Australian Open in 2008 and the French Open in 2012 and 2014 and was the first Russian to reach No. 1 in the WTA singles rankings.

Sharapova also helped Russia win the team competition now known as the Billie Jean King Cup in 2008, and she claimed a silver medal in singles at the 2012 Olympics, losing to Williams in the final.

And she earned millions of dollars more in endorsement deals than prize money, appearing in fashion shoots and sharing the cover of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition with supermodels.

Interrupted career

Sharapova retired in 2020 at age 32



after a 15-year career that was interrupted by multiple shoulder surgeries and a 15-month doping ban after she tested positive for the newly banned drug meldonium at the 2016

Australian Open. (The initial two-year penalty was shortened by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which ruled that she bore "less than significant fault" in the case and could not "be considered to be an intentional doper.")

Sharapova got a tour of the remodelled Hall in Newport, Rhode Island, on Friday and said she was giddy like a teenager as the induction ceremony approached to reconnect with people who had been so important in her career.

"There's the feeling that you have to walk through those halls," she said. "You realise you're a small part of such a bigger piece, the history of our game and all the athletes that

just accomplished what they have."

Twins who won a record 16 major titles in men's doubles together, Bob and Mike Bryan spent 438 weeks as the No. 1 doubles pair. (Mike Bryan is actually the career leader with 18 major men's doubles titles; he won two with Jack Sock while Bob was injured in 2018.)

They also helped the US to the 2007 Davis Cup title and won the gold medal at the 2012 Olympics — an occasion that is already noted in the Hall's exhibits.

