

CJP demands: Release Wangchuk, sack Pradhan; Rs 1 crore aid to NEET aspirants who died by suicide after alleged paper leak

NEW DELHI, CORRESPONDENT : Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) leaders, who were called for talks with the government as protests intensified in the heart of the national capital on Monday, demanded the immediate release of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, removal of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and Rs 1 crore compensation for the families of every NEET aspirant who allegedly died by suicide following the 2026 NEET paper leak.

The demands were outlined in a written memorandum submitted to union Health Minister J P Nadda after a meeting between the two sides, even as conflicting claims emerged over who initiated the

dialogue.

According to the memorandum, the CJP reiterated that its central demand since launching protests on June 6 has been the resignation or sacking of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, accusing him of failing to prevent repeated examination controversies, including the alleged NEET 2026 paper leak, the CBSE Class 12 portal issues, and delays in the CUET examination.

"He is directly responsible for multiple paper leaks, including NEET 2026, and other exam fiascos, most recently being CBSE 12th portal chaos and CUET exam delay," the letter stated.

"There has been no systemic corrections or action taken by Pradhan, indicating his gross



incompetency as the education minister," the CJP said in the letter. The party alleged that 21

students died by suicide following the alleged NEET paper leak and sought Rs 1 crore compensation

for the families of each of those aspirants.

It also demanded the immediate release of educationist and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on a hunger strike since June 28 as no response was received from the government concerning the matter, the letter stated.

The memorandum also called for an end to what it described as the use of "brute force" against peaceful protesters by the Delhi Police.

CJP Spokesperson Saurav Das, posting a copy of the letter on his social media handle, wrote that, "The Minister has also assured us that no further crackdown will happen at Jantar Mantar and around." However, CJP leaders

claimed there were still reports of police stopping protesters despite the assurance.

Following the meeting, Nadda said on X that "for the first time" on Monday morning, the protesters had proposed holding talks with the government. He said discussions had continued from 11:50 am, the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, and the delegation submitted a written memorandum around 4 pm. He added that he had requested the protesters to call off their sit-in and cooperate with the administration in restoring normalcy.

However, CJP spokesperson Das presented a different account. In a post on X at 11:52 am, Das said he and Ashutosh Ranka were on their way to meet Nadda after

"the government had reached out for talks in the morning."

"Our demands are clear. The youth have gathered in huge numbers," Das wrote.

Speaking to reporters before the meeting, Das also said, "The administration is trying to open talks with the government. They have come very late, but we have opened our hearts and said that we are willing to talk to them. There has been no clarity from their side as of now. The ball is in their court."

The differing accounts from Nadda and Das have created uncertainty over which side initiated the negotiations, even as thousands of protesters continued demonstrations in central Delhi during the opening day of Parliament's Monsoon Session.

Tear gas, baton charge as CJP's Parliament march over NEET leak turns chaotic

New Delhi, Correspondent : Thousands of supporters of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), marching toward Parliament were stopped by security forces outside the Sansad Marg Police Station on Monday as they demanded accountability for the alleged NEET paper leak and the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The city was thrown into gridlock as police barricaded streets several kilometers away from the protest site. Traffic snarls and long tailbacks of vehicles were a common sight across central Delhi. Many midday commuters were able to reach their offices only after several hours.

The protest, held on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, turned chaotic after demonstrators attempted to push through multiple police barricades erected around Parliament Street, Raisina Road and Patel Chowk. Security personnel resorted to baton charges, used water cannons and fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd, halting the march at Raisina Road, around 200 metres from Parliament. As a result, several protesters sustained injuries, including some who were seriously injured.

Chaotic scenes unfolded near the Constitution Club and Press Club as several protesters crossed the Raisina Road roundabout before being stopped. Both demonstrators and police personnel sustained injuries during the clashes.

Police sources said protesters tried to breach barricades at around 11:25 am, resulting in a scuffle. "The situation is tense. Protesters marched towards Parliament in large numbers. The crowd was dispersed professionally. More people continue to join the protest," a senior police officer said.

However, Delhi Police



denied reports of excessive force, stating that no incident of violence had taken place and urging the public not to believe rumours or misinformation. The police maintained that the protest was being handled professionally to ensure public order in the national capital.

The police's version, however, stood in contrast to multiple videos circulating on social media and footage aired by several media organisations showing Rapid Action Force and Delhi Police personnel baton-charging protesters near Jantar Mantar, the Constitution Club and Parliament Street. CJP volunteers also alleged that tear gas shells were fired at demonstrators..

Volunteers of the CJP also claimed that tear gas shells were fired to disperse demonstrators marching towards Parliament.

Meanwhile, the government has reached out to CJP for talks and that two of its spokespersons Sourav

Das and Ashutosh Ranka held a initial 10 minute meeting with union minister JP Nadda to put forth the activist outfit's demands.

Following a brief 10-minute meeting after a wait of 2 hours, Das and Ranka submitted a written charter of demands. "He has assured us that he will speak internally. We are in that process," Das said after the meeting, adding that the party had also received reports of large-scale detentions of protesters. Both leaders are awaiting a second round of discussions.

"The youth has gathered in huge numbers. Our demands are clear," Das had said before the meeting, describing the march as a show of public anger over the examination controversy.

Both the spokespersons of CJP are waiting for the second meeting to be held as it seems that government is deliberating on the demands of the CJP.

With the first day of the



Monsoon Session witnessing protests by students over the alleged exam paper leak, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Lathi-charge on students is an attack on democracy. This government is not capable of staying in power."

"We have also raised the issue of theft of donations at the Ayodhya Ram Temple.

Modi sahib should take responsibility because he is the one who created the Trust," he added.

The protest gained significant momentum over the weekend after activist Sonam Wangchuk was forcibly removed from Jantar Mantar and admitted to Safdarjung Hospital. Calling the move a "tipping point" and an example of

the government's "high-handedness", CJP leaders urged supporters to turn the Parliament march into their biggest mobilisation yet.

The alleged high-handedness by the authorities prompted large numbers of students to participate in the protest march to Parliament.

Authorities had mounted unprecedented security

arrangements across Delhi ahead of the protest. Heavy police deployment was seen at Parliament, Jantar Mantar, Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, JNU Gate, and key border points, including Badarpur. Security checks at the Delhi-Noida border triggered long traffic snarls, while the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation temporarily closed five metro stations near the protest route, leaving hundreds of commuters stranded and forcing many to take alternate routes.

By afternoon, security remained on high alert around Parliament as more protesters continued to converge on central Delhi, with negotiations between the government and CJP leaders still underway and police maintaining strict vigil across the capital.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke ended his hunger strike at Wangchuk's request. He broke his fast by drinking juice after Gitanjali Angmo, educator and Wangchuk's wife, announced from the protest stage that Wangchuk had urged him to end the fast to conserve his strength for leading the movement.

According to the CJP, the father of NEET student Riya Thapa, who died by suicide, also appealed to Dipke to end his hunger strike so that he could lead the march to Parliament.

Soon afterwards, Dipke, Angmo, and the father of the deceased NEET aspirant climbed onto a small truck moving with the procession towards Parliament as thousands of supporters marched alongside.

Addressing the gathering through a loudspeaker, Dipke repeatedly raised the slogan, "Dharmendra Pradhan must resign."

Following the government's call for talks with CJP leaders, the All India Students' Association

(AISA) also announced that student leaders Neha Bora, Manish Kumar, and Aameen Amitoj had ended their 23-day fast after a delegation of Opposition leaders and eminent public figures urged them to conclude that phase of the protest. The delegation included parliamentarians Manoj Jha, Rajaram Singh, and Amra Ram; social activist Yogendra Yadav; senior advocate Prashant Bhushan; Professor Atul Sood; and actors Prakash Raj and Shabana Azmi.

Addressing the gathering, Yogendra Yadav said the students were not abandoning their struggle but merely bringing one form of protest to an end. Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha described the agitation as a significant achievement, saying it had exposed the government on several fronts.

Actor Shabana Azmi said the younger generation had shown the country a new direction in democratic protest, while CPI(M) MP Rajaram Singh assured the students that the issues they had raised would now be taken up in Parliament, adding that their movement had inspired the Opposition.

AISA said the three student leaders had each lost more than 12 per cent of their body weight during the fast and suffered from critically low blood sugar levels, along with serious health complications affecting multiple organs.

The organisation also announced a month-long nationwide campaign targeting union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the National Testing Agency (NTA), and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 during the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament, saying it would continue to press the demands raised through the Jantar Mantar protest.

Abhijeet Dipke ends fast at Wangchuk's request, leads CJP March to Parliament

NEW DELHI, CORRESPONDENT : Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke ended his hunger strike on Monday morning at the request of social activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk, who remains hospitalised, before joining thousands of supporters in a march from Jantar Mantar towards Parliament demanding the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination irregularities.

The development came as the Centre initiated dialogue with the CJP, with party representatives leaving to meet union Health Minister J P Nadda after the government reached out for discussions over the ongoing student-led agitation.

Dipke broke his fast by drinking juice after Gitanjali Angmo, educator and Wangchuk's wife, announced from the protest stage that Wangchuk had urged him to end



the fast to conserve his strength for leading the movement.

According to the CJP, the father of a NEET student, Riya Thapa, who committed suicide, had also appealed to Dipke to end his hunger strike so that he could lead the march to Parliament.

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the father of the deceased NEET aspirant climbed onto a small truck moving with the procession towards Parliament as thousands of supporters marched alongside.

Addressing the gathering through a loudspeaker, Dipke repeatedly raised the slogan, "Dharmendra Pradhan must resign." Dipke had begun his hunger strike on Saturday after Delhi Police removed Wangchuk from the Jantar Mantar protest site and shifted him to Safdarjung Hospital, citing his deteriorating health and directions of the Delhi High Court.

Wangchuk has now completed 22 days of his indefinite fast, launched as part of the CJP's campaign seeking the resignation of the Education Minister over alleged leaks in competitive examinations, including NEET-UG, and broader education reforms.

Amid the intensifying protest, the CJP announced that the government had initiated

talks. In a post on X, party spokesperson Saurav Das said he and party leader Ashutosh Ranka were on their way to meet minister Nadda.

"It's 11:52 AM. Ashutosh Ranka and I, on behalf of the Cockroach Janta Party, are on our way to meet J P Nadda. The government had reached out for talks in the morning. Our demands are clear. The youth has gathered in huge numbers. We shall win!" Das wrote.

Earlier, the All India Students' Association (AISA) announced that its student leaders, Neha Bora, Manish Kumar and Aameen Amitoj had ended their 23-day hunger strike.

According to AISA, the three student leaders had each lost more than 12 per cent of their body weight during the fast and suffered critically low blood sugar levels along with serious health complications affecting multiple organs.

Pune FDA Suspends Lohegaon Eatery's Licence For Using Fat Spread Instead Of Butter In Bun Maska

Pune, Correspondent : The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Pune Division, has suspended the food business licence of MRAT Enterprises (Franchisee Abhinandan Tea), a snack and tea outlet located in Lohegaon, for allegedly misleading customers by using vegetable fat spread instead of butter while selling food items marketed as being prepared with butter.

The action was taken as part of the Maharashtra FDA's 'Safe Food, Safe Drug, Safe Maharashtra' campaign led by Food Safety Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe. Following a customer complaint, Food Safety Officers inspected the establishment on July 17, 2026.

During the inspection,

officials found that the outlet was preparing and selling its popular "Bun Maska" using Nutralite Professional Vegetable Fat Spread (Medium Fat) instead of butter. However, customers were not informed about the substitution, creating the impression that genuine butter was being used.

According to the FDA, the practice amounted to misleading consumers about the nature and ingredients of the food served. Citing consumer protection concerns and the failure to disclose the actual ingredients, the department suspended the establishment's food business licence with immediate effect from July 17, 2026, until further orders.

EDITORIAL

THE REFUGEE WITH NO PASSPORT, AND THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT WITH INDIAN PAPERS

The case of Maung Henry Htoo Aung Linn before the Delhi High Court is not only about admission to Delhi University. It is about a deeper contradiction in India's handling of refugees, citizenship, and identity in the border states of the Northeast.

On one side is a young Myanmar refugee who fled his country, studied in India, and is now seeking university admission through lawful means. He does not claim to be an Indian citizen. He does not seek Scheduled Tribe benefits. He does not try to enter the electoral roll. He stands before the court as a refugee, asking that Delhi University should not insist on a passport that his condition as a refugee makes difficult, if not impossible, to produce. On the other side are long-standing allegations in Manipur that some Myanmar nationals have crossed the border, obtained Aadhaar cards, entered electoral rolls, acquired local identity documents, and accessed benefits available to Scheduled Tribes under broad categories such as "Any Kuki Tribes".

