

Dailyfinance
Adani plans \$10 bn semiconductor project with Israel's Tower 11

PUNJAB
Vote AAP for jobs, good schools, hospitals: Mann to Haryana voters 02

INTERNATIONAL
Trump in court as lawyers fight to overturn verdict in E. Jean Carroll sex abuse suit 10

SPORTS
Neeraj Chopra qualifies for Diamond League season finale in Brussels 12



Dailypick
NORTH
PAC chairperson says panel to decide on Buch's appearance 04

DAVID A. LIEB
Georgia school shooting stirs debate about safe storage laws for guns 06

ICICI Bank-Videocon loan case: SC notice to Chanda Kochhar, husband

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from ICICI Bank's former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Chanda Kochhar and her businessman husband Deepak Kochhar on a plea filed against the Bombay High Court order declaring their arrest as "illegal". A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the couple and sought their replies on the appeal filed by the central probe agency.

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), challenged the high court order and said their arrest in the case was justified. Raju informed the apex court that Chanda Kochhar remained on interim bail for a long time and spent only about two weeks in custody. The high court had on February 6 held as "illegal" their arrest while confirming a January 2023 interim order passed by another bench granting the duo bail days after their arrest in the case. The couple was arrested by the CBI on December 23, 2022 in connection with the Videocon-ICICI Bank loan case. They immediately moved the high court challenging their arrest and sought it to be declared as illegal. By way of an interim relief, they also sought to be released on bail.

On January 9, 2023, the high court, in an interim order, granted bail to them and came down heavily on the CBI for making the arrests in a "casual and mechanical" manner and without application of mind. /PTI/

Wrestlers Vinesh, Bajrang join Congress; vow to not 'back off'



AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal with wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia as they joined Congress at the party headquarters, in New Delhi on Friday. /T. NARAYAN

NEW DELHI Olympians Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against then WFI chief and former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, entered the political arena on Friday by joining the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off". While there was no clarity on whether Punia would contest the polls, the party leaders said it had been decided that Phogat would contest from the Julana assembly segment.

Hours after joining the Congress, Punia was appointed the working chairman of All India Kisan Congress by the party.

Phogat and Punia met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence and later joined the party at the AICC headquarters in the presence of Congress general secretary in-charge Organisation KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary in-charge Haryana Deepak Babaria, Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan and the party's media and publicity depart-

ment head Pawan Khera.

At the press conference during which they joined the party, Venugopal claimed that Phogat received a showcause notice from the Railways after she met Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Party sources said the notice talked about violating service rules by meeting the political leaders.

Venugopal asked if it was a crime to meet the leader of the opposition and urged the Railway authorities to relieve Phogat and not "play politics".

Without elaborating, Venugopal claimed that Punia had also got a notice. Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways, citing personal reasons. On whether Phogat and Punia would contest the assembly polls, Venugopal said the party's Central Election Committee would decide on that.

After joining the party, Phogat said the BJP was supporting Singh while the Congress supported the protesting wrestlers when they "were

being dragged on the roads" in Delhi. Punia and Phogat were part of the protest over sexual harassment allegations against former BJP MP and then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Singh in 2023.

"I thank the people of the country and the media, you supported me throughout my wrestling journey. I thank the Congress party, it is said tough times tell you about who is with you. When we were dragged on the roads, all parties except the BJP stood with us and understood our pain and tears," the 30-year-old said at the press conference.

She said she felt proud that she was with a party and an ideology that stood against injustice on women and was ready to fight the battle from the streets to Parliament.

"I could have quit wrestling at Jantar Mantar and people also thought so (that I would do so). The BJP IT Cell propagated that we were a spent force and indulging in politics. They said I didn't want to play in the nationals,

It's time to reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle water: PM Modi

SURAT Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stressed the need to save water, saying India has only four per cent of freshwater resources in the world, and suggested that people should adopt the mantra of 'reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle' to conserve it. He also called the conservation of water and the environment a part of India's cultural consciousness, wherein water is considered god and rivers are worshipped as goddesses.

