



Sensational claim
Yesteryear actress Vijaya Pandit says Shah Rukh Khan promised to look after her son, but he's not responding now

LEISURE | P2



Mpox in Africa
Mpox outbreak in Africa is still not under control, the Africa Centres for Disease Control & Prevention warns

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Jolt for telcos
Supreme Court rejects a request by telecom companies to recalculate the dues they owe the government

BUSINESS | P11



India in command
Ravichandran Ashwin's unbeaten century puts India in a strong position against Bangladesh in the first Test at Chennai

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BJP GOVT COMPLETES 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

Manifesto my scripture: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Sept 19: As state's first BJP government completed 100 days in office Thursday, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said the party's election manifesto is a scripture for him and his administration has fulfilled the promises made to the people ahead of the simultaneous polls.

A tribal leader from Keonjhar district and a four-time MLA, Majhi assumed office June 12 as the BJP dethroned the BJD after 24 years.

Addressing a huge gathering here, Majhi slammed the previous BJD government claiming that the people of the state rejected the regional party in the election for being 'anti-people and arrogant'.

"They (BJD) have also indulged in the heinous act of using Lord Jagannath's name for petty political gains," the Chief Minister said without elaborating.

The last election has proved that the people do not tolerate a government that maintained distance from them and their problems, he said. "Our party was elected by the blessings and support of the people. During the last 100 days, we have fulfilled many of the promises made by our top leaders. Our poll manifesto is a scripture for me," Majhi said.

The Chief Minister said that he has been listening to people's problems by regularly holding grievance meetings, and many issues have been addressed.

"Though these meetings are now being held in the Capital city here, the government has



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi with his deputies and state BJP leaders at a function to celebrate 100 days of BJP governance, in Puri, Thursday

planned to hold such sessions in various regions of the state soon," Majhi said.

"We do not need a certificate from any private organisation to beat the drums of the government. It is the people who will give the certificate to the BJP government," he said.

On the achievements of his government during the last 100 days, Majhi said in the first Cabinet meeting, it was decided to reopen all four gates of Srimandir in Puri. It was also

decided to reopen the Ratna Bhandar (treasury) for structural inspection and inventory of the valuables.

"These two promises were immediately fulfilled. The state government has also set up a ₹500 crore corpus fund for Srimandir," he said, adding that another ₹200 crore corpus fund was created for upholding 'Odia Asmita'.

As promised in the election manifesto, the state government made provision of providing ₹3,100 per quintal as the MSP of

paddy. The government has made a budgetary allocation of ₹5,000 crore for the purpose and farmers will get the amount over their paddy sale, he said.

The state has also launched the CM-Kissan scheme for farmers, who will get financial assistance along with the PM-Samman Nidhi scheme.

The CM said that his government has also launched Subhadra Yojana, the 'biggest-ever' women-centric scheme, under which each beneficiary will get ₹50,000

over a period of five years. "This is assistance and not a loan. The beneficiaries need not return the money, but could utilise the amount in becoming self-sufficient," he said.

Accusing the previous BJD regime of depriving health benefits to the people of the state due to its 'ego', Majhi said his government was all set to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme so that people can avail free treatment at 27,000 hospitals in and outside the state.

Israel bombs southern Lebanon after radio blasts

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Sept 19: Israel bombed southern Lebanon Thursday and said it had thwarted an Iran-backed assassination plot, a day after explosions of Hezbollah radios that came on the heels of blasts in booby trapped pagers, setting the foes hurtling towards war.

The sophisticated attacks on communications equipment used by Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah have sown disarray in Lebanon, and are increasingly viewed as heralding a return to all-out war, last fought 18 years ago.

Hand-held radios used by Hezbollah detonated Wednesday across Lebanon's south in the country's deadliest day since cross-border fighting erupted between the militants and Israel in parallel with the Gaza war nearly a year ago.

The previous day, hundreds of pagers - used by Hezbollah to evade mobile phone surveillance - exploded at once, killing 12 people including two children, and injuring nearly 3,000.

Israel has not commented directly on the attacks, but multiple security sources have said war was carried out by its spy agency Mossad. Israel says its conflict with Hezbollah, like its war in Gaza against Hamas, is part of a wider regional confrontation with Iran, which sponsors both groups as well as armed movements in Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

Israeli security forces Thursday announced that an Israeli businessman had been arrested last month after attending at least two meetings in Iran, where he discussed assassinating Prime Minister



Benjamin Netanyahu, the defence minister or the head of the Shin Bet spy agency.

Last week, Shin Bet uncovered what it said was a plot by Hezbollah to assassinate former Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon.

Israel has been accused of assassinations including blasts in Tehran that killed the leader of Hamas and in a Beirut suburb that killed a senior Hezbollah commander within hours of each other in July.

Despite the events of the past few days, a spokesperson for the UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon said the situation along the frontier had 'not changed much in terms of exchanges of fire between the parties'. Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging fire across the Israeli-Lebanon border in parallel with the war Israel has waged in Gaza against Hamas, the Palestinian militant group whose fighters attacked Israel October 7.

Overnight, Israeli jets and artillery hit multiple targets in southern Lebanon, Israel's military said. It said air strikes hit Hezbollah targets in Chihine, Tayibe, Blida, Meiss El Jabal, Aitaroun and KfarKela in southern Lebanon, as well as a Hezbollah weapons storage facility in the area of Khiam.

Docs to 'partially' rejoin duty Sept 21

Kolkata: Agitating junior doctors announced that they will 'partially' lift their 'cease work' and partially rejoin their duties at emergency and essential services in state-run hospitals from Saturday as the West Bengal government has accepted most of their demands. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He is taking extra precaution after pager blasts

Pannun case: US court summons govt, Doval

AGENCIES

New York/New Delhi, Sept 19: The US District Court for the Southern District of New York has issued summons in the name of the Government of India and high-ranking Indian officials like National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and former R&AW chief Samant Goel after Khalistani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun filed a civil lawsuit, accusing India of plotting his assassination.

In New Delhi, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri described as completely unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations the lawsuit filed by Pannun, who heads the radical group Sikhs for Justice.

"As we've said earlier, these are completely unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations.

Now that this particular case has been lodged, it doesn't change our views about the underlying situation. I would only invite your attention to the person behind this particular case whose antecedents are well known," Misri told the media.

The court said that a response to the summons must be given within 21 days.

This comes just days before PM Narendra Modi's visit to the US from September 21 to 23.

The lawsuit has been filed September 17 against the Government of India, and Doval and Nikhil Gupta, who has been charged by federal prosecutors in an indictment unsealed in November last year for working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun, who holds dual citizenships, on American soil.

BHARATPUR: DGP ORDERS CB PROBE INTO ROAD RAGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: A day after the suspension of five cops of Bharatpur police station here on charges of gross misconduct, Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania Thursday directed the Crime Branch (CB) to launch a probe and bring to book the miscreants who abused and heckled Major Gurvansh Singh and his female friend while driving back home on Patharagadia-Chandaka Road in the wee hours of September 15.

Speaking to Orissa POST, a senior CB official said they have received the communication from the DGP office and launched a hunt for the miscreants.

Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women has

'IIC sexually assaulted me'

Confined to a wheelchair with a brace around her neck, Bharatpur police atrocity victim - the female friend of Gurvansh - Thursday cried for justice while narrating the violence and sexual assault perpetrated on her by now suspended IIC Dinakrushna Mishra and his staffers in the wee hours of Sunday. "Those who were supposed to help me took turns to brutalise me. IIC Mishra sexually assaulted me," alleged the woman. Speaking briefly to mediapersons while being shifted to a ward at City AIIMS where she has been admitted for treatment to the injuries she suffered in the vicious attack, she said the unprovoked assault took her and Gurvansh by surprise. P3

DGP in this connection within three days.

Sources said Gurvansh and his female friend were returning home in the wee hours of Sunday when they were misbehaved by around 10-12 miscreants on Patharagadia-Chandaka Road when the two objected to their rash driving.

However, to their horror, when the duo approached the Bharatpur police to lodge a complaint in this regard, they were subjected to physical torture and sexual assault by on-duty cops at the police station.

The Odisha Police Wednesday suspended Bharatpur IIC Dinakrushna Mishra, SI Baisalini Panda, ASI Salilamaye Sahoo, ASI Sagarika Nath and constable Balaram Hansda in connection with the incident.

Tirupati: TDP shows 'lab report' claiming beef tallow in laddu



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Sept 19: Amid the controversy over the alleged use of substandard ingredients and animal fat in the preparation of the world renowned Tirupati laddu, the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Thursday claimed that the adulteration has been confirmed by a Gujarat-based livestock laboratory.

TDP spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy in a press conference displayed the purported lab report which apparently confirmed the presence of 'beef tallow' in the given ghee sample.

The purported lab report also claimed the presence of 'lard' (relating to pig fat) and fish oil in the samples. The sample receipt date was July 9, 2024 and the lab report was dated July 16.

However, there was no official confirmation on the lab report from either the Andhra Pradesh government or the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the famous Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple.

The laboratory-CALF (Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food) is a multidisciplinary analytical laboratory at NDDB (National Dairy Development Board) based in Gujarat's Anand.

Andhra CM and TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu had Wednesday alleged the previous YSRCP government had used substandard ingredients and animal fat in making Tirupati laddu, a consecrated sweet. P8

'Ammunition from India enters Ukraine, irks Russia'

New Delhi describes report as 'inaccurate'

REUTERS

New Delhi, Sept 19: Artillery shells sold by Indian arms makers have been diverted by European customers to Ukraine and New Delhi has not intervened to stop the trade despite protests from Moscow, according to 11 Indian and European government and defence industry officials, as well as a Reuters analysis of commercially available customs data.

The transfer of munitions to support Ukraine's defence against Russia has occurred for more than a year, according to the sources and the customs data. Indian arms export regulations limit the use of weaponry to the

declared purchaser, who risks future sales being terminated if unauthorised transfers occur.

The Kremlin has raised the issue on at least two occasions, including during a July meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Indian counterpart, three Indian officials said. Details of the ammunition transfers are reported by Reuters for the first time.

The Foreign and Defence Ministries of Russia and India did not respond to questions. In January, Indian Foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a news conference that India had not sent or sold artillery shells to Ukraine.

Two Indian government and two defence industry sources told Reuters that Delhi produced only a very small amount of the ammunition being used by



Ukraine, with one official estimating that it was under 1 per cent of the total arms imported by Kyiv since the war. The news agency couldn't determine if the munitions were resold or donated to Kyiv by the European customers.

Among the European countries sending Indian munitions to Ukraine are Italy and the Czech Republic, which is leading

an initiative to supply Kyiv with artillery shells from outside the European Union, according to a Spanish and a senior Indian official, as well as a former top executive at Yantra India, a state-owned company whose munitions are being used by Ukraine.

The Indian official said that Delhi was monitoring the situation. But, along with a defence industry executive with direct knowledge

of the transfers, he said India had not taken any action to throttle the supply to Europe. Like most of the 20 people interviewed by Reuters, they spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The Ukrainian, Italian, Spanish and Czech Defence ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

India, however, described as 'inaccurate' a media report that said artillery shells sold by Indian arms manufacturers have been diverted by European customers to Ukraine and New Delhi has not intervened to stop it.

"We have seen the Reuters report. It is speculative and misleading. It implies violations by India, where none exist and hence, is inaccurate and mischievous," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

MARKET WATCH

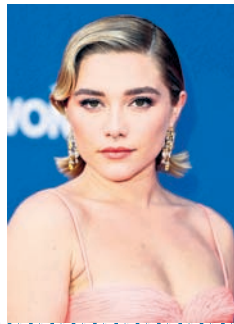
INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	83184.80	↑ 236.57
NIFTY	25415.80	↑ 38.25
DOLLAR	83.64	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	93.13	↑ ₹0.08
GOLD	₹73,320	↑ ₹265
SILVER	₹89,475	↑ ₹1,176

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	33.0°C	33.0°C
Min Temp	25.0°C	24.5°C
Humidity	84%	89%
Rainfall	3.8mm	13.6mm

FORECAST
Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain

leisure



INTERNET IS A VERY MEAN PLACE: PUGH

Hollywood star Florence Pugh feels that the internet can be 'a very mean place'. "It's so hard. (The internet's) a very mean place. It's really painful to read people being nasty about my confidence or nasty about my weight. It never feels good," Pugh told the October issue of British *Vogue* magazine.

KENNEDY JR.-CAROLYN'S LIFE SET FOR SCREEN ADAPTATION

The *American Story* franchise is adding more titles to its arsenal. The next series in the franchise has found its subject, and is currently underway at FX networks. The new season will focus on John F. Kennedy Jr. and his spouse Carolyn Bessette, reports *Variety*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
If your heart wishes to be alone, honour the mood. No friends, no music. Drive away and connect to nature if you must. There is a bit of money jingling in if you're dealing in finances, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
This day your energy levels are likely to be below par. You may tend to be restless, inactive, and averse to exerting yourself in any way. Routine tasks, even the important ones could remain unattended. But, says Ganesh, you will try to pull yourself together later in the day, make amends by trying to do something meaningful.

GEMINI
You will feel joy and happiness today, says Ganesh. However you need to be careful not to lack in co-operating with and supporting others in their endeavours. You need to look beyond fulfilling your own needs and wants and help others achieve their goals.

CANCER
You will spend the whole day in domestic matters and feel the burden of responsibilities, too. By evening, you will influence near ones by giving them special attention; you will also make others happy, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will be in the mood to provide assistance to others, however you may not be able to succeed in your endeavour. The later half of the day will see your doubts melt away and the picture will become much more clearer.

VIRGO
Ganesh predicts that partnership agreements and monetary matters will take up most of your day because business and work are on the top of your priority list. You will have to encounter competition and jealousy at different levels today. In the extremely competitive business matters, you have bright chances of success in the evening.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you shall have good news in the family regarding the progress of your children. You will present them valuable gifts and will appreciate their efficiency. Due to no reason, in the afternoon you will experience a feeling of sadness. Ganesh advises you not to take small things on your mind.

SCORPIO
Lots of work and less of time may make things difficult for you today. This may disappoint you, and you may feel agitated and irritated. But, after all what are friends for? Call them, talk to them and they may be the best counsellors. Go for a walk to take a break from a boring routine.

SAGITTARIUS
Family and friends take a back seat today as your inclination and faith in spirituality grows stronger. You may come across few unavoidable expenses, foresees Ganesh. In the evening, you may plan to visit a holy place or a temple to seek spiritual peace.

CAPRICORN
Personally as well as professionally, you'll have the best of both worlds today, assures Ganesh. Some unexpected turn of events will keep you charged up. As the day progresses, you will come across more and more such events that will keep you in a happy mood.

AQUARIUS
You will get success on the platter today. Enjoy the sweet taste of success, says Ganesh. People around you will be pleasantly surprised to see a different side of your personality. Continue to be like this and have a good time while luck favours you, as everyday is not the same say.

PISCES
A day of hectic socialising awaits you, not that you mind it. But you may also catch yourself wishing for some time alone for yourself, says Ganesh. The evening will probably see you deck up and head for a happening party, with lots of members of the opposite sex to woo.



Triptii shares her most bizarre DM

Mumbai: Actress Triptii Dimri said that she has been receiving a lot of marriage proposals in her DMs lately and added that she finds it pretty strange. In a recent interview with a magazine, when asked about the most bizarre DM she's come across, Triptii said: "I've been receiving quite a few marriage proposals in my DMs lately, so I think that's pretty strange!"

Recently, Triptii brought out her love for all things retro as she shared a video of herself pulling off a yesteryear look to promote her upcoming film *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video*. The look was from the trailer launch of *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video* in which she could be seen donning a fern-coloured saree with a floral pattern. She rounded up her look with a matching scarf, bangles and a pair of statement glasses. In the video, she was asked if she is living her dream of being in your 60s, the actress responded by saying, "I'm". *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video*, which also stars Rajkumar Rao, Mallika Sherawat, Vijay Raaz and Mukesh Tiwari, follows the story of a couple who decide to film their first night as a souvenir. It all seems fine until the CD in which they stored their video gets stolen along with the CD player.

Devotional play *Debadasi* leaves theatre enthusiasts mesmerised



Bhubaneswar: Bidyakanak Srujanasthan, a City-based theatre troupe, presented its new Odia play *Debadasi* at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday. Written by Purnachandra Kanungo and directed by Prasanna Mishra, the devotional drama left the audience in awe as the stage resembled the sanctum sanctorum of Puri Srimandir. Music, designed by director Mishra, played a significant part in creating a spiritual ambience in the auditorium. The title song was written by Arun Mantri, while Abhijit Mishra lent his voice to it. Among the artistes, Samir Tripathy, Binayak Mishra, Debubrahma, Hadu, Pradipta Swain, Manisha Rath, and the troupe's secretary, Suvakanta Padhy, played key roles in the play. Several legislators and government officials were among the dignitaries who graced the occasion. The play will be staged Friday also, and the tickets are available on Bookmyshow, shared troupe's president Sudhakar Patri.