This is the contradiction India must confront: the honest refugee is visible and, therefore, vulnerable; the illegal immigrant with Indian papers may become administratively invisible. Maung Henry's case shows the burden carried by those who follow the transparent route.

According to available details, he fled Myanmar in 2022, completed Class 10 in Mizoram and Class 12 in the Science stream in Meghalaya, and later sought admission to Delhi University. His difficulty began because Delhi University requires foreign applicants to submit a passport. His lawyers argued that treating a refugee in the same manner as an ordinary foreign applicant violates the logic of equality and dignity under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

The court's reported question during the hearing, "How can you expect a passport from a refugee?", goes to the heart of the issue. A passport is issued by a state. A refugee is often a person who has lost the protection of that very state. To demand a passport as the only acceptable identity document from such a person is to misunderstand the nature of displacement.

This does not mean universities should abandon verification. Delhi University has every right to protect its admission process. Public institutions cannot function on sympathy alone. They need documents, records, scrutiny, and accountability. Admission to Delhi University is highly competitive even for Indian citizens. A refugee cannot be admitted merely because he is a refugee. But a refugee should not be rejected merely because he has no passport.

There is a middle path. UNHCR registration, Indian school records, residence verification, police verification, and clearances from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs can together provide an alternative documentation system. Such a system would not weaken the law, but make it more realistic. India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. It also does not have a dedicated national refugee law.

Not Just Jets, China Is Developing A '5-Piece' Carrier Set, And India Should Worry

In June 2026, imagery from China showed a carrier-configured J-35 jet bearing the serial number 350030. It confirms that at least 30 airframes of this new naval stealth fighter have left the defence manufacturer Shenyang Aircraft Corporation (SAC)'s production lines. The news of the industrial architecture underpinning this capacity emerged in August 2023, when a company notice from SAC announced its ambitions to invest a whopping USD 1.2 billion in a new aeronautical complex, likely the size of six football fields - roughly 370,000 square metres - with its own flight-test runway. With such a complex and massive new warplane production capability in place, Beijing gets to experiment with what its officials are now referring to as the new frontier of sea-based naval power: a 'carrier five-piece set' involving a stealth carrier fighter jet, a carrier-based fixed wing early warning aircraft, a carrier-based fixed wing electronic warfare aircraft, a multirole catapult-launched carrier-based fighter jet, and a carrier-based anti-submarine warfare helicopter.

As China's Defence Ministry spokesperson Jiang Bin framed it, the induction of this five-part combination completes a Chinese carrier strike group's system-of-systems combat capability. Of the PLA Navy's three carriers - Liaoning, Shandong and Fujian - only the Fujian, commissioned in late 2025 with three electromagnetic catapults (CATOBAR) proven at sea, can operate the full set as designed. CATOBAR enables the carrier to have more airpower by allowing electromagnetically powered, catapult-assisted take-off for heavyweight aircraft on a short deck - a much better alternative than both steam-powered catapults and ski-jump ramp-based take-off (STOBAR) that relies on the aircraft's own engine. Till such a time, the matter of concern is not so much the J-35's active deployment, but the exports of its widely-produced variants, especially to Pakistan.

Why China Went For A 5/5
Understood piece by piece, the set is hugely inspired by a US carrier's air power wing.



The J-35 is pitched as the competitor to the F-35C in terms of roles and capabilities, though the merits remain debatable. The J-15T heavy fighter, with its payload and combat radius built for a saturation attack, is the answer to the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. The KJ-600 - China's first fixed-wing carrier AEW aircraft, nicknamed the "air-sea command centre" in state media for its added warning time and interception efficiency - is framed as a counterpart to the E-2D Hawkeye. The J-15DT/DH electronic attack variants track the EA-18G Growler. The Z-20F, replacing the Z-18F for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations, has been acknowledged by the Pentagon itself in its 2024 'China Military Power Report' to be similar to the US Navy's SH-60 family, and a "significant ASW improvement". These aircraft have become popular since they flew in formation at the September 3 military parade last year, even as new naval power elements such as the GJ-21 "Sharp Sword" Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) have subsequently joined the team.

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Capacity and Capability
China is now the only state serially producing two distinct stealth fighter families simultaneously, with some estimates projecting that advanced-fighter output across all jet programmes could

reach 300-400 aircraft annually by 2027. At the same time, the market is refining itself for China to leverage. Pakistan, reportedly seeking the J-35AE and a package including KJ-500 AEW&C aircraft and HQ-19 air defences, is potentially the first foreign operator of a Chinese fifth-generation fighter. The five-piece set is thus a defence-industrial story as much as an indigenous military-power story. The proficiency of China's air wing is yet to be tested. Not to mention, the US Navy's advantage was never just the CATOBAR capability but over 70 years of continuous catapult operations. Parades are not nearly enough to replace or compress the results of actual operationalisation, which are derived from deck-based operations by aircraft at sea, as well as their sorties, and the creation of a pool of both first-tour and experienced naval aviators. Hence, the actual capabilities of the J-35 must be analysed based on how they fare in training drills to begin with, but also, in large-scale military exercises, or, at the extreme, high-stakes maritime conflicts, in the near future. For India, there are three takeaways. The first is that SAC's production lines may

potentially soon be feeding even further into Pakistan's air force, making any skirmishes with Rawalpindi a proxy contest with many more Chinese aircraft. The second is that, given the kind of edge quantitative output grants China, we may soon see the PLA Navy operate for prolonged periods in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) - to the extent that quantity supplements blue water capabilities. India's own twin-engine deck-based fighter and, in the near future, a naval-variant trajectory for the AMCA, may need genuine fast-tracking, especially if predominance in the IOR is to be preserved. Third, the five-piece framework exposes the need for India to roll out STOBAR decks and replace capacities with the contemporary north star in Carrier Battle Group (CBG) operations. It could likely mean looking at a third aircraft carrier with a clear-eyed assessment of the cost and timeline of CATOBAR. Because China has so far only highlighted the set and tested it in trials, integrated and far-distance air wing capability remains undemonstrated. If the powers that be take the cue, now is the time for India's carrier-and-catapult debate to evolve.

SONAM WANGCHUK AND THE TRUTH BEHIND THE HEADLINES

—Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

(Media Narrative vs. Public Support: Is the Real Strength of a Movement Determined by Cameras?)

In a democracy, the most crucial factor in the success of any movement is genuine public support. The flashes of cameras, social media trending lists, millions of YouTube views, or constant debates on TV channels may make a movement a topic of discussion, but they are not, in themselves, evidence of public opinion. History bears witness to numerous movements that received limited media coverage, yet they nevertheless led to widespread social change. There were also movements that received media attention but failed to establish a lasting foothold in society. Over the past few years, there has been widespread national debate about Ladakh and its environment, constitutional rights, and local representation. Sonam Wangchuk has emerged as a prominent figure in this debate. He brought issues related to climate change, Himalayan ecology, local culture, and governance to the national stage. Many across the country have supported his views, while others believe there is a significant disconnect between his national identity and local support. This question is at the heart of democratic debate today—is a person's national popularity a testament to their local support base? Or is the true strength of a

movement determined by the trust and participation of its own community? A recent conversation with an official of a Ladakhi social organization revealed that there is no widespread public support for Sonam Wangchuk in Ladakh as portrayed in the national media. If this assessment is correct, it is worth considering why there is such a gap between the national discourse and local reality. It is equally important to avoid assuming the opinion of any one organization or individual as the collective opinion of all of Ladakh. In a democracy, society is multifaceted, and in any given region, numerous opinions, numerous groups, and numerous perspectives exist. Today, the media landscape is no longer what it once was. While news selection used to be based on editorial discretion, algorithms, clicks, views, and trends now dictate which issues receive the most attention. As a result, an individual's image often appears larger than their actual social impact. On the other hand, many local issues that truly touch the lives of the public remain absent from the national discourse. Social media has democratized expression, but it has also given new impetus to "narrative construction." A few minutes of video, emotional appeal, powerful music, and consistently shared messages can catapult an individual to national recognition. But democracy doesn't rely solely on digital popularity. The foundation of democracy is a real society,

real citizens, and real public participation. Today, many YouTube channels claim to represent independent journalism. Many of them are doing excellent work, but some also present one-sided content driven by ideological, political, or commercial motives. Viewers face the challenge of distinguishing between information and propaganda. If a channel presents only one side of a story and ignores the other, it deviates from the fundamental purpose of journalism. Similarly, mainstream media often elevates individuals to larger issues. As a result, serious issues like the environment, local governance, employment, education, tourism, and problem in border areas are left behind, and discussions are limited to a single person. This trend is not healthy in a democracy. It should also be kept in mind that the success of any movement doesn't depend solely on the popularity of its leader. If the local community doesn't actively engage, the movement's momentum can be limited. However, if the public is broadly aligned, the movement can shape its own direction, regardless of the media's silence. This experience has been demonstrated throughout India's independence movement and numerous social movements. Today, the need is for the media to evaluate a movement not solely based on its celebrity. It should also consider the number of local people involved, the impact it is having on their lives, and the level of trust they have in it. Similarly,

critics of a movement should base their opinions on facts and evidence, not just emotional reactions. In a democracy, the right to dissent is as important as the right to support. If someone criticizes the government's policies, they have the right to express their views. Similarly, if a segment of society disagrees with their position, they have the same right to express their opinion. The very essence of a democratic tradition is that diverse opinions should be presented respectfully, and the public should make its own decisions. In a sensitive border region like Ladakh, issues of development, environment, security, and local identity are crucial. Serious and fact-based discussions on these topics are essential. If the discussion is limited to supporting or opposing one individual, the real problems are left behind. This serves neither society nor democracy. Today, digital platforms can launch a national campaign on any topic in a matter of hours. Hashtags start trending, videos go viral, and it can create the illusion that the entire country is aligned on a single opinion. But true public opinion cannot be gauged solely by digital activities. Villages, towns, local institutions, civic organizations, and direct public participation are far more important indicators. The fundamental duty of journalism is to question the powers that be, but it is equally important to question movements and their leaders.

The growing market for 'masculine weakness' on social media

(THE GAME OF PROFIT, MEN'S INSECURITIES AND DIGITAL FRAUD)

—Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

The digital revolution has provided society with unprecedented convenience. Today, health information, expert advice, and medical services are available just a few clicks away. But this digital world also has another side, where people's vulnerabilities, fears, and social inhibitions are being turned into profit opportunities. If there's one area that's rapidly expanding on social media, it's the massive business of advertisements and products peddling "male weakness." Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, short video platforms, and messaging apps are flooded with advertisements that claim to enhance virility, improve marital life, or grant miraculous powers in a matter of days. This isn't just a commercial trend, but a serious issue involving social psychology, health literacy, and digital regulation. This industry capitalizes on men's hesitation, which prevents them from openly discussing sexual health issues. Advertisements first instill fear and then sell solutions to that fear. This is the ultimate business model of this entire business. Sexual health remains a topic of open discussion in Indian society. Most men hesitate to discuss such issues with family or a doctor. Exploiting this hesitation, self-proclaimed experts, uncertified vaidyas, influencers, and many compa-

nies on social media sell products that lack solid scientific evidence of their effectiveness. Claims like "effective in seven days," "100 percent guarantee," "secret formula," and "thousands have benefited" may sound appealing, but they often fall short of scientific medical standards. The language of these advertisements is also noteworthy. They don't directly sell a product, but rather question a person's self-confidence. The messages imply that not taking a particular product will affect marital life, diminish respect, or diminish masculinity. Thus, a common health concern is linked to social status and self-esteem. As a result, many people purchase these products without medical advice. Social media algorithms further exacerbate this problem. Once a person sees or clicks on such an ad, the platforms repeatedly show similar content. Gradually, users begin to believe that this problem is common and that most people are using such products. This psychological effect can often lead to unnecessary anxiety. It's also important to note that sexual health isn't just about medications. In many cases, conditions like stress, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, hormonal imbalances, smoking, alcohol consumption, lack of sleep, and an unhealthy lifestyle also play a role. In such cases, simply taking so-called "potency-enhancing" drugs isn't the answer. Proper diagnosis and evidence-based treatment are the right approach.