He was virtually speaking at a programme marking the launch of the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative in Gujarat's Surat, a step aimed at strengthening community involvement in water conservation. "For water conservation, we should work on the mantra of 'reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle'. We also need to adopt innovative techniques and the latest technology to conserve water," he said. Since 80 per cent of the water in India is used for irrigation, sustainable agriculture techniques like drip irrigation should be promoted, said Modi. "Conservation of water and environment is not new for us. It has been a part of India's cultural consciousness. In our culture, water is considered god and rivers are revered as goddesses. Narmada, Ganga, Godavari and Kaveri are our mothers. Our ancestors also knew the importance of conservation of water," he said. /PTI/

SC asks HP HC collegium to reconsider names of two judicial officers

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday asked the collegium of the Himachal Pradesh High Court to reconsider the names of two senior-most district and sessions judges for elevation as judges of the high court. The apex court observed that the high court chief justice could not individually reconsider a recommendation and it could only be done by a high court collegium, acting collectively.

A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra delivered its verdict on a plea filed by the two senior-most district and sessions judges, alleging that their merit and seniority were not considered by the high court collegium in the selection of names for high court judgeship. "There was no collective consultation and deliberation by the members of the high court collegium," the bench said while pronouncing its judgment. /PAGE 4/

Dailyheadlines

Mahesh Kumar Goud appointed T'gana PCC prez; BC leader gets key post 07

Revival of SAARC spirit can solve many regional problems: Yunus 08

Zelenskyy meets top military leaders in Germany as the US announces aid to Ukraine 09

Israeli forces appear to withdraw from Jenin but the operation may not over 10

India not in favour of talks with Pakistan until terrorism ceases: Shah



JAMMU Union Home Minister Amit Shah unequivocally said on Friday that India is not in favour of talks with Pakistan until terrorism ceases, emphasising that "talks and bombs cannot go together". Shah made these remarks while releasing here the BJP's manifesto for Jammu and Kashmir. He dismissed any possibility of dialogue with Pakistan amidst the ongoing terrorist activities.

Asserting that Article 370 is a thing of the past, Shah stated that no one can bring it back.

"Talks and bombs cannot go together. We are not in favour of talks with Pakistan unless and until terrorism ends. But we will definitely talk to the youth of Kashmir," Shah told reporters shortly after releasing the BJP manifesto ahead of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections.

Responding to a question about the National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party's (PDP) demand for talks with Pakistan and the restoration of cross-LoC trade, Shah said, "Unless terrorism comes to an end and the trade-terror ecosystem is dismantled, we cannot agree with it." Taking a dig at Congress leader

Rahul Gandhi for his silence on the NC's manifesto, which advocates the restoration of Article 370, Shah said, "You should ask this question to the Congress. Whatever they do, nothing is going to happen."

"The agenda of NC cannot get implemented on the ground. Article 370 is the past. It is history. Nobody can bring it back," the Union minister said. Asked about separatists entering politics through elections, Shah said, "I do not have concerns about separatists. The people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the valley, have decided to support Narendra Modi ji in making J&K free of terrorism. I hope that your question has been seen by Rahul Gandhi."

Criticising the contradiction between the NC manifesto and Rahul Gandhi's stance on reservations, Shah said, "There is a contradiction. This is a trait of Congress as they differ in what they say and what they do."

"I want to reassure the people of Jammu and Kashmir that Gujarat Bakerwal, Pahari, OBC, Dalit - the reservation given to them by us - nobody will snatch it. We will definitely continue," the senior BJP leader said. /PTI/

SC BINS EX-RG KAR PRINCIPAL'S PLEA FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN FISCAL ISSUE

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by former principal of Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh challenging a Calcutta High Court order rejecting his petition to be added as a party to a case of alleged financial irregularities at the institute on his watch. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said as an accused Ghosh has no locus standi (legal right to approach court) to be impleaded in the matter.

The high court had on August 23 transferred the probe into the alleged financial irregularities from a state-constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). "You were a principal of the college when the incident took place. As an accused you have no locus standi to intervene in the PIL, where the Calcutta high court is monitoring the investigation," the bench said. R G Kar Medical College and Hospital is in the eye of a raging political storm and widespread street protests following an incident of rape and murder of a junior doctor on its premises. /PTI/



President Droupadi Murmu accepts credential from Reuven Azar, Ambassador of Israel, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Friday. /PTI/

BSF asks BGB to prevent infiltration into India from Bangladesh

NEW DELHI The Border Security Force (BSF) has asked its Bangladeshi counterpart, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), to "prevent" citizens of the neighbouring country from illegally entering India in the wake of the Sheikh Hasina government's fall in August, the force said on Friday.