SRK promised to look after my son: Vijayta

HER BROTHERS, MUSIC COMPOSER DUO JATIN-LALIT, PLAYED A BIG ROLE IN SHAH RUKH'S SUCCESS, BUT TODAY, SHE IS NOT ABLE TO CONTACT HIM AS THE NUMBER THAT WAS GIVEN TO HER SON IS NOT WORKING, CLAIMS THE LOVE STORY ACTRESS



Mumbai: In a recent interview with *Lehren Retro*, yesteryear actress Vijayta Pandit discussed the struggles her son Avitesh Shrivastava is encountering in the film industry and made a heartfelt appeal for help from Shah Rukh Khan. For the unversed, Vijayta Pandit is a former actor and

wife of late music composer Aadesh Shrivastava. Vijayta, wife of late music composer Aadesh Shrivastava, recalled SRK's past support during Aadesh's illness. "You won't believe when Aadesh was in the hospital, Shah Rukh used to come and meet. One day before he died, Aadesh held Shah Rukh's hand, when he could not even talk, and gestured pointing towards our

son that he should look after him." According to Vijayta, despite SRK's previous assurances, she has been unable to reach him. "Today, I am just not able to contact Shah Rukh; the number that was given to my son is not working. I just want to remind Shah Rukh that he was a good friend of Aadesh, and this is the time we need you." Vijayta suggested that the

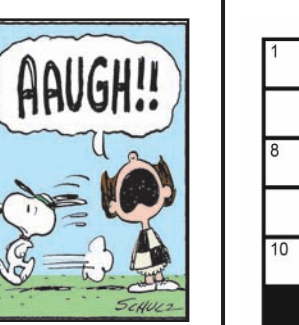
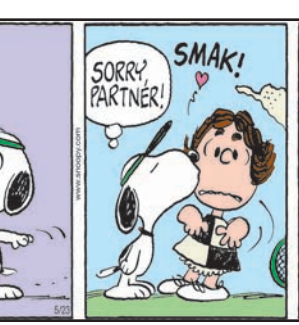
Jawan actor could provide this support by involving Avitesh in a project under his production banner, Red Chillies Entertainment. The *Love Story* actress also highlighted the role Shah Rukh Khan's colleagues, including music composers Jatin-Lalit, have played in his career. "My brothers, music composer duo Jatin-Lalit, have played a big role in his success. They gave him superhit songs in films like *Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman* (1992), *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), among others." She concluded with a plea for Shah Rukh to fulfill his promise and assist her family, given their contributions to his career. Meanwhile, Shah Rukh was yet to respond to Vijayta's appeal till filing of this report.

Young actors lack emotional connect: Ghai

Mumbai: Veteran filmmaker Subhash Ghai has heaped praise on the coming generation of actors and filmmaker but added that they lack emotional connect. Talking about the new lot of actors, Ghai told this agency, "I feel the coming generation is very talented but it actors, directors or writers. They are wonderful. They have a huge imagination. They are contemporary, well informed, and professional. The only thing that I think is less is the emotional connect." The filmmaker, who has helmed movies such as *Hero*, *Karz*, *Saudagar*, *Khalnayak*, *Pardes* and *Taal*, shared a message for the new generation. He said: "Make emotional connections. Respect each other. Respect the seniors. The more you respect the seniors, the more you will learn." Sharing his two cents about OTT, the filmmaker said, "OTT means other than TV. It means over-the-top. Something that is over-the-top, what would you expect from it? OTT means small screen, cinema means big screen. You would have to understand the difference between the two..." However, Ghai asserted that he is not against the streaming platforms. "I am not against OTT. It is a different medium. There is a five star hotel, then there is a restaurant and then there is a street shop... You get food everywhere, so eat wherever you want," he said.



PEANUTS



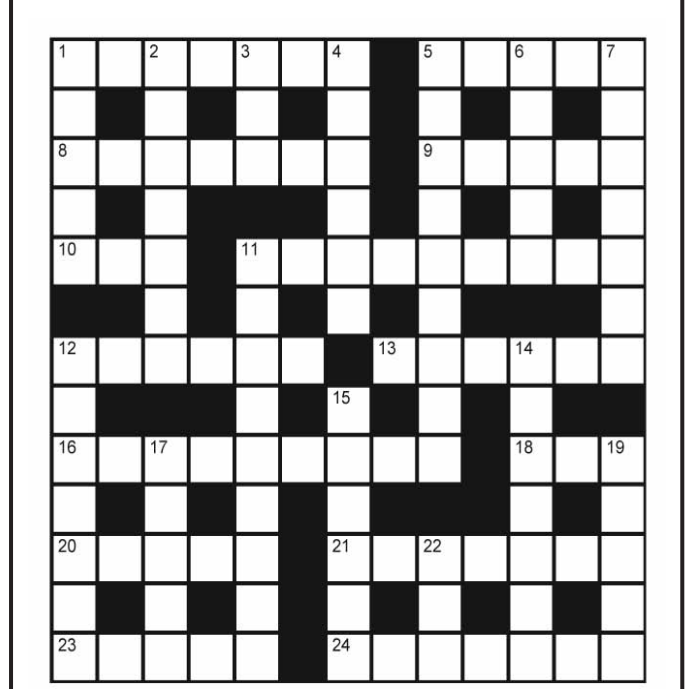
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

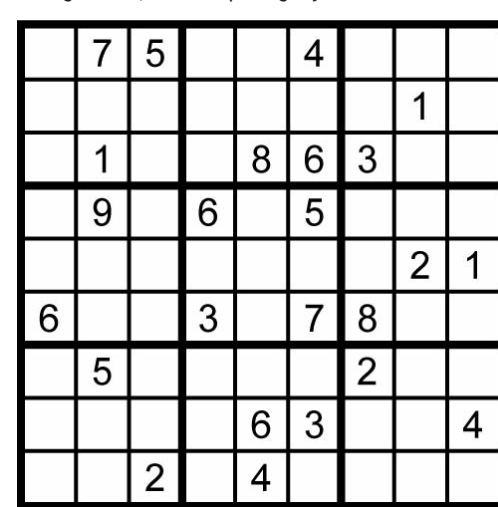


FUN post CROSSWORD

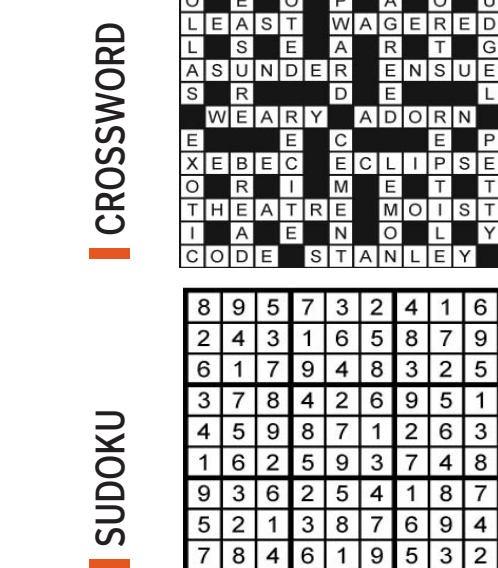


- Across**
- 1 Pastoral
 - 5 Winter warmer
 - 8 Learned
 - 9 "Fear of Flying" author Jong
 - 10 Female lobster
 - 11 Melee starter, maybe
 - 12 Partner of above
 - 13 Type of balloon (3,3)
 - 16 Malignant mischief
 - 18 Razor-billed bird
 - 20 Worker's pat on the back, at times
 - 21 Kind of police situation
 - 23 Tao virtuoso
 - 24 Contrived
 - 3 Luau souvenir
 - 4 Bank draft
 - 5 Sauna (5,4)
 - 6 Gallic goodbye
 - 7 Bird dropping?
 - 11 Realtor (4,5)
 - 12 Muenchen locale
 - 14 Inflexible
 - 15 Ballet wear
 - 17 Gullible
 - 19 Massage
 - 22 Go downhill fast?
- Down**
- 1 Large deciduous tree
 - 2 Spicy condiment

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

MAJHI GOVT @ 100



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi addressing a gathering in Puri to mark completion 100 days of the BJP government in state, Thursday



CM Mohan Charan Majhi and his party colleagues during a photo-op after having darshan of deities at Srimandir in Puri



CM inaugurates Bikash Mela at Puri Urban Haat in the presence of Deputy CM Pravati Parida and Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan

OP PHOTOS

'IIC MISHRA SEXUALLY ASSAULTED ME' Regional meeting of eastern states today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Confined to a wheelchair with a brace around her neck, Bharatpur police atrocity victim and friend of Army officer Major Gurvansh Singh cried for justice while narrating the alleged violence and sexual assault perpetrated on her by IIC Dinakrushna Mishra and his staffers in the wee hours of Sunday.

"Those who were supposed to help me, instead took turns to brutalise me. IIC Mishra sexually assaulted me," alleged the city-based restaurateur in an agonising voice with signs of the trauma writ large on her face.

Speaking briefly to mediapersons on the corridors of City AIIMS where she has been ad-

mitted for treatment to the injuries she suffered in the vicious attack, Thursday, she said the unprovoked assault took her and her friend Gurvansh by surprise.

Giving a detailed account of what happened a little past Saturday midnight, the 'victim' said 10-12 persons travelling in a rashly-driven vehicle stopped the vehicle in which she and Gurvansh were travelling on the Pathargadia-Chandaka Road. "They started misbehaving with us. Somehow we managed to save us and later went to Bharatpur police station to lodge a complaint," she said.

The woman said they found a lady cop in civil clothes sitting on a chair at the police station. "When we told her about the incident and requested her to in-



form the patrol vehicle to nab the miscreants, she, instead yelled at us, and even abused us using filthy language," she alleged.

A few minutes later, a PCR van drove into the police station premises with three cops in it. The 'victim' said after learn-

ing about the incident, they helped Gurvansh in submitting a written complaint. "However, in the next moment two of them started raining blows and kicks on Gurvansh, and bundled him into a cell," she alleged.

The woman said she protested to the policemen's action and told them not to treat an Army officer in that manner. "Hearing this, two female cops dragged me into a room by my hair. In a bid to escape, I bit their hands. This angered them further and they tied up my hands using my jacket, and legs with a scarf," she alleged.

The 'victim' said her ordeal didn't end there. "After a while, a male constable entered the room and started touching my private parts. When I shouted for help, he bolted the door from

inside and kept hitting me till daybreak," she added.

She said the IIC entered the room at around 6am. "He unzipped his trousers before me. I screamed on top of my voice for help. However, it didn't stop Mishra who continued hurting me sexually. He threatened me with dire consequences if I didn't stop shouting," she alleged.

Meanwhile, her father Brigadier Antaryami Pradhan said she is likely to be discharged from the hospital in the next four-five days. "She has been advised ample rest by doctors to heal completely," he said.

On Wednesday, Mishra and four other cops from the police station were suspended by DGP YB Khurania, pending investigation into the incident by the Crime Branch.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: A regional meeting of eastern states - Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh - will be held here Friday to deliberate on labour reforms, social protection and other issues.

According to sources at the Union Labour and Employment Ministry, the meeting is being organised by the ministry to discuss various issues with focus on labour reforms, eShram-National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), Building and other Construction Workers (BoCW), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and employment generation programmes.

The meeting is part of an ongoing series of regional consul-

tations being held by the Centre with the states/UTs nationwide, which commenced with convening of first regional meeting with southern states/UTs of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Puducherry, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands in Bengaluru. This was followed by the second regional meeting with northern states/UTs of Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Rajasthan in Chandigarh. The third regional meeting with western states/UTs of Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Daman and Diu, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep was held in Rajkot. The meeting will be chaired by Union Labour secretary Sumita Dawra and attended by senior officers of the Central and state governments.

CM to resume grievance hearing September 23

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: After a short break, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will resume hearing public grievances at the CM Grievance Cell in Unit-V here Monday (September 23). "Grievance hearing will be held at government quarters VI-IIMR-4, Unit-5, Bhubaneswar," the GA and PG department has informed.



The registration for the hearing of the grievances on Janasunani portal, or Janasunani mobile application, began Thursday (September 19).

A maximum of 1000 registered applicants can meet the Chief Minister September 23 from 11 am and submit their grievances.

The last grievance hearing by the CM was held August 5 this year.

The chief minister's grievance cell was closed for some weeks due to the Session of the Odisha Assembly.

Cong hits streets over remarks against Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Joining the nationwide protest call given by the party, Odisha Congress leaders Thursday staged a protest here demanding action against four NDA leaders over their alleged controversial remarks against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

Holding banners and posters, the Congress leaders and workers took out a protest rally from Congress Bhawan near Master Canteen Square.

When they marched towards the state BJP office here, the police stopped them at Kharavelnagar, leading to a scuffle between the cops and Congress workers.

The police detained several activists and released them later.

After the protest, the Congress leaders lodged a complaint with Kharavelnagar police against BJP leaders - Tarvinder Singh Marwah, Raghuraj Singh, Ravneet Bittu (Minister of State for Railways) and Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad.

Speaking to mediapersons, senior Congress leader and former Union minister Srikanth Jena said, "Those who have hatched a conspiracy to assassinate Rahul Gandhi are roaming freely. The police have not yet arrested them. Neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor Union Home Minister Amit Shah have commented on this issue till now."

Condemning the remarks made by the BJP and NDA leaders, Jena de-

manded immediate arrest of the leaders.

Similarly, Congress MLA Sofia Firdous said the NDA government is worried over the rise of Congress and the popularity of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

Due to strong opposition, the Union government was forced to take back some major decisions like reservation for creamy layer, and UPSC lateral entry, she said.

"After becoming intolerant towards the Congress, the BJP and NDA leaders are threatening to kill Rahul Gandhi in public. We condemn such personal attacks on Gandhi. It is not acceptable at all in a healthy democracy like India," she said.

On the other hand, Odisha BJP leader Biranchi Tripathy said the people of this country have already witnessed Rahul Gandhi's remarkable comment he made against the Sikh community during his recent foreign trip.

"Rahul Gandhi has made several comments against India in foreign countries. For this, the Congress party first needs to seek an apology from the people of this country," he said while terming the protest of Congress as a "face-saving" exercise.

Ravneet Bittu had called Rahul Gandhi the "number one terrorist of the country" while speaking publicly to the media, while Tarvinder Singh Marwah had publicly issued an "assassination" threat against the former Congress president, the Congress leaders claimed.

PM-JUGA to cover 27 dists in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Aiming at improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA) with a total outlay of ₹79,156 crore (Central share ₹56,333 crore and state share ₹22,823 crore), a move that would benefit more than 10 lakh tribal households in 27 districts of Odisha.

The programme will cover around 63,000 villages benefitting more than five crore tribal people as announced in the Union Budget for FY 2024-25. PM-JUGA will cover 549 districts and 2,740 blocks spread across all tribal dominated villages across 30 states/Union territories (UTs).

In Odisha, the initiative will cover 27 districts comprising 234 blocks



having 7,667 villages. It will benefit 10,85,661 Scheduled Tribe (ST) households and 48,15,670 ST population. The campaign also aims at promoting innovative schemes like Tribal Home Stay Programme, Support for Forest Rights Holders & Sickle Cell Disease Management and others.

Tribal villages covered under PM-JUGA would be mapped on PM Gati Shakti Portal with the gaps identified by the department concerned. The physical and financial progress will be monitored through PM Gati Shakti platform and the best performing districts will be rewarded.

The ambitious scheme envisions saturation of critical gaps in social in-

frastructure, health, education and livelihood through several Central schemes by convergence and outreach to ensure holistic and sustainable development of tribal areas and communities.

The mission comprises 25 interventions which will be implemented by 17 line ministries. Each ministry/department would be responsible for implementation of programmes related to it in a time-bound manner through funds allocated to them under Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes in five years. The move is necessary to achieve goals that include developing enabling infrastructure, improving village infrastructure, promotion of economic empowerment through skill development entrepreneurship promotion and enhanced livelihood. universalisation of access to good education & healthy lives and dignified ageing.

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SPCB to prepare vision documents ahead of 2036

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Joining the 41st Foundation Day celebration of the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) at Soochana Bhawan here, recently, Chief Secretary and chairman of SPCB Manoj Kumar Ahuja said that the vision documents are being prepared for 'Developed India-2047' and 'Developed Odisha-2036'. "More industries and businesses will develop in coming days, for which there is a need to think about the role of the pol-

lution control board in increasing the monitoring system using technologies," Ahuja said. Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia also attended the celebration as chief guest, and called upon every officer and employee of the board to make the SPCB as one of the topmost pollution control board in the country by demonstrating efficiency and incremental excellence. Khuntia said that the main responsibility of SPCB is to ef-

fectively implement various notifications issued periodically under the Water Pollution Control Act, Air Pollution Control Act and Environment (Protection) Act. "It is a challenge for the pollution control board today to solve the problem of pollution as much as possible and to manage the industrial development of the state in an orderly way," he said. "Despite the crackdown on the use of single-use plastic products from July 1, 2022, the use has not decreased as ex-

pected. It is a challenge to make alternative products available at affordable prices," he said. "As there are several mining industries in the state, a lot of waste is generated from them. These are a challenge for smart and environment-friendly management boards. Rapid industrialisation has caused more air and water pollution. Maintaining the ambient air quality in such industrial areas and preserving the quality and quantity of water resources is another challenge for the board," the minister quoted.

