



Gujarat HC refuses to stay Rahul Gandhi's conviction in defamation case, says trial

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# Afternoon

VOICE

VIEWS & VISION OF CITY

Volume: 15, Issue: 210

SATURDAY, JULY 08, 2023 MUMBAI

08 PAGES, ₹ 2/-

RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332

www.afternoonvoice.com

## IN A MAJOR SETBACK FOR UDDHAV NEELAM GORHE IS SET TO JOIN SHINDE-LED SHIV SENA



**Neelam Gorhe is known in politics as a clean face who has consistently raised her voice on women's issues and other social issues.**

In a major setback for Uddhav Thackeray, Neelam Gorhe, Shiv Sena (UBT) deputy leader and deputy chairperson of the legislative council, is reportedly joining the Shiv Sena, the political party of chief minister Eknath Shinde. Neelam Gorhe will formally join Shinde's Shiv Sena today during the entry ceremony.

Neelam Gorhe joined the Shiv Sena in 1998, since then she is known as a loyal Shiv Sainik and the female face of Shiv Sena. She has always been a leader in raising her voice on women's issues as well as other social issues. She is also known as a loyal worker of Balasaheb Thackeray. After Eknath Shinde's rebellion, Neelam

Gorhe consistently advocated for the Thackeray group.

Many Thackeray-faction leaders, including Deepali Syed, Manisha Kayande, and Neelam Gorhe, were said to have been upset after Sushma Andhare's entry into Thackeray's Shiv Sena. Many leaders criticized Sanjay Raut following Eknath

Shinde's rebellion.

There have been reports since this morning that Neelam Gorhe has decided to join the Shiv Sena. However, her name was not directly taken. Her phone was also unreachable. Finally, it appears that Neelam Gorhe is joining the Shiv Sena.

## Maharashtra Politics: What Sharad Pawar started once ended with him

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Major Rebel in Maharashtra politics began with Sharad Pawar, in 1999, after the 12th Lok Sabha was dissolved and elections to the 13th Lok Sabha were called, Pawar, P. A. Sangma, and Tariq Anwar demanded that the party needed to propose someone native-born as the prime ministerial candidate and not the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, who had entered party politics and replaced Kesri as Congress president. That was the time Pawar and Sangma founded the Nationalist Congress Party in June 1999. Despite the falling out, the new party aligned with the Congress party to form a coalition government in Maharashtra after the 1999 state assembly elections to prevent the Shiv Sena-BJP combine from returning to power. Pawar, however, did not return to state politics and Vilasrao Deshmukh of Congress was

chosen as chief minister, with Chagan Bhujbal representing the NCP as deputy chief minister. Many stalwarts of Congress rebelled and joined Pawar's NCP. That incidence was a big jolt to then the ruling party. Those days Pawar succeeded in breaking Congress now is nephew Ajit gave him back in same way.

Very strategically and without any hint eight MLAs, including Ajit Pawar took oath as ministers in the Shinde-Fadnavis government after a split in the NCP. After that, Sharad Pawar suspended all the main leaders of the Ajit Pawar group from their positions in the party. After that, Ajit Pawar's group has directly sued the NCP itself.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

# Editoritis

# Maharashtra Politics: What Sharad Pawar started once ended with him

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*If MLAs Rajesh Tope, Sunil Bhusara and Chetan Tupe join the Ajit Pawar group, it will be a big political blow to the NCP. Due to this, now the political movement in Mumbai between NCP and Ajit Pawar group has gained momentum.*

*It could be possible that 40-odd MLAs of Congress will also be bought over. This means there will be no opposition in Maharashtra.*

*In 1978, Sharad Pawar ran the rainbow coalition comprising the Janta Party and the Peasants Workers Party that lasted less than two years. Incidentally, he is tried to forge a similar alliance in the state by joining hands with the Congress and the Shiv Sena.*

A total of 32 MLAs show their support to Ajit, tomorrow if few more join his camp, he can retain party name and symbol both. Ajit Pawar's group needs three to four more MLAs to escape the action of the Defection Act. Therefore, if MLAs Rajesh Tope, Sunil Bhusara and Chetan Tupe join the Ajit Pawar group, it will be a big political blow to the NCP. Due to this, now the political movement in Mumbai between NCP and Ajit Pawar group has gained momentum.

The general sentiment is that a few months down the line, the frictions will only increase and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will eventually attempt to lead the government. Shinde's self-boasting advertisement claiming that he is the most popular leader has not gone well with BJP; Ajit and other leaders' induction in party may damage Shinde's prospects. In a meeting held at Varsha bungalow, many of his MLAs expressed disappointment openly, few of them even quarreled with each other. The development in Maharashtra seems very interesting. Ajit Pawar reported having the support of exactly 40 MLAs which Eknath Shinde had when he joined hands with the BJP. Just think Shinde and Ajit Pawar are both part of the government in Maharashtra - it will be more of the government of Shiv Sena and NCP. It could be possible that 40-odd MLAs of Congress will also be bought over. This means there will be no opposition in Maharashtra.

Not bad, perhaps we are heading towards One India - One Party, then possibly one India and Life Time One PM. I wonder what would Shinde do if BJP offers the CM post to Ajit Pawar in future? BJP seems very desperate to save its prospects in 2024. Meanwhile PM wants huge number of MPs in his camp looking at 2024 elections. Moreover, Devendra has not forgotten the betrayal and humiliation cause to him by Uddhav Thackeray and Pawar. Serving for 5-days as Chief Minister during the 2019 Maharashtra political crisis, he had to resign on 28 November 2019.