The BSF also said it is committed to maintaining the sanctity of the 4,096-km international boundary with Bangladesh, along with ensuring the safety and security of the border population.

Since August 12, the BSF and the BGB had 722 meetings at various levels, the border-guarding force said after the meeting of a special committee appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which was held in Kolkata on Thursday.

The two forces carried out 1,367 simultaneous coordinated patrolling (SCP) in vulnerable border patches, the BSF said in a statement.

"During these border meetings, BGB officials have been apprised to prevent Bangladeshi nationals from illegally infiltrating into Indian territory. The BGB has assured to take all steps for the safety of Indian citizens and people belonging to minority communities in Bangladesh," it added.

Officials of both the forces are in "constant" contact and sharing information on various operational matters on a real-time basis, the statement said.

It said the BSF also held village coordination meetings with Indian villagers residing along the international border to make them aware of the

prevalent situation in Bangladesh and seek their cooperation in border management.

A total of 614 such meetings have been held over the last 15 days, apart from multiple deliberations undertaken with sister agencies to strengthen border security, the BSF said.

The MHA formed the committee of senior officers, headed by the additional director general (ADG) of the Kolkata-headquartered eastern command of the BSF, on August 9 to ensure the "safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus and other minority communities" living in Bangladesh.

The India-Bangladesh boundary spans across five states - West Bengal (2,217 km), Tripura (856 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Assam (262 km) and Mizoram (318 km). /PTI/

Hopeful of alliance with Cong in Haryana: Raghav Chadha



NEW DELHI Amid the heightened buzz of Congress' alliance with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections, AAP leader Raghav Chadha on Friday said that the two parties are engaged in last-minute negotiations 'for the interests of the people of the state', adding that nothing 'conclusive', however, has been reached yet on the pre-poll coalition.

The AAP Rajya Sabha MP, speaking to IANS, said that the two parties are engaged in talks and are also hopeful of a coalition ahead of Assembly elections.

"Talks are going on. For the interest of Haryana, its people as well as the country, we are exploring this coalition. We are hopeful and mak-

ing all efforts to reach a common ground," Raghav Chadha told IANS.

When probed further about the delay in the announcement of Congress-AAP poll tie-up, he said that talks are underway and also moving in a 'positive direction'.

"There can't be ball by ball commentary on negotiations. Hope remains alive on likely alliance," he stated. The talks of a pre-poll coalition between Congress and AAP gathered steam after LoP Rahul Gandhi expressed desire at the recent Haryana screening committee meeting, to align with like-minded parties to dislodge the BJP from power.

The Congress MP also asked the Haryana state leaders and in-charges to explore an alliance with

Though Congress leaders have refrained from speaking about the likely alliance, AAP was forthcoming in welcoming the 'proposal'.

AAP to rule out division of votes and also to present the INDIA bloc as a united and potent force in the poll-bound state. Though Congress leaders have refrained from speaking about the likely alliance, AAP was forthcoming in welcoming the

'proposal'. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh welcomed Rahul Gandhi's statement, saying that the INDIA bloc allies must come together to stop the BJP from returning to power. However, he added that any decision to this effect will be taken by AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, based on input from party's Haryana in-charges.

Notably, Congress and AAP, part of the INDIA bloc contested the recent Lok Sabha polls together and went to upset the BJP's appeal not just nationally but also in Haryana. In 2024 polls, out of 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana, BJP saw its tally reduced to just 5. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it had swept all 10 constituencies in the state. / IANS /

Vote AAP for jobs, good schools, hospitals: Mann to Haryana voters



CM Bhagwant Mann addresses a public meeting for Haryana Assembly elections, at Kalayat assembly constituency in Kaithal, Haryana. / PTI

DW BUREAU / CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB CHIEF Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday told the people of Haryana that if they want good education, jobs and hospitals, they should vote for the AAP in the upcoming Assembly elections.

On October 5, the people of Haryana are ready to write a new story, Mann said while addressing public meetings in Kalayat and Jakhhal in the Kaithal and Fatehabad districts, respectively.

"If you want good schools, good education, good hospitals, jobs... then press 'jharoo' (AAP's poll symbol)," he said.