OUPS will transform medical education, healthcare: Minister

UNIVERSITY SIGNS A SERIES OF MOUS WITH PROMINENT INSTITUTIONS



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Odisha University of Health Sciences (OUHS) will transform healthcare delivery and medical education, positioning itself as a leader in innovation and research both regionally and globally, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said while attending a MoU signing event at the institute, Thursday. On the occasion, OUHS signed a series of MoUs with prominent national and international institutions. Through the MoUs, the university entered into partnership with AIIMS Bhubaneswar, Sri Sri University Cuttack, IIT Bhubaneswar, and Xavier Institute of Management (XIMB) Bhubaneswar. Many eminent faculty members from across India and internationally renowned scholars joined the event. Mahaling said the partnerships established today will en-

able joint research, student and faculty exchanges, and the development of cutting-edge solutions to address the challenges faced by the healthcare sector. "The MoUs aim to create a comprehensive framework for enhancing healthcare education, clinical practices, and research by combining the expertise of leading institutions and faculty," the minister said. "The collaborations will promote technological innovations in healthcare, including AI-based diagnostic tools, telemedicine platforms, and biomedical devices, while also integrating wellness practices such as Ayurveda, yoga, and meditation into modern healthcare systems," Mahaling added. OUHS vice-chancellor Manash Ranjan Sahoo said the partnership marked 'a significant step forward in institute's journey to becoming a leader in healthcare education, research, and innovation. "Through the strategic move

and with the support from the state government, OUHS will create a lasting impact not only on the students it nurtures but also on the broader healthcare landscape of Odisha and beyond," he added. In addition to the MoUs, OUHS has already initiated lines of consent with several other prestigious Indian institutions, including PGIMER Chandigarh, JIPMER Puducherry, SGPGI Lucknow, AIG Hyderabad, and NISER Bhubaneswar. Internationally renowned institutions also joined the programme online, having already agreed to sign MoUs with the institute shortly. "The focus is on fostering leadership and management in healthcare, improving strategic planning and operational efficiency, and promoting interdisciplinary research and knowledge-sharing across a broad spectrum of healthcare disciplines," an official said.



TECH-SAVVY SKILLS: Students browse on computers during the inauguration of Aradhana Padhi Reading Corner and Digital Library at Rama Devi Women's University in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

CUO holds talk on IKS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: The Central University of Odisha (CUO), in Koraput organised a talk, as part of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative, titled 'Indian Knowledge System: Contribution of Tribal Society' recently. On the occasion, tribal and forest rights activist associated with Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram Girish Kuber delivered the key note address. CUO vice chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi presided over the meeting. Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Nodal Officer Sourav Gupta inaugurated the programme and delivered the welcome address, highlighting the initiative's spirit and significance of the Indian knowledge system (IKS). In his introductory remarks,

NEP coordinator Bharat Kumar Panda emphasised the importance of understanding 'Bharatiya Gyan Parampara' beyond IKS, shedding light on the essence of 'Bharatiyatatwa' and the tribal lifestyle. In his address, Kuber touched upon a range of issues related to various socio economic, cultural, and spiritual practices of tribal life. He cited examples of Agaria tribe of Madhya Pradesh who prepares iron materials and worships Lohasur. He emphasised how the philosophy of collective life - 'Samuhikata', 'Sahaastitwa' and 'Sahaj Tatwa' leads to synthesis between nature, biodiversity, knowledge and forms the essence of 'Bharatiya Gyan Sampada'. He praised the efforts of Tripathi for leading the university towards tribal research.

Flood situation remains grim in Balasore; over 21,000 evacuated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: As the flood situation remained grim in Balasore district Thursday, the state government stepped up its relief and rescue operation by evacuating 21,076 people to safer places. According to Water Resources department, the Subarnarekha river has been flowing above danger mark for the last three days and many villages are still marooned. The river is flowing at 10.80 meters at Rajghat though the water level is showing a receding trend. The present water level at Rajghat is flowing at 10.58 meters against the danger level of 10.36 meters. However, it is showing a receding trend, an official said. Water Resources Department chief engineer Chandrasekhar Padhi said drainage of water from flood-affected villages has increased. "We hope water will recede from the villages in the next 24 hours," Padhi said. Jalaka River was also flow-



ing close to the danger mark but water level was in a falling trend, the official said. Many villages have been marooned for the last three days, with boats being the only mode of communication, another official said. Around 35,654 people from 141 villages in five blocks of Baliapal, Basta, Bhograi, Jaleswar and Balasore Sadar have been affected by the floods. "The evacuated people were being fed at 51 relief centres across Balasore district," an official at Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) office said. The official said that 21 rescue teams, including six from ODRAF, one from NDRF and 14 from fire services, have been deployed in the five blocks for rescue and relief operations. Similarly, neighbouring Mayurbhanj district has also been affected by the floodwaters of Subarnarekha, with 101 villages getting inundated. The district administration has evacuated 1,603 people living in the low-lying areas and housed them in four flood shelters, where cooked food is being served to the affected persons, officials said. As many as 15 rescue teams, including three from ODRAF and 12 from fire services, have been deployed in Mayurbhanj district. Similarly, some portions of Keonjhar, Bhadrak and Sundargarh districts have also been flooded, the SRC said in a report, adding that a total of 39,002 people have been directly affected in the ongoing flood while 499 houses have been damaged in the calamity.

Govt issues guidelines for Mpox management

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Taking a serious note of the rising number of the Monkeypox (Mpox) cases in several countries, including India, director of Public Health Nilakantha Mishra recently issued a set of precautionary measures for management of the deadly disease in the state. Mishra directed all the Port Health Officers, Chief District Medical and Public Health Officers to be vigilant in view of Mpox. In a letter, Mishra said, "Monkeypox cases have been reported from several countries of World including India. So, there is need to strengthen surveillance activities, preparedness and response against the disease." "Although India has few reported cases of Monkeypox till date, it is imperative that we take adequate precautionary measure to prevent the spread of the disease. We should ensure proper checking of persons having unexplained rash and fever with other signs and symptoms



after coming from the affected countries within the last 21 days," he said. "As a proactive approach, several public health actions at point of entry (PoE) should be initiated including international travellers' health desk at airports and seaports to keep a tab on passengers and crew coming from the affected countries. All suspected cases identified at PoE should be isolated at transit isolation facilities and information to be shared immediately with state or district surveillance officers under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)," Mishra said.

Utkal Hospital to improve emergency care in City

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: In a significant move to enhance emergency medical services in the City, Utkal Hospital, in collaboration with RED.Health introduced Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances. The flag-off ceremony took place at the hospital premises here Thursday and was attended by hospital COO Manav, CFO and unit head Arun Khillar, head of emergency department Abinash Mohanty, RED.Health founder and CEO Prabhdeep Singh and vice president of hospital business Prashant Agarwal also attended the ceremony. Speaking about the collaboration, Singh emphasised the



importance of timely emergency care and said, "Every second counts in a crisis. Our collaboration with Utkal Hospital will create a critical safety net for Bhubaneswar, ensuring that no life is lost due

to delayed emergency care." Khillar noted that the partnership will enable faster, more efficient emergency response. "This collaboration enhances our ability to provide life-saving treatment when it's needed

most," he said. Speaking at the event, COO Manav highlighted the impact of the collaboration on addressing the City's healthcare challenges. "Integrating advanced ambulance services with our medical care, bridges the gap between emergencies and treatment, ensuring continuous and specialised care from the moment patients need it," Manav said.

Bhutan officials visit wealth centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: A team of officials, representing Government of Bhutan recently visited Basuaghai Wealth Centre here, managed by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). The six-member high-level delegation from Bhutan attended the orientation by Odisha Urban Academy. Later, the team visited the wealth centre and different facilities such as Micro Composting Centre (MCC) and Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Team spirit, coordination among the work force, use of personal protective equipment, waste collection and dedicated engagement of local commu-



nity members to carry forward the decentralised waste management process were among the key issues discussed in the orientation programme. "A community driven initiative, decentralised waste management model is currently adopted for waste management. Such practices enhance com-

munity cooperation for better city sanitation, thereby promoting sustainability," said BMC commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil. The delegation appreciated BMC's effort in engaging communities, concept of Swachha Sathi and e-waste management which reflects exemplary initiatives and provides learning opportunity for ULBs. "Engaging marginalised communities in managing sanitation of the City is an example of inclusive waste management practice," said the team members. The team was accompanied by the BMC assistant commissioner N Ganesh Babu, who briefed details of the centre and management process.

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Sambalpuri singer Ruksana dies; family alleges murder

KIN ALLEGE SLOW POISONING, SINGER RUKU SUNA'S HAND IN HER DEATH

Bhawanipatna, Sept 19: Mystery shrouds the death of a popular female Sambalpuri singer who was undergoing treatment for her illness at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Bhubaneswar.



In a video posted on Ruksana's Instagram handle, her mother has alleged that Ruksana was being harassed by Ruku Suna for the last two months

deepened after family members denied the claim of her death due to scrub typhus. Her mother and sister Ruby have alleged that she died from slow poisoning while indicating the involvement of another Sambalpuri singer Ruku Suna in her death. Her kin and supporters have called for a ban on Ruku Suna in Kalahandi and demanded stringent action against him over the death.

In a video posted on Ruksana's Instagram handle, her mother has alleged that Ruksana was being harassed by Ruku Suna for the last two months. Ruksana fell sick on the shooting set and was admitted to the hospital which is indicative of a conspiracy, she said. However, she has not lodged any complaint at the police station over fear of threat to her family members.

On the other hand, singer Ruku Suna in his post on a social media platform expressed grief over the death of Ruksana Bano. He said that he always thought of Ruksana as a sister and termed the allegations as an attempt to tarnish his image.

CM Majhi to visit Keonjhar Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Sept 19: Keonjhar district administration is busy preparing for Chief Minister and Keonjhar Sadar MLA Mohan Charan Majhi's three-day visit starting Friday.

It is Majhi's second visit to his home district after taking the top post. During the visit, Majhi will attend several government and private programmes including the concluding day of a football tournament in his native village Raikala.

According to the programme released from the CMO, Majhi will land at the temporary heli-pad at reserve playground, Keonjhar at 10.40am Friday and



proceed to the auditorium to attend 3rd Annual Day function of Life Savers' Group. Later he will proceed to Raikala and attend a football tournament. He will also meet and have a discussion with the MLAs and MP of Keonjhar district.

programme 'Chai Pe Charcha'. Then he will visit Dharanidhar University ground to attend a series of events such as mega eye camp, artificial limbs distribution camp and mega health camp by a team of specialist doctors from SCB Medical College and Hospital apart from joining a programme on climate to be held in the auditorium.

The CM will briefly visit the neighbouring state Jharkhand at 1pm and on his return, he will attend the silver jubilee event of Retired Govt. Employees Association to be held at 5.35pm.

Saturday evening at 6.40pm, the CM will go to the BJP party office to have a discussion with party leaders and workers.

The CM will again go to DD University campus ground Sunday to attend a celebration marking 100 days of his government and will go further to Baripada in Mayurbhanj district.

Ahead of CM's three-day visit, Keonjhar Collector Vishal Singh and Superintendent of Police Nitin Kushalkar took stock of the special arrangements and a mock drill was held Thursday.

Woman jumps into Kharasrota

Jajpur: A woman went missing after she jumped into the Kharasrota river from a bridge in Jajpur district Thursday, police said. The incident happened near Baruhan under the jurisdiction of Jajpur Sadar police station. She left her electric scooter, helmet, shoes and mobile phone near the vehicle before jumping into the river, the police said. The woman is a resident of the Krishnapada area under the Kuakhia police jurisdiction in the district. Fire services personnel and Jajpur Sadar police went to the spot and launched a search operation to trace the woman. "We have launched a rescue operation. The woman is yet to be traced," the Additional Superintendent of Police of Jajpur district, SK Kanungo, said. Sources said the woman is an Anganwadi supervisor working at Rasulpur block.

Tribal girl gangraped; 3 in custody

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Sept 19: A teenage tribal girl was allegedly gangraped under Kutra police station limits in Sundargarh district, police said Thursday adding that three suspects, including two juveniles, have been detained in connection with the incident.

plait, police launched an investigation and detained the trio. All the three accused are from Biramitrapur.

The incident took place September 16 night when Karma Puja, an important religious festival of tribals, was underway. According to information received, three youths had come to the girl's village to participate. One of the accused, who was known to the girl, took her to a

desolate place near her village. Two of his friends also came there and the trio took turns to rape the girl. Then they left her there and fled from the scene.

"Police have detained three people, of whom two are juveniles, for their alleged involvement in the gangrape," Rajagangab Sub-Divisional Police Officer Abhishek Panigrahi said, adding further investigation is underway.

2 awarded 3-yr RI for trading leopard hide

PNN & AGENCIES



PNN & AGENCIES

Rayagada, Sept 19: The Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Rayagada, has convicted two wildlife criminals and sentenced them to three years of Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) along with a fine of ₹10,000.

commission of offence u/s 51(1A) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

In the case of default of payment, the court ordered that the accused would further undergo RI for another six months.

The court further convicted the accused persons with three years of RI with a fine u/s 411 of IPC and said in default of the fine amount imposed on them, they would further undergo six months of RI u/s 120-B of IPC.

All the sentences imposed will run concurrently, the court ruled. The STF, Bhubaneswar, apprehended the accused persons November 2, 2023, in Tamparbiduni Chowk under Chandili police station in Rayagada district and recovered two leopard skins from their possession. During the investigation, the seized leopard skins were also sent to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, for biological and chemical examination, and an affirmative opinion was received.

Trial was conducted against the accused persons, and during the trial, the prosecution examined nine witnesses and exhibited 15 documents.

The two accused, identified as Bikram Majhi and Raja Majhi, were convicted under Section 379/411/120 (B) IPC r/w 51 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, in a case filed by the Odisha STF, which recovered two leopard skins from their possession while they were trying to deliver the skins to a customer.

The court Wednesday sentenced both the accused persons to undergo three years of RI with a fine of ₹10,000 for the

ITI guest lecturers warn of hunger strike at Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Sept 19: Guest lecturers working in various Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Ganjam district have warned to stage a fast-unto-death protest over alleged neglect by the state government and non-fulfillment of their various demands.

The matter came to the fore at a meeting of the guest lecturers held Thursday on the premises of Dibyajivan Sangha at Lanjipalli here in Ganjam district. Over 150 staff working in Berhampur, Chhatrapur, Purusottampur, Sheragad and Hinjilicut ITIs attended the meeting. The guest lecturers, also known as part-time teachers, alleged that they have been deprived of rightful wages despite working in various ITIs in the district for more than 10 years.

Notably, more than 500 guest lecturers have been working in various government ITIs in phases since 1994. They have alleged huge disparity between their salary and that of the regular teachers and staff. They further complained that denial of salary on government holidays is adding to their struggle in meeting family expenses. The guest lecturers had August 28 met and submitted a memorandum to the director of technical education and training, apprising him of their demands. However, they said that their pleas are yet to be addressed.

Peeved over the negligence, they have warned of a fast-unto-death protest outside the Directorate of Technical Education and Training (DTET) at Cuttack from September 20 until their demands are met, an official said.



SPLENDID SHOW: Students perform an Odissi dance number at the district level celebration of the foundation day of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya in Deogarh, Thursday

5 FOREST PERSONNEL ARRESTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, Sept 19: Forest department Thursday arrested five Forest personnel on charge of covering up the death of an elephant at Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary under Nilagiri sub-division in Balasore district.

The accused were identified as a forest guard Padmalochan Patra and four 'Sabuja Bahini' workers Karama Behera, Maheswar Behera, Prafulla Dehuri and Bulu Dehuri of Betei area.

Forest personnel had spotted the mutilated carcass of the elephant in May while patrolling in the jungle under the Betei forest beat house in Oupada forest range which is located to the south of Kuldiha Wildlife

Sanctuary.

However, they tried to suppress the matter as they feared that they will lose their jobs if the senior officials come to know about the animal death. They picked up the mutilated body parts of the animal and scattered it in the jungle and hid them under large rocks.

However, tension prevailed after kin of the accused Sabuja Bahini workers locked up the forest office at Kuldiha and way-laid the vehicle of the Forest department.

They relented after police reached the spot and managed to placate them. Kuldiha Forest department registered a case in this connection and produced the accused persons in the court.

KULDIHA JUMBO DEATH

4 injured in group clash

PROHIBITORY ORDERS UNDER SECTION 163 OF BNSS CLAMPED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, Sept 19: At least four people were injured in a clash between two groups in Bhadrak district Thursday, officials said.

posed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in Godipokhari and within 1-km radius of the village from 2pm Thursday till 10am Saturday.

The injured people have been hospitalised, they said.

Over 10 platoons of armed police personnel have been deployed in the area to maintain peace and tranquility.



After the incident, district authorities clamped prohibitory orders in the violence-hit area, they said. The clash erupted in Godipokhari village in Dhusuri police station area in the morning after a religious flag of a community was torn on the previous night, the officials said.

To maintain law and order, the Bhadrak district administration im-

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Bank of India AUCTION SALE OF VEHICLE. Zonal Office : Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.: 0674-2362249. Table with columns: Sl. No., Branch Name, Name of the Borrower, Vehicle Details, Reserve Price / Bid Increment Amount.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice. Bid Identification No. : 23/2024-25. Table with columns: Name of the Work, Estimated Cost, Period of Completion, Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal, Last Date/time for receipt of bids in the portal, Name & Address of the Officer inviting Bid.

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Detachment is the beginning of mastery.
SRI AUROBINDO



Set Methane Targets

As summer in the northern hemisphere draws to a close, hundreds of temperature records have been broken, and there is a roughly 95 per cent chance that 2024 will beat 2023 as the hottest year since measurements began. But millions of people don't need data to tell them that - they are living through it. In 2023, the United States suffered 28 climate-related disasters that each caused at least \$1 billion worth of damage, while China experienced both extreme heat and devastating floods, with a typhoon displacing more than 120,000 people in Beijing.

It is clear that warming is occurring faster than expected, and that the world needs to pull an emergency brake on rising temperatures. China and the US, as global superpowers, could work together to drive change, and they recently held a high-level meeting to discuss opportunities for reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. As these conversations continue ahead of the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) and into 2025, they should focus on dealing with the climate crisis that has already arrived. To address it requires increased efforts to mitigate emissions of super pollutants, which are responsible for more than half of climate change.

