

# Afternoon VOICE

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## THANK YOU READERS

### Afternoon Voice walks into its 14<sup>th</sup> year of a successful journey

In the last few years, especially during the lockdown, many newspapers in Mumbai went out of business. Many news organizations faced a truly unprecedented situation and undoubtedly in these circumstances, revenue was under severe stress. Small media houses just silently vanished from the race. There was a survival crisis for us too but somehow, we worked hard to sustain ourselves.

There was a time when I thought of winding my newspaper, especially when the rival tabloid Afternoon Dispatch and Courier also got shut permanently. Everyday news of closures and layoffs in the media industry was very disturbing and distressing to me. Dealing with monetary disasters was not

easy and above all coming up from the scratch looked difficult, but somehow, we walked our path making many adjustments and today celebrating our 14th year of success.

Our readers are the biggest support and they always encouraged us to stand as parallel media against the odds in the mainstream. There was constant content flow, columns, letters to the editor and sometimes some feature stories. Our inbox is constantly overflowed. Many of them volunteer at the office to get involved in tabloid making. Without our readers' support, this celebration wouldn't have been possible.

We, The Afternoon Voice team sincerely thank each and every one of our readers and all well-wishers. Their support and blessings

## LETHAL DUOS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT

# ED SARKAR





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## Cover Story



# ED SARKAR

## THE LETHAL COMBINATION IN MAHARASHTRA POLITICS

I can understand what it takes to be a rebel. They are not born overnight but the circumstances compel them to choose their path. I don't know why but when I saw the launch of the movie Dharmaveer - Mukkam Post Thane, I got this hint that something is really not well within Shiv Sena. I was hearing much gossip that Shinde is upset, he has been ignored and so on but I thought he would join the BJP. When BJP won 3 of 6 Rajya Sabha seats by giving a major setback to then the ruling MVA alliance, Shinde's name hit the headlines for supporting BJP and that's how I was very much sure that he will join BJP but never had a clue that he will rebel with so many numbers and topple the entire government.

The overconfident leaders of Maha Vikas Aghadi always believed that their government was here to stay for another 25 years. They were challenging BJP to attempt to tumble them. They were constantly in the media with their most arrogant statements. But see how time took its turn to flip the side.

Shinde the grassroots-level leader and Devendra the hard-core administrator both make good combinations. What people want is development. They are

fed up with everyday scandals and unparliamentary attacks on each other. Maharashtra was in a mess; people were fed up with too much negative news. Don't be surprised if I say, people stopped watching the news those days. Maha Vikas Aghadi government was deep into corruption. People were fed up with corruption in government offices and ministries. Constables of chauky to traffic were collecting money because they were given targets. Government and administrative sectors were harassing commoners for bribes. Young boys and girls were arrested for social media posts. More than Shiv Sena people were fed-up with NCP and Congress.

Eknath Shinde became Chief Minister and Devendra Fadnis his deputy. Perhaps by making Eknath Shinde the Chief Minister, the BJP has directly attacked nepotism and dynasty politics. When Congress and the NCP formed a coalition government with the Shiv Sena, the Thackeray family bagged the chief minister's post in the MVA government. Uddhav Thackeray became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, following the legacy of his father Balasaheb Thackeray. Aditya Thackeray

was given the Ministry. Lately, Aditya became too intrusive and Uddhav played dummy CM rest was getting managed from his kitchen. People wanted desperate change. Well, with this revolt in government most of the people in Maharashtra have become hopeful from hopeless.

As chief minister, Shinde became a magnet that attracted many Shiv Sainiks to the new power structure, further weakening Uddhav's Shiv Sena. In its 56-year history, the Shiv Sena has witnessed many a rebellion which saw the exit of party stalwarts such as Chhagan Bhujbal (1991), Narayan Rane (2005) and Raj Thackeray (2006), but none matched the scale of the huge void left by Shinde that led to bargain on Bow and arrow, the party symbol and its existence.

CM post in Maharashtra was given to Eknath Shinde, who helped the BJP ending the era of dynasty politics in the state. By making Shinde the new chief minister of Maharashtra, BJP proved that it has no greed for power or a post. If Fadnis would have been appointed as the CM of the state, then the opposition would have alleged BJP for the toppling of MVA was a power grab move by the party. BJP has tried to prove

that it can work in the background of a government and still make a change in the state. There is where Devendra has a bigger role to play.

Eknath Shinde becoming the Chief Minister of Maharashtra was big news, people focused more on Devendra Fadnis accepting the post of Deputy CM in the state, which is being perceived as a step down for him. The perception was created but Devendra Fadnis handled it very well, both CM and deputy CM are in bro-code. The BJP has the highest number of leaders in Maharashtra, and Devendra Fadnis has already been the CM of the state once before. Through Shinde's appointment as CM, the BJP wanted to show that the party doesn't belong to one leader or one family. Whatever might be the political equation, people are yet to register Shinde as CM and Devendra as Deputy. Most of the time you will see cute gestures and exchanges between Shinde and Devendra. Where Devendra plays a big brother. Nothing is permanent in political corridors; we don't know what the would be the progress in future but one thing is sure Maharashtra needs Devendra for another few decades. Devendra is a humble human but a great taskmaster

and intellectually strong. He speaks sense and even as an opposition leader, he maintained his dignified demeanour.

Eknath Shinde is a man of the masses, presently dealing with the tag of a backstabber, there are mixed emotions for him in Maharashtra. While departing as the Maharashtra CM, Uddhav Thackeray had managed to set a narrative of having been backstabbed by the BJP. "You [BJP] have brought Balasaheb's son down," Uddhav said during his resignation speech. This narrative had the potential to bring Uddhav emotional and political benefits as far as the voters were concerned. By ensuring a 'Shiv Sainik' as chief minister, this narrative is nullified.

The BJP truly supports the legacy of Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb. Devendra Fadnis announced that Eknath Shinde would be the CM of Maharashtra. After all, with a 'Shiv Sainik' in the CM's chair, 'Balasaheb's dream remains fulfilled'.

Politics is unpredictable and random, it keeps changing. Only the concert is its leader. I also don't want to draw any conclusions but definitely wish for an able government and stable growth of Maharashtra.

## Cover Story

# Devendra Fadnavis The most loved Minister of Maharashtra

In 2014 when Devendra Became CM of the state, I saw people celebrating his win. Their happiness was countless. When he was betrayed in 2019, people felt cheated and they grieved. As the opposition leader he grabbed all the attention, Maharashtra was ruled by Maha Vikas Aghadi but people had all hopes for Devendra. His aggressive exposure and attack the ruling government was a solace to the people. They were more interested in what he would be doing next than the present leaders' speeches or press statements.

Devendra is the second youngest former Chief Minister of Maharashtra and is not only loved but most adored minister of state. While it is natural that a man who has reached the heights of power in such a short period would naturally be a gifted orator, bright as well as a strong fighter, what strikes you even as a first impression is his simplicity in dealing with people. As a person who has seen and worked for him while he wasn't a Chief Minister but BJP President for Maharashtra, there hasn't been any remarkable change even after he had taken up the crown of thorns. He had his fair share of uneasiness with tricky political situations and has managed them all.

I had several opportunities to meet him and he has always surprised me with his calm and composed approach. Despite his busy schedule, he gives time to people, hears them patiently. He is a problem solver. He can get along with all types of people and carry them along. He is not egoistic when it comes to people and his utterances are sensible. He is a man of moderate views.

In short, Maharashtra under his rule had become the only state to complete the implementation of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS). Closed Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) networks have been established in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Aurangabad. Fadnavis was then the Urban Development Minister; he has been successful in fast-tracking infra projects. Projects like the Mumbai metro, Pune metro and

Nagpur metro. Unfortunately, he could not retain power for a second term otherwise all these Metro projects would have been at speed.

Because of Devendra's clean image, he emerged as a good, non-corrupt, non-controversial, clean leader of Maharashtra. Right now, the state wants development, the city wants transparency. People believe in him and his leadership. Devendra Fadnavis has proved himself to be truly a leader for all seasons and valid reasons. Fadnavis has set in motion various initiatives, and on many occasions balanced them through regional or community-specific measures, to avoid political landmines. His clean image is widely seen as one of its most positive aspects. He is known for delivering on the promises made. Including "Mi Punha Yenar", I will come back.

Known for his high intellect, his political acumen has been proven time and again. We all have seen in two and half years of Maha Vikas Aghadi he played an excellent role of an opposition leader. After two and half years he returned to power giving his opponents the taste of their own medicine. The tricky political terrain of Maharashtra has been tough to crack even for the likes of wily Sharad Pawar which Devendra Fadnavis managed despite all challenges. He is a fighter who fights for the cause of the ordinary people of Maharashtra occupying one of the highest positions in the State.

It is even rarer to have a Mayor of the city who is just 27 years old. He was the second youngest mayor in Indian politics as he became the mayor of Nagpur back then. The outstanding performance combined with a consistent political track record stood in good stead as he then became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Farmers' issues have been a huge problem for Maharashtra historically and Devendra Fadnavis was not less affected. He brought up the flagship Jalyukt Shivar which reduced the reliance of farmers on monsoon. Challenges due to bad monsoons continue to affect Maharashtra but this man is keeping the fight

against natural calamity.

He then headed a minority government supported by a sulking and abusive Shiv Sena which was the dominant partner which took time to come to terms with the new normal. Whatever the provocation, we did not find Devendra loose with words. He kept his cool, issued very measured statements and always kept the doors open for discussions and reconciliation.

During 2014 quick anti-incumbency was setting in, he worked effectively with the party president, central leadership and RSS to spread his party in the hitherto unknown areas. In the municipal and gram panchayat elections, his party did not rely on the central leadership and yet returned a very impressive performance. From just another party, BJP rose to be the most dominant party across the state. The other three lost to BJP in strongholds as well as other areas. The long-term spread that the party will achieve in the years to come will be fantastic. It also closed doors on the four corner contests of Maharashtra.

After decades of declining economic power, the state halted the fall and turned around. Maharashtra became the investment destination that it was for the four and a half decades after independence. The SME/MSME sectors were droning again and turning around is round the corner. Infrastructure was the area which received the maximum push. In 2015 Maharashtra stood for unfinished roads, and poorly maintained roads. By 2018 Unfinished roads were completed. Road maintenance had improved. Public transport received the maximum boost. The best parts about the infrastructure development are the excellent coordination between state and central governments and the lack of corruption - which had reached institutionalized proportions under UPA.

In the year 2015, agriculture in the state was waning and irrigation projects were mired in major corruption scandals. Water resource management

was nowhere to be seen. The drinking water crisis loomed. The focus has shifted from major irrigation projects to small and medium projects. This has reduced the complexities involved and has helped enhance the groundwater table.

The level of

implementation of government schemes, central or state, was excellent - in urban as well as rural areas. Aadhar-linked bank accounts further helped curb leakages (they were on a massive scale) and warmed the hearts of people. Cut down on political and administrative corruption too. One impressive thing which I have noticed in the administration of Devendra is the ability to prioritize. A state saddled with legacy problems where more important problems were handled first, what was picked up was followed with great effort and nowhere a lack of focus was noticed.

This year in June month during the budget session of the state legislature this year, an interaction between Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde stood out for its cordiality given the bitterness between the BJP and the Sena for the last 2.5 years. Fadnavis had raised the issue of an increase in property tax on properties in Jalgaon, a decision that had been implemented by him when he was chief minister. He said that in hindsight, he realised it was a mistake and requested Shinde to reverse the hike as it would be in the public interest, this made him



stand out. Fadnavis had even led a delegation to meet Shinde, who once was part of his cabinet, to resolve the issue.

Treating Shinde with deference has paid rich bonuses to Fadnavis personally and the BJP: it not only helped the party win the third Rajya Sabha seat in the June 10 election but also the fifth legislative council seat that seemed completely out of its grasp. It is alleged by Shinde's supporters that he was not consulted for the elections. Later on, Shinde joined hands with Devendra Fadnavis and today both are ruling the state. Fadnavis has emerged as the unchallenged top leader of the BJP in Maharashtra. Fadnavis' strategy had always worked in favour of the BJP. People were a little disheartened when he was sworn in as Deputy Chief Minister but with time, they seem to be settled with the fact that Devendra is an inevitable part of State power and politics.

I am not a big fan of any political party or politician but I have immense respect and admiration for Devendra Fadnavis.

## Cover Story



# Eknath Shinde - Always a Shiv Sainik

I never judged this politician or followed him intensely, but I was initially furious when he topped the government and joined hands with the BJP. Who he joined was not my concern but will he be loyal to the party where he jumped was my curiosity. When he rebelled with several other Shiv Sena, I was reading him more. His opening speech in parliament was just mesmerizing, he stole many hearts. Many parts of Maharashtra people celebrated the day Uddhav Thackeray resigned as CM and another big celebration was on the day when Devendra and Eknath Shinde were sworn in to form a new government.

Shinde has come a long way from his humble beginnings as an auto-rickshaw driver and he had a spectacular rise in the party, beginning as a shakha activist from the Kisan Nagar area, he was elected a corporator before becoming an MLA and then cabinet member. The movie "Dharmaveer" has beautifully depicted his charisma as a Sena worker. The 58-year-old native

of Satara had a humble origin in Wagle Estate, the area he now represents. He started in a private firm and worked as an auto driver before he caught the attention of his mentor in the 1980s. Shakha Pramukh Shinde's ability to mobilise participation for Sena's protests and welfare programs earned Dighe's trust. He was eventually elevated to Shakha pramukh in Kisan Nagar.

