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BADLAPUR ENCOUNTER CASE

Bombay High Court pulls up police; 'A layman can't fire pistol unless trained'

Mumbai

The Bombay High Court expressed concerns on Wednesday regarding the police shooting of Akshay Shinde, the accused in the Badlapur school sexual assault case, stating that the incident could have been avoided and emphasised the necessity for a fair and impartial probe.

A division bench comprising Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan also raised pertinent questions over the manner in which the shootout was executed.

The bench said while it was not impugning the police's integrity, it insisted on the importance of clarity in the investigation.

It also stressed the necessity for a fair and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

During the proceedings, the court underscored its expectation that the police would address all aspects of the case transparently.

"If we find that the investigation is not conducted properly, we will be constrained to issue appropriate orders," the bench warned.

The court scheduled the next hearing for October 3, by which date the police are expected to decide on a complaint filed by the father of the deceased, requesting a First Information Report (FIR) against the involved police officers.

"We are not suspecting the police on their activities but come clean on all aspects," the bench said.

It also directed the immediate transfer of all case files to the Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department (CID) for further inquiry.



"Why have the files not been handed over to the CID yet? The preservation of evidence is crucial. Any delay raises doubts and speculation," it stated.

The judges raised pointed questions about the circumstances of the shooting, suggesting that it may have been prevented if police had tried to subdue Shinde before the incident escalated.

The bench said while it was not raising any suspicion at this stage, it was very hard to believe that Shinde managed to seize a pistol from a police officer and opened fire.

The bench also noted that the officer who shot at Shinde was a police inspector who has experience on how to react in such a situation.

"Ordinarily, the retaliation would be on the leg or arm. Why directly on the head? Does he (police) not know where the shot has to be fired? It may have been spontaneous. The first reaction should have been to disarm him," the bench said.

The court said it is not very easy to unlock and open fire from a pistol.

They questioned the rationale behind shooting him in the head rather than aiming for a less lethal

area, such as the legs or arms.

"It is difficult to believe that Shinde could have seized a pistol from a police officer and fired it," said Justice Chavan, referencing his own experience with firearms.

Justice Chavan said he has used a pistol several times and it is very hard to use.

"This is very hard to believe. I have fired a pistol a hundred times. It is hard to unlock and fire. We are not suspecting at this stage but just looking at the possibilities. Revolver is easier. Any Tom, Dick or Harry can do it. But a pistol is very hard to fire," Justice Chavan said.

The bench said the incident could have been avoided as the escorting team were officers from the Thane police's crime branch.

"It could have been avoided. Four officers were there in the vehicle. One of the officers was involved in encounters in the past. Four officers couldn't overpower the accused? How can we believe that they couldn't overpower the accused. Accused was not hefty or strong. You all could have overpowered him," the court said.

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Poster war between BJP and Shiv Sena to take credit for 'encounter' of Badlapur sexual assault accused



Mumbai

Supporters of Maharashtra's ruling BJP and Shiv Sena are engaged in a poster war to claim credit for Monday's controversial "encounter" killing of a school janitor arrested in the Badlapur child sexual assault case.

While posters with "Shinde Shahi" (the rule of Shinde) appeared in parts of Thane on Tuesday,

purportedly giving credit to Sena leader and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde for the killing, posters featuring Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with a gun in his hand and the message "Badla Pura", meaning "revenge completed", were put up in parts of Mumbai and Thane.

A hoarding with a picture of Fadnavis, a BJP leader,

and 16th-century Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji was put up in Borivali. "Shivrayanacha Maharashtra Mahilanvar Atyachar Karnanyana Asach Nyay Milnar (those doing atrocities on the women in Shivaji Maharaj's Maharashtra will get justice like this)," reads the message on it.

The hoarding also features "#Devacha

Nyaay" suggesting that justice was delivered by Devendra Fadnavis, who is fondly called Deva Bhau.

Even though the posters and hoardings do not carry anyone's name, party workers or the leaders' supporters are thought to have put them up.

When contacted, however, BJP MLA and spokesperson Atul Bhatkalkar said his party had not put up any posters. "The BJP has not put up any posters. Our stand was cleared by Devendra Fadnavis himself on the very first day. We, the BJP, sincerely believe in the rule of law and follow it. We have no idea who has put up these posters," Bhatkalkar told.

After the alleged encounter, the Sena had celebrated in Badlapur by bursting crackers and distributing sweets and displayed posters giving credit to Chief Minister Shinde. The posters had proclaimed "Ekanth (Shinde) and Eknyay (one justice)".

The school janitor was killed inside a police van in what was described as retaliatory firing after he allegedly tried to open fire at policemen. He was arrested for allegedly assaulting two four-year-old schoolgirls sexually.

BKC to Aarey in 30 minutes for Rs 50: Phase 1 of Metro Line 3 set for October opening

Mumbai

Commuters travelling between Bandra Kurla Complex and Aarey will soon reach their destination within 30 minutes for less than Rs 50 as the first-phase of Mumbai's long-awaited underground Metro Line 3, also known as the Aqua Line, will open to the public in October. Currently, the same journey by road during peak traffic, particularly along the Western Express Highway, can take over an hour due to frequent traffic congestion. During peak hours, trains will be available every 6.5 minutes.

Ashwini Bhide, managing director of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL), which oversees the Metro 3 project, confirmed on Tuesday the upcoming launch, stating that the inauguration is expected in early October.

The first phase, covering 12.44km with 10 stations, will operate from 6:30am to 10:30pm, offering 96 daily trips. The minimum fare on the route will be set at Rs 10 and maximum will be Rs 50 between Aarey and BKC for a one-way trip.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to flag off Metro Line 3 during his visit to Mumbai. However, the MMRC official did not confirm

anything stating that the communication from state government on the same is yet to be received.

While initially, nine rakes with eight coaches each will ply on this stretch, the frequency of trains is expected to increase especially after the full stretch is made operational by April or May 2025.

Bhide stated that a daily ridership of 4.5 lakh passengers in Phase 1 is expected, while the optimum capacity is 6.5 lakh ridership. However, the 4.5 lakh ridership will take time to build. While on the entire 33.5km underground corridor enroute to Aarey and Cuffe Parade, the daily average ridership is expected to be 13 lakh. Bhide addressed concerns about last-mile connectivity, explaining that contractors working on civil construction are also responsible for developing connectivity around stations which is already happening. The MMRCL is coordinating with other agencies, including BEST and the transport department, to integrate bus, auto, and other transport services. While complete integration may not be available on day one MMRCL plans to monitor commuting patterns and make adjustments accordingly.

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Maharashtra Man Gets 20-Year Jail Term For Sexually Abusing 9-Year-Old Daughter

Thane

A special POCSO court in Maharashtra's Thane district has sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment after holding him guilty of sexually abusing his nine-year-old daughter, a case their neighbour had exposed.

In his order on Tuesday, Judge DS Deshmukh of the court dealing with cases under the Protection

of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act also fined the 35-year-old convict ₹ 50,000.

Special Public Prosecutor Sandhya H Mhatre told the court that the man used to sexually abuse his daughter when his wife was away and after driving away their other children.

In August 2020, a neighbour, who had

observed a change in the girl's behaviour, persuaded the minor to share her ordeal. The 20-year-old neighbour then approached the police, ensuring the man's arrest.

Mr Mhatre said six prosecution witnesses, including the neighbour, deposed in the court. The girl and her mother were not among the witnesses, she said.

Judges work independently on judicial side but stand with govt on court infra issues: CJI DY Chandrachud



These projects are not private projects for judges or lawyers. These are projects created for our citizens," CJI Chandrachud said.

He added, "Therefore, let there be no doubt at all, and I have no doubt in my mind that the sense of collaboration between the state and judiciary is in the interest of providing modern infrastructure for our citizens and that sense of collaboration is in the tradition that our courts have wielded over for last 75 years and reflects strength and maturity of our nation."

Mumbai

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud Monday said that the judges across the Supreme Court and High Courts exercise their functions with "fiercest sense of independence" on the judicial side but the judiciary stands together with the government for issues related to court infrastructure and budgeting as such projects are created for citizens.

CJI Chandrachud, who had served as Bombay HC judge for nearly 13 years, was addressing an event at Taj Lands End in Bandra (West), after he participated in the "ground-breaking" ceremony to lay foundation for Bombay High Court's new building complex in Bandra (East).

Emphasising the "priority to expedite construction" of the new court complex, CJI Chandrachud said that the ceremony, also attended by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar celebrated "spirit of cooperation".

"Let us all be clear and let's not be befuddled by our vision, on the judicial side, judges across the HCs and SCs exercise their functions with fiercest sense of independence. But when it comes to administrative (issues) such as infrastructure, budgeting, we stand together with the government because our mission is one and the same.

Justices Bhushan R Gavai, Abhay S Oka, Dipankar Datta, Ujjal Bhuyan, Prasanna B Varale of the SC, who previously worked at the Bombay High Court along with present Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya of HC were also present at a ceremony held at Bandra (East) Government Colony.

Justice Oka stressed that the present heritage building at the Fort area in south Mumbai is inconvenient for lawyers and litigants and that "no institution can survive for a long time in the past glory of its heritage building."

He added that even though new buildings will be constructed in due course, the existing heritage building "must remain with the HC administration". "It was constructed for the judiciary and should remain with the judiciary.. It may be a museum or there can be arbitration and mediation centre," Justice Oka said.

The judge said that while only a small portion (4.39 acre of 30.16 acre) of land was handed over to HC administration for a new court complex, timelines should be fixed for handing over remaining land and releasing funds. He suggested that the actual construction "must start before November 24, 2025 so that the same can be done in the presence of then CJI (Justice B R Gavai)."

BMC to spend Rs 1,591 crore to concretise 44 km of approach roads connecting with Eastern and Western Expressways



Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai Mumbai Corporation (BMC) will spend Rs 1,591 crore to concretise approach roads of total length 44 km connecting the Eastern Express Highway (EEH) and Western Express Highway (WEH). The civic body Tuesday floated Rs 1,591 crore tender for the same.

The amount to be spent by BMC on concretising these 44 km is only one-fourth of the total cost of Rs 6,089 crore that BMC has allocated to concretise 397 km of road network in Mumbai.

The EEH and WEH were taken over by the civic authorities from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority

(MMRDA) for maintenance in 2022. Earlier in May this year, the BMC had floated a Rs 146 crore tender for carrying out pre-monsoon repair works in the two highways.

Civic officials said that the current tender will focus on repair works that are needed in the approach roads that connect the highways with the major and minor roads in Mumbai. "Several patches of the EEH and WEH are in a dilapidated state and have lived their age. Right now, our focus is to upgrade the existing infrastructure for which we intend to concretise the approach roads. These roads are filled with potholes, and since the highways are used by heavy

vehicles, concretising is the only way ahead to prevent permanent damage to the road's surface," said an official.

The EEH is 23.55 km in length while the WEH is 25.88 km.

These two highways have multiple stretches of approach roads who total length near almost the overall length of the two highways. "After the coastal road becomes operational, we will get a parallel connectivity with the highways, following which the highways will be taken up for concretisation in a phased manner, which is the larger plan. In the meantime, nearly 400 km of roads in Mumbai is being concretised by the civic authorities and within next two to four years, our target is to concretise all the existing internal roads of Mumbai," the official said.

Mumbai currently has a road network of 2,050 km of which 1,224 KM is already concretised, while the remaining roads are being taken up for concretisation in a phased manner.

Marathi to be must in schools for 4 years

Mumbai

The state government's new cultural policy recommends minimum four years of Marathi mandatory in all schools in Maharashtra. It also suggested making drawing a mandatory subject till Class 8 with additional marks on the lines of sports to be added in the final marksheet if the student chooses drawing even in Classes 9 and 10.

The cabinet also cleared two proposals to set up corporations for economically weaker sections from Brahmin and Rajput communities.

The cultural policy passed by the Maharashtra cabinet on Monday said special monetary arrangement will be made for the conservation of folk art on Maharashtra-Karnataka border. The policy has also recommended a 'Music University' of national level in the state.

The policy targeted 10 sectors,



namely craftsmanship, language, visual arts, forts and archaeology, folk arts, music, theatre, dance, films and spiritual culture and has made recommendations regarding it. A committee headed by Vinay Sahasrabudhe, Former Rajya Sabha MP from BJP, prepared and submitted the policy to the state government.

Among the major recommendations, the policy has suggested a master plan of 25 years for Marathi conservation; construction of Maharashtra state cultural bhavan; folk

arts research and conservation centres in tribal districts and constructing Maharashtra folk art gallery; restarting all closed down theaters and allowing use of MLA fund for theatre related issues; classical dance period in schools of all boards; reviving single screen film theatres; inclusion of literature of saints in the syllabus of schools and colleges and producing documentaries of state's religious culture.

Earlier, the cabinet cleared two proposals to set up corporations for economically weaker sections from Brahmin and Rajput castes. Parashuram Economic Development Corporation for Brahmins and Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap Economic Development Corporation for Rajputs will each have Rs 50 crore seed capital. The corporation for Brahmins will be headquartered in Pune while the other will be in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Install CCTVs, display proprietors' names: Yogi Adityanath's directive to Uttar Pradesh restaurants, eateries



Lucknow

Taking cognisance of incidents of spitting and mixing of urine in eatables in Uttar Pradesh, CM Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday directed that the name and address of operators, proprietors and managers should be mandatorily displayed at all food centres.

He also directed that chefs and waiters should wear masks and gloves, besides making installation of CCTVs in hotels and restaurants mandatory. Addressing a high-level meeting here, Adityanath said the presence of human waste in food items was disgusting and ordered strict action against those who adulterate food items with human waste or dirty things, an official statement said.

On September 12, a video showing a teenager spitting on rotis while preparing them at an

eatery in Saharanpur district went viral on social media, leading to the arrest of the facility's owner. Last week, a juice vendor in Ghaziabad district was arrested for allegedly serving fruit juices mixed with urine to customers. In view of such incidents, Yogi has also given instructions for thorough investigation, verification of all hotels, dhabas, restaurants and related establishments in the state.

Instructions were also given to amend the rules as per the need while ensuring the health safety of the general public. Earlier this year, the UP Government had mandated it for food stalls and fruit vendors along Kanwar Yatra routes to display the names of shop owners. The directive had been challenged in the Supreme Court for its alleged attempt to target Muslim vendors. The top court had stayed the order.

MVA will decide on CM candidate after election results, says Sharad Pawar

Mumbai

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said that the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will decide the chief ministerial candidate for the upcoming Assembly polls after the election results.

The NCP (SP) chief's statement came amid claims for the post by leaders of the other two key constituents of the MVA – Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress.

Pawar said that the decision on seat sharing between the opposition allies will be taken between September 30 and October 1.

"When the Janata Party was created, nobody thought that Morarji Desai was going to be the Prime Minister. Morarji Desai was elected as Prime Minister after the elections. Today, we want to give people confidence that we can offer them an alternative that works for their welfare. After the elections, we can decide who is chief minister, who is part of the cabinet," Pawar said at a press conference in Ratnagiri's Chiplun.

Senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat, last week, said that the Congress will have its CM after the polls while at a party program in Nagpur, Congress leaders said that state unit chief Nana Patole would be the best candidate



for the CM post. Last month, Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray had appealed to allies to declare the name of MVA's chief ministerial face before the polls.

Addressing seat-sharing within the MVA coalition, Pawar reiterated that the process is ongoing.

"Any party and its workers have the right to think that their party should be the largest party in the state. I can't make any comment on this. We have created a committee on seat sharing with all three alliance partners. The final decision on who contests from which seat will be taken on September 30 and October 1," he said.

The NCP(SP) chief also emphasised the alliance's plans to create a broader opposition front, bringing together parties like the CPM, CPI, Peasants and Workers Party and Samajwadi Party.

When asked about the Ladki Bahin scheme and its impact on election results, Pawar

highlighted that the scheme's publicity was misleading and contrasted it with his own tenure in government.

"I have worked in the Maharashtra government. For almost 24 years, I have been a part of the Maharashtra Cabinet. For almost 15 to 16 years, I was a minister. For 9 years, I was Chief Minister. As per my understanding, when a government released a scheme, the money came from the government's treasury and not from my pocket. That's why, we never put our photos and pretended like we were funding these schemes from our pocket," he said.