Super pollutants, specifically warming agents like methane, N₂O, tropospheric ozone, and hydrofluorocarbons are tens, hundreds, or even thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide per ton. Methane, for example, is a GHG that is roughly 80 times more potent than CO₂ over a 20-year period and contributes to ozone smog. But it remains in the atmosphere for only around a decade, whereas CO₂ can last centuries. This means that reducing methane emissions is the fastest and most effective way to fight climate change and improve air quality.

Cleaner air is especially important for communities living or working near cattle farms, oil and gas infrastructure, landfills, and other pollution sources. Deteriorating air quality has become a pressing public-health problem, and reducing methane levels in the atmosphere would lower rates of death and asthma, and lessen the severity of wildfires, flooding, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events.

The good news is that there are ways to cut methane emissions by as much as 45 per cent, which could reduce warming by 0.3° Celsius by 2040, bolster energy and food security, and put the world on a path to a healthier future. In addition to the broad public support for government intervention to address methane emissions, there is also global consensus on the need to address non-CO₂ GHGs. To date, 158 countries have signed the Global Methane Pledge to cut emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. And at last year's COP28 in Dubai, countries agreed to submit updated 2035 emissions-reduction targets, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), that are economy-wide, cover all GHGs, and are aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Increased global attention to non-CO₂ GHGs could not come at a better time, as updated NDCs are due in February 2025. While current NDCs contain meaningful CO₂-reduction targets, they often lack concrete, measurable goals for cutting super pollutants. Countries must recognise that this approach does not fully address the fight against climate change and raise their ambitions accordingly. Strong 2035 targets for methane and other super pollutants are necessary to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 and would reduce potentially irreversible planetary changes.

Methane has historically been hard to track, making it difficult to include specific targets in NDCs. But now, after addressing critical funding and technology gaps, methane-detecting satellites are improving data collection. Satellite programmes launched after the previous NDC update, including MethaneSAT, Carbon Mapper, and the WasteMAP, have helped local authorities pinpoint and address emissions sources. Given these developments, there is no excuse for submitting NDCs that lack methane targets.

China and the US can build on the climate commitments they made in last year's Sunnylands Statement by including robust super-pollutant targets in their updated NDCs. The Chinese government has already expressed its intention to do so, while the US has shown a willingness to implement ambitious climate policies, including support for research on emissions-reduction innovations.

The world must unite to reduce super pollutants and usher in a new era of cleaner air, improved food production, and greater energy security. The public overwhelmingly supports measuring and mitigating methane emissions across sectors, and it is time for governments to listen. A good first step would be for the US and China to set quantifiable non-CO₂ targets in their revised NDCs and encourage other large methane-emitting countries to do the same.

Marcelo Mena, CEO of Global Methane Hub, is a former Chilean minister of the environment. Sarah Ann Smith is Energy Program Director at Global Methane Hub.

WISDOM CORNER

- I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. **KAHLIL GIBRAN**
- Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. **ROBERT FROST**
- Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy. **THICH NHAT HANH**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1870:** Rome incorporated into Italy. On this day in 1870, Italian troops occupied Rome, leading to the eventual incorporation of Rome into the Kingdom of Italy and the limiting of papal governing authority to the Vatican itself and a small district around it.
- 1886:** The South African city of Johannesburg was founded.
- 1904:** Wilbur Wright makes the first circular flight. Wright, who with his brother Orville, is credited for inventing the first airplane, made a complete circle in 1 minute and 16 seconds on the Wright Flyer II.
- 1946:** Delayed because of World War II, the first Cannes film festival began, and it became one of cinema's major annual events.
- 1973:** In a much-publicized "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match, Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs. The mixed gender tennis match between top tennis player Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King was held in Houston, Texas after Riggs won another mixed gender match against Margaret Court earlier in the year. The matches were prompted by Riggs' comments that even at an age of 55, he could beat any female tennis player. King beat Riggs and took home the \$100,000 prize money. The match was and still is one of the most viewed tennis matches on television - it was watched by about 90 million people around the world.

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

UNCALLED FOR REMARKS



DK Giri

IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT IRAN HAS MADE ADVERSE COMMENTS VIS-A-VIS INDIAN MUSLIMS

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks on Indian Muslims have evoked strong reaction from the Ministry of External Affairs, media, diplomats and observers. Indeed, the comments which clubbed India along with Gaza and Myanmar were absolutely uncalled for. They were malicious and misinformed. It is another matter that the Israel Ambassador in New Delhi has had even stronger retort to Khamenei. It is anybody's guess why Khamenei made such comments at this time.

On the occasion of Islamic Unity Week, as he was meeting the Sunni Muslims of Iran, he said, "We cannot consider ourselves to be Muslims if we are oblivious to the suffering that a Muslim is enduring in Myanmar, Gaza, India, or any other place." He added that the concept of an 'Islamic Ummah' must never be forgotten.

Expectedly and rightly so, the External Affairs Ministry in a statement, said, "We strongly deplore the comments made regarding Muslims in India by the supreme leader of Iran. These are misinformed and unacceptable." It further said that countries commenting on minorities of other countries are advised to look at their own record before making any observations about others.

India's reactions are reflected in those of Reuven Azar, Israel's Ambassador to India. Azar went hammer and tongs on Khamenei, "You are a killer and oppressor of your own people. Muslims in Israel, India and all democracies enjoy freedom which is denied in Iran. I wish the people of Iran will be free soon."

However, it is not the first time that Iran has made adverse comments vis-a-vis Indian Muslims. Khamenei had criticised India for revoking Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. Interestingly, Khamenei's comments came just before the first phase of Jammu & Kashmir elections on 18 September. Note



About the intent and timing of the remarks, it seems plausible that Iran wants to consolidate its influence in the Islamic world, especially among the Shia community

that J&K has a sizeable Shia population.

About the intent and timing of the remarks, it seems plausible that Iran wants to consolidate its influence in the Islamic world, especially among the Shia community. This may be to counterbalance the influence of rivals like Saudi Arabia on the Sunni Muslim world. Iran also is wary of India being an ally of the United States. Although Iran and India share a fairly long history of cultural and economic ties, Tehran is increasingly veering towards the Sino-Russian axis. New Delhi is technically in the Sino-Russian camp, but in reality, it is gradually getting detached. Tehran might sense this development and has gone once again after India for the sake of consolidating its Islamic leadership.

Having noted the MEA's response, let us engage with at Khamenei's statement. First, Khamenei does not represent the Islamic world. Iran's enmity against Iraq, and its persistent rivalry with Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Muslim countries is an open secret. Iran's fundamentalist leadership has badly treated Sunni Muslims in their own country. Second, the democratic and pluralists world

does not recognise the Islamic Ummah. Also, a good many Islamic scholars suggest that Muslims, whichever country they belong to, should express their loyalty to that country.

Third, comparing Indian Muslims with those in Gaza and in Myanmar is completely out of any logic. Muslims in Gaza are caught in a full-scale war between Israel Defence Force (IDF) and Hamas.

Talking of Muslims in Myanmar they are again caught in a religious warfare with Buddhists. The plight of Rohingyas who have fled the country and are refugees in other countries is globally known. There are three million Rohingyas taking shelter in Bangladesh alone. Not a single Indian Muslim has been officially declared refugee in any part of the world.

In fact, there is no need to be defensive and to explain how Indian Muslims enjoy all constitutional, political and civil rights like any other Indian. If there is any tension - symbolic or actual, this is around election time when leaders appeal indirectly to their own communities for votes. Remember that the Indian Constitution bans communal mobilisation of voters.

Yet, a small part of it might escape the attention of the Election Commission of India. However, once it is brought to the notice of ECI, the offenders are punished.

One would tend to treat Khamenei's remarks as a storm in a teacup. Religious leaders who are not politically savvy often make such facile statements. Tehran knows the deep connection it has with New Delhi. The partnership over the Port Terminal at Chabahar is a key component of India's regional trade strategy providing access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. This is a ten-year contract.

India is developing the Port in Chabahar on Iran's South-Eastern coast along the Gulf of Oman. New Delhi seeks to transport goods to Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries bypassing the ports of Karachi and Gwadar situated in Pakistan. Both countries are concerned about terrorism emerging from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both countries have suffered from terrorism.

It is obvious that in economic and in cultural terms, India and Iran could be natural allies. But given the shifting geopolitical equations globally, nothing could be written in stone. In international politics, there are no permanent friends, nor enemies, only permanent national interests. New Delhi certainly has been in favour of retaining and resetting its ties with Iran, but Tehran's, particularly the supreme leader's constant meddling in India's internal affairs will make things worse.

Iran has enough enemies. It needs friends. India with its profile of a balancer and neutral player could be one such friend. One wished that Iran's religious leader understand this political necessity.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism.

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

The green hydrogen economy



Sanjay Kumar Kar

IN THE CONTEXT OF DECARBONIZATION OF INDUSTRIES AND TRANSPORT SECTOR, GREEN HYDROGEN EMERGES AS THE CLEANEST, YET EXPENSIVE OPTION

India's target to achieve net zero by 2070 necessitates energy transition and clean energy adoption. United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly SDG-7 links to access to clean energy for all. India strives to optimise domestic renewable energy production to reduce dependency on non-renewable resources. So, renewables are fast emerging to challenge fossil fuels across the country. The last decade was extremely productive for India's domestic clean energy producers. India targets 500 GW renewable energy (RE) capacity installation by 2030. To achieve the target, it requires an annual capacity addition of about 55 GW to the existing capacity of 152.65 GW. Solar and wind will continue to drive India's renewable revolution.

In the context of decarbonization of industries and transport sector, green hydrogen emerges as the cleanest, yet expensive option. We are witnessing significant changes in the green hydrogen/ammonia value chain. India's strategic location coupled with availability of globally competitive clean electricity offers considerable advantages to exploit domestic and inter-

national markets. Japan and South Korea provide immediate opportunities for export of green ammonia. Odisha has already taken a giant step to cater to the domestic and global clean energy markets. A 1.1 million ton per annum (MMTPA) green ammonia plant being set up by ACME in Tata Steel's Special Economic Zone in Gopalpur sets the ball rolling. Similarly, 0.5 MMTPA green ammonia plant by Avaada Group will help Odisha to strengthen its position in green ammonia trade. Further, Jindal Steel's target to produce green hydrogen-based steel from the Angul plant by 2026 sets an example for the steel industry.

Investment in R&D is a strong pillar for economic growth, so India should increase R&D expenditure from 0.65% of GDP to at least 2% of GDP. It is fair to argue that without a strong domestic R&D ecosystem, globally competitive domestic manufacturing will not be possible. Therefore, India's ambitious 'Make in India' program sets a solid foundation to revive manufacturing. Hence, India's thrust on semiconductor, battery, EV, and green hydrogen is highly appreciable.

Research on the design of elec-

trols bears paramount importance to develop indigenous and cost-effective electrolyzers. Further, research on producing green hydrogen from sea water and wastewater could offer technical and strategic breakthroughs.

Industries are exploring low-cost commercial storage solutions. For instance, research on sodium-ion and Zn-ion batteries is gaining momentum. Lithium-ion batteries have their own limitations and challenges, especially the availability of lithium and lithium batteries in the domestic market. Currently, the cost of batteries constitutes roughly about 40% of the cost of the electric vehicle, which inhibits adoption. Consumers are willing to switch to alternative technologies, subject to lower total ownership cost of the technology. In the case of a hydrogen vehicle or EV, the initial acquisition cost of the vehicle is on the higher side, even though the per km operating cost is low.

Investment is key to R&D and green technology adoption. It is pertinent to note that factors like level of technology maturity, industry readiness for bringing technology from laboratory

to market, end user readiness, potential/latent demand in the domestic/export market, and assurance of off takers at current price point are essential. Further, government support for land acquisition, pilot plants, lucrative taxation, and production linked incentives are critical for technology commercialisation. Incentives to consumers/end users would reduce resistance to green technology adoption.

India's renewed interest in the green hydrogen economy well supported by the National Green Hydrogen Mission presents an immense opportunity for Odisha to develop its green hydrogen/ammonia value chain. Odisha's 480 km long coast bolsters its green hydrogen economy. Port infrastructures in Gopalpur, Paradip, and Dhamra extend opportunities to develop multiple green hydrogen/ammonia hubs in Odisha. Further, green hydrogen is poised to positively impact the mobility sector; shipping, fertilizer, and steel industries in the state and beyond. Odisha is well placed to lead green ammonia (a cost-effective hydrogen carrier) trade.

The writer is Professor, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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Gender discrimination

Sir, It is highly unfortunate that female athletes in Afghanistan are increasingly facing dire situations and enduring harsh conditions under Taliban rule, as they are not allowed to engage themselves in sports. Consequent to the restrictions, in fact, many Afghan female athletes have left the country due lack of sports opportunities. Thanks to UN experts, as they called on national and international sports organisations to take decisive action against this ban. The experts described the prohibition as part of the regime's institutionalised system of gender discrimination and oppression, warning that it would amount to crimes against humanity. The cessation of female sports in Afghanistan is part of a broader effort by the Taliban to marginalise women and girls in all aspects of society. The Taliban's actions have not only stripped women of their right to engage in sports but have also further deepened the social and economic divide in Afghanistan, leaving the future of female athletes in the country uncertain and bleak.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Economic devastation

Sir, Israel's war against Hamas has drastically reduced Gaza's economy, shrinking it to less than one-sixth of its 2022 level, alongside a sharp economic decline in the West Bank, according to the UN. The UN reported that economic devastation on a "staggering scale" has unfolded since the war began more than 11 months ago in the Gaza Strip. "Production processes have been disrupted or decimated, income sources have vanished, poverty has worsened and spread, neighborhoods have been wiped out, and communities and towns destroyed," said the UN Trade and Development agency (UNCTAD) in a recent report. Mutasim Elagrar, coordinator of UNCTAD's Palestinian assistance programme, said the cost of rebuilding remains uncertain but estimates suggest "tens of billions, or possibly more." By early 2024, up to 96% of Gaza's agricultural assets, such as farms, orchards, and irrigation systems, had been "decimated," significantly crippling food production and exacerbating food insecurity in the besieged territory. Additionally, 82% of businesses in Gaza were damaged or destroyed. In the last quarter of 2023, Gaza's GDP plunged by 81%, resulting in a 22% contraction for the entire year.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Genome sequencing to identify Mpox variant

Kerala reported a confirmed case of Mpox Wednesday, marking the second known case of infection in the country following the recent global outbreak of the disease



Mpox infections are generally self-limiting, lasting between two and four weeks, and patients usually recover with supportive medical care and management

It is transmitted through prolonged and close contact with an infected patient

It typically manifests itself with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications

"Once the variant of the virus is identified, it will help in understanding its potential for spread and taking additional measures," she told reporters.

The minister said that the condition of the Mpox patient is satisfactory.

"There are 23 people on the contact list of the patient. Those who were on the same flight as the patient have been identified, totaling 43 people," she said.

All individuals who had contact with the Mpox patient have been traced, the minister added, assuring that there is no need for concern regarding the disease.

Kerala reported a confirmed case of Mpox Wednesday, marking the second known case of infection in the country following the recent global outbreak of

the disease.

According to the Kerala Health Department, the infected man had recently returned from the United Arab Emirates. He had been hospitalised here with symptoms consistent with monkeypox.

Last week, a new case of Mpox emerged in the national capital when a 26-year-old resident from Hisar, Haryana, tested positive for the virus and was admitted to the hospital.

This was the first such case reported in India since the WHO declared the Mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

Official sources have said that the initial case does not belong to the ongoing outbreak, as genomic sequencing indicates it is a distinct viral strain from a separate clade.

MATHURA TRAIN DERAILMENT

500 workers at site to clear track

THE DERAILMENT AROUND 8 PM WEDNESDAY IMPACTED SERVICES OF AROUND 30 TRAINS ON THE ROUTE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), Sept 19: An inquiry committee will be formed to probe the derailment of 25 wagons of a freight train near Vrindavan in Mathura district, a senior official said here Thursday.

The derailment around 8 pm Wednesday impacted services of around 30 trains on the route, with officials saying work is underway to clear the tracks so that normal operations could be resumed.

Nearly 500 workers have been deployed for the job of clearing the tracks since last night.

Divisional Railway Manager, Agra Division, Tej Prakash Agarwal Wednesday told reporters that traffic on three railway lines was interrupted due to the derailment.

"Twenty-five wagons of the train taking coal to Suratgarh power plant (in Rajasthan) derailed after Vrindavan yard," Agarwal said, adding that no one was injured in the incident.

General Manager of North Central Railway, Upendra Chandra Joshi Thursday said,



Officials and others stand near derailed wagons of a goods train, in Mathura, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

"Our priority is to clear the track first, and then we will focus on other aspects."

Joshi said the derailment, which occurred between Vrindavan Road and Ajhai stations, affected approximately 30 trains in the process.

While the exact cause of the derailment remains undetermined, officials are not ruling out any possibilities, including sabotage, he said.

"It is difficult to disclose the basic cause of derailment at this time. After the formation

Necessary equipment, machines and ART (accident relief train), have been requisitioned from Agra, Delhi, and Moradabad to expedite the repair process.

SK Srivastava, Station Director at Mathura Junction, said down train movements are currently ongoing on the fourth line, ensuring some level of operational continuity while repairs are underway.

"Around 500 personnel are working on-site since Wednesday night to restore normal operations," he added.

Joshi said the necessary

YOGI GOVT TO BUY 120 E-BUSES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Government of Uttar Pradesh will purchase 120 electric buses which will operate across Lucknow, Aligarh, Moradabad, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur.

Under the directives of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the process to add 120 electric buses (in addition to 100 buses) to the fleet of the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) is progressing rapidly.