Another concern in this social media business is fake reviews and false experiences. Many advertisements feature alleged experiences from people whose authenticity is difficult to verify. Advertisements are presented with people dressed up as doctors, which can be misleading to the average person. Terms like "Ayurvedic," "herbal," or "natural" are often used to create the impression that a product is completely safe. However, being natural does not in itself guarantee safety or effectiveness. It's also important to clarify that Ayurveda is a rich and scientific medical tradition in India, with its own principles, research, and qualified practitioners. The problem isn't Ayurveda itself, but rather the tendency to market products in its name without adequate evidence, quality control, or misleading claims. Therefore, it's essential to consult a qualified and registered practitioner in any medical practice. Digital platforms also have a significant responsibility. If they can monitor financial fraud, fake investment schemes, and other misleading advertisements, a more stringent verification system should also be developed for health-related advertisements. Ensuring that health claims have a scientific basis, necessary disclaimers, and adherence to regulatory standards should be part of platforms' social responsibility. Government regulatory bodies must also strengthen oversight of digital advertising. Enforcing regulations solely on print and televi-

sion is insufficient. Today, many young and middle-aged individuals spend significant time on social media, so effective action against misleading health advertisements is essential at the digital level. Furthermore, people should be informed about the importance of consulting a certified physician in case of a health problem. There's also a social aspect to this issue. Men are often expected to be physically and mentally strong at all times. This is why many men avoid acknowledging their health problems or seeking help. This mindset needs to change. Having a health problem isn't a sign of weakness, and seeking timely treatment is responsible behavior. The media also plays an important role. News media and digital content creators should promote evidence-based information rather than sensational claims. The goal of health journalism should be to raise awareness, not to spread fear and confusion. Expert opinions, scientific research, and public health messages should be given greater space. Providing scientific information on sexual health through educational institutions and public health campaigns is also the need of the hour.

As accurate information increases in society, the impact of misleading advertisements will automatically decrease. The stronger the health literacy, the less likely we are to be vulnerable to digital fraud. It's also essential that consumers exercise self-awareness.

Mumbai Police register three cases after Shivaji Park protest

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : Mumbai Police on Monday registered three separate cases in connection with a protest held at Shivaji Park in Dadar on Saturday under the leadership of Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, linked to Sonam Wangchuk being taken to a hospital from Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, Police sources said the first case was registered for allegedly organising a public gathering without obtaining the mandatory permission from the authorities. The second case relates to alleged appeals made to supporters and members of



the public to assemble at the protest venue despite the absence of official approval for the event. Police are examining the circumstances under which the gathering was mobilised and whether any provisions governing public assemblies were violated. The third case pertains to demonstrations that

reportedly continued at several locations in the Dadar area even after the main programme had concluded. According to police, groups of students and supporters remained on the roads, resulting in heavy traffic congestion and disruption to vehicular movement in and around Shivaji Park and adjoining areas. Officials said all three cases have been registered under the relevant provisions of law, and further investigation is in progress. However, no arrests have been made in connection with any of the cases so far, police added.

Mumbai police imposes 15-day blanket ban on gatherings amid nationwide NEET protests

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : In a preemptive move to maintain public order and prevent potential law-and-order disruptions, the Mumbai Police on Monday announced the imposition of Section 144-like prohibitory orders across the metropolis for 15 days, starting July 23 to August 6. The directive comes amid escalating nationwide protests led by activist Sonam Wangchuk and others against the NEET paper leak, with authorities fearing that the intensity of the stir in the national capital could trigger similar unrest in the financial capital. The official notification issued by the Mumbai Police Commissionerate prohibits the assembly of five or more persons in public areas. The order explicitly bans any unauthorized public demonstrations, protest marches, rallies, or public meetings within city limits. Stringent restrictions have also been placed on the use of loudspeakers to curb potential disturbances. "The decision has been taken to ensure peace and prevent any untoward incidents in view of the ongoing sensitive atmosphere surrounding the NEET examination

row," a senior police official stated. The administration has warned of strict legal action against those found violating the prohibitory orders. To ensure that the city's essential services and daily life remain unaffected, the police have provided specific exemptions: Social & Religious: Weddings and funeral processions are permitted. Education: Routine operations of schools, colleges, and other academic institutions are exempt. Business & Governance: Normal commercial activities in shops, markets, and factories, as well as functions in government offices, courts, and official corporate or housing society meetings, will continue as usual. Entertainment: Cinemas, theaters, and public entertainment venues remain outside the purview of these restrictions. Police authorities have confirmed that the orders will be prominently displayed at key public locations and government offices across Brihanmumbai. Public announcements regarding the restrictions will also be made to ensure widespread awareness.

Monsoon Session begins amid uproar as Both Houses adjourned for the day over NEET, Ram Temple donation row

NEW DELHI, CORRESPONDENT : The Monsoon Session of Parliament began on a stormy note on Monday, with both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha witnessing repeated disruptions and ultimately being adjourned for the day amid relentless sloganeering by Opposition members over the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak, irregularities in donations to the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, and other issues. The opening day, which began with obituary references in both Houses, quickly descended into disorder as Opposition MPs demanded immediate discussions on the alleged examination scam, police action against protesting students in Delhi, and other matters they described as urgent issues of public importance. Both Houses first paid tributes to former Members of Parliament and eminent personalities who had passed away since the previous session before being adjourned till noon.

However, when Parliament reassembled, noisy protests resumed almost immediately, forcing repeated adjournments before both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were finally adjourned for the day without transacting substantial legislative business. In the Lok Sabha, proceedings resumed with the Question Hour after the initial adjournment, but Opposition members rushed to the well of the House, raising slogans over the alleged NEET-UG paper leak and allegations relating to donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The continued protests prevented the House from taking up its scheduled legislative agenda. Appealing for calm, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla urged members to preserve the dignity of Parliament and allow proceedings to continue. "The House should function smoothly. If the House does not function on the very first day of the session, it will set a bad precedent," Birla said, asking members to



return to their seats and raise issues through established parliamentary procedures. Despite repeated appeals by the Speaker, slogan-shouting continued, forcing successive adjournments before the House was finally adjourned for the day. The Rajya Sabha witnessed similar scenes. Soon after official papers were laid on the Table of the House, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak, describing it as an issue affecting the future of lakhs of students across the country. "This concerns the future of lakhs of students. Thousands of students have reached Jantar Mantar, and they were lathi-charged," Kharge said amid loud

protests. "The government is trying to beat them down and suppress the issue," he alleged, as Opposition members rose from their seats shouting slogans of "shame, shame." Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan repeatedly appealed to members to maintain order and allow the House to function. However, with the uproar continuing unabated, he adjourned the House multiple times before calling it a day. The Opposition also referred to demonstrations at Delhi's Jantar Mantar by students protesting the alleged NEET-UG paper leak, accusing the government of attempting to suppress demands for accountability through police action against demonstrators. The disruptions came despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal earlier in the day for a productive and constructive Monsoon Session. Addressing the media before the commencement of proceedings, the Prime Minister urged all political parties and

Members of Parliament to ensure meaningful debates that would contribute to national development and strengthen democracy. Drawing a parallel between the rainy season and parliamentary functioning, Modi said just as good rainfall benefits agriculture and the economy, constructive debates in Parliament benefit the nation. He also highlighted India's recent achievements in space, sports and the economy, and appealed to all parties to work together in the national interest. The Opposition, however, maintained that issues such as the alleged cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 following the paper leak controversy, rising unemployment, inflation, the recent flash floods in Jammu and Kashmir, and alleged financial irregularities relating to Ram Temple donations required immediate discussion before any legislative business could proceed. The government has lined up an extensive legislative agenda for the session, including key Bills relating to the Supreme Court's sanctioned judicial strength and

amendments to the law governing the prevention of insults to national honour. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had expressed hope ahead of the session that all political parties would cooperate to ensure smooth functioning of Parliament and facilitate constructive discussions on matters concerning the country. The Monsoon Session, scheduled to continue till August 13, is expected to witness sharp confrontations between the government and the Opposition, particularly over the alleged NEET-UG paper leak, alleged financial irregularities relating to Ram Temple donations, education reforms, price rise, unemployment, law and order issues, and several other political and public concerns. With both Houses repeatedly disrupted and eventually adjourned for the day on the very first sitting of the session, Parliament's Monsoon Session has begun on an acrimonious note, setting the stage for a prolonged political showdown in the weeks ahead.

Nagpur witnesses massive protest backing Wangchuk, seeking Pradhan's resignation

NAGPUR, CORRESPONDENT : Hundreds of students, youngsters, senior citizens and children assembled at Samvidhan Square in Nagpur on Monday to express solidarity with activist Sonam Wangchuk and the Cockroach Janta Party's protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, while demanding the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination paper leaks. Raising anti-government slogans, the protesters condemned the alleged irregularities in competitive examinations and asserted that their agitation would continue



until Pradhan stepped down. The demonstrators also criticised the police action in the national capital, alleging that Wangchuk was forcibly removed from Jantar Mantar and students marching towards Parliament were subjected to a lathi-charge. Carrying placards, banners and portraits of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, the protesters gathered under tight police security and voiced their support for the ongoing agitation in Delhi. Earlier in the day, thousands of protesters assembled near Parliament Street in New Delhi and

Govt is terrified of students: Sanjay Raut slams Centre over curbs on NEET protest

Mumbai, Correspondent : Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Modi government after police prevented a student-led march to Parliament over the NEET paper leak issue. Thousands of supporters of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Monday marched towards Parliament on the opening day of the Monsoon Session, demanding accountability over the alleged NEET paper leak and the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, triggering a massive security operation in the heart of the national capital. Accusing the Centre of suppressing democratic dissent, Raut alleged that the government was acting out of fear and claimed that key constitutional institutions had become "slaves" of the ruling regime.

In a strongly worded statement posted on social media, Raut mocked the government's response to the growing student agitation. "The government is scared of the youth. To put it plainly, the '56-inch chest' is trembling," he said. He argued a "Truly democratic government would have engaged with the protesting students instead of denying them permission to march to Parliament and imposing police restrictions." Escalating his criticism, Raut targeted central investigative agencies and the judiciary. "If the march to Parliament is stopped, perhaps it should be taken to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) headquarters," he said, alleging that agencies such as the ED and even the Supreme Court were functioning under the influence of the Modi-Shah leadership and had become

their "slaves." Calling the NEET paper leak a national crisis rather than merely a political issue, Raut said the controversy had shattered the aspirations of lakhs of students across the country. He demanded the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, holding him morally responsible for what he described as a systemic failure. "The government thought they could easily suppress protesters like Sonam Wangchuk and Abhijit Dipke," Raut said, warning that the movement has now gained national momentum. He also urged the judiciary to move beyond ordering only medical assistance for protesters and instead direct the government to hold a meaningful and transparent dialogue with students over their concerns and future.

Six die in blaze after truck rams car near Wardha

WARDHA, CORRESPONDENT : Six people were burnt alive after a container truck overturned and rammed into a car from behind in Maharashtra's Wardha district on early Monday. The two vehicles caught fire and four members of a family travelling in the car, the truck driver and his helper were charred to death. The accident occurred on the Samruddhi Expressway connecting Mumbai and Nagpur. According to the preliminary investigation, an ethanol-laden tanker had earlier met with an accident, resulting in a fuel spill. Traffic was subsequently diverted to the other carriageway.



Amid the diversion, a car travelling from Pune to Wardha was hit from behind by a speeding truck carrying chillies. The car was crushed beneath the truck and both vehicles were engulfed in flames. The family was returning to Salod village in Wardha after dropping one of their daughters in Pune, where she had enrolled for an MBA course. The deceased have been identified as Rajesh Tipale, his wife Sushma Tipale, their daughter Janhavi Tipale, a B.Tech graduate and their driver Ankush Laxman Raut. The other two victims were identified as truck driver Sanjay Kumar and his helper, Samarjit Pal. Rajesh Tipale ran a small grocery shop in the village, while his wife supplemented the family's

income through tailoring. The couple had worked hard to educate their twin daughters, Tanvi and Janhavi, hoping to see them build successful careers. Police, fire brigade personnel and Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) teams rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations. As the overturned tanker was carrying highly inflammable ethanol, authorities first ensured the safe removal of the fuel before clearing the highway. Traffic on the Mumbai-bound carriageway was diverted through alternate routes as restoration work continued.

Bawankule labels NEET protests and Thackeray's stance as 'political drama'

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : Maharashtra Revenue Minister and senior BJP leader Chandrashekhar Bawankule has launched a scathing attack on the opposition, dismissing the ongoing nationwide NEET protests as a "political stunt" and accusing Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray of exploiting Lord Ram for electoral gains. In a sharp rebuke of the protests led by activist Sonam Wangchuk and others over the NEET paper leak, Bawankule claimed that the movement is merely a manufactured narrative designed to damage the reputations of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Rejecting calls for ministerial resignations, Bawankule asserted that the government has already addressed the issue with transparency and rigor. "The system identified those involved in misconduct, and they have



been dealt with accordingly," he stated, adding that the government acted swiftly to re-conduct the examination. He questioned the logic of the opposition's demands, asking, "Have our ministers leaked the paper? Demanding resignations despite government action is nothing but pure politics." Bawankule further intensified his critique of Uddhav Thackeray, particularly regarding the UBT leader's recent focus on alleged irregularities at

the Ayodhya Ram Mandir. Labeling the campaign as "hypocrisy," Bawankule alleged that Thackeray, having lost public support, is now attempting to rebuild a "vote bank" by invoking Lord Ram. The BJP leader reminded the public that Thackeray chose not to attend the historic consecration ceremony in Ayodhya despite receiving a formal invitation. Comparing the situation to past thefts at the Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai, Bawankule argued that incidents of theft within temple premises should not be used as a political weapon to seek the resignations of party leaders. "For the BJP, Lord Ram represents faith, culture, and values, not politics," Bawankule concluded, accusing the opposition of lacking positive issues and resorting to divisive rhetoric to stay relevant.