He contested his first election in 1997 in the Thane corporation polls. He won by a decent margin. His work in the Thane Corporation eventually incited Dighe to elevate him as Leader of the House. Four-time MLA, he served as Leader of the House for four years until he was allowed to contest the assembly elections in 2004 from Thane city. His strong connection with the grassroots ensured he won three subsequent terms consecutively from Kopri Panchpakhadi in the city.

Reaching across party lines, connected to the common man' People close to Shinde say he

is strongly tapped into the pulse of the common man. His strategies have enabled the party to win various civic body polls over the last two decades not just in Thane but even in north Maharashtra. Observers recall how he weaned away 30 BJP corporators in the Jalgaon Municipal Corporation to help. Sena won the mayoral polls last March despite BJP being in a majority there. We also had known Shinde as one of the few Sena leaders who reaches out to leaders as well as common citizens across the spectrum.

He was appointed a cabinet minister in the MVA government. However, he felt sidelined by certain elements within the party who allegedly felt insecure because of his reputation. He was somehow not in a mood to continue or take orders from junior Thackeray. A day after suspected cross-voting in Maharashtra legislative council (MLC) election earlier this month, Shinde was sacked from the party's legislative post. He subsequently went camping in a hotel in Gujarat's Surat with several party MLAs. They

eventually moved to Guwahati.

After nine days of intense political drama, during which more MLAs joined the rebellion, Shinde arrived back in Mumbai and met BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis. The duo then went to meet the Governor to stake claim to form the government. During a press conference shortly after submitting a letter to the Governor, Fadnavis dropped a bombshell and announced that Shinde would be sworn in as the new CM. Shinde took oath as the Maharashtra CM at 7.30 pm on June 30 while Fadnavis took oath as the deputy CM.

When he became CM, he turned emotional while speaking about the hardships in his personal life as well. He choked when he narrated the death of two of his children in an accident. "I have not given time to my family or children. My blood, sweat and tears were for the Sena. I have worked tirelessly to strengthen the party and this is what we have got," he said. He said he and the others with him were now back in a "natural alliance" and in the 2024 state elections, their alliance would get 200 MLAs elected. "Those worried about the future of the 50MLAs who supported me, I promise you I will ensure that each of them is re-elected. If that doesn't happen then I will go take up farming," said Shinde.

Taking a swipe at Sanjay Raut who mocked the rebels, Shinde said, "He had said they have sent 40 buffaloes for sacrifice at Kamakhya Devi temple in Guwahati. Finally, who did Kamakhya Devi sacrifice?" said Shinde. "We were called

tapriwala, rickshawwala and bhajiwala... the party that taunted PM Modi as a chaiwala is being wiped out.

In one of his initial statements after his rebellion, Shinde said in a tweet in Marathi that he and his supporters "won't go against the teachings" of Bal Thackeray and Anand Dighe, the late Sena firebrand who was a close aide of the Sena founder. A protégé of Dighe, Shinde has come a long way.

After becoming CM, he immediately pulled out his socks. Visiting police quarters to assure dignified life to cops Shinde assured major welfare for police families. He went on tour across Maharashtra, and greeted several veteran leaders of Shiv Sena. He granted quasi-judicial powers to bureaucrats. Powers have been entrusted to bureaucrats so that the common man does not suffer.

He rejuvenated Hindutva politics in the state; Shiv Sena's days were numbered when the Shinde emerged as the sole torchbearer of Hindutva. Elections are due in several civic bodies in Maharashtra, including the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which would indicate which Sena faction gets popular support. Earlier, the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena had written to the EC, requesting it to hear its views before making any decision on representations for claims over the party.

All this takes care of things for now. The BJP is in power in Maharashtra as a junior partner, and the Shiv Sena is in disarray. The party now has a chance at pushing for a government on its own after the 2024 Assembly elections.

## Cover Story

# Balasaheb belong all those who walked his path

The power struggle in the state is still going on. After the exit of the rebellion of Eknath Shinde, a powerful leader in Shiv Sena, the internal strife in Shiv Sena came to the fore and there was a tremor in the politics of the state. This rebellion is not sudden. This has been well planned and taken probably many days if not months. First massive cross voting happened for Rajya Sabha on 10th June and again on MLC elections that happened on 20th instant. Immediately after the MLC elections the rebels numbering 21 along with Eknath Shinde went in disguise. Later more and more MLAs started joining the group and we all know what happened there after.

Maha Vikas Aghadi government was dismantled, Uddhav had to resign. Meanwhile Devendra Fadnavis became umpire of the game played between Shiv Sena vs Shiv Sena. Gradually he took complete control over Eknath Shinde and his rebel group. Shinde was made Chief Minister of Maharashtra because the numbers he carried with him were very crucial for BJP to stay in power.

On the other hand, Uddhav cannot accept Eknath Shinde as the leader of Shiv Sena, because his greatest ambition is to make Aditya Thackeray his successor will not fructify. There is a possibility of the party slipping under the Thackeray family. Politically Thackerays might be broken down. But still, there is a huge movement in Sena, Aditya is addressing several rallies, his father Uddhav regularly talking to media and also visiting Shakhnas and reviving them. He would have done all this before the damage was done to Sena. The family-based parties pass the control of the party from one generation to another generation. In politics such kingdoms are demolished overnight. There are several examples.

Udhav has been sulking these days, recently there was one very theatrical interview in



which Saamana executive editor and Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut questioned Uddhav Thackeray. After the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government several attempts were made to convey to people that Shinde is back stabber and NCP chief Sharad Pawar did not ditch him but his own party legislators deceived Shiv Sena. In that Interview Thackeray lashed out at CM Eknath Shinde-DCM Devendra Fadnavis government. Uddhav Thackeray accused Eknath Shinde of trying to bring him down even when he was unwell in hospital and could barely move, in an interview to his party

mouthpiece Saamana, Uddhav made some sensational statements but they were not very convincing.

Uddhav objected to the use of his father's photo for votes by rebels. He said everyone should use their own parents' photos for votes. His statement reads "Unfortunately my parents are not alive, but they (rebels) should take the blessings of their own parents and campaign, give speeches and seek votes. Why steal my father? You have no dedication, not sense of duty, no courage - are you not man enough? You are a traitor". He said in the entire crisis, he blamed himself the most for trusting some

Shiv Sena workers and leaders.

It's high time that Uddhav should stop grumbling and understand the fact that the Parties are a product of people's moment; leader's children treat it as a personal property. Political parties cannot be inherited from their ancestors. All the dynasts are facing the issues of survivals be it Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh, Paswans or Gandhi family and now Thackeray. Balasaheb is a father-figure for many. He was a self-made public figure. It's the people's love for him that gave acceptance to his children in public life.

This is the time that Uddhav should move out gracefully from politics and be like his father working for the people of Maharashtra and Marathi mannos. Bala Saheb Thackeray was a towering personality and a principled politician. He commanded utmost respect. His legacy should have been continued by his progeny. This kind of talk of nepotism leaves a bad taste with the public. Why degrade the roots of others? Shiv Sena survived by its people, it's the sainiks who took to the roads or who contributed to the existence of the party, no one can discredit them. I have never seen Thackerays standing on the road and protesting or shouting slogans. It's the Sainiks who shed blood for the party. But an angry Uddhav compared these rebel Shiv Sainiks to "rotten leaves" of a tree that had to be shed to make way for new leaves.

The Sena chief said the rebels resented that he had been able to keep the Shiv Sena thriving even after Bal Thackeray's death. He alleged that the rebels want to separate Shiv Sena from the Thackerays, comparing it to "separating the Congress from the Gandhis. Uddhav said the BJP was trying to appropriate great leaders of other parties. The way they tried to appropriate Sardar Patel from the Congress; they are doing the same thing with his father. On the Eknath Shinde Sena claiming the legacy of Bal Thackeray, Uddhav now threw a challenge, on the other side Eknath took the challenge sportingly.

Now finally Thackeray has requested the Supreme Court to stop the Election Commission from deciding on who has control of the party until a decision is taken on the disqualification of the rebels. Team Shinde, after forming a government with the BJP's support, claims it is the "real Shiv Sena". The Election Commission has told both the Sena factions to produce documentary evidence by August 8 to prove who represents the Maharashtra party.

# Cover Story



## Maharashtra Cabinet

### BJP PLAYS BIG BROTHER BY GETTING PLUM MINISTRIES

Amid charges of BJP getting plum ministries, BJP was ready to swap some of the portfolios with chief minister Eknath Shinde. The BJP got three major portfolios – home, finance and revenue. The annual budgets of the departments of the BJP ministers are much higher than the Shinde Camp leader's portfolios. If the Shinde camp ministers are unhappy with their portfolios, Devendra Fadnavis already announced that the BJP is ready to swap some of the ministries. It is the Shiv Sena and the BJP government, so they know how to iron out their differences through dialogues. The allocations have been done through talks. There is tremendous transparency be-

tween Shinde leaders and BJP leaders.

Even though some of the Shinde camp ministers had expressed their disapproval over allocation of portfolios. Dada Bhuse, who was agriculture minister in the previous Uddhav Thackeray government, got the port and mining ministry, Gulabrao Patil, former water supply and sanitation minister, retained the same portfolio, while Deepak Kesarkar, who was expecting the environment and tourism ministry, but was given school education ministry.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Shinde had told his ministers that they should not express their displeasure over allocation of ministries as BJP is giving them full support. If there are any issues with

ministries, then people should talk to him, not to the media.

BJP minister Sudhir Mungantiwar has been made the Forest Minister, a portfolio he handled earlier.

Former state BJP president Chandrakant Patil is the new minister for higher and technical education, He will also look after parliamentary affairs.

From the Eknath Shinde camp Abdul Sattar has been given the Agriculture portfolio. Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil - Revenue, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Dr. Vijay Kumar Gavit - Tribal development, Girish Mahajan - Village Development and Panchayati Raj, Medical Education, Sports and Youth Welfare, Gulabrao

Patil - Water supply and sanitation, Dada Bhuse - Ports and mines, Sanjay Rathod - Food and Drug Administration, Suresh Khade - Labour dept, Sandipan Bhumre - Employment Guarantee Scheme and Horticulture, Uday Samant - Industry, Prof. Tanaji Sawant - Public Health and Family Welfare, Ravindra Chavan - Public Works (excluding Public Enterprises), Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, Atul Save - Cooperation, Other Backward and Bahujan Welfare, Shambhuraj Desai - State Excise Duty, Mangal Prabhat Lodha - Tourism, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Women and Child Development.

Tanaji Sawant, the newly-

sworn in Maharashtra Cabinet minister

Tanaji Sawant, 58, was the MLC for the first time in 2016 from Shiv Sena. He served as the Cabinet minister for Water conservation from 2014 to 2019. In the 2019 Assembly election, he won from the Paranda constituency in Osmanabad district. He was denied a ministerial berth in 2019 by the MVA government and since then he was unhappy and was openly boycotting Shiv Sena meetings in the district. He was among the first ones to join Eknath Shinde after he revolted. He is one of the wealthiest MLAs with a number of educational institutes across the state. According to the election affidavit filed in 2019, he has assets of Rs 206 crore.



**Devendra Fadnavis**  
- Home, Finance and Planning, Law and Judiciary, Water Resources and Command Area Development, Housing, Energy, Protocol



**Sudhir Mungantiwar**  
- Forest, Cultural Affairs, Fish Business



**Girish Mahajan**  
- Rural Development and Panchyati Raj, Medical Education, Sports and Youth Welfare



**Dr. Vijaykumar Gavit**  
- Tribal Development



**Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil**  
- Revenue, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development



**Mangal Prabhat Lodha**  
- Tourism, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Women and Child Development



**Ravindra Chavan**  
- Public Works, Food & Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection



**Atul Save**  
- Co-operation and Other Backward and Bahujan Welfare



**Suresh Khade**  
- Labour



**Chandrakant Dada Patil**  
- Higher and Technical Education, Textile Industry, Parliamentary Affairs

# Announcements of ED SARKAR

No doubt they both Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis both are committed to the state and its people. As soon as they came to power they made major announcements.

**Maharashtra Fuel Price:** The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra Government announced that it will slash VAT on fuel soon. Replying to a congratulatory motion in the Legislative Assembly, he also announced Rs 21 crore for the development of Hirkani village in Raigad district.

In April, the then chief minister of Maharashtra, Uddhav Thackeray had announced a reduction in petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2.08 per litre and Rs 1.44 per litre respectively after the Centre slashed excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 8 and Rs 6 per litre respectively.

In April this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the Centre and states should work in tandem, reiterating the theme of cooperative federalism, calling on states that haven't followed the reduction in excise duty on petrol and diesel by the Centre in November with a decrease in Value Added Tax (VAT) to do so. He emphasised that high taxes on petrol and diesel in such states – almost all opposition-led – are an injustice to the people.

After coming to power, the Shinde government has fast-tracked the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, which was kept on the back burner by the previous Thackeray-led dispensation. The new government also gave a Cabinet



approval to rename Aurangabad and Osmanabad cities as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Dharashiv respectively. The decision to rename these cities had been taken in the MVA government's last cabinet meeting held on June 29, just before Mr. Thackeray resigned. However, Shinde and Fadnavis had said the MVA dispensation's decision to rename these places was illegal as it was taken by it

after the governor had asked it to prove majority in the state Legislative Assembly.

Shinde restored the pension scheme meant for the political activists who were imprisoned during the Emergency imposed in 1975. The decision, taken by the Fadnavis government, had been scrapped by the Thackeray dispensation.

The new government lifted the stay on the construction of

Metro-3 car shed in Aarey Colony, a forest area. The decision paved the way for construction of the car shed at the green lung that was stopped in November 2019 following a stay imposed by the previous MVA government. The Shinde-led dispensation also restored the direct election for the post of sarpanch and municipal council president.