These buses will operate in five cities of Aligarh, Moradabad, Lucknow, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur. These electric buses will be equipped with modern facilities and advanced equipment. Aligarh and Moradabad regions will each receive 30 electric buses, while Lucknow, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur will each have 20 electric buses operating.



According to Transport Minister Dayashankar Singh, in the Aligarh region, 10 electric buses will operate on the Aligarh-Noida via Jewar route, four buses on the Aligarh-Ballabgarh-Faridabad route, four buses on the Aligarh-Mathura route, eight buses on the Aligarh-Kaushambi via Khurja route, and four buses on the Aligarh-Dibai-Anupshahr-Sambhal-Moradabad route.

Kerala Women's Commission urges mandatory premarital counseling



The Commission made this recommendation aiming to address the root causes of marital issues increasingly highlighted in the complaints it receives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode (Kerala), Sept 19: In a bid to address marital discord and foster stronger family bonds, the Kerala Women's Commission on Thursday proposed mandating premarital counselling at local self-government level before couples can officially register their marriage.

The Commission made this recommendation aiming to address the root causes of marital issues increasingly highlighted in the complaints it receives.

In a statement, P Sathidevi, Chairperson of the Commission, emphasised the pressing need for this intervention following a district-level meeting in Kozhikode.

According to her, many complaints point to a lack of understanding between spouses regarding family and marital dynamics, which often leads to

domestic discord.

"Most of the grievances we encounter are related to conflicts within the husband-wife relationship. The absence of harmony and affection between partners is evident," Sathidevi said.

"Premarital counselling could offer a viable solution to these issues by equipping couples with the tools and insights needed to navigate their marital journey more effectively," the Commission said.

The recommendation is clear that, to achieve a more harmonious family life, couples should be required to undergo premarital counselling before their marriage is officially registered.

The Commission has urged the government to mandate that a certificate of completed premarital counselling be submitted at the time of marriage registration.

This step is intended to ensure that all couples entering into marriage have received the necessary guidance to build a strong foundation for their relationship, it said.

Fresh wolf pack sighting causes panic among locals of Bahraich

The four wolves were seen near BJP MLC Padamsen Chaudhary's farmhouse in Magla village Wednesday evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bahraich, Sept 19: The sighting of a pack of wolves in Mehsi Tehsil here has once again stoked fear among the local residents who were beginning to feel relieved after the capture of five man-eater wolves who killed eight people in the area.

While the villagers claimed that the pack included the sixth and the last remaining man-eater wolf, who is believed to be lame, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ajit Pratap Singh rejected the assertion.

The pack of six wolves had terrorised the residents of several villages in Bahraich as they killed eight people, including seven children, and injured more than 20 since mid-July. Five of them were captured as part of the 'Operation Bhediya' campaign while efforts were on to catch the sixth wolf.

The four wolves were seen near BJP MLC Padamsen Chaudhary's farmhouse in Magla village Wednesday evening. The spot is just five km away from Sisayya Churamani village which has seen the maximum wolf attacks.

Talking to PTI, Chaudhary



AN OFFICER WAS SENT TO THE SPOT AND PUGMARKS OF WOLVES WERE FOUND BUT FROM THEIR ACTIVITIES, IT DOES NOT SEEM THAT THE MAN-EATER WOLF WAS A PART OF THE PACK

said, "The villagers saw a pack of four wolves in the mango orchard of my farmhouse at around 4 pm. One of them was lame."

"There is a den of wolves near this place. Due to rain and rising water level of rivers, wild animals often come out," he added.

However, DFO Singh said it does not seem that the new pack had the man-eater wolf and cautioned against any efforts to capture them.

"There has been information about wolves being seen in some villages of the Ramganj area of Mehsi tehsil. However, till the time it is not certain that the man-eater wolf was among them, any efforts made to catch them can create a new problem as they might start attacking humans," he said.

Singh said an officer was sent to the spot and pugmarks of wolves were found. But from their activities, it does not seem that the man-eater wolf was a part of the pack, he asserted.

"We are keeping a close eye on the area where the wolves were seen Wednesday. It is only after an investigation that we can say with certainty what type of wolves these were," he said.

BREAKING TABOOS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 19: Shattering glass ceilings and defying long-held social taboos, women now make up over 50 per cent of the workforce at Kerala State Beverages Corporation known as BEVCO, the state-run liquor retailer.

In what might be a first for India, Kerala has positioned women salespersons at liquor outlets, a job they view as no different from any other government role.

"Initially, I was very worried, as we all considered it a problem. But after six months of working, I started enjoying the job, and we hardly encountered any problems," Leena, a woman salesperson employed in a KSBC outlet in Thiruvananthapuram for

the last two years, told PTI.

Many of these employees and their families initially had apprehensions about women working in liquor outlets. But it was the women who went to the court to get their rights to work in BEVCO.

"Ten years ago, women went to court and won their rights to work in BEVCO. Earlier, women were not recruited to work in liquor outlets, and the court directed the government to recruit women as well. Now women comprise more than 50 per cent of our workforce," Harshita Attaluri, IPS, Managing Director of KSBC, told PTI.

Initially, BEVCO outlets were considered difficult places for women to work.

But over the years, women have found it to be a safer place



to work, and they hardly encounter any problems.

She said that the representation of women at BEVCO reflects Kerala society, where women constitute more than 50 per cent of the population.

"Our only problem is the long working hours. But any other

job would have its own challenges. We find most of the customers who come to our outlets as friendly and cooperative," Sangeetha, another salesperson, said.

She also demands that a system educating people about legal action if they misbehave with the

staff should also be properly displayed in the outlets, like other public offices.

The families of these employees, who first raised their concerns, are now the biggest supporters.

"My husband is my biggest support and encourages me to work. This is a safer place to work," Sangeetha added.

For Vineetha, a cashier at a liquor outlet, this is just like any other job.

BEVCO employees work from 10 am to 9 pm and only get days off on government-prescribed dry days.

The shop managers at these outlets are also happy to have women employees.

"With women at the sales counter, there is a marked improvement in consumer behav-

our: When they see women at the counter, they are more gentle and well-behaved," Ashok, shop manager at a liquor outlet in Pattam, Thiruvananthapuram said.

Now, more and more women are coming forward to take the competitive examination to get a job at BEVCO.

Apart from sales outlets, women are also placed in warehouses and administrative offices.

BEVCO now has a female MD and a woman AGM of Operations, who oversees the entire operations of the Corporation.

Harshita Attaluri believes that other departments should follow BEVCO's example and include more women in the workforce.

of the day quote

Our Navy has made a significant contribution in protecting the economic interests of all stakeholder nations of the Indo-Pacific and in smooth movement of goods in the Indian Ocean region

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

I do not know what the Prime Minister said in Srinagar today, but I can say this with a guarantee that he would have spoken about three families

OMAR ABDULLAH | NC VICE-PRESIDENT

A total of 5,45,000 tourists visited the state during 2023-24 out of which 4.70 lakh were domestic while remaining 75,000 were from foreign countries. It shows tourism has been growing in the northeastern state

MANIK SAHA | TRIPURA CM

SHORT TAKES

Dhule: Four of family found dead at home

Mumbai: A couple and their two children were found dead at their residence in north Maharashtra's Dhule city Thursday, police said. The incident at Samarth Colony in Pramod Nagar locality came to light around 11 am when some neighbours noticed foul odour coming out of the family's bungalow and alerted police, an official said. Police found the decomposing bodies of Pravinshih Girase (53), his wife Deepanjali (47) and their children Mitesh (18) and Soham (15) inside. Pravinshih was found hanging from the ceiling whereas his wife and children were found dead on the floor, the police official said. No suicide note was found. As per the neighbours, no movement had been noticed at the house for the last two days.

Former ITBP DG Gautam Kaul dies

New Delhi: Former Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) director general Gautam Kaul, who was posted as an Additional Commissioner of Police in Delhi when Indira Gandhi was assassinated, died Wednesday following a prolonged illness. He was 83. Kaul will be cremated Thursday at the Lodhi crematorium here, officials said. He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

37 roads including NH 5 closed in HP

Shimla: A total of 37 roads including National Highway 5 (Hindustan /Tibet Road) were closed for vehicular movement and 57 power supply schemes were disrupted in Himachal Pradesh Thursday as rain continued to lash parts of the state, officials said. Moderate rain lashed parts of the state and Kalpa received 30.4 mm of rainfall since Wednesday evening.

President in Ranchi

Ranchi: President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Ranchi Thursday evening on a two-day visit during which she would participate in the centenary celebrations of ICAR-National Institute of Secondary Agriculture, officials said. The president arrived around 7 pm and was greeted by Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at the airport. "Welcome and Johar (greetings) to President respected Droupadi Murmu Ji to the brave land of Jharkhand," Soren said in a post on X.



I would like to call upon all educational institutions and teachers to encourage daughters to pursue higher education and become self-reliant as we want to make India the most developed and most advanced country by 2047

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

KEJRIWAL TO JOIN AAP'S HARYANA POLL CAMPAIGN

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal will join the party's campaign in poll-bound Haryana with a roadshow in the Jagadhri constituency September 20, AAP national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak said Thursday



TIRUPATI LADDU ROW

Bitter political fight erupts

Mukesh Ahlawat to be new face in Delhi Cabinet

AMID THE CONTROVERSY, THE RULING TELUGU DESAM PARTY THURSDAY CLAIMED THAT THE ADULTERATION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY A GUJARAT-BASED LIVESTOCK LABORATORY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Sept 19: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that animal fat was used in Tirupati laddus during the previous government triggered a massive political row Thursday with the YSRCP accusing Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains and TDP circulating a lab report to back the claim. During an NDA legislative party meeting Wednesday, Naidu claimed that the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led gov-



ernment did not even spare Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirupati and used substandard ingredients and animal fat for making laddus. TDP spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy in a press conference claimed that the adulteration has been confirmed by a Gujarat-based livestock laboratory, on the ghee samples provided by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the famous Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple. He displayed the purported lab report which apparently confirmed the presence of "beef tallow", "Lard" and "Fish Oil"

in the given ghee sample. The sample receipt date was July 9, 2024 and the lab report was dated July 16. However, there was no official confirmation on the lab report from either the Andhra Pradesh government or the TTD. Senior YSRCP leader and Rajya Sabha member YV Subba Reddy, who served as chairman of TTD for four years, noted that Naidu's allegations had undermined the hallowed nature of the deity and hurt the sentiments of the devotees. "It is unimaginable to even say that animal fat was used in the consecrated food offered to

the deity and the laddus given to devotees. There is no other heinous attempt than alleging that animal fat was being used," said Reddy. Asserting that he is a Hindu who worships Sri Venkateswara Swamy, the Rajya Sabha member challenged Naidu to come and swear before the deity whether his allegations were true or false. He further said if Naidu fails to substantiate his allegations and comes up with proof, he would take legal recourse and would go up to the Supreme Court. Senior YSRCP leader and another former TTD chairman B Karunakar Reddy, charged that Naidu made sacrilegious allegations over Tirupati laddus for political mileage. Karunakar Reddy, who twice served as the chairman of TTD alleged that Naidu's claims of lacing Tirupati laddus (consecrated sweet) with animal fat during YSRCP government was aimed at politically targeting the opposition party and its president and former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. "To attack YSRCP, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and the previous government (YSRCP), he (Naidu) made heinous allegations that

animal fat was used in making Swamy's (deity) laddus. It is a deplorable experiment," Reddy told a vernacular news channel. IT Minister Nara Lokesh Wednesday expressed shock over the alleged use of animal fat in Tirupati prasadam (laddu). "The lord Venkateswara swamy temple at Tirumala is our most sacred temple. I am shocked to learn that the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy administration used animal fat instead of ghee in the Tirupati Prasadam," he said in a post on 'X'. Assailing the ruling TDP and opposition YSRCP for allegedly indulging in 'heinous' politics over Tirupati laddus, AP Congress Committee (APCC) president Y S Sharmila Thursday called for a CBI probe to ascertain whether animal fat was really used to make the sweet. Andhra Pradesh BJP in a post on its 'X' handle said the remarks of CM Naidu on the laddu issue created anguish among all Hindus. The saffron party appealed to the state government to immediately investigate all the issues that hurt the sentiments of Hindus in the previous government.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: AAP MLA Mukesh Ahlawat will be the new face in the Delhi Cabinet headed by Atishi, who will be sworn in as Chief Minister September 21, and four ministers will be retained, the party said Thursday. It said Chief Minister-designate Atishi and her new Cabinet will take the oath of office on the same day. Gopal Rai, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Kailash Gahlot and Imran Hussain, who are part of outgoing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Council of Ministers, will be in the new Cabinet as well, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said here.



Atishi and Bharadwaj were inducted into the Kejriwal Cabinet after the AAP national convenor's trusted lieutenants Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain resigned in February last year. Kejriwal resigned as Delhi chief minister earlier this week, after which Atishi, chosen by AAP as his successor, staked claim to form a new government. Atishi holds 13 major portfolios in the Cabinet headed by Kejriwal, finance, revenue, PWD and education. Her experience in handling so many portfolios was among the reasons she was picked to succeed Kejriwal. Rai is in charge of environment, development and general administration, while Bharadwaj helms the health, tourism and urban development departments among others. Gahlot holds the portfolios of transport, home and women and child development, while Hussain is the minister for food and supplies. Ahlawat, MLA from Delhi's Sultanpur Majra, has been inducted to fill the vacancy created following the resignation of social welfare minister Raaj Kumar Anand.

Bihar: Houses of 'Dalits' torched; 15 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nawada (Bihar), Sept 19: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Thursday condemned the torching of 34 houses, mostly belonging to SC/ST communities, in Nawada district and asked the Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) to visit the site and oversee the probe. The police have so far arrested 15 people Thursday, a day after arsonists torched the houses including 21 that were destroyed in the fire at Manjhi Tola area. Sources from the Chief Minister's Office said, "The CM condemned the incident and instructed the ADG (Law and Order) to monitor the probe on-site." Kumar also emphasised the need to apprehend all suspects



as quickly as possible. Preliminary investigations indicated that a land dispute may have triggered the violence, which occurred in Manjhi Tola within Mufassil police station area Wednesday evening. Nawada District Magistrate

suspects." Verma said that around 34 houses, some of which were semi-pucca, were torched by a group in Manjhi Tola. Senior administrative and police officials will report the exact extent of the damage, he added. Investigations have revealed that out of a total of 34 houses that were set on fire, 21 were completely destroyed and 13 were damaged partially. Following the incident, Nawada SP Abhinav Dhiman had said, "A call was received around 7 PM regarding the fire in Manjhi Tola. Police reached promptly with fire engines and extinguished the blaze." Meanwhile, the incident has triggered a political slugfest between the ruling alliance partners of the NDA government in the state and the Opposition.

'Should I send Bishnoi?': Salim Khan gets threat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 19: In a double security scare for actor Salman Khan and his family, a biker entered his convoy, while a burqa-clad woman and a man threatened his father Salim Khan in separate incidents, police said Thursday. Both incidents happened Wednesday in the city's Bandra area, where the Khan family lives, an official said. A 21-year-old motorcycle rider entered the police convoy accompanying Salman Khan between Mehboob Studio and Galaxy Apartments, the actor's home, the official said. The actor, who has received several threats from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and has been provided 'Y-plus' security cover by the Mumbai police, was returning to his residence. Around 12.15 am, after the convoy passed Mehboob Studio, Uzair Faiz Mohiuddin, who was riding a motorcycle, tried to get close to Salman Khan's car, said the police official. Security personnel tried to warn him, but he kept getting close to Salman Khan's car, he said. After the actor reached his house, two police vehicles chased the motorcycle rider and forced him to stop, the official said. During questioning, Mohiuddin, a resident of Bandra West, told police that he was a college student.



Pak, Cong always on same page: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Jammu, Sept 19: Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday latched on to Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's remarks on the restoration of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir to hit out at the Congress, accusing it of speaking the neighbouring country's language. Shah said on X that Asif's statement in support of Article 370, which gave the erstwhile state special rights, and Article 35A, has proved that the neighbouring country and the Congress have the "same intentions and agenda". Article 35A gave special rights and privileges to its "permanent residents". Several BJP

leaders posted Asif's remarks to a Pakistani channel that his country shared the view of the Congress-NC alliance that Article 370, which along with Article 35A, was scrapped in August 2019, should be restored. BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is in charge of the party's affairs in Jammu and Kashmir, claimed the Opposition alliance is running a Pakistani agenda in the ongoing polls. Ram Madhav, one of the two BJP election in-charges for the polls, said on X while sharing Asif's reported comments, "A clear challenge to people of J&K. NC-Congress alliance is 'on the same page' with Pakistan, declares Pak Defence Minister Khawaja Asif."



