

AJIT PAWAR PLANE CRASH

Foreign help sought to retrieve data from damaged CVR: AAIB

Update on the crash investigation comes amid doubts of 'conspiracy & sabotage' raised by Rohit Pawar

Sukalp Sharma & Sushant Kulkarni
New Delhi, Pune, February 17

FOREIGN TECHNICAL assistance has been sought for data retrieval from one of the flight recorders of the Learjet 45 aircraft that crashed in Baramati on January 28, claiming the lives of then Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) said on Tuesday.

Both flight recorders or so-called black boxes of the ill-fated aircraft suffered fire damage in the crash, but data from one of them has been downloaded successfully, the AIB said.

The update on the crash investigation comes amid doubts of "conspiracy and sabotage" raised by Ajit Pawar's nephew and NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar. In a statement on Tuesday, the AIB said it is following all technical and procedural protocols and is fully committed to transparency. It requested that speculation about the crash and its investigation be avoided.

"Both recorders were exposed to intense heat for a prolonged period during the accident and sustained fire damage," the AIB said. The Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR), manufactured by Honeywell, is undergoing detailed technical examination. Assistance has been sought from the Accredited Representative of the State of Manufacture for specialised support in data retrieval," the AIB said.

Typically, the US is listed as the primary state of manufacture for Honeywell flight recorders, and the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) often serves as the accredited representative for the state of manufacture for official investigation and regulatory purposes. Flight data and cockpit voice recordings are critical in air crash investigations as they provide crucial aircraft performance data and insights into possible technical and human factors, thereby helping investigators piece together an accurate sequence of events before the accident.

"The AIB is diligently following all prescribed technical and procedural protocols to ensure a comprehensive, objective and evidence-based investigation. The Bureau remains fully committed to transparency and will share further information at the appropriate stage of the investigation. The AIB respectfully requests all stakeholders to avoid speculation and allow the investigation process to proceed in accordance with established procedures," read the statement.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is conducting an inquiry into a case of Accidental Death (AD) that has been registered with Pune Rural police as a procedure after any accident that involves fatalities.

On Monday, Rohit Pawar had posted on X that the preliminary probe report on the crash had not been released even after 20 days since the accident, and no action had been taken against charter flight operator VSR Ventures, due to which suspicions

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were "growing stronger". Earlier, Rohit Pawar had demanded that an independent international agency such as the NTSB, France's Bureau of Enquiry and Analysis for Civil Aviation Safety, or the UK's Air Accidents Investigation Branch be asked to investigate the crash.

As per India's aircraft investigation rules, aircraft accidents and serious incidents are probed by the AIB.

Rohit Pawar has also been levelling allegations of negligence, regulatory failures and operational and crew irregularities against Delhi-based VSR Ventures, the operator of the Learjet 45 aircraft.

A special audit of VSR Ventures is already under way by a six-member team appointed by the DGCA. The DGCA is also undertaking audits of all non-scheduled aircraft operators in the country in two phases in the wake of the January 28 crash.



The plane crashed during its second attempt to land at Baramati airport on January 28. FILE

BOTH RECORDERS were exposed to intense heat for a prolonged period during the accident and sustained fire damage. The Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) has been successfully downloaded

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State govt asks PMC to clear Rs 952 cr in dues to avoid water cuts

Express News Service
Pune, February 17

DEMANDING CLEARANCE of its dues of Rs 932 crore for the usage of additional water, the state water resource department has warned of introducing water cuts for the city if the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) fails to pay the amount.

"The PMC has used the water quota that was allotted to it by the state government. The PMC has paid only Rs 19 crore in the last two months as against the dues of Rs 952 crore. The state government has directed the state water resource department to recover the dues from PMC and accordingly a notice has been served to the Pune civic body. If the dues are not cleared then water will not be provided to the city," said Kiran Deshmukh, Executive Engineer of Khadakwala section of state Water resource department.