In 1978, Sharad Pawar ran the rainbow coalition comprising the Janta Party and the Peasants Workers Party that lasted less than two years. Incidentally, he is tried to forge a similar alliance in the state by joining hands with the Congress and the Shiv Sena. Now Ajit Pawar breaking NCP is seen as Sharad Pawar's master plan and his nephew is pawn in his hand.

When Ajit Pawar was made Deputy Chief Minister on Saturday morning, only to be snubbed by Sharad Pawar, who said the decision to support the BJP was not backed by him and was his nephew's personal one. In fact, Sharad Pawar's decision in 1978 to establish his own party and run it for a decade earned him the unofficial title of "strongman" in

political circles. Sharad Pawar wrote in his book "On My Terms" that the poll reverses in the 1977 post-Emergency anti-Indira Gandhi wave shocked many in the state and the country. VN Gadgil lost on a Congress ticket in Baramati, the home turf of the Pawars.

In January 1978, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi split the Congress, forming the Congress (Indira) to take on the parent organisation Congress(S), headed by Sardar Swarn Singh, in the state elections. Sharad Pawar stayed with Congress(S) and his mentor Yashwantrao Chavan. In the assembly polls held a month later, the Congress(S) won 69 seats as against 65 of Congress(I). The Janta Party won 99 seats. However, no party got a full majority. The two factions of the Congress got together to form the government headed by Vasantdada Patil from Congress(S) and with Nashikrao Tirpude from Congress(I) as the deputy Chief minister. However, the bickering between the two Congress factions continued which made it difficult to run the government. Sharad Pawar decided to quit. His relations with Janata Party president Chandrashekar helped him. Sharad Pawar walked out with 38 Congress MLAs to form a new government called Samantar Congress (Parallel Congress). He then became the youngest chief minister of the state at the age of 38. However, with the return of Indira Gandhi to power in 1980, his government was dismissed.

Now Ajit Pawar joining the Maharashtra government as the deputy chief minister shocked everyone in the state, also many MLAs of the Eknath Shinde faction who once again find themselves in the exact dilemma they faced in 2019 when Uddhav Thackeray's decided to ally with the NCP and the Congress. There are many concerns that have created unrest in the Shinde camp. The loss of monopoly as the only party the BJP could rely upon to stay in power. NCP leaders being inducted into the state government while expansion of the Shinde-Fadnavis cabinet was long due to incorporate many from the Sena who were promised berths last year. Dilemma over joining hands with those they were wrestling even while being in the MVA. Having to make more compromises than promised when it comes to sharing of seats in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections scheduled for 2024. Fear that Ajit Pawar will meddle and interfere to create hurdles for them like he allegedly did in the MVA government.

Volume No. 15 | Issue No. 210

Afternoon VOICE  
RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332 VIEWS & VISION OF CITY

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# Voices



## Letters to the Editor

### The research on elephants over the last few years has provHumanity suffering

Uraniting on someone's face is not only a scandal of the lower caste but also a humiliation of humanity. Pravesh Shukla has been charged under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act - a law meant to protect historically oppressed communities. Despite laws meant to protect tribals, discrimination against them and other people belonging to India's lower castes - thought to number around 200 million - remains a daily reality.

They are some of the country's most downtrodden citizens because of an unforgiving Hindu caste hierarchy that condemns them to the bottom of the ladder. This incident has put entire Madhya Pradesh to shame. The strictest punishment should be given to the guilty person and atrocities on tribal [people] in Madhya Pradesh should be stopped.

**MT.Farooqi**

### ED puppets of the central government!

Ever since the Modi government came to power, all the government agencies and officials have been tied in their fist. Treating them as per his wish and getting his work done by continuously giving extensions to his favored officers. The Supreme Court also took a hard line on the third extension given to Enforcement Directorate (ED) Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra. 'Can a person be so indispensable?', This question has been asked by the Supreme Court to the Central Government. According to you, is no other officer of the ED eligible to be the Director of Enforcement Directorate? The Central Government has been caught in a dilemma.

No matter how much the Supreme Court listens to the Central Government in this matter, it does not matter to them. They want to take the country to dictatorship. That is why the central government is doing the same business behind the ED by giving extension to the officials who are working in their favor and by putting the ED behind them and keeping their seat intact.

**Datta Shravan Khandare**

### AI is threat to writing skills

Expanding arms of AI is regarded as a blessing on one hand, it also considered as killer and threat to writing and analytical skills. AI dominating and firming its foot in the sectors such as journalism, copywriting, research, transcription etc. News agencies are hiring 'AI powered reporter' for content creation rather than Editors. Students are using AI chat bots for assignments which lead to ban of AI chatbots in academic institutions. It would have disastrous consequences in long run. AI chatbots are threatening and killing writing and analytical skills as pocket calculators killed arithmetic ability in children.

**Uzakkir Khan**

### ED Government

The political weather is hot and heavy in the country. The BJP is constantly trying to split the opposition parties. After a hugely successful All-Opposition meeting in Patna, the next meeting will be held in Bengaluru on 17&18 July 2023. They are steadfast in their unwavering resolve to defeat the fascist and undemocratic forces and present a bold vision to take the country forward. The BJP is worried and is trying to break regional parties by putting pressure from the Central agencies.

The aim is to make their leaders so worried about their own existence and the survival of their party that they stop thinking about building a united front. Notably, after the NCP split, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot alleged that the BJP was trying to 'eliminate' the Opposition with the help of money power and Central agencies. "The political developments that have taken place in Maharashtra show that the BJP wants to eliminate the Opposition parties on the basis of money power and Central agencies. It is highly condemnable."