Pune

Pune Urged To Conserve Water As Khadakwasla Reservoir Holds 5.61 TMC Less Water Than Last Year

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT: Residents of Pune have been urged to use water judiciously as the Khadakwasla dam system, the city’s primary source of drinking water, currently holds significantly less water than it did at the same time last year.

The Khadakwasla reservoir chain presently has 17.26 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water, accounting for nearly 60% of its total storage capacity. However, this is 5.61 TMC lower than the 22.87 TMC (79%) recorded during the corresponding period last year, raising concerns over



water management for the months ahead.

Officials said careful planning will be essential to meet Pune’s drinking water requirements while accounting for summer evaporation losses and irrigation needs. The situation became challenging after the region received almost no rainfall in June.

Rainfall during the second week of July improved the situation, with nearly eight consecutive days of showers leading to a significant rise in reservoir levels across all four dams in the Khadakwasla project. The combined storage capacity of the project is around 29 TMC, and the reservoirs typically reach full capacity by the end of July or the first week of August.

However, the monsoon has weakened over the past two weeks, reducing inflows into the reservoirs.

According to the latest figures, the water levels in the four dams are:

Khadakwasla Dam: 70% full

Panshet Dam: 64% full

Varasgaon Dam: 58% full

Temghar Dam: 41.70% full

Water Released Through Canal for Pilgrimage and Irrigation

The Water Resources Department is currently releasing 1,000 cusecs of water from Khadakwasla Dam through the canal system to support the annual Wari pilgrimage as well as irrigation requirements.

With the palkhi procession now entering Solapur district, officials are expected to decide on Monday, July 20, whether to stop or reduce the canal water release.

Suyog Nisarg CHSL From Wagholi Commissions Second Solar Power Project

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : Taking a significant stride towards renewable energy adoption, Suyog Nisarg CHSL from Wagholi has successfully implemented 62KW solar power project under the SHAKTI initiative. The project was inaugurated on 19th July 2026, in the presence of key dignitaries including Surendra Pathare, Anil Satav, and Mahendra Bhadale. Society chairperson Surendra More along with committee members and residents welcomed guests and concluded the inauguration ceremony.

After successful implementation of the first solar power project



of 50KW in March 2025, this marks the second solar power project at Suyog Nisarg CHSL, further empowering the society to harness clean energy, significantly reducing electricity costs while promoting environmental sustainability. Spearheaded by the Managing Committee’s solar power team, the project saw instrumental contributions from committee member Shankar Vetal, supported by fellow committee members

who ensured seamless execution.

The project also benefits from the government’s PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, reinforcing financial feasibility and encouraging broader adoption across residential communities.

With this second phase, Suyog Nisarg CHSL reaffirms its position as an exemplary benchmark for residential societies embracing green energy. Their proactive, sustained commitment reflects a forward-thinking approach, demonstrating how collective efforts can drive meaningful, lasting change towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly future.

Operation Mule Hunt: Pune Police Book 23 Bank Account Holders Over ₹11.54 Crore In Suspicious Cyber Fraud Transactions

Pune, Correspondent : As part of the nationwide Operation Mule Hunt against cybercrime, Pune Police have registered cases against 23 mule bank account holders for allegedly facilitating suspicious transactions worth ₹11.54 crore linked to cyber fraud.

The action targets individuals who allegedly allowed cybercriminals to use their bank accounts to transfer and launder money obtained through online scams. Police said investigations are also underway to identify the masterminds behind the racket.

Acting on data received from the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), the Cyber Police verified multiple bank accounts across different financial



institutions. The probe found that several accounts had been used to route funds generated through cyber frauds, including online share trading scams, digital arrest frauds, online job scams, remote access application frauds, and other cyber offences.

Joint Commissioner of Police Sanjay Darade said cybercriminals typically move stolen money through multiple bank accounts

to conceal the money trail. These intermediary accounts, commonly known as mule accounts, are often provided by individuals in exchange for commissions.

To curb the growing misuse of such accounts, police have launched a focused crackdown on account holders who knowingly allow cybercriminals to operate through their banking facilities.

Accounts Used to Route Crores in Fraud Proceeds

During the investigation, police uncovered several high-value suspicious transactions across different police station jurisdictions.

In a case registered at Kharadi Police Station, more than ₹3.60 crore was routed through a single bank account within a few days.

Investigators suspect the account was used in multiple cyber fraud cases.

Similarly, an account under the jurisdiction of Wagholi Police Station recorded transactions worth ₹1.76 crore, while another case registered at Airport Police Station involved the movement of ₹1.20 crore.

In a separate investigation by Baner Police Station, cyber fraud proceeds amounting to ₹65.50 lakh were traced to a private bank account. The account has been frozen, and police have sought its Know Your Customer (KYC) records. Preliminary findings indicate that the account was used to facilitate cyber frauds targeting victims in Thane, Nagpur, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka.

Police Warn Against Renting Out Bank Accounts

Cyber Police are examining the KYC details, financial transactions, mobile call records, and links between the account holders and cybercriminal networks.

Officials said the crackdown is aimed at dismantling the financial infrastructure that enables cyber fraud operations. They warned citizens against sharing or renting out their bank accounts, ATM cards, cheque books, or internet banking credentials in exchange for commissions.

Police cautioned that anyone found knowingly providing banking facilities to cybercriminals could be treated as a co-accused in cybercrime investigations.

MHADA Pune Reopens Applications for 634 Tathawade Flats, Lottery Scheduled for August 25

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : The Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) has reopened applications for 634 unsold flats in its Tathawade housing project in Pune. The computerized lottery for these homes will be held on August 25, while the application and document verification process begins on July 20.

The move comes after the second phase of the project received a limited response in the previous lottery, leaving a large number of flats unsold. In contrast, the first phase of the development saw successful allotment of more than 600 homes.

To attract more buyers,

MHADA Pune Board has revised the eligibility criteria by allowing applicants from all income groups, including the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low Income Group (LIG), Middle Income Group (MIG), and High Income Group (HIG), to participate in the lottery.

The second phase of the Tathawade project consists of 792 flats, of which 634 units remain available. The housing options include 1 BHK flats priced at approximately ₹46 lakh and 2 BHK flats priced at around ₹64.5 lakh.

According to MHADA officials, the relaxed income norms are expected to increase participation and help sell the remaining homes.

Four Booked After Assault During Dance Party At Hadapsar’s Cult Terra Restaurant



PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : Pune Police have registered a case against four unidentified men following an alleged assault and criminal intimidation incident at a hotel in Cult Terra restaurant in the Hadapsar area.

According to the information from Hadapsar Police Station, the complaint has been filed by a 26 year old working professional, a resident of Koregaon Park. The case has been registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, including charges related to assault, causing hurt, criminal intimidation, and intentional insult.

The incident reportedly took place at around 2:00 am on July 19 at Hotel Cult Terra House in the Magarpatta area.

According to the complaint, the complainant and three friends had gone

to the hotel for a dance party when an argument broke out with a group of four men, one of whom was described as wearing a red T-shirt. The accused allegedly abused the complainant, punched her in the face, and assaulted her friend by striking him on the head with a beer bottle, causing bleeding injuries.

The complaint further states that another friend was allegedly assaulted, and his shirt was torn during the altercation. The accused also allegedly abused and threatened the complainant’s female friend.

Police have launched an investigation to identify and trace the accused. The case is being investigated by Assistant Police Inspector D.S. Patil of Hadapsar Police Station.

According to the complaint, the accused are yet to be arrested.

Viman Nagar Residents Give PMC Three-Day Ultimatum To Fix Airport Road Sewage Overflow, Warn Of Protest

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : Residents of Viman Nagar have raised serious concerns over a persistent sewage overflow on Airport Road near Survey No. 235, Sunset Boulevard Road, alleging that the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has failed to address the issue despite repeated complaints.

According to local residents, contaminated drainage water has been flowing onto the main road

for several days, creating foul odour, unhygienic conditions, and severe inconvenience for commuters and nearby residents.

The matter was brought to the attention of social activist and Pune Panther Sena founder-president Sachin Bhosale after citizens claimed their repeated appeals to civic officials and elected representatives had gone unanswered. Initially, Bhosale advised residents to continue pursuing the issue



through the PMC and public representatives. However, residents reportedly told him that all attempts had failed and sought his intervention as a last resort.

Residents allege that the stagnant water consists

of sewage and toilet waste, posing a serious public health risk. The overflowing drain has affected pedestrians, women, senior citizens, office-goers, and motorists using the busy Airport Road stretch.

Bhosale has since lodged an online complaint with the PMC and issued a three-day ultimatum to the civic administration. He warned that if the drainage line is not repaired and the problem is not permanently resolved within the stipulated period,

the Pune Panther Sena will stage a protest outside the Pune Municipal Corporation.

He further stated that the organisation would also bring samples of the contaminated sewage water to the PMC office as a symbolic protest against what it described as the administration’s inaction.

The Pune Panther Sena has urged the civic administration to treat the matter as a public health emergency and take immediate corrective measures.

‘New Pune’ Near Proposed Purandar Airport On Lines Of Navi Mumbai



many roads and flyovers are built, traffic congestion will continue to worsen if urban expansion is not planned. This is the right time to develop a ‘New Pune’ in Purandar,” he said.

Modern Three-Level Transport Infrastructure Planned

Gadkari also outlined

plans for three major elevated highway projects—Pune-Shirur, Hadapsar-Yavat, and Talegaon-Shikrapur. He said these corridors would use advanced Malaysian engineering technology, increasing the distance between support pillars from the conventional 30 metres to 120 metres, reducing

construction costs and improving efficiency.

The proposed corridors will feature a three-tier design, comprising a surface road at the bottom, an elevated highway above it, and a Metro corridor at the top to cater to future transportation needs.

₹50,000 Crore Road Projects to Transform Pune Region

The Union Minister said road infrastructure projects worth nearly ₹50,000 crore will gain momentum in and around Pune over the next year through the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). These projects are expected to reduce traffic congestion, cut travel time, and lower vehicular pollution. He also thanked the

Maharashtra government and Chief Minister for extending support to the projects.

Pune to Nagpur Journey in 4.5 Hours

Gadkari revealed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the proposed Shirur-Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar Expressway, estimated at around ₹15,000 crore, is currently under preparation.

Once completed, the expressway is expected to reduce travel time between Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar to about two hours, while the journey from Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar to Nagpur will take around 2.5 hours, enabling commuters to travel from Pune to Nagpur in approximately 4.5 hours.

O t h e r K e y

Announcements

Gadkari also made several significant announcements regarding upcoming infrastructure projects:

The second tunnel at Khambatki Ghat on the Pune-Satara highway is expected to be completed within the next two months.

The DPR for the Nanhe-Ravet Elevated Highway has been prepared, and construction will commence soon.

A new Pune-Mumbai Expressway is planned, with tenders for the first phase likely to be floated within the next three months.

Work on the Thane-Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar Highway is also expected to begin shortly.

ZTCC Pune Honours 79 Organ Donor Families On ‘Naman Diwas’, Celebrates Gift Of Life



PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : The Zonal Transplant Coordination Centre (ZTCC), Pune, paid tribute to organ donors and their families by honouring 79 donor families during the 13th annual ‘Naman Diwas’ ceremony held on Sunday, celebrating the selfless act of organ donation and its life-saving impact.

The event was attended by Dr. Sachin Jadhav, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Health Department, Mantralaya, and Dr. Abhijit Phadnis, Assistant Director of Health Services (ADHS), Mumbai, along with ZTCC members, transplant coordinators, healthcare professionals, representatives of the NGO Re-Birth, organ recipients, and donor families.

Describing organ donation as “a new beginning of life,” speakers at the event expressed gratitude to families who, despite experiencing the loss of a loved one, chose to donate organs and offer a second chance at life to others.

This year’s ceremony recognised 79

organ donor families for their extraordinary courage and compassion. Organisers said that such decisions, taken during moments of immense personal grief, have saved countless lives and continue to inspire society.

A special felicitation was also presented to Swati Kapre, a senior citizen who underwent a liver transplant 24 years ago and has since become a successful athlete. Kapre has won several medals at the World Transplant Games, including notable achievements in Germany last year, demonstrating how organ transplantation can help recipients lead healthy and active lives.

ZTCC Pune said ‘Naman Diwas’ is observed every year to honour the legacy of organ donors, express gratitude to their families, and spread awareness about the importance of organ donation.