Eknath Shinde declared the Dahi Handi a sport and

announced a Pro Govinda League to be organised across the state in the coming year. Shinde said many countries like Spain and China promote human pyramids as a sport and organise state-level events. Shinde said that although the state had announced Rs 10 lakh insurance for all the govindas, the scheme will not take off this season, because of paucity of time. He said it would be implemented from next year.



## Cover Story

# First Maharashtra Assembly session of **Shinde Government**



**A**fter the political drama of power formation and factionalism going on for the last several days, for the first time the ruling party and the opposition came face to face in the House. A glimpse of what the monsoon session of the Legislature would be like was seen at the beginning.

The monsoon session of Maharashtra Legislature started in Mumbai on August 17, with an aggressive opposition making it clear that it will oppose the "unconstitutional" government led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. On the eve of the session, which will conclude on August 25, opposition parties NCP, Congress and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena boycotted the tea party hosted by the Shinde government claiming the state government is not following the democratic procedures.

At the beginning of the session, Congress leader Nana Patole took a look at the wet drought of the farmers. Villages have gone under water due to rain. He requested the President to speak on it. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis replied that the government is keeping an eye on the situation. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has also held a meeting. Government is taking steps on it. The government will take a decision on it soon. here are some key points so far

- Supplementary demands of 25 thousand 826 crores were submitted today on the first day of monsoon session. The state government had announced financial assistance to the farmers who suffered losses due to heavy rains in the state. The state government had announced that it would provide assistance of Rs 13 thousand 600 per hectare to the affected farmers. However, it has come to light that no provision has been made for this in the supplementary demand submitted in the legislature today. Therefore, the question is being raised: when will the farmers get help.
- It was seen that Health Minister Tanaji Sawant was exhausted on the first day in the auditorium. Sawant was very tired while answering the questions of the opponents regarding health. The Health Minister could not give the exact information to the House on the related issue of elephant disease in Palghar district. So the opponents became aggressive. Eventually the question had to be shelved. Then, while replying to the question of female foeticide in Beed, MLA Bharti Lovekar made a statement that Beed district is famous for it, after which the opposition attacked strongly.
- Confusion in the Legislative Assembly over the Mumbai-Goa highway, Hasn't anything been done on the Mumbai-Goa highway in two and a half years? BJP asked this question to the Sena MLAs, to which Bhaskar Jadhav countered that this is the failure of Chandrakant Dada and Nitin Gadkari in the last 12 years.
- Police Inspector Vasudev More suspended Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis's announcement in the Assembly, regarding the illegal activities in Beed district, Fadnavis said, action will be taken in the state where this is happening.
- Nana Patole has said that Rashmi Shukla went to meet the Home Minister. No one is greater than the law. The case is in court. It is not appropriate to speak now. Mohit Kamboj is a party worker. So they must have gone to meet, said Nana Patole.
- Bachu Kadu was speaking at the monsoon session today. Talking about the phone tapping case, Bachu Kadu said that my phone was also tapped. The phone was tapped because I was smuggling ganja. There were allegations about this but I don't need anyone's clean cheat. I will not surrender either. If the authorities have not done anything in this case, there is no need to surrender, he said.
- Bachu Kadu said that "I could not come yesterday as I was out for work. Being upset is no reason not to come. Even if there is displeasure, there is no point in showing it in the hall. I have said before that it will not offend us for personal gain. He said that there are important issues and the fight regarding them will continue."
- Separating Fadnavis and Gadkari will not work
- When asked about the BJP's exclusion of Gadkari and Fadnavis in the election committee, he said it was an internal matter of the

party. Separating Fadnavis and Gadkari will not work. Looking at BJP's policy, personnel are not seen there, he said.

- Health Minister Tanaji Sawant could not give the exact information to the House on the related issue of elephant disease in Palghar district. So the opponents became aggressive. Eventually the question had to be shelved. Then, while replying to the question of female foeticide in Beed, MLA Bharti Lovekar made a statement that Beed district is famous for it, after which the opposition attacked strongly. Ajit Pawar answered the questions regarding the approved officers for the working system to prevent the outbreak of file Filariasis in Palghar district, the posts of employees, the posts filled, the number of vacant posts, the funds approved for Filariasis prevention measures, the funds spent in the previous year. Tanaji Sawant was asked. Hence, the question was postponed till Monday for reply.
- Chhagan Bhujbal lashed out at the government while talking about GST on school books. He said that it is our luck that you have not imposed GST on speech. Otherwise, if you talk for a minute, GST will be imposed. We read in the paper that Fadnavis' is more powerful than CM. He has been appointed to some committee of the centre. Just go there and tell them not to impose GST on food grains, said Bhujbal. Speaking further, he turned his march towards Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.
- Bhujbal said that I felt good that you became the Chief Minister. In a different way I think it's a good thing because this is the first Chief Minister with a beard. But he has a black beard. Their influence is limited to Maharashtra. Bhujbal said that the effect of white beard is on India.
- The boat found on the shore of Raigad (Raigad Suspected Boat) is called Lady Han and it is owned by a woman from Australia. This boat was going to Europe from Muscat. The engine of the boat broke down. The boat passengers were rescued by a Korean warship. The boat could not be towed due to rising water and it drifted away. Neptune Security Services Company has said that this is the boat. On contacting the company directly from the sticker and documents on the boat, they informed Neptune Security Services Company that this boat is ours and that it has capsized and drifted in the sea of Oman. This has also been confirmed by the central agencies. Besides, Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis has informed that even though the boat has been seized and checked, all necessary precautions will be taken. Fadnavis has given a statement in the House regarding this incident.
- A few days ago, a woman in Bakkarwadi of Beed taluka died due to an illegal abortion. Police have arrested the accused in both these cases. But it was seen that there was a lot of controversy over the case of illegal abortion in Beed. MLA Laxman Pawar raised his voice in the Legislature regarding illegal abortion in Beed district and demanded that the matter be investigated in fast track court, Health Minister Tanaji Sawant announced that the matter will be investigated once again through a special team and the matter will be conducted in fast track court.
- Farmers in the state are looking to the government for help. Ajit Pawar said that the government should take people in confidence that they will help them. Due to the rain, the crops of the farmers have suffered a lot. Therefore, Ajit Pawar has demanded that the government should announce an aid of 75 thousand rupees per hectare for crops, and also that the government should announce an aid of 1.5 lakh rupees per hectare for fruit crops. He also said that this year, the sugarcane area in Maharashtra can be seen on a large scale and if permission is given to start sugar factories from October 1, the sugarcane of the sugarcane farmers will increase.

# DEVENDRA FADNAVIS: THE TALLEST LEADER OF MAHARASHTRA



If we look at the past tenures of Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, we can see Devendra successfully remained on CM post for five years and now again in power as deputy chief minister.

- Yashwantrao Chavan - 1 May 1960 – 14 November 1962 (2 years)
- Marotrao Kannamwar - 20 November 1962 to 24 November 1963 (1 year, 4 days)
- P.K Sawant - November 1963 to 4 December 1963 (9 days).
- Vasanttrao Naik (11 years, 77 days, two full terms) from 1963 until 1975.

- Shankarrao Chavan (two terms, 2 years each) from 1975 until 1977 and from 13 March 1986 until 26 June 1988.
- Vasantdada Patil - from 17 May 1977 to 18 July 1978 and again from 2 February 1983 to 1 June 1985.
- Sharad Pawar - He has served as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra on three occasions.
- Abdul Rehman Antulay - 9 June 1980 – 12 January 1982
- Babasaheb Bhosale (1982–1983)
- Vasantdada Patil - from 17 May 1977 to 18 July 1978

and again from 2 February 1983 to 1 June 1985.

- Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar - (1985–1986)
- Shankarrao Chavan - from 1975 until 1977 and from 13 March 1986 until 26 June 1988.
- Sudhakarrao Naik - 25 June 1991 until 22 February 1993
- Manohar Joshi - from 1995 to 1999
- Narayan Rane – from 1 February 1999 – 17 October 1999
- Vilasrao Deshmukh - (2004–2008)
- Ashok Chavan - from 8 December 2008 to 9 November 2010

- Prithviraj Chavan (2010–2014)
- Devendra Fadnavis - 31 October 2014 to 12 November 2019
- Devendra Fadnavis - He served 5-day in 2019
- Uddhav Balasaheb Thackrey - from 2019 to 2022
- Eknath Shinde - presently CM of the state

So, what is the underlying theme in this simple list of leaders? No other Chief Minister barring Vasanttrao Naik has completed his tenure of 5 years. It is difficult being the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and even more difficult to maintain the chair. Devendra Fadnavis is the only Chief Minister who

did this once in a half a decade record. The last person Vasanttrao Naik did this starting in 1963 while Fadnavis took the seat in 2014 and not only kept it with his excellent track record of good work but also excelled in the area where Maharashtra historically lagged - Agriculture sector. Devendra Fadnavis overcame and managed all the setbacks and there were plenty which came on his way, including the poison of caste violence which the opposition actively perpetrated and fanned. Even though he is one of the best performing Chief Minister and here to stay in power corridors of – Maharashtra.

## Voices



### Letters to the Editor

#### Tomato flu

Doctors have sounded an alarm over a new illness that is gaining a foothold in India. 'Tomato flu', as it is commonly called, is a new type of hand, foot and mouth disease and cases have been found in Kerala, Odisha and West Bengal.

The infectious disease is caused by intestinal viruses and is rare in adults, as they usually have immune systems strong enough to defend them from the virus.

The infection has been named 'Tomato flu' because of the red, painful blisters that appear on a patient's body and gradually enlarge to the size of a tomato.

The symptoms of the disease include rashes and skin irritation. Children infected with the disease experience tiredness, joint pain, high fever and body aches. Discolouration of the hands, knees, buttocks are some other symptoms. Infected children may also experience abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. Other symptoms include coughing, sneezing and a runny nose. It is very much like chikungunya.

- Jubel D'Cruz

#### Will digital payments be expensive?

The Unified Payments Interface, which has 10 trillion transactions per month of course payments through UPI will now be charged rather than free. From January 1, 2020, UPI payments or transactions were regulated to be free and also made mandatory in that regard. However, recently the Reserve Bank has asked for suggestions or feedback from customers regarding digital transactions, perhaps free digital payments are not considered to be subject to charges. right?

Even though it is seen from the complaints received by the Reserve Bank that transactions through UPI, IMPS, RTGS, NEFT, PPI as well as debit card and credit card are charged a lot in a country that is very fast and transparent, sooner or later these digital transactions hit the customers on the basis of charges. It will definitely go?

In that regard, the Reserve Bank has announced a 'Discussion paper' and citizens have been invited to submit their comments. Isn't it to bring all this confusion under the scope of digital payment services fee?

- Dattaprasad Shirodkar

#### Depression Problem

In the country, many students prepare for competitive exams. During this journey, Students also get distracted as they just enter for preparing for that. We must ponder over it. Policies should be taken into consideration. In Academic policies, something should be added. Through this student can be conscious and complete their work consistently without worrying about the future.

- Anushka Panwar

#### Jacqueline laundered money?

This is reference to Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez alleged money-laundering case. We all know Jacqueline Fernandez well from movies and TV commercials. Unfortunately, Actress Jacqueline has been an accused in the money laundering case with conman Chandrashekar, who faces charge of extortion amounting to a massive Rs. 200 crore. Jacqueline said she didn't do something. But it is alleged that she was in constant contact with Chandrashekar. Chandrashekar has also given Jacqueline many expensive gifts and also transferred money to the account. Delhi Police had arrested Chandrashekar for allegedly extorting around Rs. 215 crore from Aditi Singh and Shivendra Singh. The ED has arrested a total of eight people in this case. These include Chandrashekar and his wife Leena Maria Paul.

- Muskan Prajapat

# Kalyan Singh: The pillar of Ram Mandir movement



The country witnessed two major movements in the early Nineties, one the Mandal and another the Kamandal (i.e., Ram Mandir) Movement. Overall, the Mandal Movement was led by the OBC leadership of socialist background, while the Mandir movement was led by the Upper caste leadership of Jan Sangh & RSS background. The nineties also saw the emergence of some powerful backward leaders in the BJP like Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar, Om Prakash Singh & others, who helped it to gain power at the centre in the long run. In strengthening the roots of BJP among depressed sections of the society and expanding its mass base, these leaders offer their best.

Born on 5th January 1932 in a backward Lodh family, Kalyan Singh played significant role in the power politics of Uttar Pradesh. In his early life, he worked as a Swayamsevak of RSS. He contested for the first time in 1967 from Atrauli constituency for the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha on Bharatiya Jan Sangh ticket. He contested ten times from the same constituency and won nine times, except in 1980. He was jailed for 21 months during the Emergency in 1975. In 1977 he was including in the State cabinet as the health minister. He has been BJP state general secretary in 1980 and president in 1984 and 1987. In 1989 he became the leader of the BJP in the UP Vidhan Sabha.

Articulate & politically suave, Kalyan Singh was the chief architect of the Ayodhya movement. He was the prominent leader of the BJP, formulating and executing the strategies for the Party's rise in UP, the most populous & central power controlling state. In 1991, when the BJP got an absolute majority under his leadership in the UP Vidhan Sabha election, he was sworn in as the 16th Chief Minister on 24th June 1991. After the demolition of the disputed Ram Mandir-Babri structure in Ayodhya on 6th December 1992, he resigned from Chief Minister post owning moral responsibility and President Rule was imposed by the President Shankar Dayal Sharma.

The short tenure of Kalyan Singh is remembered for strict & good governance in the State and reforms in various sectors. He gave impetus to the development works with social justice. His government chalk out Masterplan for the development of the historical & spiritual place of Ayodhya and acquired 2.27 Acre of land surrounding the disputed structure for the construction of the Ram Chabutara.