The 90-member Haryana Assembly is set to go to polls on October 5. The counting of votes will take place on October 8.

The Congress on Thursday engaged in hectic consultations to explore the possibility of an alliance with AAP for the Haryana Assembly polls, even as some of its leaders expressed reservations over such a tie-up with the Arvind Kejriwal-led party.

Addressing the gatherings, Mann claimed, "BJP was on way out in Haryana. Where is development? Corruption and unemployment are at peak... Don't keep any hope from them that they will do something for you. They will only give lollipop," he said.

He said Haryana shares its boundaries with Punjab on one side and Delhi on other side, both of which are ruled by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

"Now, Haryana remains, fill this gap, then Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, a big territory of north India will be under AAP

rule and you will have your say in entire country," the Punjab chief minister said.

Mann said Punjab and Haryana share many similarities, including common issues. "But there is one difference. Punjab also gave many chances to BJP-Akali Dal, Congress and you (people of Haryana) also gave several chances to BJP, Congress, INLD. They filled their coffers and looked after their families, but did not think about public," he said.

He pointed out that two-and-a-half years ago, Punjab overwhelmingly elected AAP, defeating many top opposition leaders. "They used to say that don't vote for AAP as they are new and inexperienced. But I told people we are new blood and will bring change. We don't have experience in looting like them," Mann said.

He claimed that the AAP has experience in building good schools, providing free electricity and creating jobs on merit, but not in corruption.

Mann also highlighted the achievements of the Kejriwal-led government in Delhi, particularly in health and education, which he claimed have garnered global recognition.

"I have toured Sirsa, Ambala, Kurukshetra, Sonapat, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dabri and some more districts and will visit some more in coming days for campaigning. Wherever I went, people told me one thing that they want to get rid of BJP rule. Press 'jharoo' button, you will get rid of them," he said.

Taking a dig at the BJP's "double engine government" slogan, Mann asked, "What

happened to their one engine when they changed Khattar, their chief minister? The country doesn't need a double engine, but a new engine".

He urged voters to retire the old "diesel and coal engines" and bring in new blood, ideas and a new party.

Mann credited this "young blood" for defeating major political figures in Punjab, including former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal, Navjot Sidhu, Bikram Majithia and Capt Amarinder Singh in the previous assembly polls. He noted that Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal once claimed his party would rule for 25 years but now struggles to find 25 supporters.

He told the gathering that Arvind Kejriwal is "Haryana Ka Laal" (Haryana's son) and said that the BJP has a problem with Kejriwal and their party "because we started to set right the system and make people participate in it and take control".

Mann also mentioned his own "Haryana connection", referring to his wife, Dr Gurpreet Kaur, who hails from Kurukshetra district. "I appeal to you on that basis as well. I have to go home, so please keep my respect intact. Otherwise, I'll have to hear a few things at home -- and in Haryanvi," he joked.

"If you press right button (on the polling day), you will secure a bright future for your children. If you have to bring a change, change the system, if you want good education, employment, good hospitals, good schools, then press 'jharoo' button," he added.

Punjab farmers end protest after CM Mann's assurance on agriculture policy

CHANDIGARH Farmers protesting against the alleged delay in implementation of Punjab's new agriculture policy ended their strike on Friday, a day after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann assured them that a draft of the policy would be shared with them by September 30. Mann also assured them that their suggestions would be incorporated before the policy's implementation.

Mann on Thursday held an over two-hour meeting with leaders of the Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) and Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union, which led the protesting farmers, to discuss their demands.

Farmers under the banner of the Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) and the Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union began a five-day protest on Sunday to press for their demands, including the agriculture policy's implementation.

Speaking to reporters at the protest site, Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said they had urged the state government to make the agriculture policy public.

"They (the government) said it was being finalised... They said by September 30, they would finalise it and hand over a copy," he said.

"We will wait till September 30. After we get a copy of the policy, we will go through it and hold a big meeting and decide the next course of action," he added.

In the interim, "we have decided to end the protest in Chandigarh at 2 pm", Ugrahan said.

On Thursday, when asked about the farmers' future course of action following the meeting with Mann, the farmer leader



said they would take a call after a meeting.

Mann assured the farmers that the state government was committed to safeguarding their interests and that the new agriculture policy would be a step forward in this direction.