**Tauqueer Rahmani**

# Brighten the future in Jewellery Designing

When women or girls attend a wedding, function or event, they also pay special attention to the matching of jewellery with their dress. For some time now, the trend of wearing jewellery has been increasing among men as well. Due to the growing trend of jewellery designing, this industry is now progressing rapidly and the employment opportunities in it are also increasing rapidly. Jewellery designing The art of making various ornaments is known as jewellery designing. Who designed them Yes, they are called jewellery designers. Gold, silver etc. metals are moulded into different shapes and attractive ornaments are made by adding diamonds and pearls to it.

The main job of a jewellery designer is designing the jewellery as well as creating styles and patterns. Earlier this work was done by goldsmiths and their artisans and this work was done manually. Now this work is done by jewellery designers and the help of computer is taken in it. A jewellery designer makes beautiful jewellery keeping in mind the demands of his customers and fashion. style Diamonds, ivory, precious stones, shells, pearls etc. are also widely used in making jewellery. If you have the qualities of creativity and long-term work, then a career can be made in the field of jewellery designing.

Although today the prices of gold, silver, diamonds, pearls etc. are setting new records, but people's attraction towards jewellery is not going to decrease. Now this business is growing rapidly day by day. Nowadays, people go for traditional designer jewellery in gold as well as designer jewellery embellished with other metals and stones as part of the new fashion are also beginning to give importance.

The demand for professionals in this field is very high and the supply is very low.

Therefore, the field of jewellery designing has unlimited career possibilities for the youth, which provides them with a guarantee of employment as well as heights in the future. qualification To make a career in the field of jewellery designing, first of all, it is more important to have interest and understanding towards this field. Along with this, it is important to be creative, imaginative, understanding of new era, understanding of fashion, understanding of color and design as well as hardworking. However, courage in every field But jewelry designing is such a work, in which the designer needs to work with patience. If you are designing jewelry with expensive metals like gold, diamonds then even a little carelessness can spoil all your hard work. Course To make a future in the field of jewelry designing, you can do certificate, diploma and degree courses in this field after 12th.

After 12th you can do a six month degree course in it or you can do a one year diploma after graduation. tenth pass Jewellery designing is also a career option for youngsters. Short term course can be done after 10th. CAD for Gems Jewellery, Basic Jewellery Design, Diamond Identification and Grading, Bachelor of Accessory Design, Jewellery Manufacturing, Advanced Jewellery Design with CAD, Bachelor of Jewellery Design, BSc in Jewellery Design, Master Diploma in Jewellery Design and Technology etc. are many employment oriented courses, from which you can choose according to your ability, capacity and interest. The possibilities There is no shortage of employment in the field of jewellery designing is not There is a never-ending

demand for jewellery designers in export houses to cater to the growing demand for traditional jewellery abroad. After taking a course related to jewellery designing, work from jewellery making to finishing can be easily done in a jewellery designing institute. Along with this, you can make a career in the positions of jewellery designer, production manager, costing manager, writer and drafter, planning and concept manager, gem polisher and sales associate. salary When you get a job in a firm, initially You can earn 20 to 35 thousand rupees per month. After this, on increasing work experience, you can get a job in a big export house, where you can earn 50 thousand to 1 lakh rupees per month. As your experience increases, so does the salary.

Technical ability There is no doubt that technical knowledge is very important to get employment in the field of jewellery designing. Without technical knowledge you cannot advance in this field. So join this job by doing jewellery designing course from a reputed institution All information can be obtained from Along with sketching practice, gemology, polishing, enamelling, color science, electroplating, quality control etc. are given detailed information in jewellery designing curricula. To get admission in a good institute related to jewellery designing one has to pass the entrance exam. Through this exam, the sketching ability and imagination power of the candidate is tested.

**- Vijay Garg**

Retired Principal Educational Columnist

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**No postal letters will be entertained**  
(The views expressed are authors' own.)

City

# I will work more effectively now, whether 82 or 92: Sharad Pawar



Sharad Pawar takes a dig at his nephew Ajit Pawar, saying "I am the president of the NCP. Someone may issue a statement and say anything, that does not mean anything. NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Thursday called for a meeting of the party's working committee which

expressed "full faith and confidence" in him, and approved his decision to expel "Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare and nine NCP MLAs who have joined hands with the BJP".

Ajit and Sharad Pawar round up their troops, the six who are apparently yet to take a call could de-

cide how the rest of the NCP story goes. To escape anti-defection, Ajit needs 36 of the 53 NCP MLAs with him. He seems short by five currently. We take a look at the six who didn't turn up at either of the meetings called by Ajit and Sharad Pawar respectively on Wednesday and where they stand.

Meanwhile, Sharad Pawar puts the Maharashtra tour on hold for 8 days due to heavy rains after his public meeting in Yeola. BJP national secretary Pankaja Munde greeted her estranged cousin Dhananjay Munde after the Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction joined the BJP-Shiv Sena Maharashtra government. There are speculations that she might switch sides.

# In confidence-building exercise, Devendra Fadnavis to address BJP legislators today



The BJP has convened a meeting of its legislators in both the state Assembly and Council in Mumbai on Friday. The meeting, to be addressed by Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, assumes significance in the wake of the latest political developments with newly sworn in Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar re-

bellling against his uncle Sharad Pawar and joining the Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra.

While it's 'Advantage Sena-BJP' in Maharashtra following the split in the NCP, the question now is how will the BJP negotiate in constituencies where the party and the NCP had been traditional rivals for the last four decades.