The PMC draws water from the Khadakwala dam to meet its demand of domestic water supply and pays the charges to the state water resource department. The state water resource department has also demanded Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) to clear Rs 122 crore in dues.

As per the state government decision, the PMC is allowed to draw 11.60 TMC of water annually from the Khadakwala dam but the state water resource department claims that the civic body draws more water than the allocation. In 2024-25, the PMC lifted 20.44 TMC water which is 8.84 TMC more water drawn in the year by the civic body, said state

However, PMC has challenged the claim additional water is drawn by it

water resource department. The Maharashtra Water Regulatory Authority (MWRA) has fixed rates for the water drawn from the dams. It has been fixed that the 1.5 times rate should be applied to water drawn between 100 to 125 percent of allocated quota and three times the rate for water drawn more than 125 percent of the allocated quota.

However, the PMC has been challenging the claim that additional water is drawn by the civic body. It also alleges that the allocated quota is not adequate as per the population of the city.

The state water resource department said that the additional water drawn by PMC is creating problems for them to supply water for irrigation purposes. "The PMC has exhausted its water quota by drawing the allocated water for the year so its supply can be discontinued any time now," warned Deshmukh. PMC water supply department officer Nandkishore Jagtap said that the PMC has written to the state water resource department that the civic body does not accept the claim that PMC draws additional water. "The PMC commissioner has already directed to challenge the claim of the state water resource department on the allocated quota considering the floating population of the city," he said.

Rahul Gandhi
DEFAMATION SUIT BY SAVARKAR KIN

Court urged to direct Rahul Gandhi to give voice sample

Express News Service
Pune, February 17

SATYAKI SAVARKAR, the grandnephew of V D Savarkar who has filed a defamation suit against Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday urged a special court in Pune to direct the Congress leader to provide his voice sample to "establish the identity and authenticity of certain electronic recordings".

"The special court for cases involving MPs and MLAs is currently hearing a defamation case filed by Satyaki last year against Rahul. Satyaki filed the defamation complaint against Rahul for his alleged objectionable remarks against V D Savarkar the Congress leader made during a speech in London in March 2023.

Recently when Satyaki deposited before the court, he was to play a CD that contained the video of Rahul's speech. But when the CD was played in court, it was found to be blank. Satyaki's lawyer Sangram Kolhatkar filed an application seeking adjournment and sought a thorough investigation into the CD issue.

Satyaki filed an application in the court on Tuesday, which stated, "That the complainant has diligently produced evidence to prove the case is beyond reasonable doubt. However, for the proper adjudication of the matter and to establish the identity and authenticity of certain electronic recordings, the voice sample of the accused is an indispensable piece of evidence. That this court is vested with ample power to compel an accused to a witness to provide such samples. Specifically, Section 349 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 expressly empowers the magistrate to order any person to provide voice samples for the purpose of any investigation or proceeding under this Sanhita."



Students come out after their CBSE Class 10 board exam paper on Tuesday. PUNAM CHENGRE

FROM TULIP GARDEN TO SPIRITUAL SPACES

Why PM is lauding this architect whose philosophy centres on sustainability

Dipan Nath
Pune, February 17

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi has commended Pune-based architect Mahesh Nampurkar in a letter for the latter's "remarkable contributions to nation building and raising India's global profile".

"Your visionary work in architecture and landscape design has made a significant impact on emerging Bharat, inspiring young minds everywhere," wrote the PM. He mentioned Nampurkar's support of Indian artisans and sculptors, his initiatives to green spaces in the country and "your vital, voluntary design of spiritual spaces".

Nampurkar, a partner at the firm Sunan Ship, was founded with his wife, Uma Nampurkar, has an enviable collection of awards and honours, including the Most Creative Architect of Europe and Asia, which was conferred upon him at the House of Lords, London, during the Indo UK Global Business Conclave 2022. But the letter from the PM felt quite vital.

"Any national recognition is meaningful because it acknowledges architecture as a service beyond profession, i.e. the citation not as personal achievement but as affirmation that thoughtful design contributes to the cultural narrative of the nation. It is less a culmination and more a reminder of responsibility," says the architect. Sunan Ship specialises in architecture, interior and landscape design.