Although he had given affidavit in Supreme Court that he would not allow damage to the structure, but he refused to order fire on the crowd when the Karsevaks turned aggressive and demolished it, along with other stalwarts he was also accused of conspiring over the incident, which he vehemently denied. He clarified that the incident was an outpouring of the sentiments of Crores of people, whose aspirations has been forcibly subdued for hundreds of years. Despite all security arrangement, the structure came down. Had firing been ordered, thousands of people would have been killed. His sacrifice of the Chief Ministership did not go in vain; as in case of no demolition probably the courts would have ordered Status Quo.

He again became the Chief Minister of UP on 21st September 1997 according to the 6-month rotational power-sharing formula between the BJP and the BSP. The BSP withdrew support to the government, but with the support of a faction of Congress Legislatures, he continued as CM. On 21st February 1998, Naresh Agrawal withdrew support to the government. The Governor Romesh Bhandari dismissed the government and invited Jagdambika Pal to form the Government; but the Allahabad High Court did not allow the formation of such type of government. Ultimately Naresh Agrawal had to return

back to the BJP. Kalyan Singh proved his majority and form the government again. On having tussle with Party stalwart Atalji he had to resign on 12th November 1999 and ultimately, he left BJP in December 1999.

He formed the political outfit "Rastriya Kranti Dal"; but in 2004, on the request of Vajpayee he came back into BJP and became an MP from the Bulandshahar Lok Sabha constituency. He again got upset with the BJP and became member of Lok Sabha from Etawah constituency in 2009 as an independent candidate. He joined SP in 2009, but return back to BJP in 2013.

He served as the 21st Governor of Rajasthan from 4th September 2014 to 8th September 2019 and was given the additional charge of Governor of HP from 28th January 2015 to 12th August 2015. When Supreme Court judgement came in 2019 to the pave the way for Ram Janma Bhoomi Mandir, he did not hesitate to express his pleasure. He said that his dream has been fulfilled and he wanted to live till the Mandir is constructed. In November 2020, a special CBI court had acquitted all 32 accused in disputed structure demolition case.

Kalyan Singh was the perfect blend of Mandal as well as Kamandal and was termed as "Hindu Hriday Samrat" by the Party cadres. After a prolong illness, he said goodbye to his struggling life on 21st August 2021, but left behind glorious remembrance of nationalism and governance. His demise has created vacuum in UP politics, which could not be filled soon.



- Er. Prabhat Kishore

Technocrat & Academician

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at [afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com](mailto:afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com)  
**No postal letters will be entertained**  
(The views expressed are authors' own.)

## From Vaidehi's desk...

# Story of a Media Rebel – Journey from



I started my journalism career at the age of 17 as a translator in one trade magazine in the diamond market of Mumbai. Soon I joined an English tabloid and worked there for a year as a trainee reporter. After that I joined a local cable news channel which was very popular those days, where I worked as a local news correspondent. The cable news got shut due to their own issues and again I was in search of a job but fortunately by now my media training from print to visuals was almost completed.

I joined Astha channel and made a children's series called "Chotisi Baat nanhonke saath". One newly launched health channel called Care TV saw my work and assigned me health-based documentary making for their channel. The journalist in me was not happy with adversities but these opportunities gave me a lot of experience and exposure.

Without much struggle I got a break in Free Press Journal, the English daily of Mumbai to work as court correspondent, and I was very keen to do it because those days I was studying law. My college used to be in the morning and newspapers reporting was after that. My studies and my work were in a lot of balance. My major coverage was Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's attack on North Indian students appearing for railway recruitment examinations; they were brutally assaulted by his party men.

While I was working with a free press journal, I received a

call from Late Mr A R Kanangi then the associate editor of Afternoon Despatch and Courier. I was assigned political coverage, one long year I ruled the front page with my reports and by-lines, which bothered many old guards of ADC but the owner Mr Morarka was impressed with my reporting skills and one fine day he promoted me as City editor. This promotion was hell for me, I had to face the worst of politics in that publication house. Some colleagues wrote anonymous letters to Mr Morarka, there were series of letter writings against me, some frustrated souls also wrote blogs about me.

The old staff of ADC could never digest the fact that I joined the city tabloid and soon became its city editor. There were many people waiting for their promotions but I became a hindrance. I used to work for almost 15 to 16 hours a day. My body and mind reached saturation. Many people left their jobs due to undue pressure and cheap politics. I also wanted to get out of that filth. My experience and wisdom did not allow me to take all this beyond my tolerance. I was threatened, warned of not getting a job anywhere. But at that moment I decided to quit.

I came out of the newspaper office; my heart was calm but my head was fully loaded with future thoughts. Next Few days I was breathing the freedom of staying at home, one day I received a letter from them asking me to resign. It was emotional turbulence, I wanted to quit the job but when

I received that letter I was in unknown pain. I was troubled to get my experience letter from them, my dues and full final settlements were kept pending. They delayed it for their own reasons, I had to chase them for quite a long time. There is a saying "when going gets tough the tough get going". While I was in town, I met Advocate Rohini Salian, she was my mentor. I told her that I quit the job and now don't want to work under any banner but wish to start my own publication. She encouraged me to follow my intuitions and dreams. She said do what you believe in, start your own newspaper but plan for it. Planning for it means finance is an inevitable part.

I was heartbroken and hopeless, one evening my kid friend, partner in crime and my confidant Aditi I went to terrace to have chill evening chats but I was silently watching the moon, I was in deep pain or maybe in deep silence. I know what I wanted to do but I was clueless of how to do it. I wanted to reach that sky but also wanted to find the ladders to climb. Adi shook me and asked "are you lost? I told her that I lost my job and now I don't want to join any media house for survival but aiming to do something but not finding a way. She gave me a heavy dose of motivation; she made me believe that I can do it.

The Next day I approached my friend Sachin and told him



about my newspaper venture, he agreed to help me with a couple of lakhs. But that was not enough, and finally I mortgaged my house (made by my father). He always believed if he is not alive this house is where I can stay protected. Knowing that I would have no shelter if I lost it. Finally, I got a good fund, some small amount I fixed for the emergency of life. And in

the remaining funds I made a blueprint of expenses. It took me time to draw conclusions and go ahead with the plan. It was 2009 January this day was auspicious for me because I was called to Esplanade court for title registration formalities. There was one senior gentleman who helped me register a newspaper title that I wanted, "Afternoon Voice".

## From Vaidehi's desk...

When I was in ADC people used to say you are the news face and voice of Afternoon. The term Afternoon in its voice was very close to my heart that is why I decided to name my newspaper as "Afternoon Voice". There was also another reason to have this name, those days many employees were sacked, some left abruptly, but none of them were allowed to put their point or given a chance to voice their opinion. I created this platform from all those voices who were deprived. Meanwhile, my office started in the living room of my house. We purchased two second-hand computers from one about to shut the vernacular newspaper. That person gave me knowledge about printing newspapers, circulating and all other aspects of the business which were not known to me. I mean, I was really naïve on that front. I approached one circulation agency, that agency was once the distribution agency of Afternoon Despatch and Courier. The agency guys did not take me seriously in the first place, they thought I was just venting my ambitions out of frustration. But still Mr Gunjal the circulation guy gave me valuable suggestions and keeping that in mind, my search began for a printing press. I visited several people, they all were asking for the volume that I wanted to print and size of the newspaper, number of black and white pages, and number of colour pages, or all colour or all black and white.

Here I realized my homework is yet incomplete, just managing funds and office is not enough. Now coming back to my team, they were all school dropouts and one page designer who was professional but never worked in a newspaper. I gave him a copy of Afternoon Despatch and Courier and told him that I want my paper to be exactly like this. He roughly designed the pages, I decided to keep 16 pages initially, 8 black and white and 8 colours. All news pages were in black and front page, entertainment pages, supplements, letter diary in colour. At least this time I had some rough idea of how my newspaper will look.

Here I realised, just computers are not enough but we need printers and scanners too. My next investment is my printer and scanner. We got a brand-new colour printer and scanner too. My happiness knew no bounds

when I got the rough print of layout in my hand. I did prayers, treated everyone with some sweets and the next day I was again in search of the printing press and circulation team. With Afternoon Despatch and courier, I was working for 14-16 hours but here I was working for 24 hours. I was unable to sleep, my dreams were chasing me and they did not allow me to shut my eyes. Well, the power naps gave me a lot of energy to sustain for the day.

I used to stay in Borivali and my meetings used to be in south Mumbai. So, every day I travelled to Churchgate from Borivali. I had a phone but they were not as smart as they are now. After meeting the printer, I lined up my visit with Former Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra RR Patil, in my short visit I told him that I am coming up with my own publication. He was very calm; it seems he did not believe my words but congratulated me for the sake of formalities. And also gave me a piece of advice, "journalist should always approach politicians to make them accountable for their jobs, your pen should have power to question, and if someone doing good work also unconditionally appreciate it." The day you write to seek benefits, that day you corrupt your pen." He was one humble soul, never hesitated to talk to scribes. I was taking leave, he gave me one pen which is still with me, and said more power to you. I was literally in a daze. Since I left his office, I was mentally in my dreams and physically dragging my body.

When I reached the ground floor of Mantralaya, someone called me from behind. It was my friend's father. We call him Anna, which means big brother. He asked me to join him over a cup of tea, as he was heading towards the PWD office in the same building. He is one sweetest person that I have met in my life, always smiling, calm and a person with good energy. I was introduced to him by one common journalist friend, but we were mutual admirers. He used to like my reports and columns. And I used to like his approach towards life, he empowered many youths without making noise about it. His office was one charity centre and he was known for his humanitarian contributions.

See how God plans everything

for you if your goals are strong. I showed him the blueprint of my dream project, he was very much impressed. He always encouraged and appreciated independent people. To my surprise, later on he introduced me to his father, the late Shri Baliram Gaikwad, who was a renowned teacher and a social worker, he had the opportunity to work with Baba Saheb Ambedkar for the upliftment of the downtrodden. Meeting him was bliss, he owned a publication house Vastala Baliram Prakashna Kendra.

I showed him my ambitious project, he promised me to print my newspaper for free until I learn the craft, and asked me to work on dry-runs. Dry-run means full-fledged newspaper, full-fledged newspaper means need of manpower, content news, and much more. But those days when people got to know that I am coming up with my own venture, they all approached me with some kind of content support. I rented a one-bedroom commercial flat, and that was sufficient for running the show. Later on, my friend Sachin gifted two laptops and one huge laser printer. On Office launch day, all my friends gifted me something or the other that we need on a daily basis, including cups to have tea. Some energies were really working in my favour and things were taking shape, I received a letter of Afternoon Voice title registration and later on RNI number too. We took two three news agency subscriptions; they were giving me enough city news and other content. Film PR was flooding our inbox with a lot of content. Some unknown column writers gave their columns to publish. For a daily dose of crossword and puzzle, one agency tied up with us on minimal charges. Just ten days we came up with dry-runs but that was a super awesome feeling. Trust me I forgot to sleep, eat and look at the sun and moon those days. I caged myself in a room on the news desk.

With the 11th dry-run I realized that I am ready for the show. 2009 January to August, it was a daily marathon. I decided to launch my newspaper officially on 8th August. Mahatma Gandhi's August Kranti day which launched the Quit India Movement. My movement was to change the prerogative



by asking to quit the undue dominance of intellectuals, a journalist can become owner and publisher if they wish to, but without journalists an owner of a business house cannot bring out a newspaper just because he has money and riches. One needs to respect the think tanks. Well! Sachin helped me with booking a Mumbai Press club room, I approached then the commissioner of police Mumbai, Dhanushkodi Sivanandhan, and then the BMC commissioner R A Rajiv, to launch my Afternoon Voice. Even BJP's veteran leader Prakash Javdekar graced the occasion.

Press club hall was full of those people who actually didn't believe that I would come up with my own newspaper. Most of the people arrived there out of curiosity and some genuinely wanted to appreciate my efforts. Some were the staffers of ADC. Well, my published edition's editorial had the entire saga explained and the lead story was very powerful on journalists losing their jobs without notice. The launch was done and my half battle was won. Afternoon Voice reached the stalls. All my ADC readers became my buyers. First day's sale was with a 2 percent return.

At the launch, Late Mr Suresh Baliga, the former sub editor of ADC and ADC's former editor Late Mr Mobin Pandit, and the other expelled staff, page designers all approached me. I conveyed them my financial budget and some of them literally volunteered for some time. Mobin then used to work for Peninsula Magazine, and he was on a month-long vacation. In that month he actually mentored me on the editorial desk. We used to come up with powerful lead

stories and edits. One astrologer approached me to write an everyday prediction, one comic column writer Robert Clements, and agencies were already there. Meanwhile, many citizen journalists started contributing. We hired one marketing manager on commission. That's how the story of Afternoon Voice started with a rebel, who was challenged in Afternoon Despatch and Courier, to get the job in the media if she leaves the publication on her own will. Today that newspaper was dispatched to an unknown address; it succumbed to circumstances and shut down. The owner of ADC Mr Kamal Morarka passed away. Now I can say, there is only one Afternoon in the market and that is we the "Afternoon Voice".

We are a very small group, but our mission is big. We want to fight the odds and evils in the fourth estate and strengthen democracy. We don't follow any ideology or political party; we just follow correct news. Most of the time many do not like us because we attack the wrong and appreciate the right of everybody in power corridors, we make them accountable with constructive criticism. These days the media is abused, they are alleged with numerous adjectives. Their credibility has declined. I don't blame anyone for this, neither the media nor people of this country. The journalist abides accountability before the society in general, before the law and before the professional connotation. This venture wouldn't have been possible without the help of my citizen journalists and readers. I am thankful to my readers, well-wishers and all those who supported me in the journey.