# United MVA will take on powers who split parties'

MPC president Nana Patole on Thursday said that the MVA would together fight the "dictatorial tendencies" that are breaking parties by putting the fear of the Enforcement Directorate, CBI and income-tax in their members. "BJP is fearing defeat in the ensuing Lok Sabha and state assembly polls, therefore, it is splitting opposition parties. Dirty politics



is going on in Maharashtra for the past few days, the dirty politics of ending the opposition party by misusing central agencies is in

full swing, and democracy is in danger. We have resolved to end these dictatorial tendencies of the BJP," Patole said.

# NCP divide may trigger fresh poll talks in MVA

The split in the NCP has triggered fresh talks among MVA partners about civic polls in the city. Leaders of the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP's Sharad Pawar faction have said that they favour fighting the civic polls together. A meeting will be held to

review the situation and discuss strategy and sharing of seats. The civic polls are likely after the monsoon. Equations are set to change as BJP and Ajit Pawar's NCP are now on the same side. BJP had a total majority in the previous tenure while NCP the main opposition party

# Pankaja Munde to sue news channels



Pankaja Munde will file a lawsuit against the channel that broadcasts the news of Congress entry. BJP national secretary and former minister Pankaja Munde held a press conference today at 12.30 pm at her office in Worli, Mumbai. He clearly denied the news of joining Congress this time. He made following points

My career is not worth money. I have been in politics for 20 years. Gopinath Munde's rites have been passed on to me. I am not in the nature of backstabbing

There was news that I had met Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. But she was wrong. I will file a defamation suit against the concerned channel

I was a BJP candidate in 2019. I was defeated. Many incidents happened after that. The decision was made. After that there were many reports that I was upset. I have made a stand on it. Repeatedly me talking about it is like questioning my credibility

Dhananjay Munde had defeated Pankaj in the 2019 assembly elections. Now it is being said that Pankaja got into political trouble because she became a minister in the BJP government. Attention has also been paid to what they say about it.

# Construction of East-West Vidyavihar Railway Bridge to be completed by September 30, 2023

RTI activist Anil Galgali has been informed by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation that the construction of the much awaited railway bridge connecting Vidyavihar East and West is on delay and the construction will be completed by September 30, 2023. Anil Galgali has been pursuing the administration for speedy construction of Vidyavihar railway bridges for the past 14 years.

RTI activist Anil Galgali had sought information about the Vidyavihar railway bridge from the Mumbai Municipal Corporation administration. Mumbai Municipal Corporation Bridge

- An increase of 11.21 crores
- Extension twice
- No penalty
- 35.91 crore paid to Central Railway

Department informed Anil Galgali that the work order was issued on 19th April 2018 and the completion date is 4th November 2020. The length of Vidyavihar Railway Bridge is 613 meters. The width of the railway section is 24.30 m while the width of the access road is 17.50 m. The total cost of the project is 78 crore 19 lakh 28 thousand 895 rupees. A total of 35.91 crores has been

given to Central Railway for various clearances. So far the Mumbai Municipal Corporation has appointed the contractor AB Infrabuild, A total of 57.90 crores has been paid to Infrabuild and there is a balance of 20.28 crores. Interestingly, not even a single rupee penalty was levied on the contractor.

According to Anil Galgali, there is a loss due to cost increase in such a project, but the citizens have to suffer because the project is not completed on time. There will be no delay in obtaining various permissions if the railway administration initiates a single window scheme in such a project.

Nation

# Gujarat HC refuses to stay Rahul Gandhi's conviction in defamation case, says trial court order is proper

The Gujarat High Court on Friday refused to stay on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's plea seeking a stay on his conviction in the 'Modi surname' defamation case. The bench of Justice Hemant M Prachchhak said that the trial court conviction order is proper.



"There is no need to interfere with the said order. Therefore, the application is dismissed," he said. The court dismissed Rahul Gandhi's plea and noted that at least 10 criminal cases were pending against him and even after the present case, some more cases have been filed against him. One such case has been filed by the grandson of Veer Savarkar, the court said.

Earlier in May this year, Gujarat HC reserved its order on Rahul Gandhi's plea seeking a

stay on his conviction in the 2019 'Modi surname' defamation case. Rahul Gandhi had moved the Gujarat High Court on April 25 challenging the Surat sessions court order which declined to stay his conviction in the criminal defamation case. During the hearing on April 29, Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Rahul Gandhi, had sought time to produce certain

documents on record after which the court adjourned the hearing to May 2. The Surat sessions court had on April 20 rejected Rahul Gandhi's plea seeking a stay on his conviction in the criminal defamation case.

In his judgement, Additional Sessions Judge Robin P Mogera cited Rahul Gandhi's stature as an MP and former chief of the country's second-

largest political party and said he should have been more careful. He cited prima facie evidence and observations of the trial court and said it transpires that Gandhi made certain derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi apart from comparing people with the same surname with thieves. Judge Mogera said the surname of the complainant in the case, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lawmaker Purnesh Modi, is also Modi. "...the complainant is [also an] ex-minister and involved in public life. Such defamatory remarks would have certainly harmed his reputation and caused him pain and agony in society," he said.