Expressing confidence about the public's support for the MVA's, he added, "Today, we feel that the mindset of the people is to help us. That's why, we are taking our agenda to the people. Others have the right to take their agenda to the people too. But the people will support ours."

MNS unfolds 'Vision Worli' in Aadiya Thackeray constituency

Mumbai

MNS president Raj Thackeray on Saturday appealed to "sons of the soil" to rise and fight for their fundamental rights. "Instead of buckling under pressure from forces that are out to undermine you, be strong and show your might," he said.

Thackeray was addressing a gathering after unveiling the party's 'Vision Worli' in Mumbai. What is interesting to note is Worli happens to be the Assembly constituency of Aadiya Thackeray, former Cabinet minister and son of former CM and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav

Thackeray.

Ahead of the Assembly elections, MNS's decision to hold a public rally at Worli has created a flutter. However, Raj Thackeray refrained from making any announcement keeping everybody guessing. But he minced no words to attack the builders lobby and successive governments for failing Mumbai and its people.

"Every state and city has its distinct character. When you visit London you know it by its taxis. You visit America... In the past, Mumbai had its own identity.



You identified it by its red bus or 'kali-pilli' taxis. All that has been lost. Everywhere

you see there are bridges and flyovers," he said. While stating that he was not against infrastructure development, Thackeray said, "The development is haphazard. There is no town planning."

Expressing serious concern over redevelopment, he warned, "I have often visited BDD Chawl... Today, builders are eyeing vast parcels. They are taking away prime land from locals and handing over smaller dwellings on their own terms and conditions. The builder lobby and politicians are not bothered about people. They want their profit and share."

India-China relationship key to Asia's future, their parallel rises present unique problem: Jaishankar

New Delhi



The India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia and it will influence not just the continent but the entire world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, noting that the “parallel rises” of the two countries present a “very unique problem” in today’s global politics.

“I think the India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia. In a way, you can say that if the world is to be multi-polar, Asia has to be multi-polar. Therefore, this relationship will influence not just the future of Asia, but in that way, perhaps the future of the world as well,” Jaishankar said in his address at an event titled ‘India, Asia and the World’ hosted by Asia Society and the Asia Society Policy Institute here on Tuesday.

He said currently the relationship between the two countries is “significantly disturbed”.

Jaishankar, who will address the General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly on Saturday, held a series of bilateral meetings with

his global counterparts during the day in the UN Headquarters and the city.

Responding to a question on China during an interaction at the Asia Society event, he noted that India has a “difficult history” with China, including a conflict in 1962.

“You have two countries who are neighbours, unique in the sense that they are the only two countries with over a billion people, both rising in the global order and who often have overlapping peripheries, including the fact that they have a common border. So it’s really a very complicated issue. I think, if you look today in global politics, the parallel rises

of India and China, present a very unique problem,” he said.

Jaishankar had recently said that roughly 75 per cent of the disengagement problems with China have been sorted out, a remark that was alluded to during the Asia Society interaction.

Referring to those remarks, the minister said, “When I said 75 per cent of it has been sorted out - I was asked in a way to quantify - it’s only of the disengagement. So that’s one part of the problem. The main issue right now is the patrolling. You know, how do we, both of us, patrol up to the Line of Actual Control.”

Jaishankar said the patrolling

arrangements after 2020 have been disturbed. “So we’ve been able to sort out much of the disengagement, the friction points, but some of the patrolling issues need to be resolved.”

He said once we deal with the disengagement, “there is the larger issue as both of us have brought a very large number of troops up to the border. So there is what we call the de-escalation issue, and then there is the larger, the next step is really, how do you deal with the rest of the relationship?”

Jaishankar gave a historical perspective of the relationship and of the border dispute, saying the “entire 3,500 kilometre-border between India and China is disputed”.

“And so you make sure the border is peaceful so that other parts of the relationship can move,” he said.

Jaishankar added there were a series of agreements between the two countries that went into greater detail on how to make sure the border remained peaceful and stable.

“Now the problem was in 2020, despite these very explicit agreements, we saw that the

Chinese - we were all in the middle of Covid at that time - moved a large number of forces in violation of these agreements to the Line of Actual Control. And we responded in kind,” he said.

“Once troops were deployed very close up, which is “very dangerous”, it was likely a mishap could happen, and it did happen,” Jaishankar added.

Referring to the 2020 Galwan clash, the minister said, “So there was a clash, and a number of troops died on either side, and that has since, in a sense, overshadowed the relationship. So until we can restore peace and tranquillity on the border and ensure the agreements signed up to are adhered to, it’s obviously difficult to carry on with the rest of the relationship.”

Jaishankar said the focus for the last four years had been to, in the first instance, at least disengage the troops, meaning that they go back to the camp, the military bases from which they traditionally operate.

“Because right now, both sides have troops deployed forward,” he said.

Ashwini Vaishnaw inspects trial run of ‘Kavach’ in Rajasthan

New Delhi



Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inspected the trial run of automatic train protection system (ATPS) “Kavach” between Sowai Madhopur and Nagda Kota stations in Rajasthan on Tuesday. He travelled in a loco with officials to test “Kavach”.

One of the tests pertained to loop line setting. When the train changed track to the loop line, “Kavach” automatically brought down its speed to 30 km/h from 130 km/h. If the train shifted to the loop line moves at 30 km/h speed, the impact would be minimal in case of a collision.

During the tests, the Kavach automatically applied brakes and brought the train travelling at a speed of 130 km/h to a halt at the designated place. It also blew whistle on its own while passing through a level crossing without any manual intervention from the loco

pilot.

In another test, the driver did not apply brakes after observing a red signal. The Kavach system applied brakes on its own and brought the train to a halt before a red signal.

“The latest version, Kavach 4.0, was finalised on July 16, 2024, and its first installation has been completed from Sawai Madhopur to Nagda Kota,” Vaishnaw told reporters after the tests.

Kavach has been developed by Research Design and Standards Organisation of the Indian Railways in collaboration with Indian industry. Its main function is to activate the braking system automatically if the driver fails to control the train.

Kavach has been certified for highest level of safety integrity level - SIL4 by Independent Safety Assessor and reduces the probability of train collisions in block sections and on running lines at stations through its non-SIL features.

NDA allies hail PM Modi for 'successful' US visit

New Delhi

Ruling NDA partners on Tuesday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit in terms of outcome and impact with Union Home Minister Amit Shah leading the cheers from the BJP side.

Bihar Chief Minister and JD (U) chief Nitish Kumar welcomed the decisions taken during the US visit of Prime Minister to increase investment between the two countries.

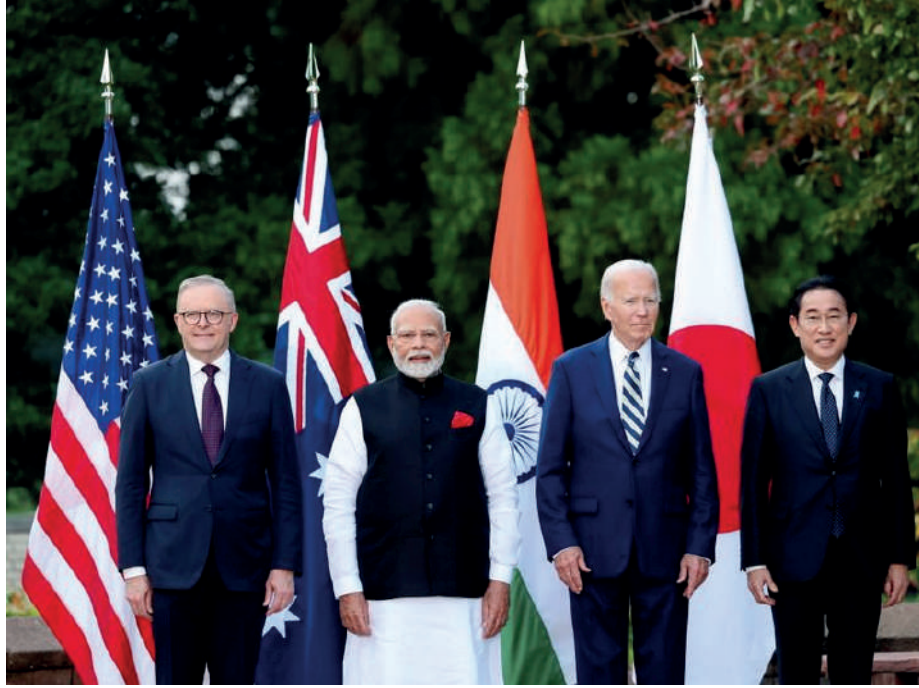
"The decisions taken between the two countries will increase investment in cutting edge technology areas and open new avenues of development.

The people of Bihar are excited about the announcements made during the visit of Prime Minister to the US and the new opportunities arising from them.

"The warm welcome accorded to Prime Minister by world leaders and Indian diaspora strengthens his leadership. This visit will have far reaching and positive effects. Congratulations to PM," said Nitish.

Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde said Modi's US visit has shown once again why he is a global statesman and trendsetter par excellence.

"As Indians, we feel very proud to see when our Prime Minister welcomed by American President Biden to his personal residence. I welcome the engagement with tech and business leaders. Maharashtra has a robust interaction with many of these people and PM's efforts to draw investments will naturally benefit our



state," Shinde posted on X.

TDP chief and Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu said, "We are lucky to be working under the leadership of such a statesman as PM. He has strengthened India's position in the comity of nations and has unarguably emerged as a tall world leader, bringing communities and countries together. His address to the United Nations stands as testimony to the importance world leaders associate with India and the significance of the role we are poised to play on the global stage in the coming years."

Naidu said over three days, PM discussed nuclear energy, cervical cancer vaccine, semiconductors, AI, biotechnology, quantum technology, Indo-Pacific economic architecture, return of our cultural heritage and many other topics.

HD Kumaraswamy of the JDS said during his three-day visit, PM attended the Quad Leaders Summit and the Summit of the Future (SOTF) at the United Nations in New York which was unique in itself, also, he held important bilateral meetings during his visit which will be fruitful for

the progress of the nation.

"Narendra Modi's meeting with Vietnam President To Lam on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly and discussions on ways to enhance relations between the two countries and increase cooperation in areas such as connectivity, trade and culture will benefit the country's trade.

The world will remember Modi's address at the United Nations Future Summit.

Every Indian is feeling proud seeing the world's love for Modi Ji during his USA visit.

"That's why the whole world is saying Modi is the pride of India," said Kumaraswamy.

Home Minister Amit Shah said, "Congratulations to PM on the successful three-day tour to the United States of America. The tour further fortifies the Modi doctrine of diplomacy, which over the last 10 years has propelled Bharat to the role of a global changemaker leading through examples in sustainable development."

The Home Minister said a successful QUAD Summit, the 'Modi & US' mega community event, and the UN Summit of the Future reflect PM's unmatched popularity across the globe.

"Modi's leadership has not only enhanced Bharat's stature as a nation, which everyone listens to, but also as one that every country accepts as a partner in the upliftment of humanity," Shah said.

India to have a trade promotion office in Sydney: Union Minister Piyush Goyal

New Delhi

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal announced the setting up of an office for trade promotion in Sydney, Australia, with representatives of Invest India, NICDC, ECGC, other officials related to trade and tourism along with the private sector represented by CII.

While addressing a joint press conference with HE Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism, Australia, at Adelaide today, Goyal said these offices will act as a bridge between investors and businesses on both sides. He said the focus is to upscale the partnerships in trade, investment, tourism and technology.

He said India celebrates '10 years of Make in India' today. The programme provided a whole of the approach in addressing the challenges of the manufacturing sector, he said. It provided provisions for 'plug and play' for infrastructure, single window system for approvals, easing compliance burden,



decriminalising laws, opening up FDI in newer sectors and encouraging the start-up ecosystem, signifying a multi-pronged approach to attract manufacturing in India.

Minister Goyal noted a lot of promise between the Make in India Programme and the Make in Australia programme to exchange technologies, opportunities and encourage businesses to work with each

other. He added that enhanced cooperation in education, skill development, investment, tourism, critical minerals, green ecosystem for sustainability are areas where the partnership holds significant potential.

Speaking about his visit to Australia, Goyal said for the first time, the leadership of both the CII and FICCI were represented in Australia, signifying the importance of the partnership. He added that the unprecedented ties between the two countries with nine in-person meetings of senior leaders being held since May 2022 reflected the deep bonding of leaders and supplements the business-business and people-people to connect.

He added that India and Australia are working towards strengthening Economic-Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) through Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). He said the ECTA agreement has resulted in market access to both sides and resulted in significant increase in merchandise trade.

Cong should realise its LS tally went up because of Sena UBT's contributions: Raut

Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Friday took a dig at Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat for claiming that the next Maharashtra chief minister would be from the Grand Old Party.

The Rajya Sabha MP said the Congress should realise it got more seats in the Lok Sabha because of the Sena (UBT)'s contribution. Reacting to Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala's statement that the Congress is the big brother in the MVA, Raut said everyone is equal in the alliance.

"There are three major parties in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), we will fight the elections together. The Congress got more seats in the Lok Sabha, but they should realise how much the Shiv Sena (UBT) has contributed to increasing their seats," Raut said.

Court orders probe by Lokayukta police against Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru

A Special Court here on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case.

The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi by MUDA.

The HC had also vacated its August 19 interim order directing the Special Court for People's Representatives to defer the decision on complaints against the Chief Minister, giving the green signal for ordering a probe.

It had dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of the Governor's August 16 order granting approval for investigation under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988.



Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday reiterated that he was ready to face an investigation in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case.

Reacting to Special Court ordering a Lokayukta police investigation against him in the case, the Chief Minister said he was not afraid of a probe.

"Already I have said that I am ready to face an investigation. I am not afraid of a probe," Siddaramaiah told reporters here.

"I am ready for a legal fight. I had said this yesterday and I am reiterating it today as well."

Siddaramaiah said the matter has been referred to the Mysuru Lokayukta police by the Special Court because the complaint was lodged in Mysuru and MUDA is also located in that city.

The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife B M Parvathi by MUDA.

You can't call any part of country Pakistan: SC on HC judge's remark

New Delhi

You can't call any part of the country Pakistan", the Supreme Court said on Wednesday on Karnataka High Court judge's controversial remarks.

A five-judge Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud, however, closed suo motu proceedings on the remarks made by Justice Vedavyasachar Srishananda after he expressed regret.

The Bench cautioned judges against casual comments reflecting their personal biases.

The judge had referred to a particular area of Bengaluru as Pakistan and had made certain gender insensitive comments against a woman lawyer.

The top court had on September 20 taken suo motu cognisance of the high court judge's alleged objectionable comments against a woman lawyer during the court proceedings in a case and his reference to a Muslim-majority area in Bengaluru as "Pakistan"



in another.

In video clips, which went viral on social media, Justice Srishananda was seen reprimanding a woman lawyer and reportedly made some objectionable comments when she intervened in an ongoing hearing.

The judge, in another case related to landlord-tenant dispute, referred to a Muslim-

dominated locality in Bengaluru as "Pakistan".

"At this stage, we request the Registrar General of the High Court of Karnataka to submit a report to this court after seeking administrative directions of the Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka, in regard to the subject matter which has been referred to above," the apex court had said on September 20.

Rahul Gandhi asks PM to clarify stand on Kangana's remark on farm laws

New Delhi

The Congress on Wednesday stepped up its attack on the BJP over its MP Kangana Ranaut's



remarks calling for bringing back the three farm laws with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi must clarify whether he is opposed to the comments or is "up to some mischief".

The opposition party demanded that the actor-politician be expelled by the ruling party if it does not agree with her remarks.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also hit out at the BJP over Ranaut's remarks and said the poll-bound states, including Haryana, would give a befitting reply to the ruling party.

Ranaut on Wednesday withdrew her remarks calling for bringing back the three

farm laws and said that was her personal opinion and did not represent the party's stand.

The Congress on Tuesday shared on X a video in which Ranaut said in Hindi, "Farm laws that have been repealed should be brought back. I think this may get controversial. The laws in farmers' interest be brought back. Farmers should themselves demand this (to bring farm laws back) so that there is no hindrance to their prosperity.

