





# TOREX

## COUGH SYRUP

### HAI TO ALVIDA KHANSI



**ELGAAR PARISHAD**

## Brahman Mahasangh 'welcomes' Mevani; calls for open debate on battle of Bhima Koregaon

CHANDAN HAYGUNDE  
PUNE, DECEMBER 27

A DAY AFTER it urged authorities to deny permission for the 'Elgaar Parishad' — an event to mark the 200th year of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon — the Akhil Bhartiya Brahman Mahasangh (ABBM) "welcomed" Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani and other speakers to the conference.

In the battle, which took place on January 1, 1818, the British Army had defeated the Peshwas. Members of the Dalit community believe that the British force comprised largely of soldiers from the Dalit Mahar community, who waged a "war for freedom" from the alleged casteism of the Peshwas, who were upper-caste Brahmans.

Anand Dave, district president of ABBM, said, "We are not against Elgaar Parishad, or people gathering at Bhima Koregaon for celebrations. We are only against casteism... We welcome Mevani, JNU student (Umar Khalid) and other speakers to Pune... we are open to interactions with organisers of the conference. If they are willing, let there be an open debate." "Our stand is that both the British Army and the Indian forces, represented by Peshwas, had soldiers from various castes. Many soldiers from Peshwa's army sacrificed their lives in this war. So, as Indians, we feel it's not right to celebrate the victory of the British. In fact, there is a difference of opinion among historians on whether the British Army won at Bhima Koregaon," said Dave.

The British government had erected a Jay-stambh (victory memorial) at Perne village near Bhima Koregaon in Pune, in the



The Jaystambh at Perne

memory of soldiers in the British Army who had died in the battle. Peshwe said he disagreed with the 'war for freedom' narrative. "Peshwas represented the kingdom of Maratha Chhatrapati and their forces included soldiers and *sardars* (officers) from different castes, including Dalits. It was a battle between the British Army and the Maratha kingdom. Celebrating the victory of the British is not right. Peshwas played a major role in the rise of the Maratha empire..."

In a press conference on Tuesday, Jyoti Jagtap of Kabir Kala Manch, one of the organisers of the event, had said, "It is time to accept that the Peshwa rule was unjust. We are fighting against the new Peshwas, the current rulers, who continue unjust practices even today."

A pamphlet for the conference makes an appeal to the public, mainly members of Dalit, tribal and minority communities, to unite and be inspired by the heroes of the Bhima Koregaon battle, in order to defeat the "new Peshwas" — BJP, RSS and other "Hindutva" forces.

Radhika Vemula, mother of Rohith Vemula, a research scholar at University of Hyderabad whose suicide had created an uproar and triggered protests, will inaugurate

the conference at Shaniwar Wada on December 31. Speakers at the event include Mevani, a Dalit leader and newly-elected Gujarat MLA, Umar Khalid, a JNU student who was at the centre of the controversial slogan-shouting incident last year, tribal rights activist Soni Sori, and Vinay Ratan Singh, the national president of the Bhim Army.

Prakash Ambedkar, grandson of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Prashant Dontha of the Ambedkar Students' Association, Hyderabad, and Maulana Abdul Hamid Azhari, national secretary of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, are among the other speakers at the day-long event, which will be presided over by retired Supreme Court Justice P B Sawant. The participants would later march towards the 'Jaystambh' (victory memorial) in Perne, where a few lakh people are expected to assemble on January 1.

**Have no hopes from BJP govt: Peshwe**

Udaysinh Peshwe, one of the descendants of Peshwas, said he found it "strange" that the BJP was supporting the December 31 event at Shaniwar Wada. "Elgaar Parishad is a conspiracy to use the name of the Peshwas for attacking the BJP. But the irony is that the BJP is supporting the event. The organisers have received permission from the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for the Shaniwar Wada conference. The BJP is in power in the PMC... still permission was granted for holding the event. It is also known that ministers of the BJP government in Maharashtra will be visiting Bhima Koregaon on January 1. So I have no hopes from the BJP government..." said Peshwe.