## Interview



# AFGHAN MEDIA GOING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

## Should be Supported by International Community

Afghan society in the last two decades progressed in almost all walks of life but one of the biggest achievements happened in the field of the press. Afghanistan saw the emergence of the professional and independent media sector but unfortunately recently Afghan press is going through a hard time. To discuss this, Manish Rai interviewed Khushnood Nabizada founder of Khaama Press (KP) largest online service for Afghanistan which he started in October 2010. KP is considered as one of the most authentic sources of information in regard to Afghanistan and is often quoted by reputed international journals. Khushnood Nabizada survived an assassination attempt on his life in February this year when his armored vehicle was targeted in an IED blast in Kabul. Mr. Nabizada is currently in the United States living in exile at a US military base in Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

**Nabizada in your opinion currently what are the main issues faced by Afghan media outlets?**

The Media agencies and news outlets in Afghanistan are facing a challenging situation since the fall of Dr. Ghani's government. Over 150 outlets have already shut down due to a shortage of operating funds and or not being allowed to operate. Dozens of journalists have been detained and tortured since August 15, 2021.

The independent media agencies that used to collect operating funds from the advertisements, subscriptions, news selling, by providing marketing services and consultancy to businesses and organizations are more likely to collapse. The private sector is dying as the country's economy is being fallen.

**One of the big achievements of Afghan civil society in the last two decades has been the emergence of freedom of speech. How do you see it now?**

Freedom of speech and many other democratic values are at high risk

in Afghanistan as of now. Access to information is limited to almost none. Journalists are not allowed to cover events nor to report regarding the current situation in society. Few journalists and media outlets are still able to survive in the capital Kabul. But there is no reporting happening from the provincial cities, districts, and rural areas.

As a member of the journalism community, I am very much concerned about the future of the press and freedom of speech in Afghanistan.

**How the international community can play its part in safeguarding Afghan media?**

The international media support organizations shall not leave the Afghan media alone in this critical time. The empowerment of media in Afghanistan is in fact the shared achievement of the global community and international organizations. Losing these achievements will not only be a loss to Afghanistan, but to all those countries that claim to support democracy and freedom.

**Khaama Press is the largest online news service for Afghanistan started in 2010 by you. How do you see the future of KP?**

Khaama Press, an 11-year-old news agency is also passing through a tough time and it has hardly managed to keep its services live since the Taliban's coming to power on August 15th till date. All our funding sources are stopped and our business contracts are canceled. Many of our journalists, experts, and professional staff have already left the job and many of them have fled out from the country for seeking asylum in Europe, US, or Canada.

As I expressed my concerns earlier, if the situation does not change, Khaama Press may collapse. Also, an organization that has been established and incorporated with the investment of a huge sum of dollars, time, and efforts of a committed and professional team of journalists and editors. Is fighting for its survival.

I am committed to trying my best to find a solution to avoid this media outlet's collapse. I am looking for opportunities

of stationing Khaama Press outside Afghanistan.

**Is KP facing any issues with its operations?**

Yes, As of now we are facing many issues like- financial crisis, lack of technical expertise and professional journalists on the ground, no access to information. We are reporting with very limited resources. Many of our journalists cannot reflect what is actually happening on the ground as there is no law and competent authority to support them.

**In today's tough times how Afghan media can maintain their independence?**

It is hard and challenging for any independent media in Afghanistan to continue its operations independently from inside the country. The only way I foresee for them is to move the head offices, the editorial and operational units to other countries and only keep a team of reporters inside Afghanistan.

Note- Interview conducted by Manish Rai

## Staff Experience

### I extend my heartiest congratulations to Afternoon Voice

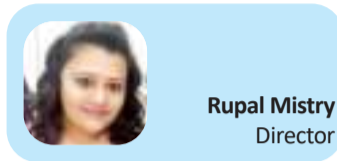
Afternoon Voice is celebrating its 14th Anniversary. As I think of how the time has flowed and ponder on so many memories, realize that I have had the privilege to be one of the few who has seen this newspaper's journey traverse from thought, to action and to culmination. And somewhere in retrospect feel that all of that actually was the easy part! Extending that culmination to 14 years of successful running frankly is the true accomplishment and to that I extend my heartiest congratulations. It's important to understand what a strong social role this newspaper plays in so many ways as it comes with a strong political outlook, analytical information, social challenges content and makes space to ensure overall social upliftment and reform for both humans and animal life as well. Today with its strong presence as a media house, it truly is a valuable fourth pillar of our country.

Wise advice from family seniors have nurtured Vaidehi and in return shaped the very essence of this institution which in return brings so much reform and well-being to all in its own way. It's amazing to witness the power of that guidance form the fundamental baseline of this media house's social responsibility. Today, I humbly take this opportunity to respect those elders and their teachings which have always nurtured, guided Vaidehi's ideology at every step and as result given this newspaper the right direction and strength to percolate through every layer of challenge at any point of time. The values of honest viewpoint, open mindset, diligence and fearless writing to fulfill a journalist's responsibilities are instilled by them as her core values. I value the spirit with which she has heralded Afternoon Voice Newspaper with consistency and monitored its content every single day for 14 years since its inception. I constantly see her battling people's presumptuous judgements all the time as prejudice governs their brains as they cannot accept facts or alternate thinking, but somewhere, their opinions simply don't matter as her focused and well-reasoned expression or

narrative is clear.

For any outsider, newspaper media seems to be a regular work culture, but people have no idea of the level of change and ethical strain the present media houses are going through. Afternoon Voice as a newspaper has undergone various challenges, ranging right from management concerns, complex story reporting and political pressures, but the most difficult challenge it faces in today's time is functioning without any political affiliation and having an independent stand, an independent voice. Choosing to have an unbiased approach to exercise true freedom of expression as a newspaper is the most difficult responsibility to maintain. Undoubtedly every newspaper has gone through a certain degree of these situations over time. But let's be honest that in the current timeline, the present government has taken media-bias to new levels. It's very important for all to understand the relative pressures they impose on media houses itself. When criticism is unwelcome and paired with denial, distorted facts peak to new levels. Newspapers are heralded as information givers and fact providers, but sadly in this new dominance they are completely disoriented and lost their sense of responsibility.

When governance shows disrespect towards democratic rights and displays lack of basic tolerance towards transparent functioning, it sees the need to thwart reality to save their image which only results in unfair and incorrect reporting. And that is the biggest shift the readers must accept as that will able them to ascertain facts and make the right choices. When dissent is unwelcome, sadly it comes with its own price. Let me assure you, every form of pressure tactics have been applied and challenges have been thrown at this newspaper. But in spite of being subjected to grueling situations, they have withheld their journalistic spirit and aim. One can try and distort facts, but truth can never be erased and its presence will always impose on your conscience. Unbiased reporting is the fundamental spirit



**Rupal Mistry**  
Director

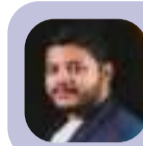
of Afternoon Voice as they believe they are the voice of the people, voice of the nation.

Afternoon Voice is such a welcoming media house to new writers and budding journalists. Its great to see this newspaper extend itself to an institute as it's a journalism alma mater for many. Media seems to be an exciting place for the youth, but channelizing their understanding with the right balance of journalistic aspects plus experience is important. Time and again I have seen Vaidehi guide and nurture them with the right approach, correct content and slowly nudge them towards enhancing their writing abilities. I always find her encouraging every person with an interest to write, to start penning their thoughts. She always says, just write, present your views, your experiences and formulate your thinking in words. Toggle your brain cells to express your beliefs, see life with clarity and value the opportunity which helps you make a difference. Be unafraid as you report incidences with facts, introduce yourself to your conscience and become aware of your beliefs. Take a stand, face your inner battles, conquer your hypothetical fears and build your ability to see reality is her constant mantra as a mentor. It's great to see so many people get guided by her insights and she puts in a great deal of energy to build their experience and extend their knowledge base. Their work experience here as a journalist's has brought growth and direction to their life and now, they all are an extension of the Afternoon Voice family.

Today I wish This team's remarkable journey a successful future and may they continue walking on their path with immense gusto and spirit. They must take pride in their journalistic representation and power through ahead with focus and blessed energy. May god bless Afternoon Voice's Editor-in-Chief Vaidehi and her whole team with knowledge, strength and conscientious writing.

### Vaidehi had guts to keep up newspaper in spite of all odds

Afternoon Voice celebrates its 14th Anniversary today, been a part of this wonderful organization since last 8 years. I've seen many ups and downs during this whole journey, the worst being the lockdown and covid period. The whole media and newspaper industry was suffering and we were in that boat too. Just when we thought of closing down like some other big publications due to financial instabilities, our editor Vaidehi was confident and reluctant on this idea of shutting down the show which she carried single-handedly on her shoulders for 12 years, and we stood with her on that decision. And we did not sink, we made it through and are blooming once again with much more strength and with a young team of ours.



**Akshay Redij**  
Director &  
Digital Editor

Thought we had to start from the scratch, we never gave up, and I am happy to say we have some of the youngest team right now, with full of energies and enthusiasm. We've come a long way and today we are proud to move towards a full-fledged digital media.

In the coming days, we plan to expand our reach to a larger audience and build strong force of citizen journalists, writers and contributors who have been the backbone of Afternoon Voice. I congratulate all our team, contributors and well-wishers for supporting us and being a part of the Afternoon Voice Parivar!

### I was guided by all my seniors at Afternoon Voice

When I came for the interview, I had no idea how it's going to be. As I had did PG Diploma in Mass Communication in my hand with no practical experience in the journalism field, so I approached Vaidehi ma'am, she boosted my confidence and groomed my skills and pushed me to do better.

She taught me how to write stories and guided me and gave me knowledge of how industry works from desk to reporting on the field. She sometimes scolded on me for making mistakes but in that scolding, I felt the softness of a mother who encourages child to do better.

Akshay Sir also guided me in social media and other technical aspects and guided



**Saket Loke**  
Digital &  
Editorial Team

me how better I can do in social media from how to create posts to how to post or schedule and many things related to graphics and website and how it works and is handled. How digital media wo works and how can social media be effective medium to reach audience

Other than these, I had great experience with colleagues and very supportive staff who helped us a lot and continue to do so."

A big thank you to all Afternoon Voice team.

# Staff Experience

## I have learnt a lot at Afternoon Voice

**W**hen I joined Afternoon Voice, I was very new to journalism, but I have learned a lot. Not only about Journalism but how to be better at video journalism and write an article. The Best thing about working for afternoon voice is that I can write what I want without any political restriction. It is a self-funded organisation which still keeps media ethics alive. For a beginner like me who wants to experience what journalism is all about, Afternoon Voice is a very helpful place to learn. In the Afternoon voice, we have a friendly environment. We all live and learn our day without any pressure. Thanks to Vaidehi Ma'am, she is so much supportive and helpful to all her juniors. She is so positive and inspiring. She motivates us to work hard and inspires us with new and



**Akash Nirmal,**  
Reporter &  
Digital Team

innovative ideas. If I sum up my experience, I love to work for Afternoon Voice, where my seniors and my juniors always teach me new things.

## Journey does not stop here, we have long way to go

**I** have completed a month with Afternoon Voice and really learnt a lot when it comes writing stories on the desk, speaking to people for the quotes and understanding how to make your own article different from the others.



**Brena Soni**  
Reporter &  
Digital Team

I have started off my journey with the media industry and prior to that I was into finance sector in which I was not working for long hours of duration and it was all ok but here in media industry though I am working for long hours of duration but I am super engrossed with my work that I don't feel when the time is up for the day.

When it comes to the Afternoon Voice Editor-in-Chief Vaidehi Taman is an amazing person with lot of experience in the media industry and immense knowledge when it comes print, broadcast or web. When I joined the organization, I was too worried about my performance in the industry and scared if the organization would throw me out in 2 or 3 days.

I made many mistakes in the organization when it comes to writing, reporting and anchoring but the Editor of guided me every path of professional goal not only that even smaller things of presentation on the camera,

speech, content, choice of words and even expression.

I learnt lot of things when it comes reporting because dealing with live situation is quite different than on a studio and desk and talking to the people is a task at that time I co-ordinated with my ideas and in case if any corrections are needed.

The job of me was not ended here she also ensures each and employee is appropriately dressed, eating proper food on time, taking for a couple of minutes in the area to ensure health is intact.

My office colleagues are very helpful and supportive. They always guide me in every aspect of my professional journey when comes to selecting important news, presentation on the videos, writing a story even when I am stuck to make headlines for some story they just pop in with lot of ideas.

The journey does not end here there are other supporting staffs as well who makes sure every staff is keeping well all the time, eating on time and making sure office is intact.

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## Afternoon has very positive work ambience

**I** started my journey recently in Afternoon Voice. When I started working here I got to know a lot of things about the media industry. Every employee of the company welcomed me and my colleagues taught me about the work.



**Vivek Gaikwad,**  
Digital Team

The environment of the workplace is so positive. We discuss a lot of things about current issues, politics, culture and history that improves my knowledge and ability to debate over different issues. People are so kind and helpful here. I feel so lucky to get a mentor like Vaidehi Taman ma'am. She taught me so many things about the industry. Every time me and my colleagues talked with her she gave us confidence. She also appreciates

us if we do something good.

Here we got to know about real journalism. We are getting trained to be a solid pillar of a democracy. We enjoy and celebrate freedom of speech. We can share our thoughts without any hesitation.

As I said, I joined recently but I learned so many things in a short time. For starting my career this is the best place to get introduced to the industry. I hope I can contribute to the company by doing a lot of hard work and smart work.



## Go Green this Ganesh festival

**G**anesh Chaturthi is one of the most celebrated Hindu festivals in India. It is believed that the one who worships Lord Ganesha with complete faith and devotion, will be blessed with happiness, knowledge, wealth and long life.