"Farmers are a pillar of strength in India's progress. Only in some states, they had objected to farm laws. I appeal with folded hands that farm laws should be brought back in the interest of farmers," she said.

In a video statement, Gandhi said, "The BJP people keep testing ideas. They ask someone to voice an idea among the people and then they see the reaction. This is what has happened, one of their MPs has talked about reviving the three black farm laws. Modi ji you must clarify, whether you are against this or you are again up to some mischief."

"Will the three farm laws be revived or not? If you do so, I guarantee you that the INDIA bloc will together stand against it; 700 people were martyred, they must be remembered and respected," he said.

Supreme Court orders states, UTs to notify Centre's school safety guidelines

New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked all states and Union Territories to notify the Centre's guidelines on school safety and security. The order came from a Bench led by Justice BV Nagarathna on a petition filed by Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) in 2019 seeking the implementation of the 2021 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education after senior counsel HS Phoolka submitted on behalf of the NGO that only five states have notified the 'Guidelines on School Safety and Security, 2021' so far. Directing the chief secretaries of

states and UTs to ensure compliance, the Bench disposed of the PIL. "The aim and objective behind the guidelines are to enact self-contained comprehensive legislation to provide for the protection of all children from all kinds of exploitation and abuse and guarantee their physical, social, psychological and moral well-being," the petitioner submitted. "The safety and security of every child studying in school is the avowed purpose and intent behind the Guidelines, therefore, it is imperative that it should be implemented effectively and mandatorily within a defined timeline," it said.

"Bharat Is Unstoppable": PM Modi Writes Blog As 'Make In India' Turns 10

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hailed the completion of ten years of 'Make In India' initiative and said that the collective resolve of 140 crore Indians was transforming the nation into a manufacturing and innovation powerhouse.

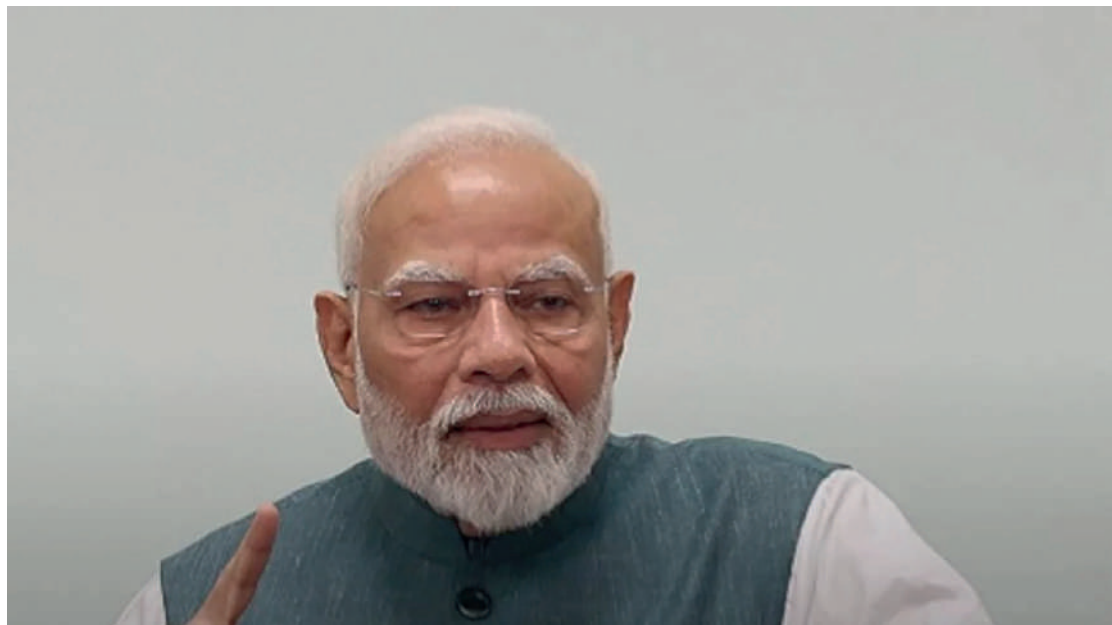
Penning a blog on the milestones and landmarks achieved under the flagship scheme, PM Modi wrote: "The impact of Make in India shows that Bharat is unstoppable."

PM Modi said that today was a moment to salute the country's vast talent pool for making the initiative a roaring success.

"Each of you is a pioneer, visionary and innovator, whose tireless efforts have fuelled the success of Make in India and thereby made our nation the focus of global attention as well as curiosity," he wrote.

He further said that the initiative which was undertaken ten years ago is yielding big results, as is evident in the manufacturing sector and also in the country's big strides in the export sector.

"The imprint of 'Make in India' has become visible across sectors, including areas where we never even dreamt of making an impact," he said.



PM Modi also cited some examples to explain the resounding success story of the Make In India initiative.

"Mobile manufacturing... we know how important mobile phones have now become, but what is startling is that in 2014, we had only two mobile manufacturing units in the entire country. Today, that number has risen to over 200. Our mobile exports have skyrocketed from a mere ₹ 1,556 crore to an astounding ₹ 1.2 lakh crore - a mind-boggling 7,500 per cent increase! Today, 99 per cent of mobile phones used in India are Made in India. We've become the second-largest

mobile manufacturer globally," PM Modi wrote, recalling the telecom revolution in the country in the past ten years.

PM Modi further drew attention towards astronomical growth in sectors like energy and manufacturing.

"Look at Steel industry - We have become a net exporter of finished steel, with production increasing by over 50 per cent since 2014. Our semiconductor manufacturing sector has attracted investments worth over ₹ 1.5 lakh crore, with five plants approved that will have a combined capacity of more than 7 crore chips per day. In renewable energy, we are the

4th largest producer globally, with capacity increasing by 400 per cent in just a decade. Our electric vehicle industry, practically non-existent in 2014, is now worth \$3 billion," PM Modi wrote on his blog.

He further said that the defence production exports have soared from ₹ 1,000 crore to ₹ 21,000 crore, spanning across over 85 nations.

PM Modi also took pride in the indigenous production of state-of-the-art trains, including Vande Bharat, and missiles like BrahMos and boasted about all of them having a 'Make In India' imprint.

The Prime Minister further

wrote: "Make in India initiative is special because it has given the poor the wings to dream big and aspire - it has given them the confidence that they can be wealth creators. Equally notable is the impact on the MSME sector."

He described Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes as one of the game-changers as it was enabling investments of thousands of crores and generating lakhs of jobs.

PM Modi said that the country has emerged as a key player in the global supply chain and also boasted about the country's phenomenal Yuva Shakti as it is proving its mettle in the Start-Up industry, globally.

The Prime Minister also called upon young Indians to come forward and join the Make In India initiative to take it to new heights.

"The momentum is clearly in India's favour. Despite facing unprecedented challenges like the global pandemic, India has remained firmly on the growth track. Today, we are being seen as drivers of global growth. We all must strive for excellence. Zero defect should be our mantra," he said in a concluding note.

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi Gets 'Z' Security Cover Days After Taking Oath

New Delhi

Delhi Police has accorded 'Z' security cover to Atishi, days after she was sworn in as the chief minister of Delhi, official sources said on Wednesday.

On Saturday, she was provided security cover, which include a pilot, in her convoy by the Delhi Police.

According to protocol, Delhi's chief minister is entitled to 'Z' category security cover on the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Delhi Police deploys 22 personnel in shifts for a 'Z' category protectee.

The 'Z' category security also include PSOs, escorts and armed guards.

A police source said her security may be further reviewed by central agencies on the direction of MHA after threat assessment.



Congress demands action against leaders who issued threats to Rahul Gandhi

Mumbai

A delegation of Maharashtra Congress led by Leader of Opposition in the state Legislative Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar met Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan on Saturday to discuss about the alleged "poor" law and order situation in the state. The delegation also sought the arrest of ruling alliance leaders, who issued threats against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. "Law and order in the state has completely collapsed and political and social instability has arisen in the state. Farmers affected by heavy rains

in Vidarbha and Marathwada are yet to get help. Due to this, there is a lot of unrest among people, especially farmers," Wadettiwar stated in a memorandum. He further demanded the arrest of Shiv Sena leader and MLA Sanjay Gaikwad and BJP Rajya Sabha MP Anil Bonde, who had allegedly issued threats against Rahul Gandhi. The memorandum stated that Gandhi's life was in danger due to these threats but no action was taken against Gaikwad and Bonde. Wadettiwar also accused Chief Minister Eknath Shinde of being a mute spectator on the issue.

Dialogue the key: Modi in third meet with Zelenskyy since June



New Delhi

stakeholders”.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday, reiterated India’s consistent approach on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict for a “peaceful resolution through diplomacy and dialogue”.

Modi, who was on a three-day visit to the US (September 21-23), while speaking at the summit in the UN echoed similar words. “Success of humanity lies in our collective strength and not the battlefield,” he had said.

Modi-Zelenskyy met on the sidelines of the UN Summit of the Future, in New York, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) posted details of the meeting on its website on Tuesday morning (IST). This was the third meeting between the two leaders since June this year.

To Zelenskyy, Modi assured that India remained open to provide all support within its means to facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution of the conflict. “The situation in Ukraine as well as the way forward on pursuing a path to peace also figured prominently in their discussions,” the MEA said.

The MEA said: “Prime Minister reiterated India’s clear, consistent and constructive approach in favour of a peaceful resolution of the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue as well as engagement between all

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had given details of the way forward during his media interaction in New York on September 21. Asked if India had a peace proposal related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict,

Misri had said: “We are involved in a set of ongoing conversations with interlocutors on all sides.” It is obvious, people see value in India’s engagement in these conversations and we are able to talk to multiple interlocutors. “There is still quite a bit of work that remains to be done... but at the moment, these are very important conversations that are going on with multiple people on all sides of this conflict,” Misri said.

At New York on Monday, Modi-Zelenskyy recalled the interaction they had in Kyiv, Ukraine, on August 23. The meeting was the third since June when the two met on the sidelines of the G7 meet in Italy.

Modi also met President of Vietnam To Lam in New York and reiterated his solidarity with Vietnam in the face of loss and damage caused by Typhoon Yagi earlier this month. India had launched a massive air-effort to send aid to Vietnam in the aftermath of the typhoon.

The MEA said the two leaders recalled the visit of Vietnamese PM Pham Minh Chinh to India last month, and discussed prospects of advancing bilateral cooperation and further strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

Israel kills top Hezbollah commander in Beirut as fears of wider conflict grow



Beirut

An Israeli airstrike on Beirut killed a senior Hezbollah commander on Tuesday as cross-border rocket attacks by both sides increased fears of a full-fledged war in the Middle East and Lebanon said only Washington could help end the fighting.

Hezbollah early on Wednesday confirmed senior commander Ibrahim Qubaisi was killed by Israeli airstrikes on Tuesday on the Lebanese capital as Israel announced earlier. Israel said Qubaisi headed the group’s missile and rocket force.

Israel’s offensive since Monday morning has killed 569 people, including 50 children, and wounded 1,835 in Lebanon, Health Minister Firass Abiad told Al Jazeera Mubasher TV.

The new offensive against Hezbollah has stoked fears that nearly a year of conflict between Israel and the militant Palestinian group Hamas in Gaza is escalating and could destabilise the Middle East. Britain urged its nationals to leave Lebanon and said it was moving 700 troops to Cyprus to help its citizens evacuate.

The U.N. Security Council said it would meet on Wednesday to discuss the conflict.

“Lebanon is at the brink. The people of Lebanon – the people of Israel – and the people of the world - cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza,” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said.

At the U.N., which is holding its General Assembly this week, US President Joe Biden made a plea for calm. “Full-scale

war is not in anyone’s interest. Even if a situation has escalated, a diplomatic solution is still possible,” he said.

Lebanon’s Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib criticized Biden’s address as “not strong, not promising” and said the US

was the only country “that can really make a difference in the Middle East and with regard to Lebanon.” Washington is Israel’s longtime ally and biggest arms supplier.

The United States “is the key ... to our salvation,” he told an event in New York City hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In Beirut, thousands of displaced people who fled from southern Lebanon were sheltering in schools and other buildings.

At the Technical Institute of Bir Hassan, volunteers brought water bottles, medicine and other supplies for the new arrivals.

In one classroom, 11-month-old Matila slept on a mattress while children elsewhere stood on chairs to pass time by scribbling on a whiteboard. Rima Ali Chahine, 50, said the shelter provided diapers, pastries and milk for the children.

“It’s a lot of pressure for grownups and children. They’re exhausted and stressed. They could not sleep,” she said. “The kids - they are living through terrible conditions.” Early on Wednesday, an Israeli strike hit the seaside town of Jiyeh, 75 km (46 miles) north of the border with Israel, two security sources said.

China test-fires intercontinental ballistic missile into Pacific Ocean

Beijing

China test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday.

The ICBM carried a dummy warhead and fell into a designated area of the sea, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

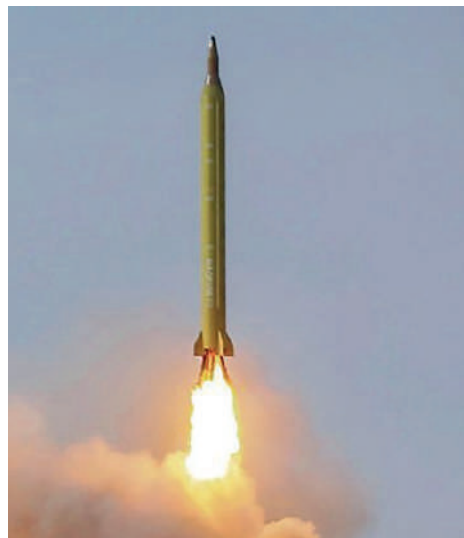
The launch by the People’s Liberation Army was part of routine annual training.

It added the launch complied with international

law and was not directed against any country or target.

It is unclear how often China conducts tests over such a distance. In 1980, China launched an ICBM into the South Pacific.

A map published in Chinese newspapers at the time showed the target area as roughly a circle in the centre of a ring formed by the Solomon Islands, Nauru, the Gilbert Islands, Tuvalu, western Samoa, Fiji and the New Hebrides.



Modi's US visit

PRIME Minister Modi's visit to the US comes at a critical juncture, marked by electoral tensions in the US and diplomatic challenges. The visit is notably subdued compared to his 2019 tour, where he famously endorsed Donald Trump with the slogan 'Ab ki baar Trump sarkar.' This time, India is cautiously treading the line between engaging with both Republicans and Democrats as the US election looms, ensuring it does not appear to favour either side. At the heart of the current diplomatic equation is India's need to maintain a balanced relationship with both political factions in the US. Modi's rapport with Trump may have served India well during the latter's presidency, but it would be risky to appear partisan in the evolving geopolitical landscape. With Vice-President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee, India must ensure that its strategic ties with the US are not jeopardised, regardless of who wins the White House.

Further complicating matters is the backdrop of the Gurbatwant Singh Pannun case. A US court recently issued



a summons against key Indian officials over an alleged plot to assassinate the Khalistani activist. While India has dismissed these charges as 'unwarranted', the issue remains a thorn in India-US relations, threatening to sour diplomatic ties.

This visit focuses on multilateral

engagements like the Quad summit and the UN Summit for the Future, marking a shift from Modi's earlier high-profile, personality-driven diplomacy to a more nuanced approach. The agenda includes strengthening ties on regional security, technology and climate change, along with solidifying India's position as a global peacemaker. Modi's engagement with the Indian diaspora in the US and meetings with CEOs also underscore his government's aim to bolster economic partnerships. The trip reflects India's focus on a more nuanced, long-term diplomatic vision while navigating geopolitical complexities and US electoral politics.

// satyasya paramarñ nidhānam //

We would like to hear from you. Please share your comments on editor.acrossstate@gmail.com

*Be yourself;
everyone else is
already taken.*

-Oscar Wilde

Chess success

India's Olympiad golden double a great feat

OUR cricket-crazy nation is going gaga over a sport that usually doesn't grab many eyeballs. That's because the Indian men's and women's teams have touched the stars by winning the gold in the 45th Chess Olympiad in Hungary. With this magnificent achievement, India has joined a select club of nations, which includes China as well as the erstwhile Soviet Union — both clinched the golden double in the same edition of the Olympiad. It is befitting that Viswanathan Anand, the colossus of Indian chess with five World Championship titles, was present to watch these

young players assert their dominance in the global arena.