The organisation said the annual observance serves as a reminder that every organ donation has the power to transform lives, keeping alive the spirit of humanity, compassion, and hope.

9-km CCTV Scan Helps Wanowrie Police Arrest Motorcycle Thief

Pune, Correspondent : The Wanowrie Police have arrested a 26-year-old man for allegedly stealing a motorcycle from the Ghorpadi area and recovered the stolen vehicle following an extensive CCTV-based investigation.

According to the police, a blue Honda Splendor motorcycle (MH 12 LN 7729) was stolen from Ghorpadi Sub Station within the jurisdiction of Wanowrie Police Station on July 14, 2026. A case was subsequently registered under Crime No. 327/2026 under Section 303(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

To trace the stolen vehicle, Wanowrie Police formed two investigation teams. During the probe, Police Constables Balaji Waghmare and Ashish Kamble examined CCTV footage covering a stretch of nearly 9 kilometres, which helped identify the suspect.

The accused, identified as Mohammad Naved

Shaban (26), a resident of Yewalewadi, Pune, was taken into custody. During interrogation, he allegedly confessed to the theft, following which he was formally arrested in the case.

Police recovered the stolen Honda Splendor motorcycle from the accused. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Bagade.

The operation was conducted under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajlakshmi Shivanakar (Zone 5), Assistant Commissioner of Police Ramdas Ingawale (Wanowrie Division), Senior Police Inspector Pandit Rejitwad, Crime Inspector Kailas Dabera, PSI Shekhar Mokate, and the investigation team comprising HC Dayaram Shegar, HC Mahesh Gadhave, PC Balaji Waghmare, PC Ashish Kamble, PC Vishnu Sutar, PC Gopal Madane, PC Chavan, PC Chormale, and PC Syed.

100 LED Streetlights Worth ₹15.75 Lakh Stolen, But PMC Lodges Complaint For Just ₹2.6 Lakh

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : A major discrepancy has emerged in a streetlight theft case in Pune, where the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) allegedly reported a significantly lower loss than the actual value of the stolen property.

According to information presented in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, 100 LED streetlights installed on Swami Vivekanand Road under the Bibvewadi Ward Office were stolen. Each LED streetlight was procured at a cost of ₹15,750, taking the total value of the stolen lights to ₹15.75 lakh.

However, when filing a police complaint with the Bibvewadi Police Station, the PMC reportedly stated that the stolen property was worth only ₹2.60 lakh, raising questions over the valuation mentioned in the FIR.

The issue came to light after BJP corporator Manasi Deshpande sought details from the civic administration through



a written question. In its response, the PMC confirmed that all 100 decorative LED streetlights had been stolen.

The civic body had installed the decorative streetlights through a tender process, with each unit costing ₹15,750. Following the theft, the Bibvewadi Ward Office lodged a complaint at the police station on November 22, 2025.

Despite several months having passed, police have not yet identified or arrested the accused. According to officials from Bibvewadi Police Station, the investigation has been kept pending due to the absence of leads. They added that

efforts to trace the culprits will resume once fresh evidence becomes available.

The report further states that even after the theft of all 100 decorative streetlights, no action has been taken against any civic official in connection with the incident. The administration has informed the Assembly that no departmental action has been initiated and no report has been submitted to the Municipal Commissioner regarding accountability.

The case has raised concerns over the handling of public assets and the apparent mismatch between the actual value of the stolen streetlights and the amount cited in the police complaint.

FDA’s AI Complaint Portal Receives 293 Food And Drug Complaints In Four Days

Pune, Correspondent : The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has witnessed a sharp rise in public complaints after launching its Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered complaint portal, making it easier for citizens to report issues related to food safety and medicines.

According to FDA officials, the Pune Division received 293 complaints between July 15 and July 19 regarding food products and medicines. The complaints are being scrutinised, and appropriate action will be taken after inspections.

The surge in complaints comes as the FDA intensifies its statewide drive against adulterated food, substandard medicines, expired products, unhygienic food preparation, and counterfeit drugs.



Once a complaint is received, Food Safety Officers or Drug Inspectors conduct inspections at the concerned premises. If necessary, food and medicine samples are collected and sent to laboratories for testing. Strict action is initiated against violators if any breach of regulations is detected.

Joint Commissioner D. V. Bhogawade of the FDA's Pune Division said the AI-enabled portal has simplified

the complaint registration process. Citizens can now submit complaints in Marathi, Hindi or English by speaking or typing, and the AI system automatically converts them into a written complaint.

The portal also allows users to track the status of their complaints online, making the grievance redressal process more transparent and user-friendly.

How to File a Complaint

Citizens can register complaints through the FDA's AI-powered portal by following these steps:

Visit [complaints.mahafda.in](https://mahafda.in).

Choose whether the complaint relates to food or drugs.

Describe the complaint in Marathi, Hindi, or English by speaking or typing.

The AI system automatically prepares the complaint in written form.

Submit the complaint online.

Track the complaint status through the portal after submission.

The FDA said the initiative is aimed at encouraging greater public participation in ensuring food safety and improving the quality of medicines across Maharashtra.

Yerawada Central Jail Inmates Learn Eco-Friendly Ganesh Idol Making Under Rehabilitation Initiative

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : In a unique rehabilitation initiative aimed at helping prison inmates rebuild their lives through creativity and skill development, Yerawada Central Jail organised a workshop to train inmates in making eco-friendly Ganesh idols ahead of the Ganesh festival.

The workshop was conducted by renowned sculptor Vivek Khatavkar and young sculptor Viraj J. Khatavkar as part of ‘Prernapath’, a rehabilitation programme jointly run by the Maharashtra Prison Department, Bhoi Pratishthan, Pune, and Adarsh Mitra Mandal, Pune. The initiative has been working for the past 12 years to help inmates return to the mainstream by nurturing positive values, creativity, and self-confidence.

The training enabled inmates to learn every stage of idol-making—from preparing the clay to sculpting eco-friendly Lord Ganesh idols. Organisers said the participants displayed remarkable enthusiasm, discipline, and artistic talent throughout the workshop.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Suhas



Warke, Additional Director General of Police (Prisons), Maharashtra, Deputy Inspector General of Prisons Yogesh Desai, Yerawada Central Jail Superintendent Sunil Dhamal, Additional Superintendent Pallavi Kadam, social activist Uday Jagtap, and prison officer Shivaji Patil.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Milind Bhoi, coordinator of the Prernapath project and Honorary Member of the Maharashtra State Youth Policy Committee, said the initiative aims to help inmates overcome despair and channel their energy into meaningful work. He noted that the project has received encouraging support from various sections of society.

Renowned sculptor Vivek Khatavkar

said the inmates possess immense artistic potential and creative energy, which can flourish when given the right guidance and opportunities. He described the workshop as one of the most memorable experiences of his artistic career, adding that it marked the beginning of many positive transformations.

The workshop also received support from sculptors Shashikant Rahukar, Amit Kalal, Rohit Gole, paper craft expert Pundalik Khalolkar, Shubham Medankar, Pravin Sonawane, and Sanjay More, who mentored the participants during the training.

The Maharashtra Prison Department, Bhoi Pratishthan, and Adarsh Mitra Mandal have appealed to citizens and organisations to purchase the Ganesh idols crafted by the inmates, saying it would encourage their rehabilitation and help them begin a new chapter in life after completing their prison terms.

The programme commenced with an introductory address by prison officer Shivaji Patil and concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by teacher Namdev Shinde.

Ganeshkhind Leads Smart Meter Rollout As MSEDCL Crosses 14.13 Lakh Installations

Pune, Correspondent : Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) has installed more than 14.13 lakh smart electricity meters across the Pune Circle, with officials attributing the progress to an extensive consumer awareness campaign aimed at addressing public concerns and misconceptions about the technology.

To build confidence among consumers, MSEDCL officials and employees have been conducting awareness sessions in housing societies across Pune. Chief Engineer Sunil Kakade has constituted dedicated teams in every division to interact directly with residents, explain the benefits of smart meters, and



answer their queries.

Each awareness team comprises five members, including two engineers. Over the past week, the teams have conducted nearly 200 awareness meetings, reaching more than 40,000 electricity consumers. In addition, two LED awareness vans have been deployed at busy locations to educate the public about smart meters.

Pune Circle has around 39 lakh electricity meters

in total. Of these, 5,28,326 smart meters have been installed in the Ganeshkhind City Division, 5,24,222 in the Rasta Peth City Division, and 3,60,645 in the Pune Rural Division, taking the total number of operational smart meters to 14,13,193.

Benefits of Smart Meters

According to MSEDCL, smart meters offer several advantages to consumers:

Solar-hour concession: Consumers using electricity

between 9 am and 5 pm are eligible for a Time-of-Day (TOD) rebate of 85 paise per unit, which is directly reflected in their electricity bills.

Accurate billing: Automated digital meter readings eliminate human intervention, reducing the chances of incorrect or estimated bills.

Real-time consumption monitoring: Consumers can track their hourly and daily electricity usage through a

mobile application, enabling better energy management and savings.

Faster fault detection: Smart meters instantly notify MSEDCL about technical faults or power supply disruptions, helping the utility restore services more quickly.

Appeal to Consumers

MSEDCL has urged consumers not to believe misinformation circulating on social media regarding smart meters. The utility has appealed to residents to cooperate with its field staff during installation and awareness drives, clarify any doubts with officials, and embrace the technology to improve electricity distribution and customer service.

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : Shiv Sena Pune City President Pramod Nana Bhangire has demanded immediate repairs to the approach road leading to Abundant Life School in Krishna Nagar, Mohammadwadi, alleging that hundreds of schoolchildren are being forced to navigate muddy, waterlogged and unsafe roads during the monsoon.

According to Bhangire, even light rainfall leaves the road leading to the school submerged under stagnant water and slush, making it difficult and dangerous for students to reach their classrooms. Children are reportedly forced to walk through mud-filled stretches while parents struggle to escort them safely, raising serious concerns over their safety and well-being.

Criticising the Pune



Municipal Corporation (PMC), Bhangire questioned how the civic body could promote its Smart City vision while failing to provide basic infrastructure such as safe access roads to schools.

“It is unacceptable that young students have to risk their safety every day because of neglected roads. The PMC must immediately repair the damaged stretch and ensure a safe route for schoolchildren, parents and school staff,” he said.

Bhangire warned that if the civic administration fails to undertake immediate repairs, Shiv Sena will launch a strong democratic protest at the site in the interest of the students.

The party has urged the PMC to treat the issue as a priority and complete the road repairs at the earliest to ensure children can commute to school safely during the ongoing monsoon season.

₹1 Lakh Fine Imposed On Mantra Zirconia For Dumping Construction Waste On PMC Plot In Keshav Nagar

Pune, Correspondent : The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has imposed a ₹1 lakh fine on Mantra Zirconia builder for allegedly dumping construction and demolition (C&D) waste on a civic-owned plot in Keshavnagar, under the Hadapsar-Manjari Regional Office.

The action was carried out under the directions of Assistant Municipal Commissioner Kunal Dhumal and under the guidance of Senior

Health Inspectors Mangaldas Mane, Navnath Shelar, and Vikas More.

According to the PMC, the contractor was found illegally disposing of construction debris on a municipal plot, violating civic sanitation and solid waste management regulations. Following the inspection, the civic body issued one penalty receipt and levied a fine of ₹1,00,000 against the offender.

The enforcement drive was conducted

by Health Inspector Sushma Mundhe, along with Mukadam Ramesh Kamble and Pankaj Nanaware, who were present during the action.

The PMC said it will continue taking strict action against individuals and contractors found dumping construction waste at unauthorised locations, urging developers and contractors to dispose of debris only at designated facilities to maintain cleanliness and prevent environmental hazards.

Amanora Township Installs Four AlgaeTree Units To Support Generation Of Clean Air

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : In a significant step towards integrating innovative environmental technology into urban development, four AlgaeTree units have been installed at Amanora Township in Hadapsar, Pune. The AlgaeTree units were inaugurated at the hands of Nandkumar Ghule in the presence of Aniruddha Deshpande, Managing Director, City Corporation Limited, the developer of Amanora Township. Amanora has over 12 thousand big trees along with about 40 thousand shrubs.

Ghule has made a significant contribution to create this green element at Amanora. With this initiative, Amanora has become the first township in Maharashtra to adopt an alternative solution to generate clear air along with the trees and shrubs.

AlgaeTree is an advanced urban environmental technology that uses microalgae-based biological systems, combined with mechanical filtration, automation and environmental monitoring, to support air purification and carbon capture in dense urban environments. Unlike conventional tree plantation, which requires adequate soil and space, the compact AlgaeTree system is designed to provide environmental support in areas where traditional greenery may be difficult to establish.