The draft of the policy is ready but it will be finalised only after due deliberations with the farmers, the chief minister had said.

The draft will be shared with the farmers by September 30 and their suggestions sought, he had added.

The farmers' suggestions will be incorporated in the policy as the state government does not want to impose anything on the growers, Mann had said and added that his dispensation was committed to consulting them for making agriculture a profitable venture. Ugrahan said after the meeting that they were informed a 1,600-page draft of the policy would be shared with them by September 30.

The farmers' other demands included the promotion of chemical-free crops, compensation to the families of farmers who committed suicide, and curbing the drugs problem in the state, Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union general secretary Lachhman Singh Sewewala had earlier said. / PTI /

Punjab to install 20,000 agri-solar pumps: Aman Arora



DW BUREAU / CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB NEW and Renewable Energy Sources Minister Mr. Aman Arora, on Friday, announced that the state government has decided to allocate 5000 solar pumps specifically for Scheduled Caste (SC) farmers and Gram Panchayats for agricultural purposes.

Disclosing the details here today, Mr. Aman Arora said that Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) is ready to kick off a scheme aiming to install 20,000 solar pumps (Surface and Submersible) as part of the initial phase of the PM Kusum Scheme.

The cabinet minister shared that 2000 solar pump sets have been reserved for SC farmers in the state, with an 80% subsidy on the total installation cost. Additionally, 3000 solar pumps have been earmarked for gram panchayats. General category farmers will get 60% subsidy on the total installation cost.

Aman Arora said that Chief Minister S. Bhagwant Singh Man led Punjab Government is pulling all

stops to ensure optimum utilisation of the natural solar energy to decarbonise the agriculture sector. He also directed the PEDA officials that the execution of the solar agri-pump project should be ensured in a transparent and seamless manner.

Aman Arora said that Chief Minister S. Bhagwant Singh Man-led Punjab Government is making every effort to maximise the use of natural solar energy to reduce carbon emissions in the agriculture sector. He also directed PEDA officials to ensure transparent and smooth execution of the solar agri-pump scheme.

The New and Renewable Energy Sources Minister, along with the department Secretary Mr. Ravi Bhagat, checked the operations of a portal created by PEDA with the assistance of the Department of Governance Reforms (DGR) for the application and allotment of agricultural solar pumps. He asked the officials concerned to ensure that farmers encounter no difficulties while applying for the solar pumps online.

Briefly

CONG LEADER LEADS DEMONSTRATION AGAINST PUNJAB GOVT ON OUTSKIRTS OF CHANDIGARH

CHANDIGARH A demonstration was held on Friday by the Congress under the leadership of former Punjab minister Jagmohan Singh Kang in the Kharar constituency, municipal committee Naya Gaon on the outskirts of Chandigarh. The protest was held against the alleged poor performance of the Punjab government, Kang said. Slogans were raised against the municipal committee and the government during the protest. Addressing the protesters, Kang said Punjab, especially the Kharar constituency and municipal committee Naya Gaon, is regretting the Aam Aadmi Party's victory in the previous elections. The leaders of the AAP government are indulging in lawlessness, he alleged. Due to apathy of the AAP government and the present municipal committee Naya Gaon, the area has no adequate sewerage, drinking water, streets, drains, roads, and street lights, Kang alleged. / PTI /

AAP MUST RESOLVE DOCTORS' GRIEVANCES BEFORE THEY GO ON STRIKE: BAJWA

CHANDIGARH The Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Partap Singh Bajwa, on Friday, exhorted the Aam Aadmi Party-led Punjab government to address the grievances of the doctors in the state before they go on an indefinite strike, which would end up crippling the medical services. Notably, the government doctors under the banner of the Punjab Civil Medical Services Association (PCMSA) have all set to observe a strike on September 9. The unresolved issues of the doctors include stalled assured career progressions, pending sixth CPC arrears, and security at the workplace among other demands. Doctors in the government sector are overburdened and understaffed. "Government doctors are the backbone of the health services in Punjab. It is the people belonging to the unprivileged section of society, who generally choose government hospitals for treatment. If the doctors of the government hospitals go on strike, it is poor people, Dalits in particular, who would be at the receiving end. And the onus will completely be on the government", Bajwa added. / DW BUREAU /