The men's team comprised World Championship challenger D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and P Harikrishna. Barring Harikrishna, none of them was even born

when Anand became India's first Grandmaster in 1988. Gukesh is just 18 years old, while Erigaisi is 21. Both are among the top 10 players in the world. At 54, Anand is a 'semi-retired' player who is still good enough to be ranked World No. 11. What's more, he has been a huge source of inspiration for Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa. On the eve of the Olympiad, he said: 'If I had to roll the dice, these are good teams to roll them with.'

The team triumph will surely boost Gukesh's confidence for his World Chess Championship summit clash with reigning world champion Ding Liren in Singapore later this year. The women's team — Harika Dronavalli, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal and Tania Sachdev — deserves kudos for emerging victorious despite the absence of star performer Koneru Humpy. These are good days for Indian chess, which is no longer a one-man/one-woman show. The Global Chess League, whose second season will begin in London early next month, will provide another big opportunity to these players to sharpen their skills and further popularise the sport in India.

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Lankan mandate

Onus on Dissanayake to bolster economy

TWO years after an economic meltdown sparked an uprising in Sri Lanka, Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Disanayake has bested Sajith Premadasa in the presidential election. Incumbent President and six-time Prime Minister

remains to be seen if the NPP will give him and his party the freedom to do something revolutionary on the economic front. A deal with the International Monetary Fund has helped Sri Lanka's economy make a tentative recovery, with inflation falling to 0.5 per cent from an alarming high of 70 per cent. The major challenges for Disanayake are to enable the country to repay its debt, regain investors' confidence and pull one-fourth of its population out of poverty. He can't afford to let down the masses, whose anger and discontent had fuelled the 2022 protests that led to



Ranil Wickremesinghe finished a distant third, underlining the voters' resolve to herald a new beginning in the beleaguered island nation. Disanayake, the candidate of the National People's Power (NPP) alliance, rode to victory on the back of his anti-corruption and pro-poor agenda. His promise of slashing taxes clicked with people who are reeling under poverty or finding it hard to keep pace with the high cost of living.

Involved in two armed uprisings against the Lankan government (1971 and 1987-89), Disanayake's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has been active in mainstream politics in recent decades. It

the ignominious ouster of then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Those nightmarish scenes of food and fuel shortages are fresh in the people's minds.

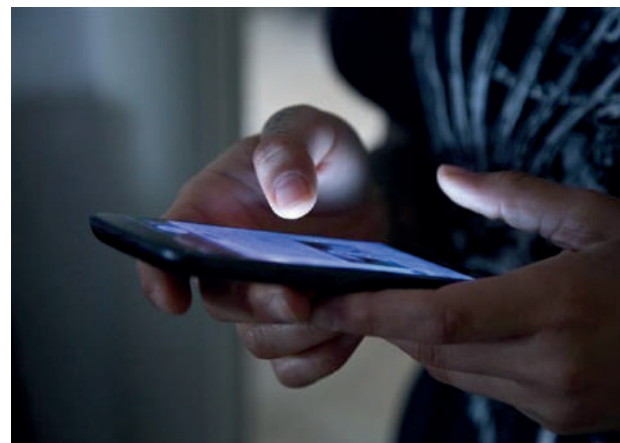
Playing its cards well, the Modi government had hosted Disanayake in February, notwithstanding the anti-India rhetoric the JVP was once infamous for. Going by Delhi's diplomatic success in making pro-China Maldives President Muizzu see reason, India will hope to sway Disanayake in case he starts cosyng up to Beijing. A balancing act by the new President will stand his country in good stead geopolitically as well as economically.

Fighting child porn

SC sends out zero-tolerance message

CORRECTING an 'egregious error' made by the Madras High Court, the Supreme Court has ruled that downloading and watching sexually explicit content involving children are offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Information Technology Act. This implies that even

the sordid matter under the carpet. In many cases, close family members commit these despicable crimes behind a veil of secrecy. With UNICEF flagging the widespread use of digital technologies as a factor behind this menace, it is very important to safeguard kids and deter potential offenders with a robust legal mechanism. The



POCSO Act does have some stringent provisions, but their diverse interpretations by high courts have proved to be a stumbling block.

Child pornography — the very term is on the way out as the Supreme Court has told courts not to use it in any judicial order or judgment and instead prefer 'child sexual exploitative and abuse material'. This sends out a strong message to society at large that such

viewing child pornographic material — without storing or sharing it — is tantamount to its possession. The landmark judgment is expected to go a long way in curbing the all-pervasive menace of sexual exploitation of children.

Kids are vulnerable to being targeted by predators everywhere — at home, on the school campus and in public places. Sexual abuse of minors is the elephant in the room, particularly in countries like India. Fearing ignominy, victims' families tend to sweep

acts will be countered with a zero-tolerance approach. Sexual harassment in any form leaves the kids psychologically scarred for life. It adversely impacts not only their studies and relationships — their entire personality, in fact. It is hoped that the SC's intervention will motivate parents, educators and others to talk openly about sexual matters without a sense of stigma or shame. These stakeholders must also monitor the smartphone usage of children to ward off harmful influences.

INDIVIDUALS holding constitutional posts are expected to hold themselves to a very high standard of behaviour. Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi has, time and again, chosen to disregard any such value system. He has made it a habit to stoke controversies. His run-ins with the DMK government have been distinctly marked by churlishness on his part. Now, he has ignited a political storm with his remarks that secularism is a European concept and has no place in India. The Opposition has termed the Governor's comment a violation of the Constitution, which establishes India as a secular state and separates religion from politics. Ravi, in his personal capacity, is entitled to maximalist views, however unpalatable these may be. He forgets — intentionally, it appears — that airing these publicly undermines the office he holds. It's a breach of his constitutional responsibility. It seems

No, Governor

RN Ravi forgets his constitutional responsibility

that he couldn't care less, which is highly problematic.

The politicisation of the gubernatorial office is one Congress inheritance that the BJP has chosen to not only persist with but also indulgently play around with. Several Governors have come to, or have

been made to, believe that their primary role is to be at loggerheads with elected governments. In their overzealousness, some have chosen to unveil their ideological makeup and political baggage. When they overstep the bounds of office, Governors give credence to the charge that they are agenda-driven. It's a disturbing pattern that is being replicated in state after state. The loss of credibility and trust in this vital component of the federal structure can have grave repercussions for the Centre-state relations.

Any attempt to weaken the country's secular fabric needs to be confronted with full force. It's perplexing that an urgent need is being felt to show the rule book to those entrusted with upholding it. So be it.



Judge's Pak remark

Onus on judiciary to combat communal stereotypes

IN this age of social media and incessant public scrutiny, it's not easy for persons in high places to say anything and get away with it. Once immune to criticism, judges, too, are feeling the heat. Taking suo motu cognisance of reports about controversial remarks by Justice Vedavyasachar Srishananda of the Karnataka High Court, the Supreme Court has sought a report from the HC Registrar General. In a video clip that has gone viral, the judge is heard saying during a case hearing that a certain area of Bengaluru is in Pakistan. Justice Srishananda left no room for doubt that he was referring to the Muslim community when he said that every autorickshaw in that area had 10 people and even a strict police officer would be beaten up there.

The judge has laid bare his deep-rooted prejudice, causing



embarrassment to the entire judiciary. The delivery of justice is bound to be adversely impacted when some judges are perceived to have political

or communal leanings. In May, Justice Chitta Ranjan Dash of the Calcutta High Court had thanked the RSS in his farewell speech and fondly recalled his

long association with the right-wing body. The disclosure had cast a shadow on his entire career and shown the high court in a poor light.

Article 50 of the Constitution, which puts the onus on the State to separate the judiciary from the executive in public services, seems to have been conveniently forgotten. As is often the case these days, the Supreme Court has taken it upon itself to set things right. Upset at the provocative remark of Justice Srishananda, a five-judge SC Bench has said that it may lay down basic guidelines. It's the need of the hour to ask judges at all levels to mind their language. The apex court had taken a commendable initiative last year by bringing out the Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes. Something similar is required to counter communal stereotypes.

Battle for Haryana

Promises galore in BJP-Cong showdown

AS Haryana gears up for the Assembly elections on October 5, the contest is primarily between the ruling BJP and the Congress. Given the people's concerns on unemployment, agricultural distress and economic inequality, both parties have promised transformative reforms in their manifestoes. While the BJP has focused on industrial growth and welfare schemes, the Congress is leaning towards populist economic relief. Both parties harp on development works during their tenures, with voters being sceptical of the claims as they are not fully supported by ground realities. Both face accusations of unfulfilled promises.



The Congress, led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda, has outlined key guarantees: an MSP law, 300 units of free electricity, Rs 6,000 pension for seniors, widows and the disabled and a Rs 2,000 monthly allowance for women aged 18 to 60. It also promises to restore the Old Pension Scheme and conduct a caste census.

The BJP, under JP Nadda, pledges to establish 10 industrial towns, create two lakh government jobs and provide Rs 2,100 per month to women. Its manifesto emphasises industrial growth alongside housing projects and expanded healthcare. Both visions, however, face hurdles, including the state's financial health, in the implementation of these ambitious promises.

Interestingly, AAP, another party contesting all 90 seats, is making a pitch with focus on education, healthcare and clean governance. Though Arvind Kejriwal, after quitting as the Delhi CM, is going full throttle in campaigning, AAP may not disrupt the two-party dominance. But it could divide the anti-BJP vote and weaken the Congress' chances. The INLD, in alliance with the BSP, remains influential in rural and Jat-dominated areas. Abhay Chautala is positioning himself as a strong alternative. With multiple contenders, this election will test Haryana's evolving political dynamics.

Save Indus treaty

India, Pak must prioritise water security

THE landmark Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which has survived India-Pakistan wars and diplomatic tensions over the past 64 years, finds itself at a crossroads today. India has served a notice on its neighbour, seeking a review and modification of the treaty in view of 'fundamental and unforeseen changes in circumstances that require a reassessment of obligations'. Since January 2023, New Delhi has repeatedly written to Islamabad to initiate talks on revising the World Bank-brokered treaty, but all this has merely been water off a duck's back. Pakistan, which red-flagged its water crisis during a UN Security Council meeting in February this year, is banking on the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague to resolve the festering dispute over water-sharing.

River waters know no boundaries. Considering their mutual reliance on this precious natural resource, the two nations must realise that the IWT's survival is integral to ensuring regional water security. Intransigence and one-upmanship have made a bilateral settlement elusive. India has unreasonably indicated that there

will be no more meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission, which includes officers from both nations, till the two governments discuss the renegotiation of the treaty. This 'Big Brother' approach may prove to be counterproductive as Pakistan has managed to internationalise the issue and is portraying India as the uncooperative party. The established dispute resolution mechanism — which has the provision for neutral experts as well as the arbitration court — should be honoured by both countries. Every effort must be made to keep the IWT alive and relevant.

Amid its muscle-flexing over the Indus treaty, India must not lose sight of the Brahmaputra basin, which lacks a water management framework. This major river system has India, China and Bangladesh among the stakeholders. Delhi must keep a close eye on China's proposed Great Bend Dam, which is expected to expand the country's capacity to store and withhold/release water. Beijing's 'upper riparian' status should not deter Delhi from insisting on multilateral cooperation.

Strengthening fundamentals best buffer against global spillovers: RBI

Mumbai

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, in Kathmandu on Tuesday, said strengthening one's fundamentals was the best buffer against global spillovers in today's uncertain world.

These would include commitment to an inflation target, maintaining buffers in the form of reserves, and following a prudent and forward-looking approach in financial sector policies, he added.

"This approach, together with prudence in fiscal management, will go a long way in enhancing the resilience of Emerging Market Economies (EMEs)," Das said in his address at the First Himalaya Shumsher Memorial Lecture, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Kathmandu, Nepal.

EMEs had exhibited greater resilience, unlike previous episodes, he added. All traditional drivers of EME crises of the 20th



century were present in the last few years, but the EMEs have probably learnt from their past experience and played it well this time.

He said, "We have not only managed to shield the economy from multiple shocks in the last few years, but have also enabled it to emerge stronger from the crisis."

Sensex breaches 85K mark, Nifty 26K

Mumbai

Driven by strong investor sentiment and positive global cues, the Indian stock markets hit fresh all-time highs today. Nifty 50 and Sensex surged to a record level of 26,011.55 points and 85,163.23 points, respectively, marking an unprecedented milestone for the benchmark index, reflecting robust buying across sectors.

After surging to fresh all-time highs led by foreign institutional investor (FII) buying flows, it pared their gains to close on a muted note. At closing, the BSE Sensex was down 14.57 points, or 0.02, at 84,914.04. Mirroring Sensex's moves, Nifty 50 touched a fresh record high, while also breaching the psychological level of 26,000. At close, the 50-stock index was marginally up by 0.01 per cent, at 25,940.40.

"Several factors contributed to this rally, including strong corporate earnings, resilient macroeconomic indicators,



and increased FII inflows. The market momentum was further bolstered by a bullish outlook on India's economic growth, supported by expectations of structural reforms and investor optimism around the Indian economy's ability to withstand global headwinds, such as inflationary pressures and geopolitical uncertainties," said Vikram Kasat, head (advisory), Prabhudas Lilladher (PL Capital).

According to analysts, Indian

equity indices Nifty50 and Sensex have witnessed a strong bullish momentum, with gains of nearly 18-19 per cent year-to-date.

According to them, more recently, the US Federal Reserve's (FOMC) decision to implement a substantial rate cut of 50 basis points — bringing rates to the 4.75-5.00 per cent range — has further bolstered risk assets globally.

S&P retains growth forecast at 6.8%



New Delhi

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday retained India's growth forecast at 6.8 per cent for the current fiscal and said it expected the RBI to start cutting interest rates in its October monetary policy review.

In the economic outlook of Asia Pacific, S&P Global

Ratings also retained its GDP growth forecast for the 2025-26 fiscal at 6.9 per cent and said solid growth in India would allow the Reserve Bank to focus on bringing inflation in line with its target. "In India, GDP growth moderated in the June quarter as high interest rates temper urban

demand, in line with our projection of 6.8 per cent GDP for the full fiscal year 2024-2025," S&P said.

The Indian economy grew 8.2 per cent in the last fiscal. S&P said the Union Budget in July outlined that the government remains committed to fiscal consolidation and to keeping the focus of public expenditure on infrastructure. The Budget has earmarked a capital expenditure of Rs 11.11 lakh crore in the current fiscal, ending March 2025.

S&P said the RBI considered food inflation a hurdle for rate cuts. It reckoned that, unless there was a lasting and meaningful decline in the rate at which food prices were increasing, it would be tough to maintain headline inflation at 4 per cent. "Our outlook remains unchanged: we expect the RBI to begin cutting rates in October at the earliest and have pencilled in two rate cuts this fiscal year," S&P said.

IPEF nations must make collaborative efforts, says Piyush Goyal

New Delhi

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said the full potential of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) could only be realised if partner countries brought their strengths to the table, whether it was technological advancements, investment capacity, market potential or requisite resources including skilled workforce, to address various challenges

of supply chain resilience or green transition. He was speaking at a virtual meeting of IPEF ministers. Healthcare, including pharmaceuticals and medical devices, was an extremely relevant area due to the overconcentration of global production of APIs and Key Starting Materials (KSMs), which could severely impair supply chain resilience and impact our capacity to address the healthcare needs of our economies, he added.

Basmati exports surge after floor price removal

New Delhi

The Centre's decision to remove the floor price for basmati rice exports is expected to spur a flurry of orders from the Middle East, Europe and the Americas, leading exporters said, helping India increase its share of the global market.

Earlier this month, India, which is the world's biggest rice exporter, removed a floor price of \$950 per metric tonne for basmati rice.

"This change has enabled exporters to offer basmati rice at more competitive prices globally, which is likely to drive higher export volumes," Akshay Gupta, head of bulk exports at KRBL Ltd, said.

When restrictions were imposed, they helped Pakistan gain basmati market share. However, with the removal of the MEP, India would be able to reclaim the lost share, said Dev Garg, director of ViExport.