Lord Ganesha is considered to be the God of success and prosperity. But some Ganesh Chaturthi practices are harming the environment.

However, after the celebration gets over, the seas, rivers and lakes are often left dirty, harming all the water creatures in them.

Plaster of Paris is the most common element used to create the Ganesh idols. POP is not a natural occurring material; hence it takes months, sometimes even years to dissolve in water.

The chemical dyes used to paint these idols are also harmful to the environment,

as they result in water pollution. They also contain poisonous and heavy metals such as lead, mercury, etc. which enter the

Along with the idols, several other items are immersed in water such as banana leaves and coconuts making the water dirty and impure. Items used for decorations are also dumped into the seas, rivers and lakes.

The toxic and heavy paints from the idols form a layer on the water surface which increases acidic content of the water and deprives fish and other aquatic animals of oxygen. That is why many fish are found dead and floating on the surface of the water after the immersions take place.

To avoid causing harm to the environment, here are a few tips and precautions you can take to ensure that the celebrations are eco-friendly:

Buy eco-friendly idols for celebrating the festival. Clay idols dissolve immediately, greatly lessening or completely preventing water pollution. You can immerse it in a bucket of water at home too.

If you are keen on buying POP idols, you can sprinkle a few drops of water symbolically and give it for recycling.

Avoid using chemical paints that contain harmful colours and dyes.

Don't use materials like thermocol or plastics for decorations which are not degradable and do not dissolve in water. Instead, you can use biodegradable items like plain or coloured paper for decorations.

Remove flowers, garlands and other decorative items before immersing the idols in water. Distribute food items like coconuts and fruits to the poor.

Make a compost of all the

biodegradable items including flowers. Flowers can be mixed with the soil which will help the plants in your garden to grow better.

All devotees of Lord Ganesha can celebrate the festival but they should take care not to harm the environment.

Take safety measures to avoid freak accidents during processions or at the sea-shore. Avoid or minimize the use of loudspeakers because it causes noise pollution.

Celebrating the festival is not about how big your idol is or how expensive your decorations are. It is about the religious sentiments, emotions and feelings in your heart.



Jubel D'Cruz

## An A'mrut' mahotsav of Casteism?

**S**oon Govinda festival will come and Bal Govinda will be ready to break the matki but who will break the communal "matki" across the country? A Dalit child in Rajasthan who went to drink water from the matki was beaten by the teacher and died. It is a brutal beating by the hands of a teacher. The teacher is supposed to be filling the cup of knowledge. On the contrary beating because the same student touched the cup of water?

The country is celebrating the elixir of independence but have we really become independent? These incidents are happening across the country when will it be free from caste and caste? When will the caste-free country celebrate its golden and amrit festival? Or will these incidents like Rajasthan continue to happen somewhere else in the country? Is

it the fault of that innocent child because he was born in a Dalit family? Or is he thirsty? Because he went to drink water? A nine-year-old boy was beaten by the teacher so much that his ear nerve was torn and he was admitted for twenty-three days for treatment at six places, firstly Bagoda, Bhinmal, Disa, Mehsana, Udaipur and finally Ahmedabad. Finally by death or caste? The child's life was taken.

The question arises, how many issues need to be worked on in the country. Even today, are we going to celebrate the "immortal" Mahotsav to Suvarna Mahotsav by turning a blind eye to the issues of caste or taking the lives of innocent children? Are we celebrating An A'mrut' mahotsav of Casteism??

-Dattaprasad Shirodkar

## Right Choice

**N**obel Peace Prize started by Nobel Foundation in 1895 to fulfil wishes of Swedish businessman and Inventor Alfred Nobel. He had fortunes of a huge 31.5 million. In 1901, First Nobel Peace Prize was shared between Frenchman Frederic Passy and the Swiss Jean Henry Dunant. Pakistan's girl Malala Yousufzai won Nobel Peace Prize in teenage for fighting bravely against terrorist in last decade. Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi was nominated a total 5 times for the Nobel Peace Prize 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947 AND 1948 but never awarded this award. Government of India instituted \*Gandhi Peace Award "in 1995 on the holy occasion of birth-anniversary of

Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. This award is open for all individuals or organisations across the globe who contributed significantly for peace. The first Indian organisation to win this prestigious award was Ramkrishna Mission and the first Indian individual was Baba Amte in 1998 and 1999 respectively. I urge the Government of India to take necessary steps to honour Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi with the Nobel Peace Prize and Bharat Ratna awards.



CK Subramaniam

## Blue story by KCR

**T**he so-called prolific architect of TRS party K.Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) created another humorous anecdote with his lax speech that "Karnataka's Raichur district should belong to Telengana". This saying just describes the mindset of a typical political leader of the current century with the mission of divide and rule. This is not new for him, everyone knows years ago what he has done to take himself along with his family members and close knits in to power, now he want to create another ruckus with just an intention of coming once again into power not only in his state but also to unbalance NDA

at the centre. For that matter inscriptions of Kannada Princes like Amogavarsha Nrupatunga and Mayuravarma etc., Portrays not only Raichur but most districts of the neighbouring states of Karnataka were hugely populated by Kannadigas. We just celebrated 75th independence day to show the world our country forever stands for unity in diversity, this unity shouldn't be torn apart by this kind of rhetoric by any Chief Minister, at the expense of the nation's prestige for his own good.

- Vijaykumar H K

## Casteism is prevalent

**P**oisonous atmosphere of casteism is being seen in the temple of education. A case of refusal to eat the cooked food of a Dalit chef in a school came to the fore by the children. In a school in Morbi, many children of the OBC community are refusing to eat food because this food was being prepared by a "Dalit lady" cook, the reason why children are refusing to eat food complaint has been filed regarding this. The children of the OBC community, influenced by their parents, were refusing to eat the food prepared by the Dalit woman. The principal of the school says that she has had two meetings with the school monitoring committee in which the parents were also involved but they are

adamant and don't want to give up their casteist thinking. Under Article 17 of the Constitution, untouchability or treating someone as an untouchable is illegal and feeling untouchable in any form is forbidden. In our country, everyone has 6 fundamental rights, one of which includes the right to equality.

In which all persons have equal rights without any discrimination, if a person discriminates against any casteism, then it is illegal. I totally support all irrespective of caste they belong, General, OBC, SC, and ST, for me they are all same and for everyone they all must be same. Let's hop, sense prevails soon.

- Garima Shrivaspal

## Movable Library

**B**ooks are man's best friend. Good books enhance knowledge as well as develop language skills and vocabulary and are a great way to reduce stress. Due to the closure of schools due to the corona virus epidemic, the education of children has been adversely affected.

In order to re-engage the children with the process of reading, writing and learning, a book fair named "Book Yatra" is being organized at different places in different cities. So far this journey has been done for about 15 days in the City in more places and has reached more than 400 children. In this book journey, we constantly carry the organization's box of books and books from the youth series, Eklavya, etc. in our bag. Using the space available in the community like trees, cots, cots, tables, walls, fruit racks, etc., they put up an exhibition of books. Children's love and enthusiasm for books is made in these book exhibitions. After so many days, they get stunned to find the books in their midst. look at books All the scenes like running here and there to read more, bringing your fellow mates as well, insisting on taking books along with your family members to see and collect them, taking them home and showing books to your elder brother and sister, highlighting children's love and enthusiasm for books.

Apart from children, elders also come to this fair to see and read books. Children also take books of their choice along with reading so that they can read them later. This book journey develops the interest of reading, writing and learning in children is planting. This book fair is like a dream come true for the

children of the poor and backward sections of the society who have been most affected due to this pandemic. The popularity and acceptance of the book fair among the children can be seen from the sweet words uttered by them out of curiosity, that, brother/didi, when will you come again with new books? This time will bring a new book of jokes, maths and English! That children's literature is not reaching the children at all. Children and young people have the same books as they got it from school-college. They are only familiar with the course books. In such a situation, the children's and youth literature which exists on such a large scale is not reaching them easily. It is not that where there is a lack of resources, children's literature is not reaching there. Rather, where there are resources, there is hardly any access to children's literature.

Despite having resources, no interest is visible even within the teacher class regarding the understanding and availability of children's literature. If better literature among children and youth If available, the children themselves are coming forward to study on their own. If studies are for interest or for their own sake, then children or anyone does not feel burdened. Once the interest in reading is awakened, then Sanskrit can be developed among the children to read the course and see it connected with their life. Therefore, availability of better children's and youth literature from community to school, college is essential. Working in this direction will be a necessary step for the current education system.

- Vijay Garg  
Writer and Columnist

## Amrit Mahotsav reignited national pride in all

**I**t was a sea of tiranga on our 75th Independence Day as the entire nation participated in the 'Amrit Mahotsav' not just in the country but abroad as well. National pride & unity strengthens when our national flag is unfurled as people irrespective of caste & creed joined hands to make the occasion memorable.

People need not be worried as to what one should do with the crores

of flags that were distributed. I would neatly fold the National Flag as per the flag code & preserve it for the coming Republic & Independence Days and fellow citizens can do likewise as well. It would not just save cost but the tricolor at home in safe custody would enthuse national pride each day of the year.

- SN Kabra

## Television and Today

**T**elevision was invented by John Logie Baird in 1925. It was black and white TV. He is also known as the Father of Television. He did not name it tv but called it the television. After this it was invented by Philo Farnsworth in 1927. After this Werner invented color TV in 1938. But it was bought by the people in 1960 -1970. The TV remote was invented in 1955 by Eugene Polly. TV has been a convenient means of entertainment since the beginning. Through this we can watch anything on the screen sitting at home. Farmer talks, news of country and abroad, food recipes, technical information, science talks, films, songs, bhajan-kirtan etc., everything is visible on the screen of this box. The use of television in India started in 1959.

The first Indian television serial 'Hum Log' was aired in 1984. Initially, the number of channels was less, but today there have been countless channels. There is a channel for every category. There is a channel related to agriculture for the farmers, then there is a dramatic channel for the children, full of fun for the youth and a separate channel for reality shows. The programs broadcast on these channels greatly affect the life of a person. Children, youth, elderly all watch the programs broadcast on these channels very carefully and some of them even follow them.

He molds his life exactly as shown in the program. Now the problem is that in these programs, it does not always give the right things, but sometimes something is also shown which is prohibited for its entry in common life. But it is shown with great pride in these programs. The best way to do that is by adopting 'sapna'. Yes, you are absolutely right. Whenever there is such a thing, which gets the status of a debate, which creates controversy when it is broadcast, which makes a difference to the TRP by showing it, the directors of TV programs show them as dreams, this is the best way for them to escape.

Because if you show it in a direct way, people will call them good and bad. So this indirect method remains easy. People say this, oh what happened to him that happened in a dream anything can be seen in a dream. They indirectly promote these evils by showing evils like dowry system, communalism, untouchability, and feticide. TRP can also be achieved well from this. The purpose of TV programs is to bring awareness in the society along with entertainment, not to show anything just for TRP.

-Khemu Parashar



## Sailing Past Smoothly in an Unstable World

**M**any in middle class pension drawing / having sufficient savings & retirement benefits like gratuity, PF, PPF, leave salary encashment etc., always complain of low interest rates.

Most, including retired financial services executives, complain. Though they are supposed to be aware that interest rates are directly correlated to rate of inflation and other factors.

I recollect the days of Apple Finance, Unit Trust of India, Krishna Bhagya, Konkan Railway Bonds etc which used to carry interest rates around 15+% with nation's inflation rate @ 9-13% range. My family was a gainer since our fixed deposits wealth grew at a fast pace being a Bank employee.

But the large overwhelming majority of the population who did not have

savings and just meeting ends with the monthly salary they got and no assured DA linked pension for the unorganised labourer, farmers etc., for small kirana shop owners' loans became extremely costly and for small wage earners who did not have the luxury of Index linked DA paid every quarter/ half yearly were the worst sufferers.

We are lucky that our economy is having a relatively low inflation rate despite COVID19 disruption and the Ukraine- Russia war. Our currency is relatively stable with a moderate depreciation. Let us not blow the present position out of proportion to get political mileage.

- Jayanthi Subramaniam



## Reviews

# Watch Makarand Deshpande's "Ram" to perceive Ram within you

In the era of hatred, where Ram has become a tool to violence and political possession, Makarand Deshpande's play "Ram" is an eye-opener. Their Play is about an Impotent and helpless law enforcement agency, violent self-declared custodians of Rama and a mad man who forces Ram to come out of the temple with his utmost madness called devotion.

These days 'Jai Shree Ram' is said by those unethical morons and hypocrites who lynch fellow humans for their lifestyle, eating habits, caste and religion. Gang Rapes inside a temple, and they proudly say "Jai Shree Ram"? (Will Ram approve this act (or) is this Rama Rajiyam is all about?) Those who bluff people by building Ram Temple at Ayodhya, keeping the issue and heat as it is to polarize Hindu. This insult to Ram by a particular sect is portrayed beautifully in this play. Words once used by pure Bhakts these days are used by Brainwashed Extremists & Gandhi Killers that look like "Devils preaching Sermons".

The simple message is that "Do not turn off your brain. Faith can be reasonable and rational. Faith is not superstition. As a seeker, you will be looking for reasons for your faith, for the truth about spiritual matters, and for seeing your own evidence of a divine being. Be open-minded about the supernatural, without being gullible. One needs to see within to witness Ram, unless you don't go crazy with yourself you won't find him here and there" says writer-director Makarand Deshpande, whose new play Ram opened during the Prithvi Festival yesterday. Theatre was houseful, in spite of it being a working day.