BALJIT KAUR HOLDS MEETING WITH ETT BACKLOG UNION



CHANDIGARH Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities Minister, Dr. Baljit Kaur, convened a crucial meeting with representatives of the ETT 5994 Backlog Union (Punjab) to address their demands. During the meeting, the union representatives expressed their gratitude towards Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann and Dr. Baljit Kaur for initiating the recruitment process to fill the backlog vacancies of teachers from Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. The union representatives acknowledged the government's prompt action and appreciated the Chief Minister and Dr. Kaur for their unwavering dedication to ensuring the welfare of marginalized sections. Dr. Baljit Kaur assured the union that the recruitment for the 5994 vacant ETT teacher posts will proceed swiftly, with 2994 of these posts reserved to fill the backlog for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. This recruitment marks a significant step toward fulfilling the state's promise to uplift these communities. Further emphasizing the Punjab Government's commitment, Dr. Baljit Kaur highlighted that the government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, has already directed various departments to accelerate efforts to provide employment to the state's youth and clear the existing backlog of vacancies for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. / DW BUREAU /

DARBARA SINGH GURU IS ADVISOR TO SAD WORKING PRESIDENT

CHANDIGARH The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) today appointed Mr Sachin Kumar Shahpur Patti as the President of the Backward Class Wing of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district. Disclosing this, party BC Wing President Hira Singh Gabhria said Working President Balwinder Singh Bhundar had approved the appointment. / DW BUREAU /

Govt committed to empowering women: Baljit

DW BUREAU / CHANDIGARH

THE PUNJAB Government will organize a special mega placement camp for women at Malout, District Sri Muktsar Sahib, on Tuesday, September 10. Similar employment camps will be held across all districts of the state, as shared by Dr. Baljit Kaur, Minister of Social Security, Women and Child Development.

Providing further details, Dr. Baljit Kaur stated that several well-known companies will participate in this camp, offering employment opportunities to women who have completed their 10th, 12th, graduation, or post-graduation. The camp is being organized by Social Security, Women and Child Development Department with the support of the Employment Generation, Skill



Development and Training Department, Punjab.

The Cabinet Minister added that various departments related to self-employment will also provide information on their self-employment schemes and offer loans to interested candidates. Dr. Baljit Kaur urged the women of the state to ensure maximum participation in the

mega placement camp. She directed all District Program Officers to make announcements in villages through Anganwadi Centers under their jurisdiction and encourage women to take full advantage of these camps.

She emphasized that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann,

the Punjab Government is taking significant steps to ensure women's participation in various fields, thereby empowering them and making them economically self-reliant. In line with this commitment, employment camps will be organized in all districts in the coming days.

Dr. Baljit Kaur also highlighted that the Punjab Government is prioritizing the upliftment of women's living standards and these employment camps are a crucial step in that direction. The aim of these camps is to provide women with employment opportunities suited to their skills. She further stated that the primary goal of these camps is to bridge the gender gap in employment, promote economic empowerment and build confidence among women.

HARYANA

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

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Haryana polls: Cong's CEC deliberates on candidates with 1st list expected soon



NEW DELHI The Central Election Committee (CEC) of the Congress met here on Friday to finalise the party candidates for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls, with sources saying the first list of nominees could be out "very soon". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Sonia Gandhi, party general secretary in-charge organisation K C Vennugopal and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, among others, attended the meeting. Of the 90 Assembly seats in Haryana, the CEC has cleared the candidates' names for 66. However, the Congress is yet to release any list. The names of candidates for the remaining 24 seats are being deliberated upon by a sub-committee that includes the likes of All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of Haryana Deepak Babaria, T S Singhdeo and Ajay Maken. The Congress is also engaged in seat-sharing talks with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the Haryana polls, with hard bargaining going on from both sides.

The Congress has been engaged in hectic consultations over the last few days to explore the possibility of an alliance with the AAP for the Haryana polls, even as some of its leaders have expressed reservations over a tie-up with the Arvind Kejriwal-led party.

The sources said the Hooda faction of the grand old party and some other leaders are opposed to a seat-sharing deal with the AAP. According to these leaders, Kejriwal's party does not have much ground in Haryana.