Sebi slaps Rs 1 cr fine on Anmol Ambani in Reliance Home Finance case

Mumbai

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on Anmol Ambani, son of industrialist Anil Ambani, for his failure to exercise due diligence while approving general-purpose corporate loans in Reliance Home Finance matter.

Additionally, the regulator levied a fine of Rs 15 lakh on Krishnan Gopalakrishnan, who was the Chief Risk Officer of Reliance Housing Finance.

Both have been directed to pay the amount within 45 days, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its order.

The order came after Sebi, in August, barred Anil Ambani and 24 others from the securities market for five years in a case pertaining to diversion of Reliance Home Finance Ltd's funds. Also, a fine of Rs 25 crore was levied on him.

In its order on Monday, Sebi noted that Anmol Ambani, who was on the board of Reliance Home Finance, had approved general-purpose corporate loans or GPCL loans, and that too after the company's board of directors had given clear direction not to go ahead with any approval of such loans.

The approval for loan of Rs 20 crore to Accura Productions Private Limited was provided by Anmol Ambani on February 14, 2019, despite the board of directors in their meeting on February 11, 2019, had directed the management to not issue any further GPCL loans.

"The noticee 1 (Anmol Ambani), as non-executive director of the company, has taken the company in his own direction and has gone overboard in his role as director. Noticee 1 in doing so, gives a hint of being motivated and definitely not in the interests of the shareholders and has not acted with due care and diligence, and has not maintained



high ethical standards, Sebi said.

Anmol, who was on the board of Reliance Capital and Reliance Home Finance and also a director in the other Reliance ADAG group companies where the funds were onward lent, "did not exercise reasonable due diligence with respect to the entire GPCL lending and the onward lending by these GPCL entities to other Reliance ADAG group companies, including Reliance Capital", it added.

Sebi said that Gopalakrishnan had also approved various GPCL loans and was aware of the substantial deviations which were recorded in the credit approval memos of various loans which he had recommended while being the CRO of the company.

While being a part of the senior management of Reliance Housing Finance, Gopalakrishnan should have followed due process, complied with the code of conduct of the company, and acted with due care and diligence in performing his duties and acted in good faith, in the interest of all stakeholders of the company, Sebi said.

Both Anmol Ambani and Gopalakrishnan violated the provisions of Sebi's LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) rules.

93% retail traders lost money in F&O in 3 years: Sebi study

Mumbai

When it comes to equity derivatives trading, retail investors are on the back foot, as 93 per cent of them incurred losses with average loss of around Rs 2 lakh per trader during the last three financial years (FY 22 to FY 24), according to a new study conducted by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). There are over one crore individual (Futures & Options) traders. Despite consecutive years of losses, more than 75 per cent, of lossmaking traders continued trading in F&O.

The aggregate losses of individual traders exceeded Rs 1.8 lakh crore over the three-year period, the study pointed out.

The top 3.5 per cent of loss-makers — around 4 lakh traders — faced an average loss of Rs 28 lakh per person over the last three financial years. Only 1 per cent of individual traders managed to earn profits exceeding Rs 1 lakh, after adjusting for transaction costs.

Also, during the period, the proportion of young traders (below 30 years) in the F&O segment rose from 31 per cent in FY23 to 43 per cent in FY24.

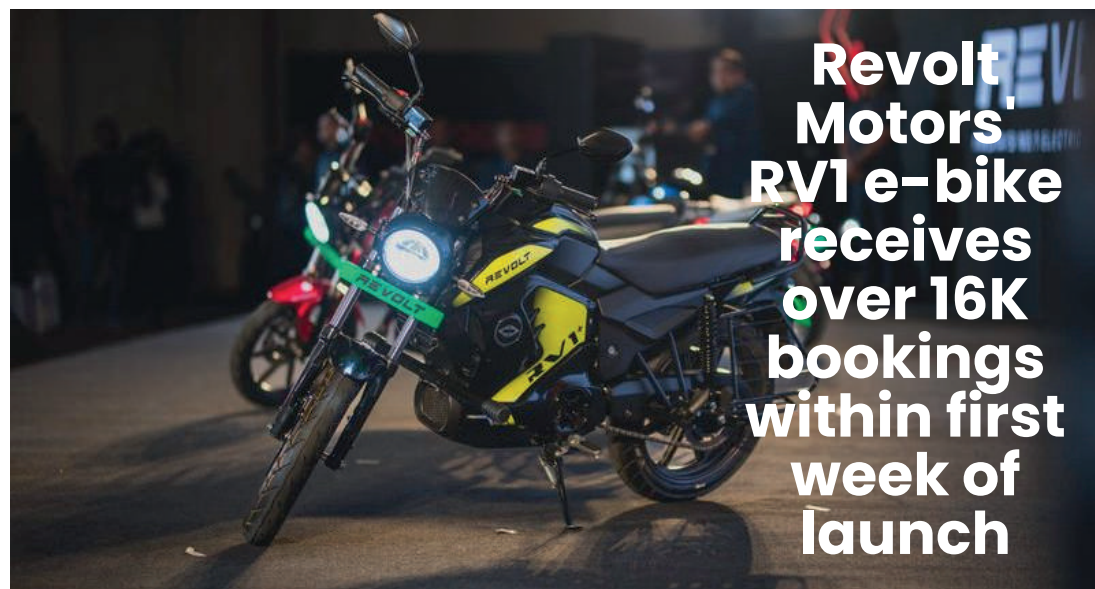


Individuals from Beyond Top 30 (B30) cities made up over 72 per cent of the total F&O trader base, a higher proportion compared to mutual fund investors, 62 per cent of whom are from B30 cities.

In contrast to individual traders, proprietary traders and Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) as a class booked gross trading profits of Rs 33,000 crore and Rs 28,000 crore, respectively, in FY24 (before accounting for transaction costs). Against this, individuals and other investors incurred a loss of over Rs 61,000 crore in FY24, before accounting for transaction costs. Most of

the profits were generated by larger entities that used trading algorithms, with 97 per cent of FPI profits and 96 per cent of proprietary trader profits coming from algorithmic trading.

F&O are financial derivatives that allow investors to trade on the price of underlying assets like commodities, stocks, bonds and currencies. The main difference between the two is that futures contracts require the buyer to purchase the asset, while options contracts give the buyer the option to buy or sell the asset.



Revolt Motors' RV1 e-bike receives over 16K bookings within first week of launch

Revolt Motors' RV1 and RV1+ electric motorcycle have achieved over 16,000 bookings within a week of its launch.

Launched on September 17 by Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, the RV1 and its premium variant RV1+ are being offered at an introductory price of Rs 84,990 and Rs 99,990, respectively.

Anjali Rattan, chairperson, RattanIndia

Enterprises Limited, said, "We are deeply humbled by the unprecedented demand for the RV1. This monumental response not only strengthens our resolve but inspires us to continue leading the charge in India's electric-mobility revolution. The RV1 was designed with the everyday Indian commuter in mind and to witness its acceptance at such a massive scale within a week is both thrilling and rewarding."

SpiceJet raises Rs 3K-crore via QIP



Mumbai

Domestic carrier SpiceJet on Monday said it has raised Rs 3,000 crore through a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP).

The QIP, which opened on September 16 and closed on September 18, received an overwhelming response, SpiceJet

said in a statement.

The carrier said it would also receive an additional Rs 736 crore from the previous funding round. The newly-raised capital would be used to operationalise grounded fleet, acquire planes, invest in technology and expand into new markets, the airline said.

Buffer stock sale upped to control onion prices after export duty removal

New Delhi

The government has intensified its efforts to check onion prices by stepping up the sale of buffer stock in wholesale markets, following a spike in retail prices after the recent removal of export duty.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare on Monday said the Centre had begun offloading onions from its buffer stock in wholesale markets of Delhi and other key cities, with plans to expand subsidised retail sales nationwide.

"We anticipated a price surge after lifting the export duty. With our 4.7 lakh tonne buffer stock and increased kharif sowing area, we expect to keep onion prices in

check," Khare told mediapersons.

The government plans to increase retail sales of onions at

in Mumbai and Chennai have reached Rs 58 and Rs 60 per kg, respectively.



Since September 5, the government has been selling onions at Rs 35 per kg through mobile vans and outlets of NCCF and NAFED in Delhi and other state capitals.

Khare expressed optimism about the upcoming kharif onion crop, citing significantly higher acreage compared to last year. "Arrivals will begin next month, and we foresee no production concerns," she said.

The secretary also addressed other commodity prices.

On edible oils, she acknowledged a price rise following recent import duty hikes, explaining the move was to protect domestic farmers.

a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg across India, focusing on cities where prices exceed the national average.

Official data showed retail onion price in Delhi at Rs 55 per kg on September 22, up from Rs 38 per kg a year ago. Prices

Vodafone Idea awards Rs 30k crore contracts to Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung for 4G, 5G gear supply

Mumbai

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

It is the largest deal awarded by any Indian telecom operator during this year.

The deal also marks the first step towards the roll-out of the company's three-year capex (capital expenditure) plan of about USD 6.6 billion or Rs 55,000 crore announced earlier.

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

The supplies against these new long-term awards will start in the coming quarter.

The top priority for the company is to expand the 4G coverage to 1.2 billion Indians, the statement said.

VIL CEO Akshaya Moondra said that the company has started the investment cycle and it is on the journey of VIL 2.0.

"From hereon, VIL will stage a smart turnaround to effectively participate in the

industry growth opportunities. Nokia and Ericsson have been our partners since our inception and this marks another milestone in that continuing partnership. We are pleased to start our new partnership with Samsung. We look forward to work closely with all our partners as we move into the 5G era," Moondra said.



VIL was the biggest telecom operator formed with the merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular in August 2018 with a mobile subscriber base of 40.8 crore. With continuous decline in the subscriber, VIL is now left with 21.5 crore mobile services subscribers as per latest data released by telecom regulator Trai.

VIL had recently raised Rs 24,000 crore through sale of equity and will fund the

capital expenditure from the latest capital.

The capex is currently being funded out of the equity raise. For the long-term capex, the company is in advanced stage of discussions with its existing and new lenders to tie up Rs 25,000 crore of funds and Rs 10,000 crore of non-fund-based facilities.

VIL said that it has completed techno economic evaluation of the company's long-term projections by an independent third party.

The report has been submitted to all the banks and financial institutions basis which the banks will now progress with their internal evaluation and approval processes.

VIL in the last auction had acquired spectrum worth Rs 3,500 crore to increase

its network capacity.

The company executed some quick-win capex for the deployment of more spectrum on existing sites and the roll-out of some new sites.

VIL said that the small capex roll-out boosted its network capacity by about 15 per cent and an increase in population coverage by 16 million by end September, 2024.

The company claimed that it has started witnessing an improvement in customer experience in select geographies where these roll-outs have been completed.

VIL holds a large spectrum portfolio including mid-band 5G spectrum in 17 circles and millimetreWave 5G spectrum in 16 circles.

After the Rs 24,000 crore fundraise, including Rs 18,000 crore through a follow-on offer, the company was reeling under the debt of around Rs 2.14 lakh crore.

The company had payment obligations of Rs 2,09,520 crore towards the government as of June 30, 2024, which included the deferred spectrum payment obligations and adjusted gross revenue liability.

Post Rs 24,000 crore fundraise, VIL promoters Aditya Birla Group and Vodafone hold 37.3 per cent and the government 23.2 per cent stake in the company.

India's Defence Diplomacy: A Strategic Response to China in the Modi Years

On 17 September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping embarked on his inaugural visit to India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first term. Only a week earlier, more than 200 soldiers from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) trespassed into Indian territory in the Chumar sector of Eastern Ladakh. These PLA personnel arrived equipped with cranes and bulldozers, to construct roads on the Indian side and deploy surveillance cameras. The military standoff soon escalated, casting a shadow over Xi's state visit to India. It marked Modi's first encounter with China's offensive deterrence.

Throughout the past decade, India-China relations have experienced a series of setbacks that have compelled India to explore avenues in its military diplomacy that would enhance deterrence. Initially cautious, this approach aimed to foster a *modus vivendi* with China. However, major bilateral episodes—notably the Doklam standoff and the Galwan incident—pushed India to adopt a proactive approach against China. Utilising two regional case studies, this brief demonstrates India's success in the last decade in projecting capability, credibility, and communication—the three essential aspects of effective deterrence against China.

Malabar Naval Exercises and Defence Diplomacy

The Chumar incident was followed in 2014 by two Chinese attack submarines, including a nuclear-powered one, being dispatched to the Indian Ocean as part of the Chinese Navy's flotilla. The submarines docked at a Sri Lankan port for refuelling and resupply, posing potential security risks to the peninsula. The Modi government recognised the immediate imperative of devising regional strategies in response to such manoeuvres by the Chinese military. The response involved bolstering its defence diplomacy with key stakeholders in South Asia and Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region.

In this context, the Malabar naval exercises emerged as a prominent strategy. In 2015, India and the US agreed to incorporate Japan as a permanent participant in these exercises. This marked a significant step towards consolidating the naval capabilities of three major navies in the Eastern Hemisphere, all of which have encountered challenges in their relations with China. In 2020, the group expanded and included Australia as the fourth member. The Malabar exercises have provided the participating

nations with a shared platform for exchanging doctrines, refining training skills, and enhancing operational coordination to bolster regional security.

The scope of the exercise has broadened to encompass carrier-strike group operations, maritime patrol and reconnaissance operations, surface and anti-submarine warfare, helicopter cross-deck operations, and underway replenishment. Over the past decade, these exercises have been conducted in various regions and countries, including the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, Philippine Sea, East China Sea, Guam, Japan, and the South Pacific Ocean. Today, the Malabar exercises have become the foremost naval diplomacy tool in Asia.

As anticipated, the Chinese government is critical of the increasing naval cooperation among democracies in the region. India's collaboration with US forces within the Indo-Pacific framework and its emphasis on enhancing maritime domain awareness have drawn condemnation. China is particularly angered by India's scrutiny of Chinese vessels transporting dual-use goods to Pakistan, resulting in their subsequent seizure by India.

Furthermore, the Malabar exercises have helped India procure advanced sensors and weapon systems from the US and Japan. These arms sales and the resulting familiarity with each other's military capabilities and interoperability have the potential to undermine any Chinese aspirations for regional hegemony in Asia. Therefore, the Malabar exercises are an ideal defence diplomacy initiative for responding to and deterring China.

Defence Diplomacy with Southeast Asian States

India's commercial and strategic interests and commitment to freedom of navigation are hinged on maintaining stability in the South China Sea and the Western Pacific. Given China's coercive tactics and expansionist policies, there is a risk of jeopardising Indian interests and undermining the rules-based order in the region. Consequently, Indian defence diplomacy has fostered deeper partnerships with key Southeast Asian states; countries like Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines have strengthened their ties with India, diversifying their strategic options and hedging against Chinese influence.

In November 2015, Singapore finalised a Defence Cooperation Agreement, followed by the inaugural Defence Minister's

Dialogue in June 2016. Subsequently, in November 2017, India and Singapore sealed a naval cooperation agreement to bolster maritime security, mutual logistics support, and joint exercises. Noteworthy features of this pact included temporary deployment from each other's facilities and streamlined access to Singapore's port for refuelling and berthing. This accord extended the operational reach of the Indian Navy east of the Malacca Strait and strengthened military ties with multiple Southeast Asian states. The comprehensive partnership includes crucial agreements on Submarine Rescue Support, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and cyber security.

Furthermore, Vietnam and the Philippines have intensified their defence collaboration with India under Modi. Vietnam and India elevated their military relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016, holding their inaugural security dialogue in 2018. Their Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity, and People, established in 2020, was followed by a similar agreement in 2022, facilitating mutual logistics support; it was the first such accord that Vietnam has signed with any country.

In recent years, China's persistent encroachment into Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and harassment of the latter's oil and gas operations have sparked disputes. For instance, Chinese forces destroyed nearly one hundred Vietnamese boats between 2014 and 2022. The ongoing Chinese intimidation has drawn Vietnam closer to India, seeking political and military support. Despite Beijing's warnings, the Indian government consistently backs these Southeast Asian states against China on international platforms. Indeed, since 2020, India's rhetoric regarding Chinese coercion in the South China Sea has toughened, complemented by naval deployments in the region.