Fearless and honest dialogues, very neat script, it makes you laugh, it tickles your ribs and also sends ripples, makes you sad looking at the irony that we are witnessing in the name of Ram, religion and cast. The drama is a power-packed emotional trip. There is a dialogue in this play "Once people used to humbly greet others saying "Jai Ram Ji ki, but now it scares us". In many parts of the country, it is a



common greeting to relatives and known in the form of sometimes 'Ram-Ram' or 'Jai Siya Ram' as well. The narrative of greeting has changed to sloganeering for violent attacks.

The play centres on a mad man (Makarand Deshpande) seeking shelter in a Ram temple only to be kicked out by Ram-bhakts because they think he doesn't look the part of a devotee. It's an obvious mention to self-proclaimed janitors of religion who frequently create chaos in the country. The mad man and so-called devotees clash prompting a police constable (Nagesh Bhosle) to intervene. The constable and the hobo strike up a conversation and what follows is a two-hour-long commentary on the country's political, religious and social state of affairs.

What unfurls next is a series of events as the beggar is questioned by people from various walks of life about his claims. We can relate to various scenes in the play since it questions how we as a society have changed. From religious violence to mob lynching. Nagesh Bhosle was

hilarious and outstanding on his part, in many scenes, he just stole the show. Nagesh's versatile act keeps you glued.

The play also features Ajay Kamble, Ninad Limaye and Madhuri Gawli; they all were best in their roles, each actor in the play knew their craft well. The play is Written and Directed by Makarand Deshpande. He felt the need to write the play, mainly due to the "misconception" of Ram. "There have been instances where people who aren't followers of Ram have been forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' but I didn't want to make the play a case study," he says.

"What charmed me most about the story was that Ram is more human than superhuman as a character. That's something I wanted to bring out in the play. The simplicity of the character, and the fact that he was a son, a husband and a brother first and God after, is fascinating and this is my version of Ram," says Makarand.

Markard is known for his roles in movies such as Swadesh, Makdee, and Mahesh Bhatt's

Sadak 2. He is one of the actors and directors who are hugely contributing to Indian theatre. He is an individual who can beautifully balance between films and theatre. "I don't know why people fail to notice my work on a national level, never mind I will keep doing my best", he said. His work demands national acclaim. But he is not the one who can be a doormat in political corridors.

"I don't have to convince anybody of what I am capable of delivering, whereas films are a different ball game altogether. Theatre is always going to be my forte and I have a lot of freedom to express myself here, that's why I write beyond the frame and that gives scope of improvisation for all my characters," says Makarand.

In a discourse that seems to spring from a heartfelt need in Deshpande to make people examine received beliefs and check their own majoritarian impulses, the tramp advises the constable to write his own mythological epic. The same custodians of religion campaigner of a single version of the epics,

one of which they approve, when there are in fact many. He goes on to demonstrate how the two great Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, can be married and, in the process, suggests that over time, the world has only gotten more violent and bigoted.

While watching the play and efforts of Makarand to seed that poise belief in people, a few lines of Ramcharitmanas stroke my mind

**“तुलसी मेरे राम को,  
रीझ भजो या खीज।  
भौम पड़ा जामे सभी,  
उल्टा सीधा बीज॥”.**

In this quadrant, Tulsidas says that when the seeds are sown in the ground, it is not seen whether the seeds are inverted or straight, but in time all the seeds germinate and all the seeds are inverted. He has done his job, it's the viewers who have to decide how they want to see their Ram.

## Different Strokes

# Sonal Mansingh Celebrates Lord Ram through 'Ramotsav'



**W**e all have heard myriad stories about lord Ram, seen it in a form of drama or dance or even both, but at the recently held Ramotsav by Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh in the capital Shri Mohan Bhagwat said, 'I have seen Many Ram Kathas, but this one by Sonal ji was totally magical.' That is exactly how even the audience felt at the Ramotsav, a two-day dance extravaganza that had the celebrated dance guru and one of the cultural ambassadors of India Dr Mansingh brought out, unfolding the life of lord Ram in her unique and distinctive style.

After hosting the event online due to the pandemic, she is back to live shows this year, on the theme of Ramotsav. "Dance is a part of life. I wish that dancers continue to bring joy to all," said Dr. Mansingh, founder of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances (CICD), which presented this show under their KalaYatra cultural festival. I caught up with my most admired artist and spoke to her about being back on stage after the pandemic and this is what she had to say:

**So finally, you are back to where you belong, the stage, how does it feel?**

This comeback of physical festivals is like a renewal of life, performing arts and artists, especially dance and dancers, were one of the worst-hit sections by the Covid-19 pandemic. I am thrilled to be back on stage with a house full show, the response of the audience is all what one craves for as an artist and finally I am getting that, Bhagwati Ki Kripa Hai (it is the blessing of the Goddess).

**Would you please tell me more about Ramotsav?**

This was a two-days festival, for the inaugural day we had "Katha Siya-Ram Ki" where my team of dancers and musicians along with me brought the age stories of Lord Rama alive through dance, abhinaya, music, drama and songs. All this combined in the Katha brought a distinctive spiritual essence to the theme. Such Kathas are eternal, they give me scope to explore various dimensions of life. It is not just a simple story of Ram and Sita, it is a story in a much wider and

bigger sense, the more we try to understand, the more we get pulled into it, that is mystical power of Lord Ram.

The second day of the festival showcased the evolutionary cycle from the Indic lore Dashavatara (the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu), presented by the repertory group of Kamakhya Kalapeeth, CIDC, under my direction. What followed was an extraordinary recital of Pibare Rama Rasam by classical dancer G Ratheesh

Babu where he encapsulated three different episodes from Adhyatma Ramayana. The closing piece was a Kathakali performance based on the theme Ram Parashuram, which was brilliantly performed by the repertory under the direction of Thiruvattar Jagadeesan from The International Centre for Kathakali, Delhi.

**You have been on stage for decades, and each time you step on the dance floor you always bring out something**

**innovative and exceptional, how do you manage to do that?**

I challenge myself all the time, for me my benchmark is my previous show and nothing else. And yes, I never get comfortable in my position, I keep creating. Also, I am tremendously self-critical, a show of mine that you might find absolutely perfect, I see a scope of improvement, that is what keeps me going.

**What was the best part of the Ramotsav festival?**

Oh, the best part of the festival, well, you will be amazed to know, for me, it was not the show, but it was something very personal, it was my surprise birthday celebration, which my team decided to do post the performance. I was completely emotional when they showered rose petals on me, all the lights were switched off and the audience lit diyas while I cut the cake, which had sitar and tabla on it. What more can I ask for? The love, the warmth was overwhelming, shows come and shows go but what remains is the love and affection of people which is poured out in this loving and caring fashion.

For me this was the highlight of Ramotsav.

Dr Mansingh is one illustrious artist who many a times wonders if this really is her life, she is one who has been living seven lives in one and yet her Rachnaatmakta Bhandar (Inventory of creativity) does not diminish. Now that it is the endemic, let us all come together and welcome back on stage one the very amazing and inspirational Dr Sonal Mansingh.

Sandip Soparkar holds a doctorate in world mythology folklore from Pacifica University USA, an honorary doctorate in performing arts from the National American University, He is a World Book Record holder, a well-known Ballroom dancer and a Bollywood choreographer who has been honored with three National Excellence awards, one National Achievement Award, Dada Saheb Phalke award and Rabindra Nath Tagore Prize by the Government of India.

Interview by  
**Sandeep Soparkar**



## Expression



# Can society **PROHIBIT** unmarried people from renting a house?

In many places, bachelors are found to be very cordial. Also, renting to bachelors is more beneficial to the flat owner as they are willing to pay more by splitting the expenses among themselves. But housing societies in cities often rule that no landlord can give a house to an unmarried man or woman on the pretexts – 'Bachelors have a bad experience, bring girls or boys, drink alcohol, party late into the night or argue with security guards, may be criminals, etc.' are made. Flat owners generally have a perception that if a family lives in the flat, they will take better care of the flat. Moreover, there will be no complaints from society and neighbors

As a result, many intelligent, educated and sound background people are also mistreated and humiliated when they come to the city for education or employment. So the question arises that if the society watchers will not let them stay based on many prejudices, where will these people go? The number of hostels is very less and not enough for job aspirants coming to cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Thane and Chennai.

Are these rules legally binding? So no. No one can stop him or her from renting a flat on the basis of caste, religion, creed or gender if one has police verification and all legal documents. Members of society have no right to moral policing. Norms cannot be made by assuming the behav-

ior of a select few as the norm. In simple terms of law, the property is owned by the society. As a result, they have no say over the type of tenant allowed to live in the society.

It is the owner's discretion and right to rent out his property, subject to appropriate terms and conditions prescribed by law. Only that he should not rent out his premises for commercial or illegal activities. Every member of the society has the right to rent out his tenement at will and the society cannot restrict bachelors or spinsters. The condition of taking prior permission of the society to grant flats on 'live and license' basis has been removed from the new model bye-laws. Only that the members are required to inform the society about the flat to be rented by submitting a copy of the duly registered tenancy agreement and a copy of the details of the tenants submitted to the nearest police station.

Society may charge 'Non-Occupancy Fee'. Society cannot act arbitrarily. Housing associations can make their own rules. There are elaborate guidelines or bye-laws that every housing society adopts when it is registered. These rules and regulations govern the day-to-day operations of the housing organization and are critical to its smooth running. Individual societies have the legal right to refuse tenants based on their bye-laws. In many cases, such bylaws are interpreted in a particular way to achieve this.

However, they have no constitutional right to do so. The flat owner is only bound by the tenancy agreement and its terms and conditions. In case of breach of any clause or any rule of that rental agreement, only in that case, the society has the right to ask to vacate the flat, otherwise no one has the right to interfere with renting out his house to someone.

### What can be done if the society blocks the rental of the house?

The Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act has no provision for 'prohibited and restricted' areas within the society's premises. If the society violates the rules and regulations and abuses the flat owner, then a complaint application can be sent to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to cancel the registration of the society. He can also take legal action and obtain an injunction restraining the society from evicting the bachelor by filing a civil case. The senior office bearer of the society may be asked to produce a court order for eviction by showing the agreement. Before filing a case a notice may be given to the society asking 'why appropriate legal action should not be taken against its illegal acts and appropriate compensation claimed for the violation of the fundamental and constitutional right to live in peace wherever it abides by law'. In case of more physical and mental harassment, harassment, fighting, tension, abuse, beating, a written complaint can be filed with the local police. And the

Court can obtain an injunction against such illegal eviction.

### Society bye-laws or constitutional rights, which one will prevail?

The Society has been classified as a "service provider" under the Consumer Protection Act, which has been reinforced by several judgments of the Consumer Courts. The sole-responsibility of the society is to provide "common services and facilities" to its members, which also legally means "common services and facilities".

Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution provide for equality before law. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of these is prohibited under this section. Every citizen and non-citizen of India, as per the Constitution of India, is provided with the fundamental right to reside (resident) anywhere in India, except in restricted and restricted areas. None of the Apartment Acts across India have any provision for "prohibited and restricted" areas within society premises. Also, they do not restrict "tenants", even though a "bachelor tenant" cannot be prohibited (banned) from living in the society for whatever reason.

### Can society bye-laws or bye-laws be challenged?

In the case of Samwarmal Kejriwal v. Vishwa Cooperative Housing Society, the Hon'ble Supreme Court upheld the right of the owner to retain a tenant of

his choice. Similarly in the case of St. Anthony's Co-operative, the Bombay High Court ruled against the society and rejected the amended bye-laws by which the society sought to restrict the membership of persons of a particular religion.

Any rule that violates a person's fundamental rights can be challenged in a court of law. Housing society regulations do not have the status of law. Every Indian citizen has the right to live anywhere in the country and no one is allowed to discriminate on the basis of religion, marital status, caste, sex, food habits or marital status. There are cases where tenants have filed, fought and won many cases. These rules are not laws made by societies, so if an individual feels that his rights as a citizen have been violated, he can be challenged.

It is imperative that people seek legal recourse if they experience any form of discrimination or harassment. Such small steps will go a long way in strengthening the rule of law in the country and achieving the goal of 'Housing for All'.



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## National News

### Cannot declare Satyendar Jain as a 'person with unsound mind': Delhi HC

The Delhi High Court observed that it cannot declare Satyendar Jain as a person with an unsound mind and disqualify him from being a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or the Minister in the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi in the facts and circumstances of the case.

The observation of the Delhi High Court has come in an order passed in a PIL that sought direction to disqualify Satyendar Jain for being the Member of the Legislative Assembly and apparently the Minister in the Government of NCT of Delhi.

The bench of Justice Satish Chander Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad also said that the court has carefully gone through the entire material on record and has also heard learned counsel for the petitioner at length. "It is true that cases have been registered against Satyendar



Jain and he is facing prosecution for various offences under the Indian Penal Code, Prevention of Corruption Act as well as Prevention of Money Laundering Act," the bench said.

However, the fact remains that the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 is a complete code in itself which provides a mechanism in respect of investigation, inquiry and trial. The Code of Criminal Procedure

caters to all contingencies and it is for the prosecution/ court to take appropriate steps in accordance with the law.

The Delhi High Court had decided to reserve the order on a Public Internet Litigation (PIL) seeking direction to disqualify Satyendar Jain for being a member of the Legislative Assembly and apparently the Minister in Government of NCT of Delhi on Tuesday.

### If considered by Oppn, Nitish Kumar might be 'strong candidate' for PM: Tejashwi Yadav

Amid the buzz that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could emerge as a prime ministerial candidate, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday said if considered by the Opposition, the JD(U) leader might be a "strong candidate" as he enjoys "immense goodwill" on the ground.

In an interview with a news agency, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Yadav also said the BJP's narrative that "jungle raj" will be back with the return of the Mahagathbandhan government was a "tired discourse" and a "classic case" of "crying wolf".