He cited the disqualification criteria under the Representation of the People Act and added that

removal or disqualification as MP could not be termed irreversible or irreparable loss or damage to Gandhi. Following his conviction by a lower court in the criminal defamation case, Rahul Gandhi was disqualified as Lok Sabha MP. He had been elected to Lok Sabha from Wayanad in Kerala. The lower court sentenced the Congress leader to two years in jail on March 23 under sections 499 and 500 (defamation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in a case filed by Purnesh Modi. At a rally in Karnataka's Kolar in April 2019, Rahul Gandhi, in a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said, "How come all the thieves have Modi as the common surname?". Following the session's court verdict, Congress had said it will move the Gujarat High Court. ANI

## MP: Man booked for uploading doctored urination incident image to insult Tricolour

An FIR has been registered against a person for allegedly using an image of the Sidhi urination incident and doctoring it to insult the Tricolour, police said on Thursday. According to police, a person with the Twitter handle 'Shafeeq 2.0' used an image from the Sidhi urination incident and doctored it to insult the Indian flag.

Anil Bajpai, SHO Kamla Nagar, Bhopal said that a case has been registered against the person operating the account Shafeeq 2.0 under sections 153(1), 465 and 469 and section 67 of the IT Act as well as provisions of the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act. Earlier on Thursday, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had lunch with urination case victim Dashmat Rawat at the CM House in Bhopal. The Chief Minister met the victim of the Sidhi urination incident at CM's house in the state capital, Bhopal, and

had lunch with him. Chouhan welcomed the victim, Dashmat Rawat, and also washed his feet as a mark of respect. He also apologized to the victim for the incident and said he was deeply disturbed and filled with pain after seeing the video. "My heart is filled with pain; Dashmat ji this is an attempt to share your pain. Also, I apologize to you. For me, only people are god," CM Chouhan wrote after meeting the victim.

CM Chouhan met with the victim Dasmata Rawat at CM House. During this, the chief minister washed Dashmat's feet as a mark of respect, put tilak on his forehead, and garlanded him. He also honoured him by offering a Shawl, Sripahal, and the idol of lord Ganesha. Besides, CM fed Dashmat with his own hand on the occasion. Notably, in a viral video of the incident, the accused Pravesh Shukla (30) was seen urinating on Rawat. ANI

## Wrestlers' sexual harassment case: Delhi court summons Brij Bhushan on July 18

Delhi court on Friday summoned BJP MP and outgoing WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in a case of alleged sexual harassment of women wrestlers and said there was sufficient evidence to proceed against the accused.

Taking cognizance of the chargesheet, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Harjeet Singh Jaspal directed Brij Bhushan to appear before the court on July 18. The court also summoned Vinod Tomar, suspended assistant secre-



tary of the Wrestling Federation of India. The city police had filed a chargesheet against Brij Bhushan, a six-time MP, on June 15 under Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment), 354D (stalking) and 506 (criminal in-

timidation) of the IPC. Tomar was charged with offences under Sections 109 (abetment of any offence, if the act abetted is committed in consequence, and where no express provision is made for its punishment), 354, 354A and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC. PTI

## Uttarakhand: Tomatoes now going at Rs 250 per kg in Gangotri Dham, Rs 180 to 200 per kg in Uttarkashi

The humble tomatoes are now going at princely rates up north, with the kitchen staple going at Rs 250 per kg in Gangotri Dham and Rs 180 to 200 per kg in Uttarkashi district. A vegetable seller said tomatoes have become dearer in the region all of a sudden.

"Consumers are bearing the brunt of the rising prices of tomatoes in Uttarkashi. People are not even willing to buy them. In

Gangotri, Yamunotri, tomatoes are going at Rs 200 to Rs 250 per kg," Rakesh, a vegetable seller told ANI. Many attributed the sharp rise in vegetable prices to the prevailing heatwave in key tomato-growing areas, as well as heavy rains, leading to a disruption in supply chains. Tomatoes also have a relatively lower shelf life, which is also believed to be having a bearing on their prices. In Chennai, tomatoes are

currently selling at Rs 100-130 per kg. Faced with a price pinch, the Tamil Nadu government has started selling tomatoes at a subsidized rate of Rs 60 per kg at ration shops in the state capital Chennai in a bid to bring some respite to the consumers amid the price spiral. Like many states, Karnataka has also seen tomato prices go through the roof in recent days. ANI

World

## Security threats, debt repayments hinder Pakistan-China BRI projects: Report



The growing terrorist risk to Chinese citizens residing in Pakistan and differences over debt repayments have hindered the progress in the Belt and Road Initiative's projects of Islamabad and Beijing, Voice of America (VOA) reported citing officials and critics. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multi-billion dollar project was introduced in 2013 and quickly dubbed the flagship

extension of the Belt and Road Initiative. Pakistanis hoped that this new development program will bring change and turn the country into a regional hub.

The investment has helped Islamabad improve debilitating national transportation and power sectors and build trade routes connecting landlocked western China to the strategically located Pakistani deep-water Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea. Pakistan

has extracted many benefits from the projects they have created nearly 200,000 direct local jobs, built more than 1,400 kilometres of highways and roads, and added 8,000 megawatts of electricity to the national grid, ending years of blackouts caused by power outages in the country of 230 million people. Prolonged daily power cuts crippled economic activity and undermined industrial production, reported VOA.

Officials in both countries say that CPEC has attracted more than USD 25 billion in direct Chinese investment, which is expected to increase to USD 62 billion by 2030, when all CPEC projects, including several industrial zones, are scheduled to be completed. But recently, Chinese interests in Pakistan have come under militant attacks. On Wednesday's ceremony, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the CPEC, the Detractors said highlighted strains over security and other issues stemming from the economic undertaking. ANI

## Afghanistan: Women makeup artists protest against ban on beauty salons by Taliban

Days after the Taliban issued a decree and banned women's beauty salons across the country, several women makeup artists protested against the move and urged for rescinding of the order, Tolo News reported. More than 60,000 women in Afghanistan are at risk of losing their jobs after the Taliban ordered the closure of all women's beauty parlours and hairdressing salons across the country, as per Khaama Press.