The system works by drawing in ambient air, filtering particulate matter and directing carbon dioxide-rich air into a cultivation chamber containing microalgae. Through photosynthesis, the microalgae absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, while the system continuously monitors

environmental and operational parameters through sensors and smart technology. AlgaeTree is designed to capture carbon dioxide at a rate significantly higher than an equivalent area of terrestrial trees and has an estimated absorption capacity of up to 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ per year, subject to operating conditions.

The technology also incorporates filtration systems to assist in reducing PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ particulate matter. Solar-assisted operation helps reduce dependence on external energy sources, while the system’s compact footprint makes it suitable for urban locations such as residential townships, corporate campuses, commercial complexes, public spaces and smart-city infrastructure.

Heavy overnight rain cripples Mumbai; waterlogging hits roads, rail services

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : Heavy overnight rainfall battered Mumbai and its suburbs on Monday, causing widespread waterlogging, disrupting road and suburban rail traffic, and prompting the temporary closure of the Andheri subway.

Civic officials said intense showers were reported from Bandra, Byculla, Mulund and several eastern and western suburbs, while parts of Navi Mumbai also experienced heavy rainfall.

Mulund recorded the highest rainfall at 160 mm, followed by Versova at 157 mm. Mankhurd, Powai, Bhandup, Marol and Oshiwara received more than 100 mm of rain each during the overnight spell. South Mumbai areas, including Colaba, Parel and Sion,



witnessed light to moderate showers.

The heavy rainfall led to waterlogging in several low-lying areas, severely affecting vehicular movement during the morning peak hours. A stretch of the Sion-Panvel Highway near Juinagar remained inundated, resulting in traffic congestion extending for nearly three kilometres.

Traffic on the Western Express Highway also slowed considerably after

water accumulated at several locations, including Malad and Santacruz. The Andheri subway was temporarily closed after the water level rose rapidly, forcing motorists to take alternative routes.

Suburban train services on both the Central and Western Railway networks were delayed as water accumulated on tracks at several locations, inconveniencing thousands of commuters.

Traffic on the Sion-Panvel Highway was further disrupted after a BEST bus crashed into a roadside divider near Mankhurd on Monday morning. The accident claimed the life of a 65-year-old man and left two BEST employees injured. Police have launched an investigation into the incident.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for Mumbai and adjoining Raigad district, forecasting moderate to intense spells of rain at isolated places during the day.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Mumbai Police and disaster management authorities deployed dewatering pumps and emergency teams at vulnerable locations to

clear flooded roads, regulate traffic and respond to rain-related emergencies.

Despite the wet weather, schools and colleges across Mumbai, Thane and Palghar are functioning normally. Neither the BMC nor other civic authorities have announced any city-wide school closure, as no major disruption warranting a holiday has been reported.

Civic officials attributed the flooding to high-intensity rainfall within a short duration, which temporarily overwhelmed the city's storm-water drainage system in several areas. Authorities have advised citizens to avoid unnecessary travel through waterlogged and flood-prone areas and urged commuters to check weather forecasts and traffic advisories before setting out.

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Maharashtra chief spokesperson Navnath Ban on Monday attacked Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, saying that his alleged attempts to provoke the country's youth and create unrest would never succeed.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state headquarters, Ban said that patriotic youth across the country stand firmly behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Referring to the protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, he said the police had acted in accordance with court directives.

Whether it is Start-up India or Make in India, young people continue to participate enthusiastically in large numbers. Therefore, irrespective of Sanjay Raut's intentions to inflame the minds of the youth and set the country ablaze, such efforts will never succeed, Ban said.

Criticising Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray, Ban alleged that Thackeray had removed his saffron cap during a protest at Shivaji Park.

First, he abandoned saffron ideology and rejected the ideals of the revered Balasaheb Thackeray. Now, even the saffron cap appears undesirable to him, he said. Ban further claimed that



Aadiya Thackeray aspired to take complete control of the party leadership by sidelining Uddhav Thackeray and Sanjay Raut.

He warned that supporters of Hindutva would not overlook what he described as the rejection of saffron symbolism during the Shivaji Park protest.

If they wish to lead, they must wear the saffron cap, uphold Hindutva ideology and then agitate. Only then will their party survive, Ban remarked.

Taking a swipe at Uddhav Thackeray's reported statement that his party was protesting "to protect Lord Ram," Ban said, Uddhav Thackeray seems to have forgotten that it is Lord Ram who protects the world and his devotees.

Since everyone knows that 'one who does not stand with Lord Ram stands for nothing, they should instead focus on safeguarding their own party. Otherwise, the party may cease to exist.

On the Delhi protest, Ban maintained that efforts were underway to find an

appropriate resolution in line with judicial directions. He accused Sanjay Raut and the Shiv Sena (UBT) faction of exploiting the agitation to preserve their political relevance.

He also mocked Raut over the party's "Ram Raksha" protest, claiming that those participating in the demonstration were unable to recite the Ram Raksha prayer. Raut has become accustomed to such embarrassments, he said.

Ban further targeted Raut over his criticism of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), alleging that the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader had previously organised protests against the agency because "corruption has become a habit."

You understand better than most what action by the ED entails. You were arrested by the ED in connection with allegations linked to the Patra Chawl scam. You want people to take to the streets against the agency, but there is no reason to criticise the ED without cause, Ban said.

Mumbai Police detain students near Chaityabhoomi over bid to stage protest against union Education Minister

Mumbai, Correspondent : A group of students was detained by Mumbai Police on Monday after they attempted to stage a protest near Chaityabhoomi at Dadar in support of the ongoing agitation in the national capital seeking the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

According to police sources, the students had assembled near the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar memorial with the intention of holding a

demonstration and raising slogans against Minister Pradhan. Acting on intelligence inputs about the proposed protest, Mumbai Police had made elaborate security arrangements and deployed additional personnel in and around Chaityabhoomi to prevent any disruption of law and order.

As the students attempted to gather and launch the protest, police personnel intervened and detained them before the demonstration could proceed.

The protesters were taken to the Shivaji Park Police Station, where their identities were being verified, and further legal action was being initiated in accordance with the law.

Earlier in a similar action, city police had detained several students in Azad Maidan who were protesting with the same demand.

Police officials said the preventive action was taken to ensure that peace and public order were maintained in the sensitive area, which witnesses a

large number of visitors every day.

No untoward incident or damage to public property was reported during the operation, and normal movement in the vicinity remained unaffected.

The protest in Mumbai comes amid continuing demonstrations in New Delhi and other parts of the country, where student organisations have been demanding the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over issues concerning the education sector.

Rohit Pawar slams LS Delimitation Bill which Supriya Sule supported

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT : Sharad Pawar-led NCP MLA Rohit Patil has strongly criticised the BJP-led NDA sponsored 131st Constitution Amendment Bill, also known as the Lok Sabha Constituency Delimitation Bill, which Sharad Pawar-led NCP National Working President Supriya Sule, had supported in principle last Wednesday, July 15.

Alleging that the Lok Sabha Constituency Delimitation Bill is "a hidden plot by the ruling party to attack the Constitution and end democracy," Sharad Pawar-led NCP MLA Rohit Pawar appealed to opposition parties not to support the bill "under any circumstances," indicating that there is a rift within the Sharad Pawar-led NCP.

In a detailed social media post, Sharad Pawar-led NCP MLA Rohit Pawar alleged that, "The main objective of the ruling party is to get the 'Delimitation Bill' passed in the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which began on Monday. To get this bill passed, the opposition is being seduced with deceptive sweet talk and promises of increasing the Lok Sabha seats of all states by 50 per cent. However, if we fall into the trap of these figures and support this bill, then just like the ward structure in municipal corporation elections, the Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies will also be manipulated



for the political gains of the BJP".

Citing the example of what happened in Assam, Sharad Pawar MLA Rohit Pawar said, "This reorganisation will be done only to retain power without considering geographical boundaries or constitutional framework. The reorganisation of constituencies in Assam is a good example of this. Since 2016, the BJP has developed a strategy with the help of experienced former officials to sabotage targeted constituencies in order to change demographic and political realities to favour the BJP".

"Until this bill is passed, they (the BJP) will pretend to reconcile with the opposition, but as soon as the bill gets passed, the BJP's dictatorial tendencies will resurface. There is a well-planned move to get the Delimitation Bill passed and implement the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) to undermine the Constitution of India. All opposition

parties must foil this plot by making a united effort to ensure that the bill never gets passed," he stated.

It may be recalled that last Wednesday, July 15, Sharad Pawar-led NCP's National Working President and Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule, who also happens to be the daughter of NCP founder Sharad Pawar, had announced at a press conference here that her party will support the BJP-led NDA sponsored 131st Constitution Amendment Bill, which is also known as the Lok Sabha Constituency Delimitation Bill.

She said that the Sharad Pawar-led NCP "may" support the bill "if" the government amends it to increase Lok Sabha and Assembly seats across all states by 50 per cent.

"Give the 50 per cent condition on paper. Then we will discuss," Supriya Sule said, claiming that the government has a proposal to include the 50 per cent cap in the bill.

Sule also stated that she attended an all-party meeting called by union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju to discuss the Delimitation Bill, which was also attended by union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"The bill is still not with us. I can't speak about the bill unless it (the draft of the bill) is with us," Supriya Sule said on July 15.

MUMBAI/ NASHIK, CORRESPONDENT :

Isha Gramotsavam, Bharat's biggest rural sports festival, is set to make its debut in Maharashtra this year, with Nashik hosting the state's inaugural edition. First launched in 2004 by Sadhguru, Yogi, Spiritual Guru and Founder of Isha Foundation, Isha Gramotsavam has grown from a grassroots initiative into the country's largest rural sporting movement.

The sporting festival has earned national recognition for its contribution to rural development and sports promotion. It is accredited by Fit India and is recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, as a National Sports Promotion Organization (NSPO). In 2018, the initiative received the prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar for its outstanding contribution to grassroots sports.

Now in its 18th edition, the festival is being held across 10 states and one union territory, including Maharashtra, bringing together villages from across Bharat through the spirit of sport, community and cultural celebration. This year's edition is expected to witness participation from over 80,000 players representing more than 40,000 villages through an estimated 7,000 teams, including nearly 15,000 women

players across the country.

Open only to non-professional rural men aged 14 years and above, while women aged 13 years and above, Isha Gramotsavam seeks to strengthen community bonds and celebrate the vitality of rural Bharat through competitive volleyball and throwball, accompanied by vibrant cultural performances, said a release today.

The tournament will follow a multi-stage format comprising Cluster-level matches, Divisional rounds, the Semi-Finals, and the Grand Finale. Maharashtra's Cluster-level matches will be held on 1-2 August at Late Ma Saheb Meenatai Thakare Indoor Stadium, Nashik, where men will compete in volleyball and women in throwball. The qualifying teams will advance to the Divisional rounds, which will be held on 15-16 August at Sadhguru Samidhi Bengaluru, with the winners earning a place in the Semi-Finals and the Grand Finale, to be held from 4-6 September at the Isha Yoga Center Coimbatore, in front of the iconic Adiyogi.

Isha Gramotsavam has a prize pool of over rupees 1 crore. At the Cluster level, the winning team will receive Rs 10,000, the runners-up Rs 7,000, while the third and fourth-placed teams will receive Rs 5,000 and Rs 3,000

respectively. Teams qualifying from the Cluster level will advance to the Divisional rounds, where the winners will receive Rs 15,000, the runners-up Rs 10,000, the third-placed team Rs 6,000, and the fourth-placed team Rs 4,000. The winning teams at the Grand Finale will receive 5 lakh each, while the runners-up will receive Rs 3 lakh. Third and fourth-place teams will receive Rs 1 lakh and Rs 50,000, respectively.

The support of Isha Gramotsavam's partners has made it possible to provide a national platform where thousands of rural athletes can discover their potential, represent their villages with pride, and celebrate the spirit of rural Bharat through sport. This year's edition is supported by Gravton Motors as the Mobility Partner, Nivia Sports as the Sports & Equipment Partner, TATA AIA Life Insurance Company Limited as the Bronze Partner, Wonder Cement as the On-ground Support Partner, and CG Power and Industrial Solutions Limited, Varindra Constructions Limited, Royal Infraconstru Ltd, and Agilisium Consulting as CSR Partners.

The festival will simultaneously take place in rural parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Puducherry.

Maha Oppn backs CJP protest as Police cracks down on protestors

Mumbai, Correspondent : Opposition parties in Maharashtra backed the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protest in New Delhi, even as the Mumbai police issued an order on Monday barring the gathering of five or more than five people at public places for 15 days, from 12.01 am of July 23, until the midnight of August 6.

Issued by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) Akbar Pathan under the Maharashtra Police Act, the order has prohibited all processions, use of loudspeakers and amplifying instruments, musical bands and bursting of crackers in processions, besides other restrictions.

The police statement stated that the order was issued due to what it called the "likelihood of disturbance to public order" as well as "danger to human lives and

loss of property".