Furthermore, India has provided material support to Vietnam. It has extended a US\$100-million credit line to Vietnam to procure 12 patrol vessels from Larsen and Toubro Shipyard in Chennai. Moreover, India presented a missile corvette, INS Kirpan, to the Vietnamese Navy in June 2023. There are also ongoing considerations regarding the potential sale of BrahMos missiles to Vietnam. Vietnam has emerged as a cornerstone of Indian defence diplomacy in Southeast Asia and constitutes a pillar of India's 'Act East' policy

and an anchor in India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

The Philippines, for its part, has emerged as a crucial partner for the Indian armed forces since 2016, as well as an export destination for defence goods. Historically, India-Philippines relations were among the least developed in the region, with previous Philippine governments primarily focused on balancing relations between the US and China. However, former President Rodrigo Duterte's visible antipathy towards the US and concerns about China prompted him to seek defence partnerships in the region, elevating the prominence of Indian defence diplomacy in the Philippines' security framework.

Modi's attendance at the ASEAN and East Asia Summits in Manila in 2017, and Duterte's subsequent visit to New Delhi in 2018, laid the groundwork for deeper defence collaboration. Under Duterte and his successor President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr., bilateral defence ties have flourished, with Indian naval warships frequently visiting Philippine ports and the two navies conducting joint exercises.

Further, the Indian government, for the first time, agreed to sell three batteries of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippine Marine Corps. At the fourth Philippines-India Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting in March 2023, India also agreed to post a defence attaché in Manila to oversee defence and security affairs. Additionally, training, intelligence sharing, cybersecurity, maritime domain awareness, and white shipping information exchanges have commenced. The bilateral relationship appears to be evolving into a defining regional partnership, serving their mutual interests, particularly concerning China.

Chinese Perception of Indian Military Diplomacy

The Chinese defence discourse frequently highlights shifts in India's foreign strategy since Modi came to power, emphasising improvements in India's military relations with Japan, the US, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Australia. India's expanding interests in the South China Sea and its use of related disputes to counter Chinese actions along the border have gained attention. Following the Galwan incident, China believes that Indian activity in the South China Sea region has surged, restricting China's resource investment along its Indian border.

Furthermore, according to China, India perceives the Indian Ocean as its strategic domain, potentially leading to an India-centric regional order through the control of key maritime channels. India is also competing with China as a development model in the Global South and is seeking to emerge as a leading force in maintaining the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific through robust military diplomacy. With the completion of the BrahMos missile sale to the Philippines, China is apprehensive that India will soon become one of the primary sources of weapon supplies for countries in Southeast Asia.

Lessons and Trends

India has historically refrained from commenting on Chinese coercive and expansionist actions in Asia, but this has changed in recent years. India has begun to assertively oppose such policies. India's vocal opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative, support for the 2016 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea judgement against China's 'Nine-Dash Line' in the South China Sea, emphasis on a rules-based order, and advocacy for a free and open Indo-Pacific have bolstered democratic responses to China.

In addition, India's defence trade trajectory is set to witness growth in the coming decade. Indian weapons platforms have gradually gained recognition for their performance, contrasting with perceptions of subpar quality associated with Chinese defence goods. Consequently, India is poised to emerge as a major supplier of defence goods to countries on China's periphery, shaping long-term strategic partnerships and serving as a strategic response to China in the region.

Finally, the increasing frequency of joint military exercises, exchange programmes for officials in military training establishments, regular high-level visits, and the conclusion of numerous bilateral defence agreements have collectively reshaped India's image as a power in the Eastern Hemisphere. India's rising profile serves as a counterbalance to potential Chinese hegemony in the region, given its substantial size, population, economy, military, and diplomatic capabilities. Consequently, India's military diplomacy is expected to intensify further, posing challenges to China's strategic position in the region.

Antibiotic pollution in a warming world

Following the World War II, when industrially produced antibiotics emerged, our quality of life and life expectancy substantially improved. A world in awe of the new cure that could beat the once-fatal infection never suspected that bacteria could outsmart the very drugs designed to kill them. As the author of *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson aptly puts it: "Because we humans are big and clever enough to produce and utilise antibiotics and disinfectants, it is easy to convince ourselves that we have banished bacteria to the fringes of existence. Don't you believe it. Bacteria may not build cities or have interesting social lives, but they will be here when the Sun explodes. This is their planet, and we are on it only because they allow us to be."

Rising temperatures allow the increased contamination of our water systems by antibiotic residues, feeding the surge in resistant "superbugs"—bacteria which common medical treatments cannot kill.

With the grim reality of climate change today, society faces an unprecedented juncture of Antibiotic Pollution combined with Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Rising temperatures allow the increased contamination of our water systems by antibiotic residues, feeding the surge in resistant "superbugs"—bacteria which common medical treatments cannot kill. A recently published study in the *Lancet* estimates that more than 39 million deaths will occur due to antibiotic-resistant infections between now and the year 2050. AMR-related deaths are projected to rise by nearly 70 percent by 2050, and South Asia, which includes India, is expected to be the most hit. 11.8 million deaths would likely be attributed to resistant infections over the next 25 years in South Asia. The consequences of inaction could be disastrous, where decades of medical progress could be undone and put public health in jeopardy on a scale never before seen.

The invisible pathways of pollution

Antibiotic pollution influences the environment through several key paths, each playing a sizable role in the spread of AMR.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing: India, one of the world's largest producers of antibiotics, accounts for more than 20 percent of the world's generic drugs. But this kind of positioning comes at a cost. The effluents discharged from the manufacturing units,

like in industrial belts such as Patancheru-Bollaram industrial estate in Hyderabad, have been found to carry high concentrations of antibiotics like Ciprofloxacin, Ofloxacin, and Azithromycin, at levels thousands of times higher than what is deemed safe. A study estimated the antibiotic residue concentrations in certain Indian rivers, namely the Yamuna and Gomti, to be 2-5 times higher than the limits proposed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.

Even with wastewater



treatment systems installed, systems usually fail to effectively filter out these antibiotic residues. The Indian pharmaceutical industry, valued at around US\$50 billion, has yet to fully execute stricter wastewater management practices. Improved surveillance is a significant component of the new World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on wastewater management and limiting antibiotic pollution from manufacturing. India is far from the mark as local industries continue to discharge untreated toxic waste into nearby water bodies.

Improved surveillance is a significant component of the new World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on wastewater management and limiting antibiotic pollution from manufacturing.

Agriculture and livestock: Increased temperatures and changing disease patterns in agriculture have spurred overuse in livestock and crop production. A major share of antibiotics is consumed by livestock farming in India, with most farmers using antibiotics to promote the growth of their animals. This practice causes significant quantities to seep into the soil and find their way into nearby water bodies. A 2021 study by the Indian Council of Agricultural

Research noted AMR in *E. coli* and other bacterial samples taken from livestock and shrimps in 12 states. The samples had resistance levels higher in regions where antibiotics were used extensively.

Aquaculture: Aquaculture in India, particularly within shrimp farms along the coastal regions, is highly dependent on antibiotics as infections are too common due to warmer water temperatures. A 2022 study detected Norfloxacin in the waters of the Zuari river (Goa). The concentrations were higher

than the WHO recommended limits. With water temperatures rising, the demand for antibiotics also continues to rise. This not only affects marine ecosystems but also poses a risk to public health.

Climate change as a pollution multiplier

Climate change also means that the risks posed by antibiotic pollution are amplified, doubling the need for such urgent action. More flooding due to increasing global temperatures sends antibiotic residues derived from pharmaceutical plants, agricultural lands, and urban areas into rivers and lakes. An example to understand this would be to look at monsoon floods this year, the spillover from urban sewage systems, which carry waste containing antibiotics, contaminate local water bodies and create an environment conducive to the amplification of bacteria that were resistant to those antibiotics. A study finds that over 85 percent of Indian districts are exposed to extreme climate events such as floods, thereby placing more ecosystems at risk of contamination from pollution with antibiotics.

Simultaneously, in northern India and much of the country, the increasing intensity of drought is concentrating pollutants (with evaporation),

including antibiotic residues, in shrinking water bodies such as local lakes. This creates a "perfect storm" for bacteria to develop resistance.

The high temperatures make it possible for bacteria to exchange genes, i.e. horizontal gene transfer, thus spreading the genes carrying antibiotic resistance between additional bacterial strains.

In addition to this, a warming climate directly drives the proliferation of bacteria. Elevated temperatures allow bacteria little time to multiply; in this case, chances of developing resistance increase. The high temperatures make it possible for bacteria to exchange genes, i.e., horizontal gene transfer, thus spreading the genes carrying antibiotic resistance between additional bacterial strains. One 2020 article reports that a 10°C temperature increase predicts an added ~5 percent rise in the antibiotic resistance rate of common pathogens like *E. coli* and *S. aureus*. In India, with a 0.7°C increment in temperature compared to that in 1901, the accelerated growth of bacteria is contributing to the vicious cycle of escalating antibiotic use and resistance.

AMR: A global and Indian public health crisis

It is staggering to realize that drug-resistant infections kill approximately 1.27 million every year, and will rise by 10 million every year by 2050 if rapid action is not taken. Projections estimate that AMR will cause a death toll of 2 million annually in India by 2050 due to its heavy use in health care and agriculture.

India is at the centre of this emerging crisis. With ~1.4 billion people and the world's highest use of antibiotics, it has very particular challenges with both use and pollution. Resistance to antibiotics accounted for an estimated more than 56,000 neonatal deaths in India in 2019 alone, according to an analysis published in *The Lancet Microbe*. Antibiotic misuse has been rendered possible in light of prevalent over-the-counter availability and lax regulations in human and veterinary medicine.

With WHO support, India drew up the National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR) in 2017, which targets improvement in regulation, education, and surveillance.

The healthcare systems are overworked in rural areas, where a course of antibiotics is often used as a quick fix for most general ailments, whether required

or not. With WHO support, India drew up the National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR) in 2017, which targets improvement in regulation, education, and surveillance. Yet, the implementation has been sluggish, and the country remains a global hotspot for AMR.

Policy and solutions: What needs to change

Antibiotic pollution requires more than just awareness; it needs stringent regulatory reform. India, as one of the world's largest antibiotic producers, needs to take greater responsibility for the environmental consequences of this industry. It needs stricter regulations that will offer better governance in terms of disposing of antibiotic waste, with mechanisms to ensure compliance.

According to the WHO 2024 guidelines on wastewater management, monitoring the antibiotic residues in manufacturing effluents is vital. The broad plan for tackling AMR is given in India's NAP-AMR, but it needs to go further to the local level. Needless to say, stricter regulations are needed concerning the disposal of pharmaceutical waste and the improvement of standards for the treatment of wastewater to cope better with the residues of antibiotics. The country should also strengthen its agriculture by advocating antibiotic stewardship and Climate Smart Agriculture to reduce overdependence on antibiotics.

India, along with major antibiotic producers like China, must work within global frameworks to enforce limits on pharmaceutical waste. Partnerships between countries, international organisations like WHO, and global industries are vital to stem the tide of antibiotic pollution.

Urgency in action

The time to take action on antibiotic pollution is now. Still, with climate change gathering at an accelerated pace, the dispersal of antibiotics in the environment will continue to worsen. The consequences of inaction are dire: millions of lives are at risk, and modern medicine itself could be undermined. This calls for coordination by governments, industries, and the community to reduce antibiotic pollution by bringing in stricter regulations. It is only through such collective action that the dual crises of climate change and antimicrobial resistance can be mitigated.

Mauritius at a crossroads: Navigating power shifts in the Western Indian Ocean

The global order is going through a discernible transition, as evidenced by the waning US hegemony and the ascent of China and other middle-power countries, leaving the world in flux. In this rapidly changing world order, the political and security landscape of the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR) has witnessed drastic transformation. Located off the coast of southeast Africa, WIOR is home to some of the world's busiest International Shipping Lines (ISL), transporting most international freight and container traffic. The WIOR is also abundant in natural resources. A 2017 World Wide Fund (WWF) report estimates that the region's natural resources are worth US\$ 333.8 billion.

In the centre of WIOR lies the small, densely populated island nation of the Republic of Mauritius. Home to more than a million people, the country comprises a group of islands with a 1.9 million square km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and an additional 396,000 square km marine area covered by a Joint Management Agreement (JMA) with the Seychelles. The Republic comprises two main islands, Mauritius and Rodrigues, along with other offshore islands such as Agalega and St. Brandon.

The WIOR is also abundant in natural resources. A 2017 World Wide Fund (WWF) report estimates that the region's natural resources are worth US\$ 333.8 billion.

In the security dimension, Mauritius evokes an intriguing perspective—a small island state operating in a dynamic security environment between the two major continents of Asia and Africa. This study examines the critical security issues Mauritius is experiencing. It will contend that the leading cause of these security issues is the growing rivalry between great powers within its borders. It elaborates on possibilities for establishing the agenda for collaboration and offers a comprehensive assessment of Mauritius's position within the WIOR security milieu.

Salience of Mauritius

Mauritius is strategically significant because of its proximity to critical ISLs. Consequently, major power interests are growing in the region, with rivalries

between the US and China and India and China becoming more prominent. Security concerns, geoeconomic interests, and capacity-building primarily drive these rivalries. According to an Interpol report, international crimes such as piracy, money laundering, drug trafficking, and human trafficking also grew more intense in recent times.

The sovereignty dispute over Chagos and the question of Agaléga further complicate this equation. In its bid to navigate a way out of these murky waters, Mauritius has held two editions of the

of underwater resources, maritime patrol and surveillance, satellite remote sensing, reef conservation and marine biodiversity, marine pollution, freedom of navigation and anti-piracy, Coast Guard capacity-building, and other matters of shared interest. Oil spill control, maritime disaster response, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change are all pressing concerns for Mauritius and other tiny island nations in the region.

International powerplay

The region has become a theatre of powerplay as numerous countries project their power there. South Africa is the powerhouse of the WIO region. It has long been considered a security supplier to most WIO countries and a net security provider in the southwest Indian Ocean. With its colonial past and continued ongoing ties in the region, France has historically been the dominant nation among all the island nations. The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), a regional bloc of five island nations in the area, was established by France in 1982.

Despite its geographic distance, India has long regarded the West Indian Ocean region as a maritime neighbour. India was recently granted observer status within the IOC. In the WIO region, India is joining France and other European partners to prevent terrorism, especially in the Mozambican channel. India is set to play an even bigger role as it completed a new jetty and airstrip at Agalega Island.

Meanwhile, Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean is steadily increasing. Chinese warships have been policing the Indian Ocean since 2008, and by 2017, China already had a fully operational military base in Djibouti, hosting 400 marines. It is also allegedly planning multiple other bases including in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Seychelles, and Comoros. China is also present in Mauritius because of private investments made by telecom giant Huawei. Recently Huawei constructed a 700 km underwater cable for high-speed internet connecting Rodrigues, the second-largest island in Mauritius, known as Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine Cable

System (MARS). Additionally, Beijing gave the Mauritius telecom company a US\$350 million loan for the Mauritius Safe City project (MSCP).

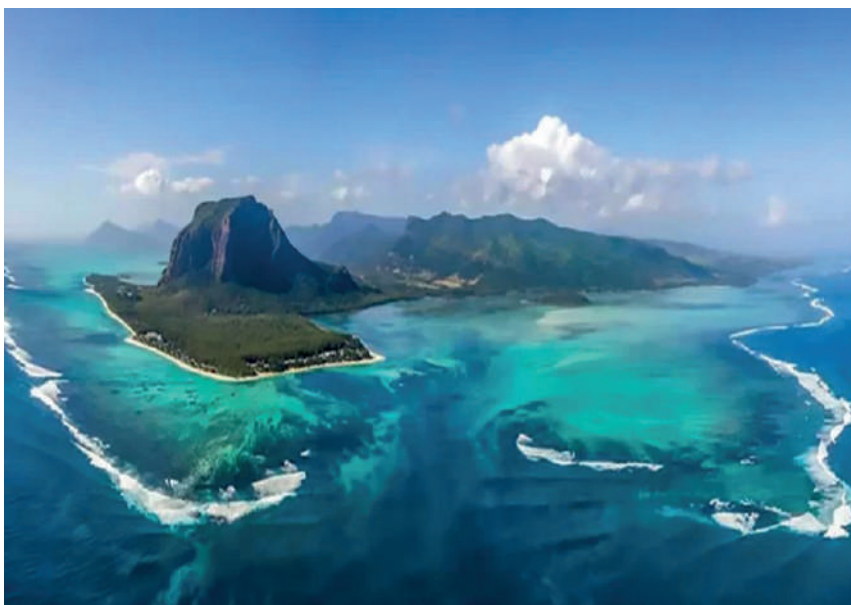
It will be interesting to see how Mauritius plays these multiple external actors with their vested interest in fulfilling its own objectives and preventing any major conflict between these global powers.