Old world values



Nampurkar graduated in Architecture from Pune University in 1993. His motivating statement is "Give me a square inch, and I can design it for you". Sunan Ship's oeuvre extends from a balcony to a 500-acre property. "If you are an architect or a designer, you should not prototype your thoughts. You should be open to all the challenges," he says.

Sustainability and a respect for clients' sensibilities are at the core of his designs. Nampurkar began practising in 1996, before starting Sunan Ship in 2008. The firm had little capital, but the biggest asset was Nampurkar's thoughts and his calibre to draw details. To this day, he has a passion for drawing things by hand and to scale. "That gives me an upper hand. Because of this, I feel that I can really give a sense of a place to my clients," he says. Some of the country's iconic spaces have been designed by Sunan Ship, including the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar and the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir's residence.

An award-winning design is a clubhouse in Gujarat that uses elements, such as a stepwell, which are integral to the cultural history of the region. The

gives you Rs 100, worth for Rs 300. Then, you will get knowledge of Rs 100," he says. He also works a lot, around 16 hours. "You should not bind yourself with timelines if you desire," he says.

The challenge of sustainability

Nampurkar was drawn to architecture because it sits in the intersection between art and responsibility. "In India, design cannot be detached from civilization; it carries memory, spirituality, climate wisdom, and social cohesiveness. To design here is to listen — to history, to land, and to people — and then translate that listening into space," he says.

The real challenges for architects like Nampurkar will be changing mindsets. Pune is experiencing a construction boom, with towers of dubious tastes rising upwards into the sky. Nampurkar says that sustainability demands restraint in an age that celebrates excess and breakneck speed.

"It asks architects to design with humility toward nature rather than dominance over it. Convincing society that longevity and balance are more meaningful than immediacy remains our greatest task," he adds. What encourages him is that authenticity eventually finds its audience. While much of contemporary construction responds to speed and replication, there remains a quiet demand for meaning and permanence. "Clients come to us not merely for buildings, but for clarity of vision. Profit becomes a consequence of trust sustained over time," he says.

entrance of the clubhouse welcomes guests with a sight of a majestic stone-carved fountain. Another awarded design is of a leisure world crafted out of a quarry. His clients range from former President of India Pratibha Patil to corporate houses for Bollywood superstars and political stars, including late Ajit Pawar. He has also designed educational institutions, such as DY Patil.

Listening to Nampurkar is a lesson in merging work with one's philosophy. "My father used to say that, if somebody

BRIEFLY

Police advisory after child-kidnapping gang rumours

PUNE CITY POLICE on Tuesday issued an advisory for citizens appealing them not to believe in the rumours that a child-kidnapping gang was operating in the city. The advisory was issued following circulation of messages on social media accompanied by photos of alleged suspects' which claimed children were kidnapping children from societies.

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2)	Mr. Suhas Janardan Hardkar Address: Shri Sai Baba Chs Plot No 334 Navin Mahade Vasahat Near Vartak Nagar Police Station Vartak Nagar Thane Jeeagram Maharashtra 400606	Rs. 17,20,468/- (Rupees Seventeen Lakhs Twenty Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Eight Only) as on 01.09.2021 with further interest, incidental expenses, and costs etc. thereon	Property ID: SBNCRAMC65162FE81 All the Piece and Parcel of Property measuring carpet area 272.37sq ft and built-up area 350 sq ft bearing Flat-14A, 3rd Floor, Sharda Tower, Kasba Path, Sharda All Path, Near Pradhar Haud Chowk Pune Maharashtra 411011 Owned By Mr. Suhas Janardan Hardkar Possession: Physical	Rs 13,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Only)	Rs 1,30,000/- (Rupees One Thousand Only)	From 15.03.2026 To 16.03.2026 & 21.03.2026 To 22.03.2026 (11:00:00 - 15:00:00)
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