## PROTEST AGAINST PAKISTAN

Shiv Sena workers protest against Pakistan over the treatment meted out to Kulbhushan Jadhav's mother Avanti and wife Chetna, who met the former Indian Navy officer in Islamabad on Monday. Jadhav was arrested by Pakistan in 2016 on allegations of spying and sentenced to death. Sandip Daundkar

# A New Year resolve: Pune Metro may take off in a year's time

Pimpri-Dapodi route on Corridor One will be first one to get green signal: MAHA-Metro

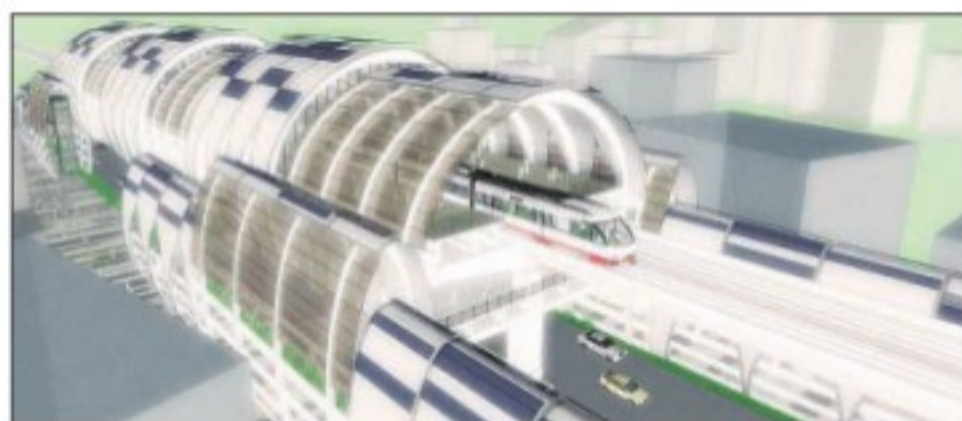
MANOJ MORE  
PUNE, DECEMBER 27

THE PUNE Metro service may become operational, in parts of Corridor One, within a year's time, said officials of the Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MAHA-Metro) on Wednesday.

The officials cited the example of the Metro service in Nagpur, where they managed to conduct a trial run within 27 months of starting work on the project. "... Pune Metro will be flagged off in the next one year, or in just over a year's time," said Brijesh Dixit, managing director of MAHA-Metro.

Last week, Dixit had said that work on Pune Metro was progressing at a faster pace than work on Nagpur Metro.

Reiterating the statement, Dixit said the elevated part of Corridor 1 — a distance of about 6 km from Pimpri to Dapodi — faced few hurdles like land acquisition, so MAHA-Metro would be



Corridor One will cover a distance of about 16 km

able to complete the work faster. "For the same distance in Nagpur, we could start the trial run within 27 months... the actual operations will probably start soon. Since work on Pune Metro is taking place at a brisk pace compared to work on Nagpur Metro, we expect to start the trial run here in just over a year's time, and the actual run soon after that," he said.

Work on Pune Metro had started on December 24, 2016, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had performed the *bhoomi puja* for the project.

Welcoming the statement by Metro officials, Ghulam Ali Bhaladar of Chinchwad Pravasi Sangh said, "Why should they operate Pune Metro from Pimpri to Dapodi... why can't they operate it from Nigdi... if they do that, commuters from Pradhikaran-Nigdi, Akurdi, Kalbhornagar, Mohannagar and Chinchwad would benefit greatly."

He pointed out that more commuters needed Metro services from the congested Nigdi area, rather than from Pimpri, as residents of Pimpri Camp and Pimpri-gaon can access local train



services. Corridor One, from Pimpri to Swargate, will cover a distance of about 16 km. Part of it is the 6-km stretch from Pimpri to Dapodi, a straight route on the Pune-Mumbai Highway. Metro officials said commuters would be able to reach Dapodi from Pimpri within 8-10 minutes.

A PMPML bus on the same route takes up to 15 minutes or even more, depending on the traffic situation in Phugewadi-Dapodi stretch and Kasarwadi.

Most of the buses on this route are jampacked, with women commuters often complaining that men occupy seats meant for them on the buses.

While a PMPML bus can carry about 50 commuters, a Metro train, which will run at an interval of 10 minutes, can carry over 900 passengers. "The frequency of Metro trains would be decided on the basis of the commuters' requirements," said Metro officials.

However, the Pimpri-Dapodi route faces a major roadblock at Nashik Phata square: the triple flyover which passes over the road, rail line and river. The flyover has forced MAHA-Metro officials to realign their plan.

"The elevated route, which begins in a straight line from Pimpri, takes a detour at Nashik Phata... it shifts to the right side to emerge from between two bridges, and then again returns to the highway at Kasarwadi... it is a complicated task," said MAHA-Metro officials, adding that they were confident of overcoming the hurdle.

## Death toll of helmet-less riders in two-wheeler accidents rises to 195

MANOJ MORE  
PUNE, DECEMBER 27

AS MANY as 195 two-wheeler riders have lost their lives on the roads of Pune between January and November this year. None of them were wearing helmets at the time of the fatal accidents. This highlights the fact that most two-wheeler riders in the city continue to ignore their safety, despite the threat to their life and limbs, by refusing to wear the protective headgear.