The US is also increasing its presence to fend off growing Chinese penetration and preserve its influence in the region. Due largely to its security concerns, Australia has taken an active role in the WIO. However, as the country shifts its focus to regions closer to home, such as the Pacific, the Australian Navy's influence is progressively dwindling in WIOR. However, given their changing interests, Australia may later decide to reevaluate its commitments in the region. Going forward, it will be interesting to see how Mauritius plays these multiple external actors with their vested interest in fulfilling its own objectives and preventing any major conflict between these global powers.

Conclusion

While assessing the security and development challenges of African Small Island States, the outstanding battle to influence Mauritius and its surrounding region must be considered. The archipelago's advantageous geostrategic location, political stability, and sound governance are contributing to its attractiveness. Since gaining independence, the nation has excelled at preserving internal peace and stability. No wonder international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank are keen to invest in Mauritius.

In the WIOR, Mauritius is taking the lead as a significant player in Indian Ocean geopolitics. The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) have headquarters in Mauritius. Despite being a tiny island nation, Mauritius aims to bring together the diverse perspectives of the WIOR's littoral and non-littoral governments. It hopes to influence the Indo-Pacific conversation positively by participating in these international organisations. As major international parties look for new methods to engage with Mauritius and influence its political leadership, there may be some fascinating developments in Mauritius diplomacy in the upcoming year.



Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security, emphasising the security of the Southwest Indian Ocean.

Indeed, Mauritius's capacity to assume a more assertive role may be restricted to its involvement in international institutions as a small island state. Yet, it has implemented some specific proactive measures to improve the security situation in WIOR. Mauritius acknowledges the value of peace, stability, and prosperity of WIOR towards an open, free, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. To maximise freight and reduce expenses in the region, Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth advocated for a collective regional maritime shipping line.

Oil spill control, maritime disaster response, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change are all pressing concerns for Mauritius and other tiny island nations in the region.

Mauritius frequently participates in diverse discussion platforms to foster effective communication and productive collaboration. These discussions cover topics such as the discovery and exploitation

Caring for the elderly: Need for a sensitive approach

Globally, the fear of overpopulation has been replaced by concerns about ageing societies. Declining fertility rates and increasing longevity between 1970 and 2020 have made ageing the dominant global demographic trend. Population alarmists of the 1970s often presented famines, environmental degradation, and food shortages as inevitable consequences of overpopulation and birth control, and population stabilisation efforts often disregarded the basic human rights of people in developing countries. While the latest demographic trend of a growing elderly population has not been met with

the same degree of alarmism, the elderly are often presented as a problem due to higher health costs, care requirements, and their lack of productive potential. Some scholars like David Bloom and Leo Zucker have even described ageing as the “real population bomb”. This view of the elderly population as an economic and social burden not only hurts the dignity of

older persons but may also be untrue in many contexts, particularly in several developing countries where the informal sector dominates the economy and elders provide crucial unpaid services to their families and communities like agriculture, childcare, fetching water, social work through religious institutions, organising religious functions, etc.

Experts have often argued that India's growing youth population and low-dependency ratio is an economic asset (also known as demographic dividend), especially at a time when the developed world is facing labour shortages. Notwithstanding its huge youth population which is likely to peak in 2041, the country is also witnessing a growing population of senior citizens i.e. people above the age of 60. According to Census 2011, India had about 103 million elderly citizens (more than the total population of countries like the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, and France) and they accounted for about 8.6 percent of the total Indian population. As per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI), the share of the elderly population is projected to reach 19.5 percent (nearly 355 million persons in absolute

numbers) of the total population by 2050. States like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra already have a much higher share of the elderly population at 19.6 percent, 16.5 percent, 16.4 percent, and 15.2 percent respectively.

This view of the elderly population as an economic and social burden not only hurts the dignity of older persons but may also be untrue in many contexts, particularly in several developing countries where the informal sector dominates the economy

The rising elderly population has led to heightened concerns about India's preparedness and the burden on its



exchequer. However, Indian policymakers must keep in mind the country's socio-economic reality while making policies for the elderly. The first and foremost question is the relevance of concepts like the dependency ratio (the ratio of persons 60 years and above to the working-age population 15-59 years) in the Indian context. On the one hand, the high youth unemployment rate is preventing the country from reaping the demographic dividend, on the other hand, everybody above 60 years is not exactly dependent.

A small but growing section of highly educated professionals above 60 years are re-entering the labour force as consultants and advisers. However, a significantly high proportion of India's elderly citizens are too poor to ever retire. They continue to work in the informal sector and often perform very labour-intensive jobs like pulling cycle rickshaws and lifting heavy weights. The LASI Study finds that half of the elderly male population is currently working. While the figure for elderly women is lower at 22 percent, it could be because of an underestimation of women's care work and unpaid work in agriculture. While the definition of work used in the LASI study is relatively broad, it does not

include community services which are particularly important in the Indian context. Many elderly persons are involved in the provision of crucial social services (also known as 'sewa' in Hindi) through religious organisations like temples, gurudwaras etc. Such services contribute to the welfare of ordinary citizens, promote social cohesion, and provide a sense of identity in the community. In other words, the notion that all citizens above the age of 60 are unproductive dependents, is not true.

Old women bear special mention because unlike the overall sex ratio, which is skewed in favour of men, sex ratio at 60 years and above is skewed in favour of women at 1,065 females per 1000 males. About 68.3 percent of women between 60-75 years of age and 73.3 percent of women above 75 years have never been to school while only 8 percent have completed primary school. Also, a substantial section of elderly women, particularly rural women have no source of income and are completely financially dependent on their families. Old women, particularly widows, also experience discrimination. About 70 percent of the currently working elderly women

are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The economic contribution of elderly women through care work is often underestimated. Elderly women make critical contributions to their families through their care work, particularly for their grandchildren, and also other elderly members of the household. A recent report by Age International estimated that globally, old women perform 4.3 hours of domestic work and unpaid care work. The report further calls them a 'hidden workforce'.

Although, the family is regarded as the main institution responsible for the care of older persons in India, household incomes in India are very low and taking care of the elderly is often a huge financial burden for the families.

Although, the family is regarded as the main institution responsible for the care of older persons in India, household incomes in India are very low. As such, taking care of the elderly is often a huge financial burden for the families. Governments, both the centre and the states, have made some efforts to address the concerns of the senior citizens in recent years. However, the bulk of the elderly population does not benefit from many of the existing benefits provided

by the government due to poor awareness about government schemes and inability to access them.

A significantly large share of the elderly population in India is severely economically disadvantaged. The elderly is often paid less than persons aged between 45-59 years. The mean monthly earnings of elderly workers is just about INR 6,670. The annual per capita income and the monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) of households with at least one elderly person is also quite low at INR 44,901 and INR 2,948 respectively. Therefore, policies directed towards the elderly should be tied with poverty alleviation, nutrition, and health schemes. While participation in economic activities contributes to well-being, much of it is distress-driven and exploitative in the context of the elderly from low-income households. Therefore, a universal pension for the elderly is the most effective way to help India's senior citizens and even low-income households. It will provide income security to the elderly protect them during sickness, and improve their bargaining power in the labour market.

Greater investments are also needed in the health and re-skilling of older persons. The urban elite has access to better health facilities but the bulk of India's elderly, particularly in rural areas, lack access to adequate health facilities. Therefore, primary health centres should be strengthened and the country's health policy should turn its attention to geriatric care. India's current healthcare model focuses on individual diseases as opposed to a comprehensive elderly healthcare programme akin to maternal and child health. The country also needs to invest in the training of healthcare professionals. However, rising health expenditure should not be viewed as a drain of resources. Rather investments in the health sector can be a driver of growth and create employment opportunities for the younger population. As mentioned above, many senior citizens are qualified and are already making important economic contributions in post-retirement vocations. If access to learning opportunities, particularly newer skills and digital technologies can be imparted, then more senior citizens can become financially independent and find a sense of purpose in life.

In a nutshell, India needs sensitive planning for this fast growing population cohort rather than fear-mongering over a natural demographic transition and off-course pejorative phrases like 'new population time bomb' must be shunned completely.

Urmila Matondkar Files For Divorce From Mohsin Akhtar Mir: Report



New Delhi

Actor Urmila Matondkar has filed for divorce from businessman-model Mohsin Akhtar Mir, Hindustan Times reported. Urmila Matondkar and Mohsin Akhtar Mir were married for eight years. Hindustan Times quoted a source close to the couple as saying, "After careful consideration, Urmila has decided to call it quits on her marriage with Mohsin. She has already filed for divorce in court. While the reason behind the separation is still not known, the divorce isn't happening on mutual terms."

Urmila Matondkar and Mohsin Akhtar Mir got married on February 4, 2016 in an intimate ceremony. The wedding took place at the actress' residence in Mumbai and was attended by only close friends and family members. Mohsin and Urmila first met each other at designer Manish

Malhotra's niece's wedding in 2014.

Urmila Matondkar featured as a child actor in Shekhar Kapur's adaptation of the 1980 Erich Segal novel *Man, Woman and Child*, which was titled *Masoom*. She featured in multiple hits in the Nineties. Her famous film credits include *Rangeela*, *Judai*, *Satya*, *Mast*, *Khoobsurat*, *Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya* *Bhoot* and *Ek Hasina Thi* among others. Urmila, who has been away from the silver screen, had last appeared in a 2014 Marathi film named *Ajoba*. She also had a special appearance in the song *Bewafa Beauty* from the 2018 film *Blackmail*.

Mohsin Akhtar Mir has also been a part of a few projects including *It's A Man's World*, *Luck By Chance*, *Mumbai Mast Kallander* and *B.A. Pass*, to name a few.

Alia Bhatt dazzles at Paris Fashion Week debut; Aishwarya shines too



Bollywood star Alia Bhatt looked drop-dead-gorgeous as she made her Paris Fashion Week debut in a creation by ace couturier Gaurav Gupta. The actress sauntered on the ramp along with American star Andie MacDowell during the show *Walk Your Worth* at Palais Garnier. She wore a metal-cast silver breastplate paired with black velvet flared pants from the designer's 2024 couture collection, *Arunodaya*. Gupta, who has styled renowned global head-turners, took to Instagram and wrote, "@

aliaabhatt in custom Gaurav Gupta Couture for her runway debut at the L'Oréal Paris — Le Défilé show."

Gupta's list of celebrities, who have sported his creations, include names such as Beyonce, Paris Hilton, Mindy Kaling, Angela Bassett, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Kriti Sanon, Janhvi Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Shakira, Jenna Ortega, Jr Ntr. Bebe Rexha, Sharon Stone, Jeena Ortega, Sharon Stone, Ashanti, Luis Fonsi, Lizzo, Kylie Minogue, Megan Thee Stallion and



Sawetie. With her captivating appearance at Paris Fashion Week, Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan once again proved why she is called Queen of Ramps. Dressed in a balloon hem-red dress, the Jodhaa Akbar star let her hair down and added a pop of colour to her look with a bold red lip shade. She walked the runway with utmost confidence and grace, representing L'Oreal Paris. Her walk became more special when she greeted the French audience with a namaste.

Masaba reveals why mom Neena Gupta didn't allow her to become an actor

Leading fashion designer Masaba Gupta, who ventured into acting with her streaming show 'Masaba Masaba', has shared that her mom, the veteran actress Neena Gupta, dissuaded her from taking up the profession of acting early in her daughter's career.

She shared the reason behind her mom's thought process stating that the market forces would put her in a box as an actress as the industry used to function differently back in time.

In a podcast 'BiEauty Banter' hosted by Queenie Singh, Masaba said, "She didn't allow me to be an actor. Okay. Which is

why, so I remember there's Anupam Kher's acting school in Mumbai. They share a wall with SNDT College. And I said, I want to go and study acting because I want to be an actor. And she said, don't even think about it. You know, you have this look which is very artsy, international, and almost not Indian. You'll get put in a box. And the industry at the time was very different."

The designer-actress further mentioned, "So she



said, you'll be frustrated. Do something that you have to apply your brain to, that you can do for life. And she said, oh, there's SNDT right there. Do you want to go give it a shot? The admissions were open. I went there and I gave my, I put in my paper, filled a form. And my test grade marks were all they needed to take that form in. So, luckily they were good and they took it in. They said, yeah, come and do the entrance exam in a week."

Masaba also spoke about how nepotism is not just limited to the film industry, and is there in every industry or profession.

She said, "Nepotism exists in every industry. Lawyer's son becomes a lawyer. Doctor's son becomes a doctor. And their father recommends them. That is the way of the world. Not just in India, but everywhere. Yes, sometimes I think opportunities are misplaced because of nepotism in Bollywood".

"But it's the way of the world. It's just that it's such a public industry that you're able to see it. Nepotism happens everywhere", she added.

Boman Irani feted with South Asian Film Association award for his directorial debut 'The Mehta Boys'



Mumbai

Actor Boman Irani, whose directorial debut 'The Mehta Boys' received standing ovation at the Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF) recently, has been feted with the prestigious South Asian Film Association award for his directorial debut.

The award recognises his exceptional talent and contribution to the world of cinema. In the presence of his family and co-actors, Boman Irani accepted the prestigious award with pure joy.

He took to social media to express his excitement, as he shared, 'Winning at the Chicago South Asian Film Festival for 'The Mehta Boys' feels like a dream come true''

He further mentioned, 'Having my family and cast by my side made it all the more special. To everyone who poured their heart and soul into this film but couldn't be here tonight—this win is for you! Your dedication and passion made this possible,

and I am deeply grateful. Here's to the entire team.'

'The Mehta Boys', which has garnered widespread critical acclaim and audience appreciation since its premier at CSAFF, is a heartwarming family drama. It showcases Boman Irani's ability to not only act but also direct with finesse.

The Mehta Boys' stars Boman Irani, Avinash Tiwary, Shreya Chaudhry and Puja Sarup in key roles. The film is written by Boman Irani along with Alexander Dinelaris Jr, who has co-written the Oscar-winning script for 'Birdman'. It is based on a father and son, who are at odds with each other, and find themselves compelled to spend 48 hours together. The film explores the complexities of a father-son relationship.

Boman Irani, who was last seen in 'Dunki', and Alexander Dinelaris Jr also conducted a masterclass on the writing process of the film recently at the film fest.

Laapataa Ladies finds way to Oscars, is official entry for Best Foreign Film

Mumbai

India's official entry to Oscars, more often than not, causes heartburn. But with Kiran Rao's heart-warming Laapataa Ladies becoming India's bet in the Best Foreign Film Category for Oscars 2025, the naysayers are likely to be on the same page as cine buffs.

Since its release in 2024, the film has emerged as the favourite of viewers and critics alike. In competition with big-time grossers like Animal and the much-feted ones like Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light, this joyous fare, busting patriarchy, was one of the 29 films in contention.

In a unanimous vote, it was selected by the Film Federation of India's 13-member committee, headed by Assamese director Jahnua Barua. Sceptics, however, will wonder why Kapadia's Cannes winner was snubbed, and might link the selection to one of Laapataa Ladies producers, Jio Studios — part of Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited.

Yet, one can't take away the beauty of Rao's second directorial film, which lies in its simplicity and felicity to drive home a message or two on women empowerment in a light-hearted manner. The film, with no big stars to boast of, earlier, was a limited box office success. But it got more attention and praise when it streamed on Netflix.



Its citation, "Indian women are a strange mixture of submission and dominance. Well-defined, powerful characters in one world, Laapataa Ladies (Hindi) captures this diversity perfectly, though in a semi-idyllic world and in a tongue-in-cheek way," is on point.

Set in 2001, can this socially relevant comedy, entertaining and meaningful at the same time, fetch India the elusive Oscar for the Best Foreign Film?