The Mumbai Police also registered an FIR against organisers of the protest held at Shivaji Park in Dadar West held on Sunday for "unlawful assembly" stating that no permission was granted to carry out the protest in which Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray participated.

The police also warned organisers of another protest at Chaityabhoomi in Dadar West on Monday, July 20, stating that the organisers have been denied permission to protest and that an FIR would be registered against them if they protested.

The first FIR was registered at the Marine Drive police station against the Sharad Pawar led-NCP activists for protesting near the Mantralaya (state secretariat or administration building) in South Mumbai, while the second FIR was

registered against left-wing organisations for protesting near the Mumbai Press Club near Azad Maidan in South Mumbai.

On Monday, hundreds of students, youth and senior citizens staged an agitation at Samvidhan Chowk in Nagpur expressing their support to the Cockroach Janata Party's protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, demanding the resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Another protest was also organised in front of the RSS headquarters at Reshimbagh in Nagpur, where protestors chanted slogans against the RSS and the BJP, until they were dispersed by the police.

Sharad Pawar-led NCP Maharashtra state women's wing president Rohini Khadse attacked the BJP government and said, "The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has asked

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to resign. Crores of people of the country voted and placed Prime Minister Narendra Modi in power. BJP MLA Atul Bhatkalkar criticised the CJP movement. They forget that the same people who voted you to power can also crush you. Therefore, do not take the people of the country, especially the youth, for granted".

"Attempting to crush the rights given by the Constitution using force is an insult to democracy. The police lathi charge on the protesting youth at Jantar Mantar in Delhi is highly condemnable. Instead of guaranteeing employment, education and a bright to the youth, if they are being beaten up, then this is not democracy but oppression," Sharad Pawar-led NCP Maharashtra state women's wing president

Rohini Khadse said here on Monday.

Interacting with media persons in Delhi on Monday, Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena-led Rajya Sabha member and chief Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said, "The BJP government underestimated the scale of the students' movement.

They did not understand what was going to happen, what is happening right now and what may happen in the immediate future. They simply thought that they could finish off the students like insects, but the Cockroach Janta Party and students turned up at Jantar Mantar in the thousands. This movement is spreading across the country and receiving mass support in major cities".

"What will the BJP government do? Will they throw lakhs of people behind

bars? The government, which consists of a few 56-inch people, is scared of the children. If it was possible, this government would have sent the Enforcement Directorate (ED) after everyone sitting at Jantar Mantar," Sanjay Raut stated. Sanjay Raut also tweeted on X stating, "The credit for today's great movement goes to only one person and his name is Supreme Court Justice Surya Kant. My Lord, thank you for bringing the dead people of the country back to life".

Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena MLA Aadiya Thackeray tweeted on X stating, "What a cowardly regime! Using brutal force against the students and those standing for students, only on one issue—asking for justice against examination paper leaks".

Interacting with media

persons in Delhi on Monday, Sharad Pawar-led NCP National Working President and Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule tweeted on her X account stating, "In a democracy, every citizen has the constitutional right to peacefully voice their concerns. Instead of listening to those exercising this democratic right, the reported use of force to suppress their voices is deeply unfortunate and unacceptable".

"Students and their parents have been peacefully raising their demands for a considerable period. Their voices deserve to be heard through meaningful dialogue, not met with force," Supriya Sule stated.

Extending her support to the protest, Supriya Sule stated that the BJP government should "engage in a dialogue with the protesters and address their genuine concerns as soon as possible".

Security stepped up after bomb threat to Kalyan, Mumbra railway stations



MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT :

Security was stepped up at Kalyan and Mumbra railway stations on suburban lines of the Central Railway today after police received information about an alleged plot to blow up the two stations.

However, no suspicious object or explosive material was found during an extensive search, officials said.

The alert was triggered after a caller, identified as Brijesh Kumar, informed the police helpline (112) that he had overheard three individuals discussing a plan to target the two railway stations.

Acting swiftly on the information, Thane Police alerted the Government Railway Police (GRP), following which a joint

search operation was launched by the GRP, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS).

Security personnel carried out thorough searches at both railway stations. However, no suspicious object or explosive material was recovered during the operation.

Police are attempting to trace and question the caller as part of the ongoing investigation to ascertain the authenticity of the threat.

Kalyan and Mumbra, located on the Central Railway line, are among the busiest railway stations in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Despite the security alert and search operation, train services and passenger movement remained unaffected.

MUMBAI, CORRESPONDENT :

The ambitious Bhandup Bird Park project in Mumbai's suburban district is set to accelerate efforts towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable eco-tourism, with an investment of Rs 45 crore allocated through the District Planning Committee, Guardian Minister Adv Ashish Shelar announced.

Adv Shelar inspected the proposed project site at Bhandup on Monday in the presence of MLA Mihir Kotecha, corporators Prakash Gangadhare, Hetal Gala Morvekar and Deepika Ghag, along with senior officials.

The project is planned within the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, a Ramsar site of international significance, and will cover around 20.09 hectares along the Thane Creek shoreline near the Bhandup Pumping Station.

However, only 0.35 hectares of land will be utilised for creating eco-friendly tourism infrastructure, following the principle



of minimal intervention in the natural ecosystem.

The site is known for its rich mangrove habitat, wetlands and mudflats, which support nearly 250 species of resident and migratory birds.

The proposed bird park will feature bird-watching facilities, nature trails, green landscaping, visitor amenities, conservation initiatives and environmental awareness programmes.

Economist Kate raises concern over misuse of mule accounts

Pune, Correspondent :

Prominent economist Dr D.S. Kate on Monday expressed concern over the growing misuse of "mule accounts", warning that allowing others to use one's bank account in exchange for money is both illegal and highly risky.

In a statement, Dr Kate said cybercriminals use mule accounts to receive and divert funds obtained through fraudulent activities.

A mule account holder is often used to receive money into their bank account, transfer the funds to

another person, or withdraw them in cash in return for a commission ranging from 10 to 20 per cent. Needy individuals, educated unemployed youth, people involved in illegal activities, and those lacking financial awareness are particularly vulnerable to such schemes, he said.

Dr Kate further stated that fraudsters lure people by promising to double their money through various investment schemes, part-time job offers, digital arrest scams, debt enhancement proposals, loan

The planned attractions include a 2.16-kilometre Mangrove Nature Trail, bird observation centres, viewing decks, multi-level watch towers, a butterfly garden, a jetty, a Nature Interpretation Centre with a lecture hall, external parking facilities and other eco-tourism amenities. Officials said that construction materials and methods would be selected to minimise ecological impact.

The Bhandup Bird Park is also set to become India's first eco-tourism destination to incorporate an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based bird detection and monitoring system.

Spread over approximately 1.5 kilometres, the system will enable real-time bird monitoring, AI-powered identification, automated tracking, event analytics, recording and biodiversity documentation.

The technology platform will include digital lens integration, centralised data management, live synchronisation and interactive digital features, making the

park an attraction for tourists, researchers, ornithologists and nature enthusiasts.

The project has received approvals from the Executive Committee of the Maharashtra Nature Tourism Development Board and the Maharashtra Eco-Tourism Board. It has also secured the necessary Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), along with technical approval from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

Announcing the funding provision, Shelar said the Rs 45 crore allocation would be made from the District Planning Committee's special fund.

He said the project represented a convergence of environmental conservation, biodiversity protection, technology and sustainable tourism, and would help establish Mumbai Suburban as a prominent eco-tourism destination while serving as a model initiative for the country.

Minister Mahajan instruct work on ghats for Simhastha Kumbh Mela is completed within the stipulated timeframe

NASHIK, CORRESPONDENT :

Maharashtra Minister for Water Resources and Kumbh Mela, Girish Mahajan, today directed that the ongoing works for development of various ghats, roads and allied infrastructure for the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela be executed with high quality and completed by the deadline of March 2027.

A meeting of the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela Authority was held under the chairmanship of Minister Mahajan. The meeting was attended by Mayor Himgaouri Adke-Aher, Deputy Mayor Vilas Shinde, Authority Chairman Dr. Pravin Gedam, Police Commissioner Sandeep Karnik, Kumbh Mela Commissioner Shekhar Singh, Municipal Commissioner Manisha Khatri, District Collector Ayush Prasad, Superintendent of Police Dr.



D. S. Swami, Chief Engineer (Water Resources) Prakash Misal, Superintending Engineer (Command Area Development Authority, Nashik) Rajesh Govardhane, Superintending Engineer (MSEDCL) Anil Thorat, and Superintending Engineer (MSETCL) Shrikrishna Navlakhe, among others.

During the meeting, Minister Mahajan reviewed the current status of the ghat construction works in Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. He assessed the latest progress, implementation challenges, necessary inter-departmental

coordination, and pending issues. He instructed all concerned agencies to complete these works before March 2027.

He emphasized that various departments must discharge their responsibilities collectively and in coordination to resolve any difficulties arising during the execution of these works. Mahajan directed the Water Resources, Revenue, Land Records, Police, and Forest departments to expedite the work by collaboratively resolving issues relevant to their respective domains.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the progress of several projects: constructing a "ghat" on the right bank of the Godavari River upstream of its confluence with the Kapila River; constructing a "ghat" on the left bank at Takali, downstream of the Godavari-Nandini confluence; developing the "Odha Ram Ghat" and its surroundings on the left bank at Odha (near the Ganpati temple, extending both upstream and downstream) for the "Shahi Snan" (royal holy dip) during the Nashik Simhastha Kumbh Mela; constructing "ghats" and developing areas on the right bank (in Dasak "shivar") and the left bank (in Nandur "shivar") upstream of the Dasak Bridge; constructing new "ghats" and allied works along the Godavari riverbanks (both right and left) at Trimbakeshwar; executing the "Gautami-Godavari Dam to Trimbakeshwar Pumping

System' project to ensure the Godavari River flows perennially and to fully fill decentralized water storage bodies in the Trimbakeshwar area; and constructing "ghats" on both the left and right banks at Takali (upstream of the Godavari-Nandini confluence) as well as a rubber weir (balloon weir) at the Godavari-Nandini confluence.

Superintending Engineer Misal provided details through a presentation. Additionally, Divisional Commissioner Mr. Gedam, Kumbh Mela Commissioner Shekhar Singh, and Municipal Commissioner Mrs. Khatri briefed the meeting on the ongoing works related to the Kumbh Mela. All land acquisition officers, concerned revenue officials, executive engineers, and project officers associated with the respective projects were present on this occasion.

Health crisis at Maha's power center; CM Fadnavis's office hit by contaminated water scandal

Mumbai, Correspondent : In a deeply concerning turn of events for the state's administrative headquarters, Mantralaya has been gripped by a public health crisis that has reached the doorstep of three-time Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Fadnavis, who recently achieved a historic political milestone by becoming Maharashtra's third-longest-serving Chief Minister, personally intervened after discovering a foul odor in the coffee served at his sixth-floor office during a meeting.

Following his immediate intervention, which saw his office pivot to bottled mineral water, the crisis has exposed a wider

failure in the facility's infrastructure.

The contamination, suspected to stem from compromised underground storage tanks, has triggered a wave of illness across the building.

Numerous officials and employees have reported symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, and fever, with some requiring hospital treatment for jaundice. The situation has caused significant alarm among the staff, who now face health risks within the very center of the state's governance.

Public frustration is mounting, with staff unions and officers pointing fingers at the Public Works Department (PWD) for gross negligence in maintaining the

building's water supply systems.

Despite internal directives to clean storage tanks, the persistent nature of the contamination has forced employees to take matters into their own hands, with many now bringing their own bottled water to work as a safety precaution.

Formal complaints have been lodged with Chief Secretary Rajesh Agarwal, as employees demand accountability for the unsanitary conditions.

As the government scrambles to conduct water quality testing and repair filtration systems, the incident serves as a stark indictment of the facility management at the highest level of Maharashtra's administration.

Deputy Mayor Parshuram Wadekar inspects progress of national memorial at historic Bhide Wada

PUNE, CORRESPONDENT : Deputy Mayor Parshuram Wadekar on Monday inspected the ongoing construction work of the National Memorial at the historic Bhide Wada in Budhwar Peth and directed officials to complete the project within the Mahatma Phule Bicentenary birth anniversary year.

Wadekar reviewed the progress of the project

with officials, engineers and architects and stressed that the memorial should be completed within the stipulated time, maintaining high quality and in a manner befitting its historic significance.

It was at Bhide Wada in 1848 that Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule started the first school for girls in India, laying the foundation for a

revolutionary movement for education, equality and social transformation.

The historic site therefore holds immense importance in the social history of India and is regarded as a source of inspiration for citizens.

During the inspection, officials briefed Wadekar on the current status of the architectural work, ongoing development activities and the plans for the next phase of construction.

Farmer, son die by suicide one after the other in Buldhana

Buldhana, Correspondent : In a heart-rending incident, a farmer and his son allegedly died by suicide one after the other in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, police said on Monday.