The protesters gathered at the Union of Women's Beauty Salons and said that the closure of beauty salons will lead to severe economic challenges for them. "More than 12,000 women's beauty salons are active all over Afghanistan and all of them are women," Tolo News quoted Nadia Sultani, a makeup artist. "Women's beauty salons are the women's area. The head of every beauty salon is a woman. When a woman is working in a women's beauty salon, that is due to hardship and poverty," Raha Hassani, another makeup artist stated. The

Taliban in a new decree, banned women's beauty salons in Kabul and other provinces across the country on July 4. The Taliban Ministry of Vice and Virtue also ordered the Kabul municipality to bring the new decree of the Taliban leader into effect and cancel the licenses of women's beauty salons.

The Islamic Emirate has banned girls and women from going to schools, universities and working at NGOs as well as going to public areas such as parks, cinemas, and other recreation areas. The UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Irene Khan, said at the 53rd regular session of the Human Rights Council, last month that women's public presence has been totally erased by the 'Taliban', Tolo News reported. Previously, the UN special rapporteur for Afghanistan Richard Bennett, said that between September 2021 and May 2023, more than 50 edicts were issued regarding women and girls by the Islamic Emirate, Khaama Press reported. ANI

## "Vile, unacceptable": US lawmakers condemn attempted arson at Indian Consulate

Several lawmakers in the United States condemned the attempted arson and violent rhetoric aimed at Indian diplomats, including the Ambassador of India to the United States, Taranjit Singh Sandhu. US Congressmen Shri Thane-dar, Rich McCormick and Brian Fitzpatrick, from Michigan 13th district, Georgia's 6th Congressional district and Pennsylvania's 1st Congressional district respectively, took to Twitter to register their outrage at attempts by pro-Khalistani elements to "instil terror".

A group of Khalistan radicals, on July 2, tried to set the Indian consulate in San Francisco on fire.

US Congressman Shri Thane-dar criticised the incident in a strong-worded tweet. "I condemn in the strongest possible terms the attacks at the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. Violence and attempts to instil terror are unacceptable in democracy," tweeted Thane-dar. McCormick termed the attack on the Indian

## US, India conduct 'Operation Broader Sword' to stop international shipments of illegal and dangerous drugs

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and US Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) in collaboration with Indian Government's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) carried out 'Operation Broader Sword', a special bilateral multi-agency enforcement operation targeting illicit pharmaceuticals, devices, or precursor chemicals shipped using the international mail system. Conducted in June 2023, Operation Broader Sword stopped more than 500 shipments of illicit, and potentially dangerous, unapproved prescription drugs, combination medical devices, and synthetic drug precursors from reaching American consumers, the US Embassy in India said in a press release. The operation targeted packages entering the

US from India through the New York's John F Kennedy International Airport and Chicago's O'Hare International Airport International Mail Facilities (IMFs) from June 12-23.

During the operation, investigators examined over 1500 shipments originating in India and took action on approximately 500 products, including illicit and illegal medications intended to treat or mitigate serious diseases, according to the press release. Many shipments were determined to have included opioid and other controlled substance drug products.

The US Embassy in India in the press release said, "In anticipation of the Operation, HSI special agents conducted a controlled delivery of a shipment of suspected products resulting in the arrest of an Indian national for the illegal importation of illicit pharmaceuticals including opioids and other controlled substances." ANI



Consulate in San Francisco as 'unacceptable'. He tweeted, "This attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco is vile and unacceptable. Americans stand by our allies and our patriotic Indian-American community." Rep Fitzpatrick called for appropriate legal action against those involved in the incident. Taking to his official Twitter handle, he wrote, "This kind of violence is lawless and unacceptable. I firmly condemn the repeated hateful attacks on the Indian Consulate and look forward to those involved being held accountable with appropriate legal action."

The attempted arson attack on the Indian Consulate by pro-

Khalistanis and their ensuing rally on July 8 was also condemned by the co-chairs of India Caucus, saying free speech is not a license to provoke violence. Co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on India, Ro Khanna and Michael Waltz, in a press release, said, "As the co-chairs of the India Caucus, we strongly condemn the attempted arson and vandalism at the Indian Consulate in San Francisco and the posters circulating on social media with violent rhetoric aimed at Indian diplomats, including Ambassador Sandhu." They also appealed to the US State Department to investigate the damage and take necessary action. ANI

## Interview

# Roots of India with Ankur Pathan

The trend of elaborate dance shows has been ruling for a while now. Hundreds of dancers on stage, in colour coordinated vibrant cloths, with extravagant props, accessories and styling. Well, putting all this together is a Hercules task and there is one maverick who does it all with ease. I am talking about the very creative Mr. Ankur Pathan, who is a folk dancer, choreographer and today a renowned show director, who with his show expertise of stage craft, light design and set design has been presenting the most memorable shows by the Government on India.

Ankur's name is a part of Asia book of records, India book of records and Guinness books of records. He was awarded with the National Award in 2011, Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Kalakar Puraskar, Event Management Federation Award in 2014, 2015 for the use of technology in folk. We all are aware that Garba is going to be soon announced as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage, as an Awardee in folk, Pathan will soon lead the dance performance at the announcement. I met with the distinguished artist, excerpts from the interview:

### Tell me about your dance training and your early days of dance?

I started my career as a dancer with Aavishkar Academy of Performing Arts in Ahmedabad. I attended umpteen workshops with authentic Folk and Tribal Performers at their homes, schools and institutes. I am happy to share that I visited 34 countries through ICCR and also several parts of India through Zonal Centres. My folk dance took me to every corner of India and most beautiful places in the world. My initial days of dancing, performing at various stages are something that molded my mind to what it is told.