India's Oscar race, even in the best of times, has been restricted to a few rays of sunshine, like in 2023, when it won two Oscars for Best Song (Naatu Naatu) and Best Documentary Short (The Elephant Whisperers). Best Film honour, even in foreign language, however, is elusive.

Much has been written about why a country that produces hundreds of films each year can't make the Oscar cut, but there are no easy answers. Often, the reasons are convenient: not

picking the better film as official entry, or not having sufficient budget to publicise the film among the voting members of the Academy.

When smaller nations like South Korea pick up the Best Film Oscar, breaking the "one-inch-tall barrier of subtitles", as it did with Parasite in 2020, it makes it even harder to comprehend what exactly we lack.

For the moment, however, there is a reason to cheer. But, the applause can wait. The film's real chances will emerge only after it finds a place among the prestigious final five nominees — a list in which, incidentally, Rao's ex-husband Aamir Khan's Lagaan, too, figured way back in 2002. Based on an award-winning story by Biplab Goswamy, Laapataa Ladies is produced by Khan, and as someone who understands the drill, he can perhaps move things this time around.

Kerala HC dismisses actor Siddique's anticipatory bail plea in rape case

Kochi

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of Malayalam film actor Siddique in a rape case registered against him based on a complaint by an actress.

"Application is dismissed," Justice C S Dias said.

The detailed order giving reasons for rejecting the actor's plea is not yet available.

Siddique, who was booked for offences under sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation), has claimed in his plea that the complainant female actor, has subjected him to the "prolonged campaign

of harassment and false accusations since 2019".

In his anticipatory bail plea, he further claimed that she had repeatedly, for the past five years, made unsubstantiated and false claims of sexual misbehaviour and 'verbal sexual offers' by him in a theatre in 2016.

"But now she has raised totally contradictory allegation of more serious crime of rape at a different place in the same year," he had said in his plea.

Siddique had resigned from his post as general secretary of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) following the allegations against him.

Multiple FIRs have been registered

against many high-profile Malayalam film personalities following allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report.

The committee was constituted by the Kerala Government after the 2017 actress assault case and its report revealing instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry.

Following the allegations of sexual harassment and exploitation cropping up against several actors and directors, the state government on August 25 announced the establishment of a seven-member special investigation team to probe them.



Chess stars receive grand welcome after historic wins

Chennai

Flashing radiant smiles after their history-making gold at the Olympiad, members of India's trailblazing chess teams returned to an enthusiastic welcome from fans, officials and their families here today. D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, R Vaishali and men's team captain Srinath Narayanan landed here early this morning.

Both the Indian men's and women's teams scripted history on Sunday, winning their maiden gold medals in the Chess Olympiad in Hungary. Their extraordinary victory reinforced India's position as a new chess powerhouse. And as was expected, there were loud cheers as the four walked out of the airport.

Gukesh, who was instrumental in Indian men's team dominance in the tournament with an unbeaten run, flashed his individual and



team gold medals for the cameras. The 18-year-old is now gearing up for the World Championship clash against China's Ding Liren in November after becoming the

youngest ever challenger to the crown by winning the Candidates Tournament in April.

"It's very special, since both the teams won the gold," Gukesh

said.

The brother-sister duo of Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali reached in the before Gukesh. All of them were welcomed with

garlands, bouquets and traditional stoles as fans scammed to click selfies with them.

"I'm very happy that we have won the Olympiad for the first time. And we managed to win in both sections so it's a very special feeling and a proud moment for us," Praggnanandhaa said.

"We were playing good chess and it showed that we were the best team. The Olympiad is the only tournament we play as a team for the country," he added.

Vaishali, who laid the foundation for the women's team's triumph, said missing out on the gold in the last edition in Chennai was painful.

"It's a dream moment. Last time in the Chennai Olympiad we won bronze, we were so close to winning gold, we missed it in the last round and it was very painful. I'm glad that both teams have won gold. It's a historical moment," she said.

Border-Gavaskar Trophy: No room for error against Pant, says Oz spinner Lyon

New Delhi

Veteran Australian spinner Nathan Lyon feels there is no room for error when bowling to Rishabh Pant, adding that the young India wicketkeeper-batter has a superabundance of talent to tame the best attack in the world.

Pant will be an integral part of the Indian batting lineup during the five-Test Border-Gavaskar series beginning in Perth on November 22.

The 26-year-old Pant recently returned to Test cricket after nearly 21 months following a near-fatal car crash in December 2022, and smashed a century against Bangladesh in the first Test at Chennai.

"You're bowling against someone like Rishabh Pant, who is electric. He's got all the skills in the world," Lyon, who has snared 530 Test scalps and will be expected to play a key role in the series against India, said. "As a bowler, your room for error is so small. So, you've got to be good. It's a challenge as a bowler if I'm going to get hit for six," added the 36-year-



old.

Pant has been magnificent in the last two Test series against Australia, accumulating 624 runs in 12 innings at an average of 62.40, including a century and two half-tons with a top

score of 159 not out.

Lyon said he would try to push Pant on the back foot and get him to commit a few mistakes. "I'm not afraid of getting hit for a six. The challenge is that I can provide the batters and try and keep someone like Rishabh in his crease and potentially try and get him to defend me a lot more... and hopefully, bring a couple of chances along the way," he said.

Australian captain Pat Cummins acknowledged that Pant has been a "major influence" in India's back-to-back Test series wins Down Under, stressing the need to keep the flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter "quiet" in the series.

"He's someone that had a big influence in a couple of series and we have got to try and keep him quiet," Cummins said. "Someone like Pant might play a reverse slap and it's an incredible shot, and that's just part of who he is. I think we've become a bit more accustomed."

Sarfaraz, Jurel set to be released from India squad for Irani Cup

Mumbai

Middle-order batter Sarfaraz Khan, wicket-keeper Dhruv Jurel and pacer Yash Dayal will be released from the Indian team for the Irani Cup if they are not selected in the playing XI for the second Test against Bangladesh, starting September 27 in Kanpur. The BCCI on Tuesday announced the Rest of India squad, led by Ruturaj Gaikwad, which will take on reigning Ranji Trophy champions Mumbai in Lucknow on October 1-5. "Dhruv Jurel and Yash Dayal have been selected in the Rest of India squad and their participation is subject to them not being involved in the second Test," said the BCCI statement.

Sources said that in case wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant suffers any niggle during the Test, KL Rahul can fill up for him. Sarfaraz will play for Mumbai, led by Ajinkya Rahane, if he does not figure

in the playing XI for the second Test. "Sarfaraz Khan who has been retained in the Team India squad for the 2nd Test, will be released to represent the Mumbai team subject to him not being involved in the second Test," added the BCCI statement.

The Irani Cup match will also mark Mumbai all-rounder Shardul Thakur's return to First-Class cricket after surgery. Shreyas Iyer, Musheer Khan, Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian are expected to play for Mumbai. Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube won't be playing for Mumbai as they would have to report in Gwalior for the T20I series against Bangladesh starting October 6.

The Rest of India squad also has Ishan Kishan, who was not given a central contract last season for ignoring the BCCI's directive to play domestic cricket. Kishan recently scored a hundred in Duleep Trophy.

Women's T20 World Cup: Harmanpreet happy to tick all boxes

India-Bangladesh Test: Security upped in Kanpur for 2nd match



Kanpur

Elaborate security arrangements have been made for the India-Bangladesh second Test match, to be played at the International Green Park stadium here from September 27, a senior official said on Tuesday.

An FIR was filed against 20 members of the Akhilesh Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha on Monday for allegedly organising a 'havan' by obstructing the road before the stadium to protest against atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh, said ACP Harish Chander.

Police said a "fool-proof" security plan has been chalked out for India and Bangladesh cricket teams, which are supposed to arrive here by Tuesday evening.

Kanpur's Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Harish Chander told PTI they have sought adequate police force, including senior rank officials, to be deployed for the match. "We are reviewing the security arrangements to leave no stone unturned and (are) confident of getting an adequate police force to meet the

requirements," he added.

The officer said they were coordinating with Central and state agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the state Intelligence to share inputs regarding threats, if any, to deal with it deftly.

The Green Park stadium and Hotel Landmark have been divided into sectors, zones and sub-zones, and its reign has been given to DCP, additional DCP and ACP rank officials, respectively, said DCP (East) Shrawan Kumar Singh, who has been made the nodal officer of the entire event.

Traffic diversions have also been imposed ahead of the match. Those named in the FIR included Rakesh Mishra, Vikas, Atul, Jaydeep, Vikas Gupta, Prashant Dheer, Ajay Rathore, Ashish, Brajesh, while about 10 others are unidentified.

The FIR was lodged under sections 189(2) (unlawful assembly), 191 (2) (rioting), 223 (disobeying an order promulgated by a public servant), and 285 (obstruction or injury to any person in any public way) of the BNS, he said.

World Cups but I have the same excitement as I had when I was 19," the 35-year-old skipper said.

The main challenge will come from England and Australia, who have found a way to beat India in ICC events even from difficult situations.

"We can beat any team and Australia know that very well. They know if there is one team that can beat them it is us," said Harmanpreet.

Head coach Amol Muzumdar shed more light on the team's focus areas during the training camp in Bengaluru. "We did identify a few things (after the loss to Sri Lanka) and went about it in the subsequent camp. We first had a fitness and fielding camp. Then we had a 10-day skills only camp. We focused on enhancing athletic ability and all-round fielding abilities," he said.

"There were yoga sessions and psychological sessions. We brought in a sports psychologist (Mughda Bawre). She has been fantastic with the group," he added.

On the lack of game time, he said: "We are prepared for everything. In the skills camp, we had nets and five games in 10 days. We have ticked all the boxes as far as preparation is concerned."

terms of preparation compared to the small things that were not there in the earlier editions," said Harmanpreet.

India have not had game time since the end of July when they surprisingly finished runners-up to Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup. They had an extensive preparatory camp at the NCA. The players spent a lot of time on fitness and fielding, areas in which the team has been found wanting in the past.

"During the Asia Cup, we played good cricket, one odd day, things did not go to plan," said Harmanpreet.

Harmanpreet has been part of all the T20 World Cups till date, but feels that she is still as excited as she was at her first World Cup. "I know I have played so many



Mumbai

The feeling of near misses has haunted Harmanpreet Kaur for long but the Indian captain feels that her team has ticked all the boxes in its bid to cross the line in the Women's T20 World Cup beginning in the UAE from October 3. Since the tournament's inception in 2009, India have managed to reach the final only once — in 2020, when they lost to Australia. India also played the ODI World Cup final in 2017. Harmanpreet was in the team on both occasions, in fact, leading the side in 2020.

"This is the best team we are going forward with. The players have been together for a long time. We came so close last time and lost in semis (2023). We have ticked all the boxes in

Tennis Roundup: Jeevan, Vijay win maiden title

New Delhi

Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Vijay Sundar Prashanth clinched their maiden ATP title together, winning the Hangzhou Open men's doubles event, while Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti finished runners-up at the Chengdu Open.

The unseeded Indian duo of Jeevan and Vijay scripted a remarkable comeback to

defeat the unseeded German team of Constantin Frantzen and Hendrik Jebens 4-6 7-6(5) 10-7 in one hour and 49 minutes.

This was the second ATP Tour title for the 35-year-old Jeevan, having won the Chennai Open with Rohan Bopanna way back in 2017.

Yuki and Olivetti narrowly missed out on a third title this year, losing 4-6 6-4 4-10 to the top-

seeded French pair Sadio Doumbia and Fabien Reboul in a tense final.

India's highest-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal lost to sixth-seeded Pavel Kotov in his opening qualifying match of the Beijing Open. Nagal, ranked 83rd in the world, lost 2-6 6-7 to the world No. 63 Russian in a match that lasted one hour 52 minutes.



Rhea Singha crowned Miss Universe India 2024



Rhea Singha has been crowned 2024 Miss Universe India, and she will now represent the nation at the global Miss Universe 2024 pageant.

The grand finale of Miss Universe India 2024 was held on Sunday in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The event was filled with excitement, with Rhea emerging as the winner and taking home the prestigious title.

After her big win, Rhea couldn't contain her happiness. Speaking to ANI with a bright smile, she shared, "Today I won the title of Miss Universe India 2024. I am so thankful. I have done so much work to get to this level where I can consider myself worthy enough for this crown.

I am so inspired by the

previous winners."

Actress and 2015 Miss Universe India, Urvashi Rautela, who served as a judge at the event, shared her thoughts and expressed hope that India will win the Miss Universe crown again this year.

"I feel what all the girls are feeling. The winners are mind-blowing. They will represent our country very well in Miss Universe. I am hopeful that India will win the Miss Universe crown again this year. All the girls have been hard-working, dedicated, and extremely beautiful," Urvashi said.

With this title, Rhea is now preparing to represent India at the 2024 Miss Universe competition, which will take place later this year.

Coldplay announces third Mumbai show due to 'phenomenal demand'

Mumbai

British rock band Coldplay on Sunday added a third show to the Mumbai leg of its 'Music of The Spheres World Tour 2025' citing 'phenomenal demand', hours after fans expressed disappointment over long virtual queues on the online ticket platform BookMyShow.

According to the platform's website, all three shows are sold out.

The tickets for the new show, set to be held on January 21 at Mumbai's DY Patil Sports Stadium, went live at 2 pm on BookMyShow.

'Due to phenomenal demand, a third Mumbai date has been added at DY Patil Stadium for 21 January, 2025. Tickets on sale at 2PM IST today,' Coldplay said in an X post, alongside the booking link.

According to reports, the server of BookMyShow website and app on Sunday crashed as it opened the sale for the British band's concerts scheduled for next year.

Soon, hashtags 'Coldplay', 'BookMyShow', and 'Crashed' started trending on X.

Coldplay had already announced two shows on January 18 and 19, 2025, at the DY Patil Sports Stadium.

Several fans shared screenshots of their frozen computer screens and smartphones with the app experiencing a lot of traffic.

According to BookMyShow, the sale for the tickets of the two shows on January 18 and 19, 2025, at Mumbai's DY Patil Sports Stadium, was supposed to open at 12 noon. Many said the tickets remained unavailable for booking well over 12.15 pm.

The ticket prices range from Rs 2,500 to Rs 12,500, with Rs 35,000 for lounge area, according to the platform's website.

In less than an hour, the server got back up and BookMyShow shared a message



of facing 'heavy traffic' on every account trying to book a ticket, with the wait list going as high as 8,42,745 (data on BookMyShow website as per 1.39 pm).

'Because of heavy traffic, queue is moving slower than expected. Thank you for your patience!' read a message on the platform.

A fan claimed other platforms are selling Coldplay tickets at inflated prices.

'Dear @coldplay, fans in India are struggling to get tickets on @Bookmyshow_live with waitlists over 300k, but platforms like Viagogo (search coldplay india tickets on google, first sponsored link will be VIAGOGO) are selling them at inflated prices. #coldplayindia #BookMyShow (sic)' said a user.

Soon, BookMyShow warned fans about unauthorised platforms selling fake tickets for the Coldplay India tour.

'It has come to our attention that unauthorised platforms are listing tickets for Coldplay's Music Of The Spheres World Tour 2025 in India, both before and after the official sale.

'These tickets are invalid. Ticket scalping is illegal in India and punishable by law. Please don't fall prey to this

because you will be buying fake tickets. Avoid scams! BookMyShow is the only official platform for ticket sales,' the platform said in a post on X.

A few helpful fans suggested others waiting to refresh the page.

'If you are in the queue for coldplay tickets and it's going slow, refresh your page. It's going to be quicker #Coldplay #BookMyShow (sic)' said an X user.

'Indians everytime when they try to book tickets of Coldplay and any other major event on bookmyshow! Crashed again! #bookmyshow #Coldplay (sic)' wrote another.

'Bookmyshow server be like: Sir mai kaam hi nahi karta kuch! #BookMyShow #Coldplay (sic)' a user joked on X.

The Mumbai concert will mark Coldplay's first visit to India in eight years.

The Grammy-winning band previously performed in Mumbai as part of the Global Citizen Festival back in 2016.

'Music of The Spheres World Tour 2025' will commence on October 30 at the Marvel Stadium in Melbourne, Australia, and will conclude on August 31, 2025, with a show at the Wembley Stadium in London, the UK.