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a visit to the flood affected areas of Panskura in Purba Medinipur. West Banerjee Thursday alleged that the flood situation in the state was because of DVC's unbridled release of water from its dams to save Jharkhand. Holding the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) responsible for the "man-made" floods in West Bengal, she said her government would sever all ties with it

India's ambitious 25-year cheetah conservation plan

The report, released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority on the completion of two years of Project Cheetah September 17, said while a new batch of cheetahs was likely to be brought to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary by the end of the year, they would be released into free-ranging conditions over the next five years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: India aims to build an inter-state cheetah conservation complex in the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscapes across Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan within the next 25 years, according to the 2023-24 annual progress report of Project Cheetah. The report, released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority on the completion of two years of Project Cheetah

September 17, said while a new batch of cheetahs was likely to be brought to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary by the end of the year, they would be released into free-ranging conditions over the next five years. According to the "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in Gandhi Sagar", five to eight cheetahs would be released into a 64-square kilometre predator-proof fenced area in the first phase, with a focus on breeding. "Both these landscapes, along



the interstate border of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, are adjacent to each other, and the combined landscapes together can constitute the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar cheetah landscape for metapopulation management of 60-70 cheetahs after restorative

measures, prey availability, and scientific management are effectively in place, as an interstate cheetah conservation complex within the next 25 years under the umbrella of Project Cheetah," the report read. This larger Kuno-Gandhi

Sagar landscape is located in the Sheopur, Shivpuri, Gwalior, Morena, Guna, Ashoknagar, Mandasaur and Neemuch districts of Madhya Pradesh and Baran, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Kota, Jhalawar, Bundi and Chittorgarh districts of Rajasthan. The Bhind and Datia districts in Madhya Pradesh, Dholpur in Rajasthan, and Lalitpur and Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh adjacent to this landscape would be incorporated as part of the complex, depending on cheetahs' use of the region, according to the report. While authorities have been busy preparing the 368-square kilometre Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary for the next batch of cheetahs, the ones in Kuno remain inside enclosures that are only 0.5 to 1.5 square kilometres in size. For context, cheetahs need much larger areas in the wild, usually over 50 square kilometres, depending on prey availability. "During July-August 2023, all the free-ranging cheetahs were captured for treatment and housed in quarantine bomas due to health reasons and subsequently shifted to soft-release enclosures. Currently, all the cheetahs are in soft-release enclosures and will be released in a phased manner post-monsoon," the report said. According to officials, the animals were brought back to their enclosures after the deaths of three cheetahs - a female named Tibilisi (from Namibia) and two South African males, Tejas and Sooraj - from septicemia, an infection that occurs when bacteria enter the bloodstream and spread.

national

of the day quote

Telangana is home to a large US Consulate and a large number of youth go to America from the state

The BJP government and its dormant departments have completely failed to maintain the Taj Mahal, the wonder that attracts tourists from all over the world

In Viksit Bharat, special impetus needs to be given to the sports sector as we aim to develop ourselves in every sector. By 2047, our goal is to be among the top five countries in sports. To achieve this goal and ensure we do not miss the 2047 opportunity, we must create world-class sportspersons

XPOST OF THE DAY

The new Chairperson and CEO of the Railway Board has raised concerns about the manpower shortages in the Indian Railways and sought additional staff urgently to ensure the safe operation of trains. He has sought approval from the Ministry of Finance to create additional posts in the essential safety category

SHORT TAKES

Chhattisgarh: Three Naxalites surrender

Sukma: Three Naxalites, two of them carrying a cumulative reward of ₹2 lakh on their heads, surrendered Thursday in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, a police official said. He identified the three as Madvi Bhima (52), Madkam Hidma alias Sai Denga (33) and woman ultra Paadam Ayate (24). "Bhima was Nilamadgu RPC DAKMS president of the outlawed Maoist outfit and carried a bounty of ₹1 lakh on his head. Hidma was its vice-president. Ayate was Palachalma RPC 'jantana sarkar' head. She too carried a reward of ₹1 lakh on her head," he said.

Tigress Riddhi dies in MP's Van Vihar

Bhopal: The only white tigress, who has been the glory of Madhya Pradesh's wildlife, was found dead at Van Vihar in Bhopal, official said Thursday. Wildlife lovers and the regular visitors at Van Vihar will miss the tigress as she was one of the main wildlife animals displayed in an enclosure for visitors at the park. She used to be popularly known as Riddhi. As per the official statement, she has been ill for a few days and was found lying dead in its enclosure at the national park Thursday.

2 Bangladeshi smugglers held

Kolkata: The Border Security Force (BSF) arrested two Bangladeshi smugglers and recovered six heads of cattle from them along the riverine Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB) in Harishchandrapur, Malda, West Bengal Thursday. The BSF jawans, who were part of a boat naka party, narrowly missed serious injury after being attacked by the smugglers with sharp-edged weapons.



In my opinion, self-reliance is not about isolation, but also about strengthening internal capabilities and capacities to face external challenges
MARSHAL V R CHAUDHARI | CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF OF INDIA

TOP COURT LAUNCHES ONLINE MEDIATION TRAINING PORTAL

The Supreme Court has launched an online mediation training web-portal developed by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in collaboration with the apex court's Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC). Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice Sanjiv Khanna, executive chairman NALSA, launched the portal Wednesday



RG KAR HORROR

WB junior docs to call off strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Sept 19: Agitating junior doctors announced to "partially" withdraw their 'cease work' and rejoin emergency and essential services at state-run hospitals from Saturday, as the West Bengal government has accepted most of their demands. The medics, who have been on 'cease work' for the last 41 days following the rape and murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital August 9, announced that they would lift their sit-in outside Swasthya Bhawan Friday.

Before lifting the sit-in, they would march from Swasthya Bhawan, the state health department headquarters, to the CBI office at CGO Complex in the Salt Lake area.

"It has been decided that given the flood situation in West Bengal and the state government agreeing to certain demands of ours, we will be re-joining emergency and essential services partially from Saturday. We are withdrawing our cease work partially," an agitating doctor said Thursday after their general body meeting. The protesting doctors said they would not work in the Outpatient Department (OPD) but would partially work in emergency and essential services.

"We will withdraw our sit-in



outside Swasthya Bhawan Friday after march to the CBI office. We will wait for a week for the West Bengal government to implement all its promises and if unfulfilled, we will resume 'cease work'," the doctors said, adding that their fight for justice has not ended. This decision came after the state government issued several directives regarding safety and security at hospitals and medical colleges.

"We will withdraw our sit-in outside Swasthya Bhawan Friday after march to the CBI office," the doctors said. The protesting doctors added that they would continue their 'cease work' at the Outpatient Department (OPD) but would resume partial emer-

gency and essential services in all departments.

In response to the doctors' earlier demands, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee transferred Kolkata Police Chief Vineet Goyal and appointed Manoj Kumar Verma in his place, while also removing two senior health department officials.

"However, this doesn't mean our agitation has come to an end. We are committed to pushing forward in a new direction if our demands and assurances are not fulfilled within a stipulated period," agitating doctor Debashis Halder said.

After a meeting with the Chief Secretary Wednesday, the doctors received a directive from the state secretariat Nabanna as-

The West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC) Thursday cancelled the registration of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's former principal Sandip Ghosh, an official said

Ghosh, who is in CBI custody, has been removed from the list of registered medical practitioners maintained by the WBMC

sureing them that safety and security measures would be implemented, Halder said.

The doctors announced that Friday, they would organise a march from Swasthya Bhawan to the CGO Complex to "conclude this phase of our protest".

"While we will partially resume our duties Saturday, we will keep a close watch on the administration. If we notice anything amiss, we will return stronger than before," the doctors said.

Agitating junior doctors Thursday submitted to Chief Secretary Manoj Pant a draft of the key points of their meeting with the West Bengal government last night and were awaiting the state's response. The West Bengal government Thursday evening issued a list of directives on the safety, security and conducive environment for healthcare professionals, saying those orders need to be implemented immediately.

FATF lauds India's efforts to fight money laundering

The report, which comes after a visit of FATF experts to India last November, has placed the country in the "regular follow up" category, a distinction shared by only four other G20 countries



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: Global anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing body FATF Thursday released India's much anticipated mutual evaluation report, saying the country's systems in these domains were "effective" but "major improvements" were required to strengthen prosecution in such cases.

The 368-page report with a cover picture of India's new Parliament draped in Tricolour lights was released after the assessment was adopted by the Paris-headquartered body during its plenary meeting held in June.

The last such review of India's combating of money laundering and terror financing regime was published in 2010. India will "report back" to the plenary after three years.

India will undergo its next evaluation in 2031. The Union finance ministry issued a series of posts on its X handle, saying India achieved "a significant milestone by securing regular follow up rating from FATF" and that this was a "proud moment".

"This is a testament to our nation's commitment to combating money laundering and terrorist financing," it said.

The report said India achieved a high level of technical compliance across the FATF recommendations and took significant steps to implement measures to tackle illicit finance.

"Nevertheless, it is critical that the country continues to improve its system as its economy and financial system continue to grow, in particular ensuring that money laundering and terrorist financing trials are completed and offenders are subject to appropriate sanctions; and taking a risk-based and educative approach with non-profit organisations," its executive summary said.

The summary said it could be concluded that India had implemented an anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist fi-

nancing (AML/CFT) framework that was achieving "good" results, including on risk understanding, access to beneficial ownership information and depriving criminals of their assets. The report said India's anti-money laundering (AML) and combating financing of terror (CFT) system was "effective in many respects."

According to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), "major improvements" were required to strengthen the prosecution in money laundering and terror financing cases and to protect the non-profit sector from "terror abuse".

"India's main sources of money laundering originate from within, from illegal activities committed within country," it said, adding the country faced "disparate" range of terror threats, most significantly from ISIL (Islamic State or ISIS) or AQ-linked groups (Al Qaeda) active in and around Jammu and Kashmir.

"India's largest money laundering risks are related to fraud, including cyber-enabled fraud, corruption, and drug trafficking," the report said.

It underlined that understanding of money laundering threats arising from trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling and that from smuggling and dealing in precious metals and stones "can be further developed."

The world body, of which India became a member in 2010, said while the number of money laundering investigations had increased over the period under review, the number of prosecution complaints had not caught up accordingly (while noting the timing of investigations and prosecutions might differ significantly due to the delay between the start of an investigation and filing the prosecution complaint, which could take several years). Although the conviction rate stands at almost 97 per cent, there are a number of factors that may explain the low number of prosecutions over the evaluation period, it said.

NIA recovers arms, over ₹4 crore cash from raids in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Thursday recovered arms and more than ₹4 crore in cash during searches in Bihar as part of its probe against banned Naxal outfit CPI (Maoist), according to an official statement.

The searches covered the houses and office premises of three suspects in a conspiracy case, with NIA investigations finding the trio were involved in providing funds and logistics support to the leaders of CPI (Maoist) to revive their Naxal activities in the Magadh region, it said. A total of five locations in Gaya and Kaimur districts of Bihar were searched as part of the operation, aimed at foiling the CPI (Maoist) conspiracy to revive and strengthen it in the state's Magadh area, said the statement issued by the NIA.

"Extensive searches by the NIA in the CPI (Maoist) Magadh zone revival case Thursday led to a massive haul of arms, cash and incriminating digital devices and documents from Bihar," it said. The seizures included 10 weapons of different bores, ₹4.03 crore in cash, incriminating documents along with various digital devices, the statement added. The accused, Rohit Rai and Pramod Yadav, were found in possession of arms and ammunition, as well as booklets pertaining to the CPI (Maoist) Magadh Zonal Sangathanic Committee, the NIA said.

The NIA, which took over the probe on September 26, 2023, registered a case against 20 accused persons.



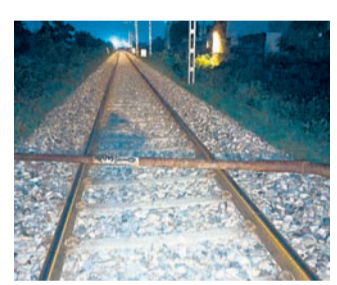
Police use water cannons to disperse Muslim Youth League activists during their protest march demanding the resignation of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Train mishap averted after loco pilot spots iron pole on track

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Rampur, Sept 19: The driver of the Naini Jan Shatabdi Express averted a possible accident when he slammed the emergency brakes on finding an iron pole across the tracks near Uttarakhand's Rudrapur, officials said Thursday, alleging that it could be sabotage.

The incident occurred Wednesday near Rudrapur City Railway Station, approximately 43 kilometres from Uttar Pradesh's Rampur, Railway officials said. "The loco pilot of train number 12091 September 18 at 10.18 pm reported to Station Master/Rudrapur City that he



found one 6-metre-long iron pole on track between Bilaspur Road and Rudrapur City," a spokesperson from the Railway Ministry said suggesting an act of sabotage. "The driver stopped the train to clear the track. He started the train safely afterwards," the spokesperson said.

SNIPPETS

DU student dead as SUV crashes into guardrail

New Delhi: A 19-year-old Delhi University student died and his four friends were injured after their speeding SUV crashed into a guardrail, which pierced through the vehicle, near Rajghat in north Delhi early Thursday, police said. They were returning from Gurugram after celebrating the teenager's birthday. Aishwarya Pandey was admitted to LNJP Hospital where he was put on ventilation support. He died late Thursday. The police suspect that the students were under the influence of alcohol. However, one student said the one who was driving the car got distracted while changing songs on his mobile phone. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) MK Meena said a case under sections 281 (rash driving) and 125(a) (causing hurt by act endangering life of personal safety of others) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita had been registered at Kotwali police station.

Cinema choreographer Jani Master held in sexual assault case

Hyderabad: Noted south Indian cinema choreographer Jani Master was arrested Thursday for sexually assaulting a woman who worked with him, police said. Jani Master, whose real name is Shaik Jani Basha, was apprehended in Goa by the Cyberabad police. He has worked in a number of Telugu and Tamil movies. He was produced before a local court in Goa and a transit warrant was obtained. He was being brought here and will be produced before a regular court, a police release said. It said, based on the woman's complaint, Zero FIR was registered in Raidurgam Police Station, Cyberabad. A Zero FIR is filed irrespective of the place of offence. On September 15, the Narsingi Police re-registered a case under sections 376(2)(n), 506, 323 of IPC, the release said. The complainant had alleged that Jani Master had sexually assaulted her in 2020 during a work trip to Mumbai and continued sexual harassment and also threatened her not to disclose it to anyone. On recording her statement, it was disclosed that she was a minor at the time of the alleged offence. Therefore, relevant section of POCSO Act, 2012 was added, the release said.

'Coal mining methane emissions to double by 2029'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: India's annual methane emissions from coal mining could more than double by 2029 compared to 2019 as the country seeks to increase coal production to meet its growing energy demand, according to a new report.

The report by global energy think tank Ember said that the total coal mine methane emissions of the fast-developing South Asian nation are set to increase by 106 per cent since the last national estimate in 2019.

"To meet rising energy demand and reduce coal imports, India's Ministry of Coal is plan-

ning a significant expansion in domestic coal mining, alongside its considerable renewable energy expansion."

"The proposed increase in coal mining will lead to a substantial rise in coal mine methane emissions, as high-emitting underground mining is expected to triple by 2029, exceeding 100 million tonnes (Mt) per year," the report said.

Between 2010 and 2019, overall coal mining in India increased by 28 per cent.

Despite this rise in production, national estimates of coal mine methane rose by only four per cent. This was due to a shift



Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with over 80 times the warming impact of CO2 over a 20-year period

India is already the world's second-largest coal producer and plans to double its production this decade, reaching an annual production rate of more than 1.5 billion tonnes

tic coal production could surpass 1.5 billion tonnes by 2030. Ember estimates that India could progressively mitigate up to 35 per cent of its coal mine methane by 2030.

in the type of mining, with several older, gassier underground mines being retired and a substantial increase (38 per cent) in shallower, surface coal mining.

India's energy demand is growing rapidly, with coal-based power generation projected to increase from 212 GW in 2023 to 260 GW by 2031, according to the latest National Energy Policy. In response, the Ministry of

Coal has outlined plans to increase domestic coal production "to meet peak energy demand".

This was also reiterated by the International Energy Agency (IEA) earlier this year, noting that the growth in renewable energy has been "unable to keep pace with the growth in power demand" due to heatwaves and reduced hydropower output. These plans suggest that total domes-

Addressing India's coal mine methane emissions is a low-hanging opportunity to slow climate change, reduce surface ozone and complement India's efforts to reduce carbon dioxide. Policies to incentivise mitigation, capture and utilisation of coal mine methane are crucial and should be prioritised with urgency, said Rajasekhhar Modadugu, Analyst Climate and Energy, India, Ember.

international



One of the important leaders today in the Global South is your good country India. Today, the Global South depends on the India way in contributing to shaping the future
INGA RHONDA KING | PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES TO THE UN AMBASSADOR

TALIBAN'S CONTROL
The Taliban administration is in control of 39 Afghan embassies and consulates globally three years after it took over Afghanistan



of the day quote

Only when we have strong power, can we contain and frustrate the enemies' strategic misjudgment and will to use armed forces
KIM JONG UN | LEADER, NORTH KOREA

I am pleased to announce today Greece's intention to start negotiations (with France) to acquire one more frigate, the fourth of the same type
NIKOS DENDIAS | MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, GREECE

I don't think we have seen before, a violation that is so massive, as we've seen in Gaza. These are extremely grave violations that we do not often see
BRAGI GUDBRANDSSON | VICE CHAIR OF THE UN COMMITTEE

SHORT TAKES

Ex CIA officer jailed for 30 yrs

Washington: A former CIA officer was sentenced to 30 years in prison Wednesday for drugging and sexually abusing more than two dozen women in several countries. Brian Jeffrey Raymond, 48, of La Mesa, California, pleaded guilty in November 2023 to one count of abusive sexual contact and other charges. "When this predator was a government employee, he lured unsuspecting women to his government-leased housing and drugged them," Matthew Graves, the US Attorney for the District of Columbia, said. "After drugging these women, he stripped, sexually abused, and photographed them," Graves said in a statement. Nicole Argentieri, a senior Justice Department official, said Raymond "sexually exploited dozens of women over the course of 14 years."