### Why did you choose folk dance as your career?

Oh! I can go on and on about my love for the folk dance art of India. But the most important thing I feel what attracted me and made me choose folk dance as my career is the power it brings. Folk dances are filled with energy not just normal energy but high voltage energy, it has varieties of colors, the instruments are popular as well as some very rare ones, the music is soul touching and the purity that it holds can never be matched with any other art form.

### They say the world of dance is more for the ladies, how do you feel being a man in the world dominated by women?

Well not going to lie, indeed it is! Every moment is challenging, you need to be excellent in your merits and perfection but to be precise in my field there is space for both, it is welcoming to both males and



females. For example, Garbo is for only females and Garbi is for only males and then there is Raas where both males and females come together and perform for lord Krishna and Radha. So we can find a good balance if and only if the art is pure and kept unpolluted.

### You are one of the favorite dance show directors for stage shows and events organized by the Government, which has been most memorable and why?

I literally have a long list, a never ending list of memorable events and shows that I have choreographed, well picking up a few is going to be a task. But nevertheless I will be mentioning a few of them that I found to be extremely satisfying. 'Statue of Unity Launch', with 800 musicians and dancers from various parts of India, maintaining a common rhythm and variations in other instruments, I can still hear the sounds of it. 'Vibrant Navratri' in 2014, a multimedia spectacle in multilevel stage with all types of special effects on stage, with 400 local dancers which included their Ariel fight, Ariel Raas in sky above 200 ft from the ground which was the highlight of the event. 'Swarnim Gujarat', a Government of Gujarat's celebration at Sardar Patel Stadium in 2010, co-ordinated and choreographed the mega event with bollywood choreographer Chinni Prakash ji and Rekhaji, plus managed 6000 dancers for 1 month with rehearsals and then the show itself was the first of Indian events, before I did the commonwealth games opening ceremony. Then there was 'Namaste Trump', the 8 km long road show of the US President with 2000 Dancers and cultural folk performance in the stadium in front of over two lakh crowd, was unbelievable moments for me. Oh Sandip! I better stop now, I can go on and on. This even makes me emotional, it is almost like planning a baby and seeing it being born, totally an unbelievable feeling.



### Tell me more about your recent show of Gujarat Day and what is next in your pocket?

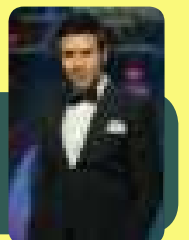
My most recent one is again for the Gujarat government, where I designed, choreographed and managed Gujarat Government State Level celebration of Gujarat day, I took place at the beautiful city of Jamnagar, here I worked with 90 percent of local dancers and drama artists, on 12 different level stages. Next for me is The G20 summit at Gandhinagar and in Diu which I am currently focusing on.

### How do you feel when folk dance and dancers are treated differently to the classical ones?

There are a lot of differences, it is painful not only for me but also for my late Guru Bansi Kaul ji. One dance type (Folk) is ground rooted and the second one (classical) is sophisticated and the treatment given to both are also the same, which does hurt, pierces like an arrow right into the heart. The beauty of folk dances is its purity, colorful costumes, rhythm, music, and energy of performance. Which should not be taken as a difference in treatment.