The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader said the coming to power of the Mahagathbandhan government with the JD(U), the RJD, the Congress and other parties uniting "augurs well for opposition unity".



"It signals that most of the Opposition parties recognise the larger challenge before the country – the hegemony of the BJP, where on the back of money, media, and (administrative) machinery power, they are determined to stamp out all diversity from the Indian society as well as from the political spectrum," he alleged.

### Jayalalithaa death: AIIMS panel says "correct" medical procedures followed

A report by an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) panel of doctors has asserted that the treatment provided to late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa was as per "correct medical practice and no errors" have been found in the care provided.

This provides relief for Apollo Hospital where Jayalalithaa was admitted.

With direction from the Supreme Court, the AIIMS panel was formed to assist the Arumughaswamy Commission.

The panel found the final diagnosis and timeline of events of Jayalalithaa's health was fully observed and also agreed with Apollo's treatment and diagnosis.

After the demise of Jayalalithaa in December 2016, full-scale politics erupted over the cause of her death and the medical procedures followed during her hospitalisation.

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Pannerselvam had requested a probe over her death which led to the formation of the Arumughaswamy Commission.

### BJP says Kejriwal kingpin of excise policy 'scam', handcuffs getting close to him

The BJP on Sunday alleged Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is the "kingpin" of the excise policy "scam" and said handcuffs are getting close to him as nodes of corruption are being unravelled.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia alleged Kejriwal was busy indulging in corruption when Covid-affected people needed his help.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, who also addressed the press conference, said, "Delhi's excise policy has proved to be a



corrupt one. Arvind Kejriwal is the kingpin of this entire scam." Bhatia said when it was time to help Covid-affected people, Kejriwal was busy indulging in corruption by signing the excise

policy. "Roots of the excise policy 'scam' lead to the doorstep of corrupt Kejriwal. No one is above law and no corrupt person will be spared," he said.

### 58 new posts of law officers in AG's office to be reserved for SCs: Bhagwant Mann

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday announced that 58 new posts of law officers being created in the Advocate General's office will be reserved for Scheduled Castes.

These posts will be filled up in the coming days, he said.

"When I took oath as chief minister, I asked my officers whether there was any provision of reservation in the appointment of law officers in the Advocate General's office and they replied in the negative.

"When I asked them whether we can we make such a provision,



they said the government can take such a decision," Mann said

in a video message.

These additional 58 posts being created in the AG's office will be reserved for SCs, he said, adding the decision was taken after consulting legal experts.

Mann said Punjab will be the first state in the country to have such a provision for SC lawyers.

The announcement comes a day after Mann, during a meeting with members of the Valmiki community on the issue of appointment of law officers, said no other state has reservation in these posts but the Punjab government will soon give "good news".

## City News

### Special court rejects police plea for cancellation of bail to MP Navneet Rana



A special court on Monday rejected the police plea seeking cancellation of bail granted to Navneet Rana, an independent MP from Amravati in Maharashtra, and her MLA husband Ravi Rana citing violation of conditions.

The Ranans were booked and

arrested by Khar police station officials on April 23, for alleged offences of sedition and breach of harmony for declaring their intention to chant the Hanuman Chalisa outside Matoshree, the personal residence of then Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, in Bandra (east).

### More than 1,500 Maha villages get 100 pc 'Har Ghar Jal' coverage

Every household in 1,513 villages of Maharashtra has received tap connection for drinking water under the 'Har Ghar Jal' mission over the last few weeks, an official said on Sunday.

The department of water supply and sanitation had reached out to 1,553 villages in the state as part of a special campaign between July 25 and August 12 and managed to cover all households in 1,513 villages, the official said. The government is committed to supplying water to all rural households by 2024 under the scheme and works are underway to provide tap water through village-level water supply schemes, said Dr Hrishikesh Yashod, mission director of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Maharashtra.

As per official data, individual tap connections were provided in 111 villages in Nashik district, 89 in Gadchiroli, 79 in Satara, 78 in Amravati, 76 in Chandrapur, 65 in Nagpur, 52 in Jalna, 42 in



Aurangabad and 17 in Palghar among other villages in the state. The department had set a target of providing at least 55 litres of quality-controlled and consistent water supply in every household in 1,553 villages as per the JJM parameters, the official said.

At least 1,513 villages have been declared Har Ghar Jal-certified during special gram sabhas organised for the purpose, he said.

Yashod further said that earlier, people in these villages had to rely on hand pumps, wells and other sources for drinking water.

### Uddhav will launch Maha Prabodhan Yatra in Thane

After Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray's Shiv Samvaad Yatra, Shiv Sena will begin its Maha Prabodhan Yatra all over the state. Sena party president Uddhav Thackeray will address the first public rally as part of the yatra at Thane's Tembhi Naka. Sena leaders said Uddhav's first speech will be in Thane, the home turf and stronghold of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Sena leaders said the tour's finer details will be worked out after Ganpati, after which the tour will be launched.

### Maharashtra assembly passes amendment for election of nagar parishad heads

The Maharashtra legislative Assembly on Monday passed an amendment to an act, under which heads of nagar parishads and panchayats can be elected directly by the voters. Chief minister Eknath Shinde tabled the bill to amend the Maharashtra Municipal Council, Nagar Panchayats and Industrial Townships Act 1965.

The amendment was introduced to change the



existing practice of elected heads of nagar parishad or representatives choosing the municipal council.

### NCP MLA Awhad urges Central Railway to review decision of replacing non-AC locals with AC trains

NCP MLA Jitendra Awhad on Monday appealed to the Central Railway to review its decision of replacing some of the non-air conditioned local trains with the AC ones on the main line between Mumbai and Thane. Talking to reporters here, the MLA

from Kalwa-Mumbra in Thane said the decision to replace the existing non-AC locals with the AC trains was causing hardships to commuters. There will be an agitation if the Railways does not resolve the problem, the former state minister said.

### Maharashtra govt to bear education cost of college students who lost parents to COVID-19

Maharashtra minister Chandrakant Patil on Monday said the state government will bear the education expenses of college students who have lost both their parents to the COVID-19

pandemic. The state higher and technical education minister made the announcement on the floor of the state Assembly while responding to a question by Congress legislator Shirish Chaudhary.

### Rebel MLA miffed as junior from BJP bags cabinet post



Rebel Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Shirsat who had sparked speculation that he was unhappy on not being inducted into CM Shinde cabinet and could go back to Uddhav Thackeray camp on Sunday said that MLA Atul Save, who "came from behind", has got cabinet ministership and now it was time he too be considered. Shirsat said this at an event in Aurangabad. Recently, Shirsat had tweeted a video of Uddhav's speech in the assembly and referred to him as 'kutumb pramukh (patriarch)'.

### Carnac bridge to be razed, will be rebuilt by 2024

The 150-year-old British-era Carnac bridge can be demolished. The traffic police have granted its noobjection certificate (NOC) to the railways for its demolition subject to fulfilment of several conditions, including its reopening by June 2024. The bridge, located between CSMT and Masjid Bunder station, passes over the Centrail Railway tracks. The closure of the bridge would mean that vehicles have to enter DN Road via General Post Office by taking a long detour via P D'Mello Road.



### Ancient idols stolen from temple in Jalna



Unidentified thieves allegedly stole six ancient idols from a temple in Maharashtra's Jalna district, police said on Monday. The theft came to light this morning when the temple priest discovered that the ancient metal idols were missing, an official said.

According to sources, the idols made of five metals were reportedly installed in the temple in 1535.

# Gossip

## 'Delhi Crime' makes you question what all goes into making a criminal: Shefali Shah



As someone a 'born criminal' or does society play a role in creating one? This is the central conflict that will be explored in the second season of "Delhi Crime", says actor Shefali Shah.

Shah, who returns as DCP Vartika Chaturvedi in the upcoming installment of the acclaimed Netflix drama, said this time the police procedural series is more reflective in nature in comparison to the first chapter.

"I see the growth in these characters who have been loved. The beauty of 'Delhi Crime' is that it makes you question what all goes into making a criminal. "Is it just as simple as pointing a finger to somebody? How has the society, how have I contributed to the good and the bad? It's a lot of this stuff, which is so deep," the 49-year-old actor told an agency in an interview.

Returning with the second season of a popular and awarded show like "Delhi Crime" was tough, she said. But what kept the team going was approaching the two chapters as two "individual shows".

Besides different cases being under investigation, a lot has changed from season one to season two.

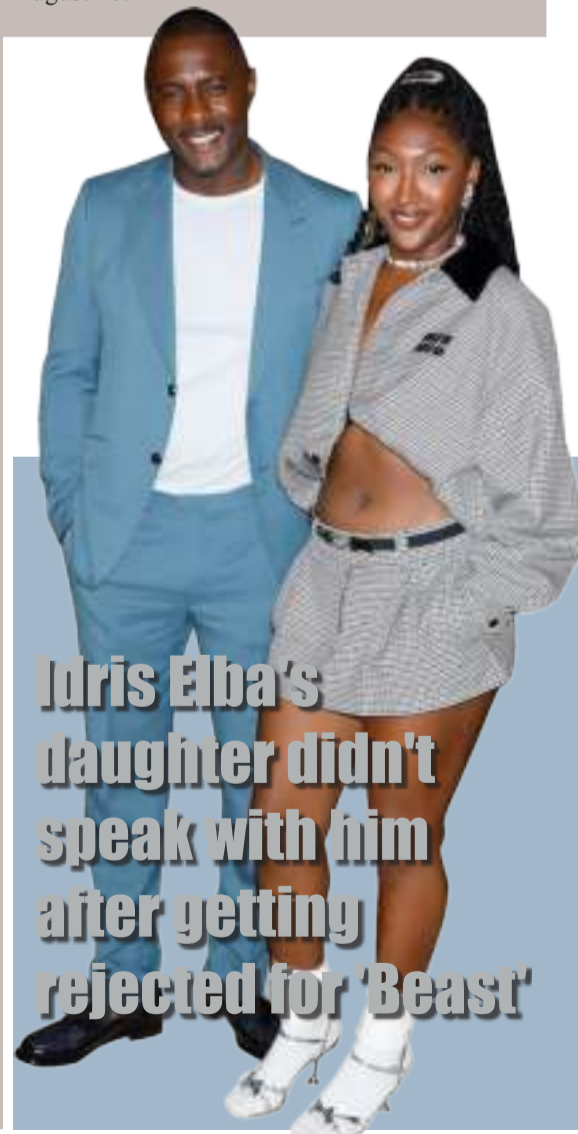
Filmmaker Richie Mehta, who directed the first chapter, is attached as the creator of season two, which is directed and showrun by Tanuj Chopra.

What remains the same is the core of "Delhi Crime", added Shah.

"They are individual shows... In 'Delhi Crime' one, the case is different. This is a different story being told by a different creator. At the same time, the core, soul and grain of DC isn't going to waver." The first season, which premiered in 2019, followed the 2012 case of the gangrape and murder of the physiotherapy intern, who was assaulted on a cold December night in a moving bus by six men and died of her grievous injuries 13 days later in a Singapore hospital.

Playing DCP Vartika Chaturvedi came as a turnaround for the actor, who said she was "scared" about reprising what she described as a "bookmark character" who is so loved and respected.

"Delhi Crime" season two also stars Rasika Dugal, Rajesh Tailang, Adil Hussain, Anurag Arora, Yashaswini Dayama, Sidharth Bhardwaj, Gopal Dutt, Denzil Smith, Tillotama Shome, Jatin Goswami, Vyom Yadav and Ankit Sharma. The series will start streaming on Netflix from August 26.



Idris Elba's daughter didn't speak with him after getting rejected for 'Beast'

## Jennifer Lopez, Ben Affleck get married again



Star couple Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck tied the knot for the second time on Saturday in a lavish, star-studded ceremony. Lopez, 53, and Affleck, 50, got married during a three-day celebration for friends and family at the latter's sprawling riverfront estate near Savannah, Georgia.

The nuptials come nearly a month after the duo eloped to Las Vegas, according to entertainment website. Lopez wore a couture Ralph Lauren dress made in Italy for the ceremony, which was officiated by celebrity life coach Jay Shetty.

The dress code for the second wedding was white and the function was attended by Matt Damon and his wife Luciana, director Kevin Smith, and actor Jason Mewes, among others.

The couple, who had announced their engagement in April, recently returned from Paris where they went for their honeymoon.

Lopez and Affleck first dated after working on the movie "Gigli". They got engaged in November 2002, but Lopez called off the engagement in early 2004.

She has been married three previous times, including to singer-songwriter Marc Anthony, the father of her twins Max and Emme; actor Chris Judd and producer Ajani Noa.

This is Affleck's second marriage after his 2018 divorce from Jennifer Garner, with whom he has three children: daughters Violet and Seraphina, and son Samuel.

English actor-producer Idris Elba lived through the tense environment after his daughter Isan didn't land a role in his latest movie 'Beast' for lack of chemistry on camera, reports an entertainment website.

"Interestingly enough, my daughter auditioned for this role," Elba said on The Breakfast Club, quoted by Deadline. "She wants to be an actress and she auditioned and it came down to chemistry in the end. The relationship in the film and the relationship between my daughter was, the chemistry wasn't right for film, weirdly enough." After not getting the part, Elba said his daughter didn't talk to him "for about three weeks."

According to entertainment website, it was producer Will Packer who had to give Isan the news that she wouldn't be acting with her father as he sees her as his "little niece". Packer gave props to Elba for not going the route of nepotism and asking producers to put his daughter "through the ropes" in the audition process.

"He auditioned with her (and) he was very tough on her," Packer added. "(Elba) said, 'Listen, at the end of the day we're going to make the best decision for the movie. I trust you, Will, trust the director,' and she was very good, very close."