Woman sentenced to death in Pak

Islamabad: A court here in Pakistan Thursday sentenced a Christian woman to death in a blasphemy case. A case was filed under Blasphemy laws against Shaughta Karan, accused of sharing derogatory material about the Prophet of Islam in a WhatsApp group in September 2020. Judge Afzal Majuka of the Special Court in Islamabad after the trial found her guilty under Section 295 C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which carries a death sentence. The court also imposed a fine of ₹300,000 on Karan. Apart from this, the court also sentenced her to seven years imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹100,000 under Section 11 of the Pakistan Electronic Crime Act (PECA). The judge in a brief order said the convict has the right to file an appeal in a high court within 30 days of the decision.

India to rollover \$50mn for Maldives

Male: In a goodwill gesture, India Thursday said it has decided to rollover a \$50 million Treasury Bill for an additional year upon the request of the Maldives government. "At the request of the Government of Maldives, the State Bank of India (SBI) has subscribed the \$50 million Government Treasury Bill (T-bills) issued by the Ministry of Finance of Maldives, for a period of one more year from the date of maturity of the previous subscription, September 19, 2024," the High Commission of India in Maldives said in a press release. SBI bought the Treasury Bill under an agreement signed by the previous government.

HIDDEN EXPLOSIVE IN ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Hezbollah hits back

The Iran-backed group fires new volley at Israel as fears of greater war mount after electronic devices bombing

Beirut, Sept 19: Hezbollah fired a new barrage into northern Israel Thursday, continuing its drumbeat of exchanges with the Israeli military as fears of a greater war rise after hundreds of electronic devices exploded in Lebanon, killing at least 37 people and wounding more than 3,000 others.

The device explosions appeared to be the culmination of a monthslong operation by Israel to target as many Hezbollah members as possible all at once. Over two days, pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah detonated, wounding and even crippling some fighters, but also maiming civilians connected to the group's social branches and killing at least two children.

It was unclear how the attack fit into warnings by Israeli leaders in recent weeks that they could launch a stepped-up military operation against Hezbollah, Lebanon's strongest armed force. The Israeli government has called it a war aim to end the Iranian-backed group's cross border fire in order to allow tens of thousands of Israelis to return to homes near the border.

Speaking to Israeli troops Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said, "We are at the start of a new phase in the war, it requires courage, determination and perseverance." Gallant said after months of fighting Hamas in Gaza, "the centre of gravity is shifting to the north by diverting resources and forces."

Hezbollah said early Thursday it had targeted military positions in northern Israel, without specifying what weapons it used. Israeli hospitals reported that they treated at least eight patients injured in the attacks. The military said early Thursday that it had struck several militant sites in southern Lebanon overnight.

The volley of strikes was a



Lebanon bans pagers, walkie-talkies from flights

Lebanese authorities Thursday banned walkie-talkies and pagers from being taken on flights from Beirut airport, the National News Agency reported, after thousands of such devices exploded during a deadly attack on Hezbollah this week. The Lebanese civilian aviation directorate asked airlines operating from Beirut to tell passengers that walkie-talkies and pagers were banned until further notice. Such devices were also banned from being shipped by air, the Lebanese state news agency reported.

Lebanon and Hezbollah, a heavily armed group backed by Iran, say Israel carried out the attack. Israel has not claimed responsibility.

The Lebanese army said Thursday it was blowing up pagers and suspicious telecom devices in controlled blasts in different areas. It called on citizens to report any suspicious devices.



The number of dead in the first day of attacks, Tuesday, remains 12; more than 1,300 people suffered injuries ranging from mid-level to severe

Yes, we were subjected to a huge and severe blow. The enemy crossed all boundaries and red lines
HASSAN NASRALLAH | LEADER OF HEZBOLLAH

a major offensive in Lebanon. Meanwhile, Lebanon was still reeling from the unprecedented mass bombings of Tuesday and Wednesday.

The explosions have rattled anxious Lebanese fearing a full-scale war. The Lebanese Army said it has been locating and detonating suspicious pagers and communication devices, while the country's civil aviation authorities banned pagers and walkie-talkies on all airplanes departing from Beirut's international airport until further notice. The attack was likely to severely disrupt Hezbollah's internal communication as it scrambles to determine safe means to talk to each other.

After comms blasts, Lebanese fear bombs in their pockets

The explosion of thousands of Hezbollah's mobile communication devices has spread fear across Lebanon, leaving people terrified they might be carrying bombs in their pockets. False rumours have spread of other types of mobile phones and even appliances blowing up since the attack. Mustafa Jemaa said he had removed some stock from his electronics shop in the southern city of Sidon. "We had some devices here that we believed were 100% safe, but out of caution, we removed them because we got worried," he said. "Of course we're scared, my children, my siblings' children, all of us. Who can feel safe in this situation?" said Mustafa Sibai, a Beirut resident. "When I heard about what happened yesterday, I left my phone on my motorcycle and walked away," he said. Ziad Makari, information minister in Lebanon's caretaker government, said panic was to be expected, noting that the attack was "a new type of crime to the Lebanese" and that it had struck people at home, at work and during their daily lives. But he added that "there are many rumours, an intercom blew up, a solar power (system) blew up, a television blew up, a smart phone blew up". "There are a lot of lies, a lot of fake news and this doesn't help at all," he said.



Mpox not under control: Africa CDC

REUTERS

Dakar, Sept 19: The mpox outbreak in Africa is still not under control, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) warned Thursday, adding that cases were still increasing in several countries.

The World Health Organization declared the recent outbreak of the disease a public health emergency of international concern after the new variant was identified. Countries in the continent are struggling to respond to another major outbreak coming at the heels of the Covid-19 pandemic that exposed weak health systems that were unprepared to deal with a major public health crisis.

The number of mpox cases in Africa has surged 177%, and deaths

have increased 38.5% compared with the same period a year ago, data from the Africa CDC showed.

"We can say today that mpox is not under control in Africa. We still have this increase of cases that is worrying for all of us," Jean Kaseya, director general of Africa CDC, told a weekly briefing on the outbreak.

In one week 2,912 new cases were reported compared with the previous week including a new country, Morocco, where a case was reported, confirming the spread of the disease in all four regions of the continent.

So far, 15 of the 55 member states of the African Union have reported cases, Africa CDC said.

"We still have people dying from mpox in Africa. In one week, we lost 14 people," Kaseya added.

Pak urges India to honour provisions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Sept 19: Responding to India's formal notice seeking a review of the Indus Water Treaty, Pakistan Thursday said it considers the agreement "important" and hoped that New Delhi will also comply with the provisions of the bilateral pact signed exactly 64 years ago.

India August 30 served a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a review of the agreement citing "fundamental and unforeseen" changes in the circumstances and impact of the persistent cross-border terrorism, government sources in New Delhi said Wednesday.

The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) was signed by India and Pakistan

INDUS WATER TREATY



September 19, 1960, after nine years of negotiations with the sole aim of managing six trans-boundary rivers in the basin.

One of the major agreements between India and Pakistan, the IWT has stood the test of time and has been adhered to despite wars and tensions between the two neighbours. Responding to a question on India's notice, Foreign Office

spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch told reporters here, "Pakistan considers the Indus Water Treaty as an important one and hopes that India will also comply with its provisions."

Baloch pointed out that the two countries have a mechanism of Indus Commissioners and all issues about the treaty can be discussed in it. She also said that any measures to address concerns about the treaty must be taken within the agreement's provisions.

Pakistan receives the entire flow from the three western rivers, Chenab, Jhelum and Indus, while India has complete rights over the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers.

Communal violence in B'desh killed nine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Sept 19: At least nine people have been killed and 69 places of worship attacked and vandalised in more than 2,000 incidents of communal violence between August 4 and 20 in Bangladesh, a minority organisation in the violence-hit nation said Thursday.

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad's leader Nirmal Rozario called for an independent and impartial investigation of communal violence under the supervision of the United Nations, the Daily Star newspaper reported.



A total of 2,010 incidents of communal violence took place in 68 out of 76 districts and metropolitan areas across the country between August 4 and 20, resulting in the deaths of nine people, Nirmal Rozario, one of the vice-presidents of the organisation, was quoted as saying by the paper.

Giving details of the communal violence during the political turmoil that ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Nirmal said that 1,705 families were directly affected by the violence. Among them, 157 families had their homes attacked, looted, vandalised, and set on fire. Some of their businesses were also looted, vandalised, and torched, he said at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Canada reduces permits for international students

THE ANNOUNCEMENT COMES AS PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU'S LIBERAL GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF TEMPORARY RESIDENTS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND FOREIGN WORKERS

AGENCIES

Ottawa, Sept 19: Canada is further reducing the number of study permits it will grant to foreign students and tightening eligibility for work permits in a bid to cut down on the number of temporary residents in the country, the government said Wednesday.

The announcement comes as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, trailing in the public opinion polls and coming off a major by-election loss this week, seeks to reduce the number of temporary residents, including international students and foreign workers, in the country. The issue has become one of



the most contentious in Canadian politics with a federal election

due no later than October, 2025. The changes announced

Immigration is an advantage for our economy, but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down
JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

Wednesday would reduce the number of international study permits issued to 437,000 in 2025. Canada approved 509,390 in 2023, according to immigration department data, and 175,920 in the first seven months of 2024.

"We're granting 35% fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number's going down by another

10%," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted on X.

"Immigration is an advantage for our economy, but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down," he added.

According to Statistics Canada, the biggest jump in immigration numbers comes from temporary residents, especially students and workers, whose ranks have doubled in just two years from 1.4 million in the second quarter of 2022 to 2.8 million in the second quarter of 2024.

Migrants have been blamed for societal problems including a lack of affordable housing and a ramped-up cost of living in Canada.

business



Banks will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda set by the Prime Minister and by your role, we are going to give greater momentum to achieving this dream

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

THOMSON ENTERS INDIA AUDIO MARKET

French consumer electronics brand Thomson, through its brand licensee Super Plastronics Pvt Ltd (SPPL), Thursday announced its foray into the Indian audio market with the launch of soundbars



of the day quote

I am confident that within five years our logistics cost will be in single-digit

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER



It is a positive for the global economy, including the Indian economy. It is a 50 basis points cut from a high level. I don't see that making any significant impact on inflows. We have to see from (the point of) where the (US interest rates) levels are

AJAY SETH | ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY



The zinc consumption and demand in India is 1.1 million tonne (MT), which is higher than the current production in India...this is likely to go over 2 MT in the next 10 years. That's the forecast

ANDREW GREEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IZA



EY EMPLOYEE'S TRAGIC DEATH Probe on 'exploitative work environment'

Anna Sebastian Perayil worked at EY Pune office for four months before she succumbed allegedly due to work pressure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Ministry of Labour & Employment is investigating alleged "unsafe and exploitative work environment" days after the tragic demise of Anna Sebastian Perayil who worked with SR Batliboi, a member firm of EY Global.

Perayil was a 26-year-old chartered accountant (CA) who died allegedly due to extreme work pressure at the firm.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of Anna Sebastian Perayil. A thorough investigation into the allegations of an unsafe and exploitative work environment is underway. We are committed to ensuring justice &

Labour Ministry has officially taken up the complaint," Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje Thursday said on X.

EY Wednesday issued a statement stating, "We are deeply saddened by Anna Sebastian's tragic and untimely passing in July 2024."

Since the death, EY has been in touch with the family, helping them but it is only now that her family has chosen to write to the company, complaining about the "excessive workload", it had said.

EY has said it will continue to improve and provide a healthy workplace in its offices throughout the country.

Anna Sebastian Perayil, who passed her CA exams in 2023,



Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of Anna Sebastian Perayil. A thorough investigation into the allegations of an unsafe and exploitative work environment is underway. We are committed to ensuring justice & Labour Ministry has officially taken up the complaint

SHOBHA KARANDLAJE | UNION MINISTER OF STATE

worked at EY Pune office for four months before she succumbed. Her mother this month wrote to EY India Chairman Rajiv Memani flagging the "glo-

balisation" of overwork at the multinational consulting firm. "Anna was a part of the Audit team at SR Batliboi, a member firm of EY Global, in Pune for

a brief period of four months, joining the firm on 18 March 2024. That her promising career was cut short in this tragic manner is an irreparable loss for all of us," the EY has said in the statement.

It has also stated that while no measure can compensate for the loss experienced by the family, the firm has provided all the assistance and will continue to do so.

"We are taking the family's correspondence with the utmost seriousness and humility. We place the highest importance on the well-being of all employees and will continue to find ways to improve and provide a healthy workplace for our 100,000 people across EY member firms in India," it has stated.

FSNL sold to Japan's Konoike Transport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The government Thursday approved the privatisation of Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL) to Japanese corporation Konoike Transport Co Ltd for ₹320 crore.

Under the Steel Ministry, FSNL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of MSTC Ltd. The government had received two technically qualified financial bids for the company.



The Alternative Mechanism, comprising Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy, have approved the highest bid amounting to ₹320 crore of Konoike Transport Co Ltd for sale of 100 per cent equity share-holding of MSTC Ltd in FSNL along with transfer of management control, a finance ministry statement said.

The 320 crore bid was higher than the reserve price of ₹262 crore set by the government on the basis of valuation carried out by the Transaction Adviser and Asset Valuer. The strategic sale of FSNL received two technically qualified financial bids.

The bid submitted by Konoike Transport Co Ltd at ₹320 crore was the highest of the two bids and was also above the reserve price. The other bid was of Indic Geo Resources Pvt Ltd (a subsidiary of Chandan Steel Ltd), the ministry added.

Konoike's Steel Division is a long-established segment of the company, with over 140 years of experience in steelworks operations. The division provides comprehensive services ranging from raw material acceptance to manufacturing processes, slag treatment, scrap processing, examination, packaging and delivery of steel products, supporting customers' operations.

The division also engages in recycling projects, such as the perfect recycling system, which recycles industrial waste without producing secondary waste.

FSNL was incorporated March 28, 1979, to provide steel mill services. FSNL specialises in the recovery and processing of scrap from slag generated during iron and steel making across different steel plants.

Setback for telcos

SC rejects telecom firms' plea on dues owed to govt; shares slump



AGR DUES	SHARES SLUMP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecom firms had moved SC claiming there were several errors in arriving at the AGR dues which totalled over ₹1L-cr Vodafone-Idea's total liability was ₹58,254-cr and Bharti Airtel's ₹43,980-cr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VI slumped 19.60% to settle at ₹10.38 on BSE Indus Towers shares tanked 8.86% to ₹389.65 Bharti Airtel ended 0.75% higher at ₹1,665.05

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Sept 19: The Supreme Court Thursday rejected a request by telecom companies to recalculate the dues they owed the government, sending shares of debt-saddled Vodafone Idea and its peers down.

Analysts at ICRA estimate that Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel owe ₹1 trillion (\$12 billion) in past dues, including spectrum charges and licensing fees. They, however, did not shed light on the amount owed by other companies. The companies, in a last-resort petition against a similar ruling by the top court in 2021, had argued that the telecom department made errors in calculating the so-called adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues.

Telecom firms had long contested that only revenue accrued from core services should be taken into account when computing the dues, while the government argued that AGR should include non-core revenue as well, such as money from rent or land sales.

The Supreme Court had, in 2019, ruled in favour of the government's definition of AGR calculations. The latest ruling is a setback for Vodafone Idea, which owes the government around ₹700 billion in license fees and spectrum charges, according to its latest quarterly report.

The Indian government is also one of the largest shareholders in the company with a 23.1% stake.

Analysts did not expect the ruling to have a major impact on Bharti Airtel due to its stronger financials.

"A positive ruling would have reduced Vodafone's debt by ₹350 billion," said Balaji Subramanian, a research analyst at IIFL Securities.

The ruling makes Vodafone's debt-funding (Rs 250 billion) challenging since lesser cash flow would worry banks about taking exposure to the company, he said. "If the relief had come, their annual cash flow would be higher by ₹80 billion."

Relief on the AGR front is "crucial" for Vodafone Idea and in its absence, the telco could be staring at financial crisis in coming years once the annual spectrum and AGR payments of \$4-5 billion per annum fall due, CLSA said Thursday.

"AGR relief is crucial for Vide (VI) and we await industry's next steps. In absence of AGR relief, Vide could face financial crisis in 2HFY26/FY27CL, when annual spectrum and AGR payments to government of \$4-5 billion per annum become due," CLSA said in a note Thursday.

Macquarie's report titled "No AGR waivers; VI needs waivers and a white knight?" observed that Vodafone-Idea's net debt was \$28 billion in 1QFY25, including AGR liability of \$8.5 billion (of which about 20 per cent is principal and the rest represents interest and penalties).

Telecoms' tussle with govt over licence fees

2019: India's top court asks telcos to pay down dues of \$13 billion on adjusted gross revenue, leading to a jump in the amount the firms owed the government.

Vodafone says it will ask the federal government for relief on payments of at least \$4 billion, and a lobby group warns of catastrophe for the sector.

Airtel and Vodafone hike prices and ask the Supreme Court to review its ruling.

2020: Supreme court rejects the companies' petition to review its 2019 ruling. The government orders mobile carriers to immediately pay the dues a day after the Supreme Court threatened the companies and officials with contempt proceedings.

Telecom operators get 10 years from the Supreme Court to pay the dues; firms to pay 10% of the charges owed by March 31, 2021.

2021: Non-executive Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla steps down from Vodafone, sending shares down and fuelling concerns that the Indian wireless carrier may not survive the government's bill.

Banks, led by State Bank of India call on the Indian government to give debt-laden Vodafone Idea more time to clear its tax dues and spectrum fees.

Days later, India's federal cabinet approves a relief package for the cash-strapped telecoms sector including a four-year moratorium on the dues.

2022: Vodafone approves the conversion of dues and interest related to spectrum auction installments into equity in Jan.

A month later, the Indian government orders Vodafone to convert its dues of ₹161.33 billion into equity.