Last month, Pune Newsline had reported that 175 two-wheeler riders had died in accidents in the first nine months of this year. Since then, 20 more deaths have been reported.

According to figures obtained from Pune Traffic Police, 374 two-wheeler riders sustained serious injuries and 205 sustained minor injuries. Some riders have even gone into a coma after sustaining serious head injuries, said police sources.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (traffic) Ashok Morale reiterated that two-wheeler riders in the city continue to ignore their own safety by not wearing helmets. "Had they worn helmets, many of the 195 riders could have survived. But in Pune, riders continue to ignore their safety," he said.

However, civic activists D G Baliga and Shridhar Chalkha said Pune Police, who are in charge of implementing the helmet rule, are passing the buck to two-wheeler riders. "Why are people being allowed to flout the norm



**BETWEEN JAN AND NOV 2017**

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ASHOK MORALE, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, (TRAFFIC)

brazenly? When a law is in place to wear helmets, how can Pune Police allow the law to be violated," they asked.

The activists cited Section 129 of the Motor Vehicles Act, which makes it compulsory for two-wheeler riders and the pillion rider to wear a helmet. "In 2005,

the Bombay High Court had made it mandatory for bikers and pillion riders to wear ISI-grade helmets.

In 2010, the Supreme Court had made it mandatory for manufacturers of two-wheelers to sell helmets along with the vehicles," they said.

However, DCP (traffic) Ashok Morale said Pune Police were imposing fines on nearly 100 two-wheeler riders every day, on an average, for violating the helmet rule. "Along with implementing the law, we are also trying to create awareness among riders. We would also be reaching out to college students," he said.

Gauri Sarvate, an activist and film-maker who lost her brother in a two-wheeler mishap a few years ago, said police should act comprehensively and not take piecemeal action. "No one in this city should ride on a two-wheeler without helmets. Police should not allow bikers to trample the law... Forget about two-wheeler riders, we have not even seen police take action against pillion riders, which is also mandatory under the Act," said Sarvate.

Following reports in Pune Newsline last month, Police Commissioner Rashmi Shukla had promised to launch a mission to 'save the lives of two-wheeler riders'. Earlier this month, as part of the mission, Pune Police had launched an awareness drive by putting up digital boards at several points in the city, emphasising on the need to wear helmets. Shukla said police were also going to take a slew of other steps as part of the mission.

ANJALI MARAR  
PUNE, DECEMBER 27

LAMENTING THAT a "pernicious political landscape" was hurting the progress of science in India, speakers at an annual meeting of scientists on Wednesday urged the members of the scientific community to "unite and speak up". By remaining silent on issues that affect matters related to science, scientists were losing respect, they said.

"Science is under attack, due to the pernicious political landscape, coupled with the practiced scientific model, which is at least a century old and finds no relevance in the 21st century," said S

Sivaram, a senior member of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), in his opening remarks at the inaugural session of the 83rd Anniversary General Meeting Programme of the INSA, which started in Pune on Wednesday. Sivaram said the field of science in India was in need of "a newer area of work, with new stories and themes to work on". "Our present day science comprises of old stories, which have become outdated. There is a need to introspect on whether there is a new story to tell," he said.

While scientists have complained repeatedly about funding drying up for research, some speakers also highlighted the "silence" maintained by many sci-

entists about the problems and issues faced by the community, and claimed that it was a "bigger threat".

"By remaining non-reactive against bizarre statements that are often doing the rounds, scientists are actually losing respect. The issue with funding in science is true and the academies can do little about it. There is a need for scientists to unite and speak up in unison," suggested Jayant Udgaonkar, director, Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Pune, which is a co-organiser of the three-day national meet.

Sivaram, former director of CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL), reminded

the audience that scientists needed to demonstrate "measurable benefits" of their research to society. "A section of scientists believe that public funding in science is charity and that there is little accountability to the public, with some obligations to their own community," he said.

Addressing the need to engage more young scientists, Sivaram said, "We must recognise that it involves the country's future and therefore, the academies must ponder how young scientists must be made a part of this conversation, along with making them stakeholders for a future that they will be working in."

INSA president Ajay Sood, during his speech, admitted that

science academies in India should have a focused approach. "There is a lot of room for science academies to perform and we must do something more. Though it is not a very easy subject, we are hopeful about putting together some action plan before the academy. We also need to identify focus areas that will have an impact," he said.

On the way science is taught in India, and the need to engage teachers and give them research experience, senior IISER scientist LS Shashidhara said, "We need a pedagogical change... and we need to train newer teachers simultaneously, providing them with research experiences that can later be translated to teaching."