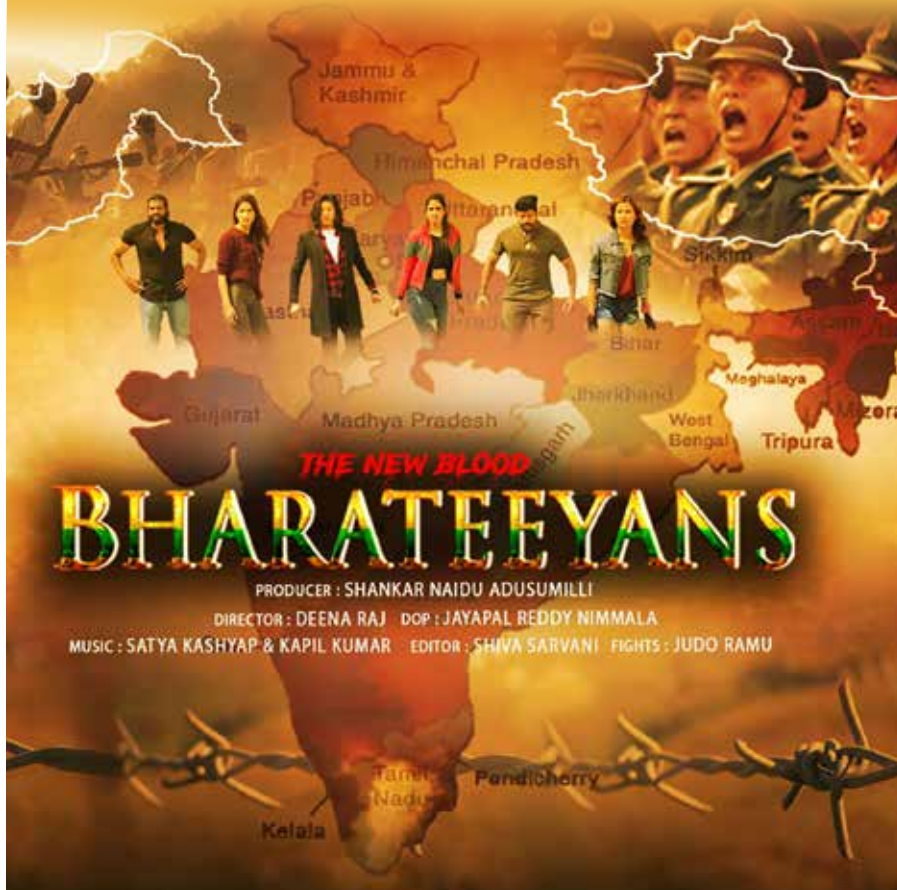
**Sandip Soparrkar**

Ace Dance Choreographer



# Entertainment

## Producer Shankar Naidu disheartened with censor board for removing Shiv Tandav song from his film **BHARATEEYANS**



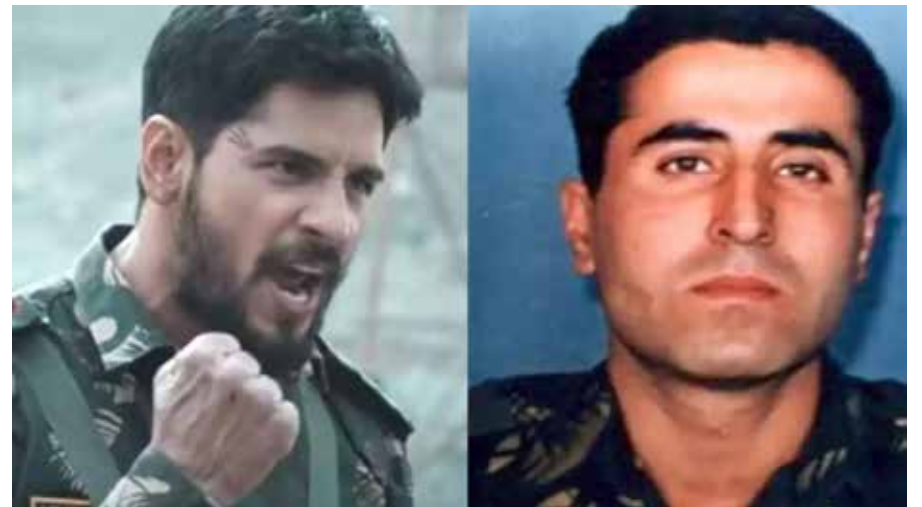
Deena Raj, known for his love stories 'Preminchukundam Raa' and 'Kalisundam Raa', is making his directorial debut with a patriotic drama titled 'Bharateeyans' starring Nirroze Putcha, Sonam Thendup Barphungpa, Subha Ranjan, Samaira Sandhu, Rajeswari Chakraborty and Mahender Bargas in leading roles. The film showcases the evil tactics of China and has received immense praise from retired Indian Army personnel at a special screening in different parts of India. Producer Dr. Shankar Naidu Adusumilli, who is an NRI and well known Surgeon in USA, is determined to oppose the Censor panel's objections to the film mentioning China.

However, now after 70 cuts, the film will be released. The censor board has also removed a song on Shiv Tandav from the film. Producer Shankar Naidu, who is grieved by this tyrannical act by the censor

team said, "We have not received any support from the censor board. Shiv Tandav is a song that signifies triumph of Good over evil and Hinduism, was cut by the Censor board without any consideration despite our appeal. Is it an act to subvert Hindus as if we have no right to canvass positive themes of our epics? They have allowed many movies with scenes demeaning, insulting and degrading Hindu Gods and Hindu spirits.

'Bharateeyans' is written and directed by Deena Raj, and stars Nirroze Putcha, Subha Ranjan, Sonam Thendup Barphungpa, Samaira Sandhu, Peden O Namgyal, and Rajeswari Chakraborty in leading roles. Produced under the banner of Bharat American Creations, the film is slated to release in Hindi and Telugu on July 14, 2023 in cinemas. UFO Moviez will be distributing the film.

## Sidharth Malhotra remembers Captain Vikram Batra on his death anniversary



Actor Sidharth Malhotra, who portrayed the character of Captain Vikram Batra in the film 'Shershaah' on Friday paid tribute to the late Param Veer Chakra awardee on his death anniversary. Taking to Instagram story, Sidharth re-shared the Indian Army post and captioned it, "Big love and Respect." 'Shershaah' is based on the life of Captain Vikram Batra, who laid down his life in the service of the nation while recapturing Indian territories from Pakistani intruders during the Kargil War in 1999. ANI

Pop icon Britney Spears was allegedly smacked in the face by NBA star Victor Wembanyama's security official. Spears filed a police report in Las Vegas, Nevada, after she was allegedly assaulted by a member of Wembanyama's security team.

On Friday, Spears took to Instagram and issued a statement claiming she was slapped by Victor's bodyguard when she tried to greet the player at a restaurant in LA, Page Six reported. Narrating the whole incident, Spears wrote, "Traumatic experiences are not new to me and I have had my fair share of them. I was not prepared for what happened to me last night."

However, she did not mention the name of the athlete. Spears recalled recognising Victor in her hotel lobby but it wasn't until she saw the 19-year-old player for a second time that she decided to "approach him and congratulate him on his success." "It was really loud, so I tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention. I am aware of the player's statement where he mentions I 'grabbed him from behind' but I simply tapped his shoulder," she explained. "His security then back handed me in the face without looking back, in front of a crowd," the Grammy winner continued to claim. "Nearly knocking me down and causing my glasses to fall off my face." ANI

## Britney Spears files police report after being smacked in face by NBA star Victor Wembanyama's security