2023: A petition was filed by telcos in September, asking the Supreme Court to re-calculate the dues.

2024: Vodafone launches its ₹180 billion-share sale, planning to use the funds to expand its 4G network, set up 5G networks and pay taxes and dues.

It also issues shares worth ₹24.58 billion to Nokia and Ericsson to raise capital.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 19: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed to fresh record high levels Thursday in line with firm global trends after the US Federal Reserve announced the first cut in policy rate in more than four years.

The 50 bps rate cut is a bold stance by the US Fed to revitalise their subdued economy, which will in turn open the door for other global central banks, including RBI to kick-start the softer interest rate regime

VIJAY BHARADIA | FOUNDER, WALLFORD FINANCIAL SERVICES

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 236.57 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 83,184.80. During the day, it jumped 825.38 points or 0.99 per cent to scale a new all-time intraday high of 83,773.61 but pared some of the gains at close.

The NSE Nifty gained 38.25 points or 0.15 per cent to 25,415.80. During the day, it surged 234.4 points or 0.92 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 25,611.95.

From the 30 Sensex firms, NTPC, Nestle, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers.

India to be 3rd-largest economy by FY31: S&P

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 19: India is on track to becoming the third-largest economy by 2030-31, driven by a projected annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent this fiscal, S&P Global said in a report Thursday.

The report also said that with 8.2 per cent growth rate in FY2024, continued reforms are crucial to improving business transactions and logistics, boosting private sector investment, and reducing reliance on public capital.

It said equity markets are expected to stay dynamic and competitive due to strong growth prospects and better regulation, and foreign inflows into Indian government bonds have surged



Sensex climbed 0.29% to settle at all-time high of 83,184.80

Nifty surged 0.92% to hit fresh intra-day peak of 25,611.95

HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards from the pack.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.06 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.53 per cent.

Among the indices, consumer durables climbed (0.64 per cent), Realty (0.47 per cent), bankex (0.46 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.34 per cent) and auto (0.32 per cent) were among the gainers. Telecommunication tumbled 3.89 per cent, oil & gas (1.81 per cent), industrials (1.56 per cent), services (1.22 per cent), teck (0.60 per cent) and IT (0.48 per cent).

since the country joined major emerging market indexes, with further growth anticipated. To maximize trade benefits, India must develop infrastructure and geopolitical strategies, particularly regarding its extensive coastline, said the first edition of 'India Forward: Emerging Perspectives' report.

Nearly 90 per cent of India's trade is seaborne, necessitating robust port infrastructure to



manage increasing exports and bulk commodity imports, it added.

Noting that India faces rising domestic energy demands and can look to sustainable technologies, including renewables and low-emission fuels, balancing energy security with its energy transition plans, the report stated that agriculture will rely on advanced technologies and new policies to improve infrastructure and productivity.

The need is to address critical infrastructure issues such as irrigation, storage, and supply distribution to ensure food security and economic stability, it added.

The S&P Global India Research Chapter's inaugural study was launched here Thursday.

Govt brings steps to resolve shipping related woes of traders

Centre cuts certain port charges, 5 more vessels lined up to bring down shipping costs for exporters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The government Thursday announced steps, including reducing certain charges at ports and purchase of five additional second-hand container vessels by SCI, to resolve shipping sector-related problems of exporters and importers.

These measures were announced after a meeting of all the concerned stakeholders of the international trade segment, in-

cluding senior officials of ministries like commerce and industry, shipping, ports, finance, civil aviation and railways; apex exporters body FIEO (federation of Indian export organisations), customs officials, freight forwarders, transport operators and shipping companies.

Exporting community and experts have flagged shipping sector issues which are hurting the country's exports, which have contracted by 9.3 per cent in August. The issues figured in the discussions include container shortage, surge in ocean freight rate and shipping cost, shipping delays at the Indian ports, and turnaround time at the ports.

Briefing media after the deliberations, Commerce and Industry



Exports registered a steepest decline in 13-month falling 9.3% in August to \$34.71bn due to global economic uncertainties, while the trade deficit soared to a 10-month high of \$29.65bn

Exports during April-August this fiscal increased 1.14% to \$178.68bn, and imports grew 7% to \$295.32bn

Minister Piyush Goyal said that several issues were discussed to look at addressing the challenges that exporters and importers are

facing in the shipping area. "I am confident that it (decisions taken today) will result in significantly bringing down the ship-

The deliberations took stock of the emerging geopolitical and economic scenario. Collectively, we made decisions to promote a trust-based working environment for faster processing of cargo during exports

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

ping cost, improve the availability of empty containers, help faster evacuation of export consignments, and significantly reduce the congestion at ports," he said.

It was announced that the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) will "purchase five additional second-hand container

vessels" to further boost cargo handling capacity.

The SCI also announced that they are chartering container ships to significantly increase the container capacities, on an immediate basis capacity will be enhanced by 9,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit).

The Railway board and Container Corporation announced that empty containers can now be stored at the yard at zero cost for 90 days. The charges of ₹3,000, that is being levied beyond 90 days, are now halved to ₹1,500.

Further, the storage and handling rates will be reduced for containers from ₹9,000 to ₹2,000 (for a 40 ft container) and from ₹6,000 to ₹1,000 (for a 20 ft container).

SEVENTH WICKET PARTNERSHIP OF 195 RUNS PULLS INDIA OUT OF THE WOODS

Ashwin, Jadeja tango saves India

Chennai, Sept 19: Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (102 batting, 112b, 10x4, 2x6) sparked on home turf with his sixth hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja (86 batting, 117b, 10x4, 2x6) to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here Thursday.

Ashwin and Jadeja added 195 runs for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56 (118b, 9x4).

The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match.

In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the cream of Indian top-order - skipper Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) - before snapping Rishabh Pant's (39) return to Test cricket.

KL Rahul, another batter who is re-entering the Test establishment, fell for 16 to off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz as fortune's pendulum stayed firmly in Bangladesh's quarter.

But then came the two gladiators who know Chepauk like the back of their hands - Ashwin by birth and Jadeja through his



RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

Dravid bats for successor Gambhir

New Delhi: Former India head coach Rahul Dravid is expecting his successor Gautam Gambhir to do a 'great' job with the national team. "He (Gambhir) has got a lot of experience, as a player also he has played a lot, he obviously coached quite a bit. I am sure he will be great," said Dravid, while attending a programme here Thursday. "In any situation everyone brings his own experience and knowledge to the table. I am sure the team will benefit from everything that Gautam brings to them with his team," he added.

and execution. At times, he scored at a strike rate in excess of 100 and was not hesitant to travel the more uncultured way. A slog sweep that went for six over mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Shakib Al-Hasan testified that. Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end

long association with the Chennai Super Kings. Ashwin went off the blocks with a flurry of boundaries, a firm validation of his oh-so-smooth timing born out of fluent hand movement through shots and precise footwork. There was this ramp shot off Mahmud, who tried to rattle Ashwin with a short-pitched delivery that climbed onto his body. But the veteran player arched himself back ever so slightly to gain space to execute the ramp over the slip - fabulous in conceptualisation



RAVINDRA JADEJA

comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed. But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours.

The spectators eventually witnessed the moment that they had been waiting for when Ashwin reached the hundred with a single off Shakib, and they welcomed it with applause, cheers and loud bugling.

It was his second consecutive hundred at his home ground after going past the three-figure mark here against England in 2021. And it could not have come at a better time as well.

But before the epic fight-back, the Indian innings resembled a crumbling rampart. Only Jaiswal batted with a lot of composure as wickets tumbled around him. He along with Pant put on 62 runs for the fourth wicket to somewhat resurrect the innings.

Brief scores: India 339 for 6 (Ravichandran Ashwin 102 batting, Ravindra Jadeja 86 batting, Hasan Mahmud 4/58) vs Bangladesh. Match to continue.

- ### HIGHLIGHTS
- 6th Test hundred by Ashwin, the 2nd one at Chepauk
 - Ashwin now has as many Test centuries as Dhoni
 - Highest 7th wicket partnership by India against Bangladesh

Malvika in maiden Super 1000 quarters

Indian shuttler beats 2 times CWG medallist



Malvika Bansod in action during her match against Kristy Gilmour PHOTO X

Changzhou (China), Sept 19: Young Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod continued her fine form as she cruised to her maiden Super 1000 badminton tournament quarterfinal after eking out a hard-fought victory against higher-ranked Kristy Gilmour in the China Open here Thursday.

Malvika, ranked 43rd, toiled hard for 65 minutes before pulling off a 21-17, 19-21, 21-16 win over the two-time Commonwealth Games medallist and World No. 25 from Scotland in a women's singles round of 16 contest.

"This is the first time I will play in the quarters of a Super 1000 tournament, so it is a dream come true and the biggest achievement of my life so far," Malvika said after the match. "I dreamt about this before the tournament that how would it be if I reached the quarters and now I'm in the top eight. No doubt it's a great feeling," she added.

Malvika now leads head-to-head against Gilmour 3-2 and said it was a tough match. "There is a lot of drift from one side which I found difficult to adjust to in various stages of the match. Thankfully I managed to pull off the win," stated Malvika.

The win comes a day after the 22-year-old defeated Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia. The Nagpur shuttler said her ability to control the shuttle in tricky conditions is helping her.

"My retrieving is working well; I am able to control the shuttle better than the others. The conditions were a bit tricky for both players but I was able to handle it better," Malvika pointed out. She added that she has focused on enhancing her strengths, and it is yielding positive results.

"This circuit is very tough because if you are entering a Super 500 or 1000 tournament, you end up playing a top 10 player in the first round as I'm not seeded yet. So, I need to be physically strong from the beginning itself. I have been working on it," Malvika informed.

However Malvika, who is the lone Indian shuttler remaining in the competition, has a tough challenge ahead of her as she will be up against fourth seed and two-time World Champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan. Although the Japanese shuttler has won both the outings against Malvika, the Indian had come close to defeating Yamaguchi and hopes she can cross the line this time round. "Hope for the best. I am in good form so let's see how it goes tomorrow (Friday). I will give my best," Malvika signed off.

SHORT TAKES

Lifters continue to shine in Fiji

Suva (Fiji): Indian weightlifter Valluri Ajaya Babu produced a record-breaking performance to clinch the gold medal in the men's 81kg junior category at the Commonwealth Championships here Thursday. The 19-year-old Babu heaved a total of 326kg (147kg+179kg) to finish on top of the podium. With his performance, Babu set a Commonwealth record in clean and jerk. Compatriot Sairaj Pardeshi bagged the youth gold in the same category while finishing second in the junior section behind Babu. Another Indian lifter, Lalruatfela won the silver in the men's 89kg event.

Late goals ensure victory for Spurs

Coventry (UK): Tottenham Hotspur avoided a shock defeat in the third round of the English League Cup after scoring two late goals to beat second division side Coventry 2-1 here Wednesday. Djed Spence evened the score in the 88th minute at Coventry Arena after Brandon Thomas-Asante had fired the home team ahead in the 63rd. Brennan Johnson completed Spurs' comeback with the winner in the second minute of stoppage time.

Gauff, Gilbert part after 14 months

New York: Coco Gauff, last year's US Open champion, and coach Brad Gilbert announced Thursday they have split after 14 months together. The move comes after the 20-year-old American was ousted in the round of 16 at Wimbledon, the Paris Olympics and the US Open. "Thank you @bgtennisnation! We had an incredible run and I wish you all the best in the future!" Gauff posted on 'X'.

BFC win easily

Bangalore: JBangalore: Bengaluru FC (BFC) eased past Hyderabad FC 3-0 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in a match of the ISL here Tuesday. It was their second successive win. Rahul Bheke scored in the first half, and Sunil Chhetri added two more goals in the second half to seal a comfortable victory.

OFC eye win against Punjab



OFC head coach Sergio Lobera and player Jerry Mawihmingthanga

New Delhi, Sept 19: Punjab FC will look to continue their winning run while Odisha FC (OFC) will try to erase their winless trot in away matches when the two sides will clash in a match of the ISL here Friday. OFC have not been able to win their last five away games and it will certainly worry their head coach Sergio Lobera.

Punjab FC started their campaign in this edition of the ISL defeating Kerala Blasters FC. They will certainly seek to maintain the momentum. On the other hand, OFC suffered a 2-3 reverse at the hands of Chennaiyin FC in their season opener. However, what goes for Odisha FC is that they won both their encounters against Punjab last season.

Also Punjab's most vital and versatile player Luka Majcen has been ruled out for six to eight weeks due to injury. OFC have their injury problems too. Carlos Delgado and Saviour Gama have been ruled out for the Punjab game.

Lobero however, asserted that he is not thinking about the availability of key players. He informed that his main aim is to see that there is no repetition of the mistakes that happened in the last game. "When you lose one game the focus will be improving in the next match. That is our main goal and challenge," Lobero said.

Gukesh masterclass sinks China

Budapest, Sept 19: Grandmaster R Vaishali and Vantika Agrawal put up impressive performances as Indian women defeated Georgia while World Championship challenger D Gukesh led the men to victory over China in the seventh round as both teams continued their unbeaten streak in 45th Chess Olympiad here.

Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1, while the men eked out a 2.5-1.5 win over China.

On a day that saw D Harika settling for a draw with Nana Dzagnidze and Divya Deshmukh being held by Nino Batsiashvili from a better position, it was Vantika who handled her time pressure extremely well to play almost 20 moves with just about a minute on her clock to win her game and seal India's seventh straight victory.

The Indian women took their tally to an impressive 14 points out of a possible 14 and stretched their lead to two points over nearest rivals Poland, Kazakhstan and France who all have 12 points apiece.

In the men's section, Gukesh showed the way. Playing the white side of a 'Closed Sicilian' Gukesh reached a drawn endgame after nearly five hours of play but then the Indian found a small mistake made by China's Wei Yi on the top board and worked round it to win the game.

R Praggnanandhaa played out a quick draw as black against Yangyi Yu of China while P Harikrishna pressed for some time before the position petered out to be equal in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame against Wang Yue of China on the fourth board.

Earlier Arjun Erigaisi went for the kill against an alert Bu Xiangzhi and the latter found a nice piece sacrifice to force a draw through repetition.

With just four rounds to come, the Indian men have done everything correct thus far and are sitting pretty with a 100 per cent score like their female counterparts.



India's D Gukesh makes a move during the game against China's Wei Yi



Konark Suryas Odisha start campaign today

Bhubaneswar: The Irfan Pathan-led Konark Suryas Odisha will begin their campaign Friday in Season 3 of the Legends League Cricket (LLC) at Jodhpur. They will take on defending champions Manipal Tigers, captained by former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh. The Konark Suryas Odisha have a number of former Indian stars in their ranks. Among them are Yusuf Pathan, Ambati Rayudu, R Vinay Kumar and Shahbaz Nadeem. Other players who are part of the squad are leg-spinner Pravin Tamble and batter Rajesh Bishnoi.

SLUGGISH CITY HELD BY INTER

Manchester, Sept 19: Hosts Manchester City made a sluggish start to their Champions League campaign as they drew 0-0 against Inter Milan in a game played at the Etihad here Wednesday night. Pep Guardiola's side have won all four of their Premier League games this season but failed to break down Italian champions Inter in a repeat of the 2023 final won by City. There was injury scare for City as they lost Levin De Bruyne at half time. City had their best chance late in the game, but Phil Foden fired straight at Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer on a night when Erling Haaland was kept quiet while chasing his 100th goal for the English club.

"It was a very intense game against a strong opponent. We



TENSE MOMENT: Inter Milan players (in blue) and Erling Haaland watch as Ilkay Gundogan heads towards the opposition goal, Wednesday

knew what was coming, they are a top team as well and they are used to winning, so we were not going to have an easy job," City defender Ruben Dias told TNT Sports.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan could have won it for Inter when he blazed over 15 minutes from time, allowing City to extend their unbeaten run in the competition to 24 matches - one

off the record set by Manchester United between 2007 and 2009.

Both teams squandered numerous chances in a breathless back-and-forth affair. Pep Guardiola's City were largely stilled by Inter's impressive discipline in defence, while Simone Inzaghi's Inter, who were dangerous on the break on a nery night for both sides, lacked in finishing.

In another game, Ligue 1 champions Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) looked as if they would also have to settle for a point against European debutants Girona. However, a goalkeeping blunder from Paulo Gazzaniga in the 90th minute resulted in Nuno Mendes' cross squirming through his grasp and handed the French champions victory.

4 new meet records on day 2

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Four new meet records were set Thursday, on the second day of the 70th Odisha State Senior Athletics Championships-2024 which is currently on at the Kalinga Stadium here. More than 900 athletes from all the 30 districts of Odisha are participating in the tournament.

In the boys' under-23 100m sprint, Animesh Kujur of Bhubaneswar created a new meet record with a time of 10.38 seconds to win the gold. Jyoti Prakash Nayak of Cuttack also set a new meet record in the boys' under-23 hammer event with a throw of 49.11 metres. In the girls' hammer event of the same age category, Nikita Purbiya of Paradip, flung the instrument to a distance 37.36 metres to achieve the third new meet record on the day. In the senior women's hammer event, Divya Shandilya also set a new meet record with a throw of 57.67 metres.

Athletes from Cuttack district hogged the limelight winning 22 medals in the day. The men's decathlon, the most grueling competition, was won by Lipun Naik of Sambalpur who accumulated 4,211 points. He was followed by Soumya Ranjan Sahoo (Cuttack, 3,794 points) and Suraj Pradhan (Dhenkanal, 3,718 points).



Nikita Purbiya (centre) was one of the athletes who set a new meet record Thursday OP PHOTO