The incident took place late Sunday night at a farm near Jalka Bhadang village in Khamgaon taluka.

According to police, Santosh Harishchandra Gawande (50),

a resident of Parkhed village, allegedly hanged himself from the iron frame of an onion storage shed in his field.

When Santosh did not return home till late at night, his son Akshay alias Vitthal Gawande (30) went to the farm in search of him.

On finding his father hanging, Akshay reportedly called two to three of his friends, informed them about the incident and told them that

he too intended to end his life.

Despite their attempts to dissuade him over the phone, Akshay allegedly hanged himself near his father's body.

The deaths sent shockwaves through Parkhed village, with relatives and villagers rushing to the farm after learning about the tragedy.

Khamgaon Rural Police conducted a panchnama and sent

both bodies to the Khamgaon General Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Police are investigating the reason behind the double suicide.

While initial discussions in the village suggest mounting farm debt may have driven the father and son to take the extreme step.

Officials said the exact cause would be established after the investigation.

12 kg silver crown stolen from Peshwa-era Shiva temple in Raigad; probe underway

Mumbai, Correspondent : A 12-kg silver crown, estimated to be worth around Rs 20 lakh, was stolen from the Shivling at a historic Peshwa-era Shiva temple in Khopoli town of Maharashtra's Raigad district, police said on Monday.

According to police, unidentified miscreants broke into the temple and fled with the silver crown, triggering outrage among devotees

and local residents.

The theft has raised questions over the security of the temple, despite the premises being equipped with CCTV surveillance cameras.

A case has been registered at Khopoli Police Station, and a special investigation team has been constituted under the supervision of Senior Police Inspector Sachin Hire to investigate the theft

Police officials said CCTV footage from the temple and surrounding areas is being analysed, while technical evidence and other forensic leads are being examined to identify and trace the accused.

Search operations have also been launched.

The temple, believed to date back to the Peshwa period, is a prominent place of worship in the region and attracts a large

number of devotees throughout the year.

Police expressed confidence that the culprits would be apprehended and the stolen silver crown recovered at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the incident has sparked resentment among devotees, who have demanded enhanced security measures at temples and strict action against those involved in the theft.

One killed, two injured as BEST bus hits divider on Sion-Panvel highway in Mumbai

Mumbai, Correspondent :

A 65-year-old pedestrian was killed and two BEST employees were injured after a Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) bus lost control and crashed into a road divider on the Sion-Panvel Highway at Mankhurd in the eastern suburbs of Mumbai on Monday morning, police said.

The accident

occurred at 09 am near Vishwakarma Hospital when the Route No. 501 BEST bus, travelling towards Vashi, allegedly veered off its lane and rammed into the central divider. The impact fatally injured Bhaskar Raosaheb Pandey (65), who was standing near the divider at the time of the accident.

Officials at Rajawadi Hospital said Pandey was brought to the hospital with grievous injuries but

was declared dead before admission.

The bus driver, Banwari Shiram Prasad Sharma (51), and conductor, Vaibhav Waghmare (41), sustained injuries in the crash and are undergoing treatment. Doctors said both are in stable condition.

Police and traffic personnel rushed to the spot soon after the incident. The damaged bus was removed from

the carriageway, and traffic on the busy Sion-Panvel Highway, which was briefly affected, was restored after clearance operations.

A case has been registered, and police are investigating the circumstances that led to the accident. Preliminary findings suggest the driver lost control of the vehicle, though the exact cause will be established after completion of the investigation.



MASSIVE FIGHT AFTER FIFA WORLD CUP FINAL

Argentina Players Turn Their Backs On Spain, Slammed For Classless Act During Trophy Presentation



LAMINE YAMAL 'COMPLETES FOOTBALL' AT 19 AS ARGENTINA BETRAY MESSI

AGENCY
Buenos Aires: It was heartbreak for Argentina. Ferran Torres scored a dramatic extra-time winner as Spain defeated holders Argentina 1-0 to win the World Cup on Sunday and shatter Lionel Messi's dreams of a triumphant farewell to football's greatest stage. Barcelona striker Torres lashed home a thumping finish in the 106th minute to reward a dominant display by Spain against an Argentina team who failed to register a single shot on target in 120 minutes. A star-studded crowd of 80,663 that included US President Donald Trump packed East Rutherford's MetLife Stadium to see if Argentina captain Messi could crown his glittering career with a second World Cup victory. But the 39-year-old maestro – almost certainly playing in his final World Cup game – was reduced to

irrelevance as Spain took control early on against an Argentina team who committed cynical fouls throughout. The South Americans' skulduggery ended with midfielder Enzo Fernandez being sent off after a brutal challenge on Spain defender Pau Cubarsi in stoppage time. Shortly after the match ended, Argentina star Lionel Messi was sitting on the field as Spain players celebrated. He then got up when 19-year-old Spain forward Lamine Yamal approached him and they shared a handshake and a hug. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni was held back by a Spain player while appearing to shout at someone moments after the final whistle. Leandro Paredes also shoved Spain's Eric Garcia and Gavi, and Nicolas Otamendi exchanged words with a few Spanish players, including Rodri. Paredes was given red card. For long periods though it looked as if Argentina may somehow hold on for a penalty shoot-out as Spain struggled to make the breakthrough. But after Nico

Williams had a goal controversially disallowed in extra-time, Spain struck. A lofted cross to the back post by Pedro Porro found Williams who nodded into the path of Torres to crash home the goal that clinched Spain's second World Cup title after their maiden 2010 triumph. "Ultimately, the goal belongs to 47 million people – not just me or the 26 players," goal hero Torres said, referring to Spain's approximate population. "At the end of the day, all finals are tough; when you're up against Messi, there's a certain nervousness, but we always believed in our football and in ourselves." Argentina came under heavy criticism for their conduct after losing the FIFA World Cup 2026 final, with sections of the football fraternity branding the runners-up "classless" after players turned their backs during Spain's trophy celebrations and fans chanted Lionel Messi's name while Rodri collected the tournament's Golden Ball award, reported Goal.com.

CALM KIMI ANTONELLI TAKES SIXTH WIN OF THE SEASON WITH VICTORY AT BELGIAN GP

AGENCY
Belgium: Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli ended a three-race winless streak on Sunday to extend his lead in the Formula One drivers' championship with a solid fighting victory for Mercedes in the Belgian Grand Prix. The 19-year-old Mercedes driver came home 1.952 seconds ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc with four-time champion Max Verstappen finishing third for Red Bull. Antonelli's teammate George Russell, who began the race in second place in the championship, just 25 points behind the Italian, crashed out of the race on the opening lap after tangling with Hamilton. Hamilton was fourth for Ferrari after an incident-filled race in which he hit a mechanic during a pit-stop. The incident was referred to the stewards. While the seven-time champion escaped additional punishment, his Ferrari team were handed a fine. Isack Hadjar, who began at the back of the grid, did superbly to work his Red Bull up to sixth, just holding off reigning world champion Lando Norris, who started 13th, in the second McLaren. It was Antonelli's sixth win of the season and came from his



sixth pole of the year, the first driver to win from pole in Belgium since 2021. It lifts him to 204 points in the championship, 45 clear of Hamilton with Russell third on 154. "It feels very nice to be back on the top step," said Antonelli. "We just have to keep performing, keep bringing the results and then we will see what will happen at the end of the year." The race started in cool conditions under a grey sky with rain in the air as Antonelli made a good start to lead up to La Source, but he had no answer when Verstappen deployed his power pack to pass him

through Eau Rouge. The Dutchman was then immediately vulnerable to a counter-attack and both the Italian and Leclerc drafted past him into Les Combes where behind them Hamilton clashed with Russell. "Racing incident" - The four-time champion continued in fifth, but Russell bounced off into retirement as a Safety Car (SC) was deployed. Hamilton reported that he "had no front end" control as a result of a car ahead moving across him and the incident was investigated by the stewards who gave Hamilton a five-second penalty.

PFL announces historic champion vs. champion clash that will see two promotions belts on the line



DULEEP TROPHY:

Ruturaj Gaikwad To Lead Star-Studded West Zone Squad, Shams Mulani Named Vice-Captain

AGENCY
Mumbai: India opener Ruturaj Gaikwad has been appointed captain of a star-studded West Zone squad for the upcoming Duleep Trophy, with seasoned left-arm spin-bowling all-rounder Shams Mulani named as his vice-captain. The squad was announced on Monday following a meeting of the zonal selection committee for the



competition, to be played from August 23 to September 10 at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) grounds in Bengaluru. Last year, India's seam-bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur led West Zone, who reached the semi-finals of the competition, but didn't make the final as Central Zone grabbed the first-innings

lead. Now, for the upcoming competition, the captaincy baton has gone from Thakur to Gaikwad, who also leads Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL and was recently in the India 'A' squad for the 50-over tri-series and red-ball games against Sri Lanka 'A'. The team features two specialist wicketkeepers in Harvik Desai and Urvil Patel, ensuring strong options behind the stumps.

VIRAT KOHLI WAS A MASTER, HE WILL REMAIN ONE: IRFAN PATHAN

AGENCY
Mumbai: Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan believes Virat Kohli's reputation does not hinge on scoring runs at Lord's, saying the batting great has already proven himself across the world and that his latest half-century should be appreciated for the quality of the innings rather than the venue where it came. Kohli struck 74 in India's chase of 388 in the third ODI against England at Lord's, sharing a crucial partnership with Rohit Sharma before the visitors eventually fell 27 runs short as England clinched the three-match series 2-1. Questioning the significance often attached to performances at the historic venue, Pathan said Kohli's legacy has long been established. "I've always wondered why it's considered so important to score runs at Lord's. Virat has scored runs everywhere in the world. It might be a prestige thing, but if this half-century hadn't come, would his importance in world cricket, or Indian cricket, have diminished? Absolutely not. Whether he scores runs at Lord's or not shouldn't be given that much importance, especially from an Indian fan's perspective. Virat Kohli was a master, and he will remain a master," Pathan told



JioStar. Pathan also highlighted Kohli's awareness during the chase, noting how the former India captain adjusted his approach as the required run rate climbed in the latter stages of the innings. "In this game, though, the way he batted stood out. Once he got to around 45, he knew he had to switch gears because of the required run rate.

PV Sindhu Leads Indian Challenge At China Open, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty To Skip



AGENCY
Mumbai: Bolstered by her Japan Open triumph, India's PV Sindhu will spearhead the country's challenge at the China Open Super 1000 tournament starting on Tuesday, but Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will miss the event as the former continues to recover from a shoulder injury. India's badminton contingent will look to build on a productive week on the BWF World Tour, with Sindhu returning to China in red-hot form after capturing her first title in nearly two years. The two-time Olympic medallist enjoyed a flawless campaign in Japan, defeating three-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi in the

final and winning all her matches in straight games. The 2016 China Open champion will look to carry that momentum into the tournament, where she opens her campaign against compatriot Unnati Hooda. Sindhu could face fourth seed Chen Yu Fei of China in the second round. The Tokyo Olympic champion retired with a hamstring injury during her Japan Open semifinal last week and is scheduled to begin her campaign against Japan's Natsumi Nidaira, provided she recovers in time. Devika Sihag is the other Indian in the women's singles draw and will begin her campaign against Thailand's Busanana Ongbamrunphan.

"THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TOLD":

Rohit Sharma Ends Retirement Speculations In Explosive Interview

Rohit Sharma has shrugged off the speculations of his international retirement in an interview with the BCCI following India's ODI series loss to

England. The right-handed batter returned to form with a superb century, albeit in a losing cause. The Three Lions beat India by 27 runs to clinch the three-match series 2-1. Rohit had scored just 11 and 26 in the first two matches against England. Several media reports

that he might be dropped after the third ODI and added that the player might opt to retire at the conclusion of the match. First, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia cleared the air on the issue. He said that Rohit is going to play for India even after the England series. If anyone still had doubts about it, the player himself has rubbished the claims of his international retirement. Notably, Rohit has already called time on his T20I and Test careers and is active only in ODIs at the

highest level. The veteran cricketer said that the "outside noise" doesn't bother him as it is something he has been used to since the start of his career. "My job is with the bat. Come and play, represent my country. That's what I have been told to do since I made my debut. That's what I am going to do. Since I made my debut, the noise was there. Till the time I am going to be there, the noise will be there. It doesn't matter to me. What matters is what I do on the field. I want to try and

contribute to the success of the team. That's all my focus is," Rohit said. "If there is no noise, there is no fun. My job is inside. Their job is outside. That's how I look at it," he added. Rohit scored 138 off 110 balls in the third ODI against England at Lord's, London. His innings was laced with 17 fours and five sixes. Earlier, India captain Shubman Gill also refuted suggestions that Rohit plans to retire from international cricket after the third ODI against England at Lord's.

