

## DUMPED

A two-year-old girl was found, apparently abandoned, half a kilometre from the railway tracks in Nalasopara on Thursday. She has injuries on her head, legs and back, and was found by Bharat Patil, an advocate. She was admitted to hospital by the police. The girl remembers only her first name and the Thane and railway police are struggling to identify and find her parents. "Someone reported that the girl had been thrown off a running train but there is no eyewitness," said ACP B Sidam (Vasai division) of the Mumbai Railway Police.



KEVIN D'SOUZA

## Cyclathon to show how to beat pollution on two wheels

STUTI SHUKLA  
 SEPTEMBER 17

THE Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) plans to hold a 'cyclathon' soon to promote the bicycle for short-distance commuting. The move, aimed at easing the traffic jams caused by the 17 lakh vehicles in Mumbai, follows a proposal to set up dedicated tracks for bicycles.

"In recent years, bicycles seem to have gone out of fashion. We want to hold a cyclathon and spread awareness of the benefits of cycling," said a BMC official.

The cyclathon, likely to be held at the end of the year, will be open to all citizens, including professional cyclists. It will try to spread the message that cycling is the solution to road congestion, air and noise pollution and rising fuel prices.

The BMC is in the process for appointment of a consultant to study the proposal to set up dedicated cycling tracks. Around 10 firms with international partners have expressed willingness to do the study, which will take at least a year.

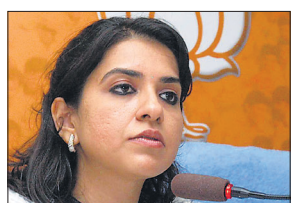
Residential groups and activists have long demanded dedicated cycling tracks along the city roads. The Mulund Parents Association led a campaign and collected nearly 2,500 signatures from students of 19 schools and their parents. They have submitted the proposal to ministers several times.

"The BMC's proposal to induce cycling is a good initiative. The cyclathon will help break psychological barriers in the minds of those who don't use cycles because of their so-called status," said Yogesh Katira, MPA president.

If dedicated lanes are set up, parking facilities will be provided at places like railway stations and bus stops.

## INSIDE

Four of a family get life term for murder P2



Shaina NC eyes Lodha's Malabar Hill seat P3

Mercury rises, humidity drops in city P3

Beer man acquitted in murder case P3

## Fresh, green & affordable, never mind retail rates

N GANESH  
 SEPTEMBER 17

CAULIFLOWERS at Rs 24 a kilo instead of the market rate of Rs 32, lady's fingers at Rs 30 instead of Rs 40, vegetables can be bought at rates much lower than those in the retail market, thanks to a scheme that involves cooperative organisations of women self-help groups in Badlapur and farmers in Ambernath.

With help from the government, these organisations have been procuring vegetables in bulk from the Agriculture Produce Market Committee in Kalyan and selling these at affordable prices.

The alternative having come at a time when the country is struggling against rising prices, these outlets are invariably crowded. At the Ambernath outlet, outside the station and run by experienced vegetable vendors under the banner of Farmers' Cooperative, 300-400 kg of vegetables are sold daily. At Badlapur, where the scheme is managed by a women's cooperative, 125 kg of onions and potatoes and 60 kg of other vegetables are sold daily.

"Because we lacked experience, we started with onions and potatoes, which have a longer shelf life. It was only a week ago that we started procuring vegetables. We have kept fewer greens as we are testing the waters,"

said Shaila Borade (35), mother of two and a member of a self-help group in Badlapur.

She said 20 women are involved in the scheme, currently headquartered at the district rural office at Badlapur. And the outlet does not stock plastic bags, she said. "We have made bags from old saris which we give customers at Rs 2," said Borade.

The initiative follows a government resolution in August, when the state noted a huge difference in vegetable prices at the wholesale and retail levels.

"This is the result of a state policy to provide affordable vegetables to the public. Co-operatives of self-help groups and farmers are the medium to achieve this goal. The state has waived of APMC fees till October 20," said Rajesh Lavekar, administrator of the APMC market in Kalyan.

Arvind Walekar, chairman of the Ambernath Samudaik Shetkari Sahakari Sansthan, said, "Officials from the state cooperative and markets department have been very keen on implementing the scheme."



### WIDE GAP

Vegetable	Subsidised rate (Rs/kg)	Market rate (Rs/kg)
Cauliflower	24	32
Lady's finger	30	40
Tomato	10	12
Onion	08	12
Potato	14	18

## 26/11: mix-up in seizure packets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
 SEPTEMBER 17

THE Mumbai police seized arms and ammunition from Nariman House after the 26/11 attack and sealed them in packets meant for articles seized from Hotel Taj. The goof-up was exposed on Thursday when the Nariman House articles were produced in court. The panch witness who had signed for the articles said the signatures on some of the packets were not his. The defence questioned the witness's credibility, the prosecution conceded there has been a mistake, and the court sought a clarification from the police.

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# Rs 2.75-cr drug haul

WEEKLONG DRIVE | Charas, brown sugar and cocaine seized, 3 gangs busted, 10 peddlers held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
 SEPTEMBER 17

THE anti-narcotics cell (ANC) of the Mumbai police has seized 22.5 kg of charas, 2.9 kg of brown sugar, and 4.3 grams of cocaine, worth an estimated Rs.2.75 crore in the international market, in a weeklong crackdown on suppliers and peddlers.

The ANC has busted three major supply gangs and arrested 10 persons, including a Nigerian who has allegedly been peddling cocaine to a high-profile clientele for five years.

"In a recent meeting, we decided to crack down on the people who are actually supplying and peddling drugs. Various teams of the ANC tapped their networks of informers, then cracked down on three gangs that are the major suppliers to the city. None of them had been arrested before, so these are significant catches. Six cases were registered against them," said Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rakesh Maria.

Many of the arrests happened on September 13. The Bandra unit arrested Ghulam Rasool Khan (35) of Valsad and Mohammed Arif Shaikh (32) of Uttar Pradesh from Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivili with 22 kg charas. "This gang used to bring in the charas from Mughalsarai in buses. They would hide the drugs under rice, wheat and jaggery," said ACP (Crime) Deven Bharti.

The same day, Nigerian Yogochoyuk Renizes Opara (27) was arrested with 4.3 grams of cocaine from Claire Road in Byculla by the ANC's Azad Maidan unit.

"He has been in this racket for five years. He peddles to high-profile buyers. With his arrest, we hope to expose a larger network and seize more cocaine," said Maria.

In yet another raid the same day, the spe-



Some of the seized drugs GANESH SHIRSEKAR

cial cell of the ANC arrested Kalyan (West) residents Munna Khan (40) and Abdul Gaffar Shaikh (37) with 750 grams of brown sugar.

On Thursday morning, the Ghatkopar unit of the ANC arrested Ravi David (27) from Antop Hill with 1.1 kg of brown sugar.

In a trap at Bombay Central on September 11, the Worli unit arrested Bhawarsingh Rajput (40) of Madhya Pradesh, Shobhalal alias Bhagwanji Aajna (43) of Rajasthan, and Mohammed Akram Shaikh (43) of Vasai. The ANC seized 150 grams of brown sugar.

The following day, the Ghatkopar unit arrested Abdul Karim Shaikh (30) with 500 grams of charas from Andheri (West).

### Test kits

The anti-narcotics bureau has placed a proposal before the state home department for the procurement of saliva drug test kits. "When we raid pubs or parties, we bring all people there to the police station and send them for medical tests. Innocent guests are cleared only after the test reports come back. With the saliva test kits, we will be able to check for drug consumption on the spot, in minutes," said ACP (Crime) Deven Bharti.

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