Meanwhile, Olympians Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, entered the political arena on Friday by joining the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off". The 90-member Haryana Assembly is scheduled to go to polls on October 5 and the counting of votes will be undertaken on October 8. /PTI/

Any BJP candidate will defeat Phogat, Punia in Haryana: Brij Bhushan Singh



GONDA (UP) Former BJP MP and ex-WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Friday sought to downplay wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia's foray into politics, saying any BJP candidate will defeat them if they contest in Haryana and also offered to campaign in the upcoming assembly elections should his party allow. Talking to journalists at his residence Vishnoharpur, about 40 km from the district headquarters, he said, "These wrestlers made a name in the sport and became famous on the strength of wrestling. Now after joining Congress, their name will be erased."

Earlier, Phogat and Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against the then WFI chief Singh, joined the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off". There are indications that both or at least one might contest the October 5 assembly polls in Haryana.

Reacting to this development, Singh said, "These people consider politics to be a wind. They are thinking that they will win the assembly elections from Haryana. They can contest from any assembly seat in Haryana, a small BJP candidate will defeat them." He went on to add: "If my party directs, I will also go and campaign in the Haryana assembly elections. I claim that I will get maximum support from the people of their community. I am ready to campaign in favour of the BJP candidate in front of them as well." He also claimed that during the Lok Sabha elections, the "people of Haryana were saying that if you come and contest elections from here, we will make you win, but at that time I had refused them".

Singh said many Congress leaders joined the wrestlers' protests in the name of getting justice for them.

"One after the other, many wrestlers were made their pawns. The Congress, along with the wrestlers, has destroyed wrestling in this country," he alleged. He claimed that during the rule of the Congress, wrestling was not known in the country. "After becoming the president of the WFI, due to my efforts, people started knowing about wrestling in India and wrestlers won medals in international competitions." He also said that when the wrestlers were protesting in Delhi, a wrestling competition of junior and senior level was organised in Nandini Nagar (Gonda). /PTI/



(L-R) JD(U) leader KC Tyagi, BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and actor Kabir Bedi at the 'Asian Brand and Leadership Conclave 2024', at Surajkund, in Faridabad on Friday. /PTI/

If Vinesh wants to become 'Cong ki beti' what objection can we have: Anil Vij

CHANDIGARH Senior Haryana BJP leader Anil Vij on Friday took a dig at wrestler Vinesh Phogat over joining the Congress, saying what objection could they have if she wanted to become "Congress ki beti" from "desh ki beti".

The former minister was asked about Phogat and another wrestler Bajrang Punia, both from Haryana, hours before the two joined the Congress on Friday ahead of the Assembly polls in the state.

"... Agar woh desh ki beti sey Congress ki beti banna chaahati hai, to hamein kya etraaz hai (if Vinesh wants to become Congress' daughter from being the country's daughter, what objection can

we have)," the former Haryana home minister said.

Vij said the Congress was trying to bring these players with them from the very first day and it was due to their instigation that the wrestlers started the movement in Delhi.

It was because of their (Congress') instigation that the (Delhi) protest was going on, otherwise the matter would have settled long before, he said.

The BJP sought to underplay Phogat and Punia joining the Congress.

BJP MP and national spokesperson Sambit Patra refused to make any direct comment on the two wrestlers joining the Congress.

Anybody can join any political party in a democratic country, he told a press conference at the BJP headquarters in Delhi when asked for his comment.

"So far as the two sports persons joining the Congress is concerned, it is a democratic country and any can join any political party," he said.

"Your question that somewhere or the other they indulged in politics, I would not like to answer. I said it is a democratic country. But, yes people, media and intellectuals will ask this question," he added.

Phogat and Punia, both 30 years of age, met Congress president Mallikarjun

Kharge in the national capital and other senior leaders at his 10, Rajaji Marg and officially joined the party at a press conference at the AICC headquarters.

Also, Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways citing personal reasons.

Punia is a Tokyo Games bronze medalist, while Phogat became the first woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final, the stage where she was disqualified after being found over weight by about 100 gm in her 50-kg category weigh-in. She subsequently announced her retirement from the sport.

Punia and Phogat were part of the protest over sexual harassment allega-

tions against former BJP MP and then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in 2023.

Congress MP Deepender Hooda had led a rousing welcome for Phogat at the Delhi airport on her arrival from the Paris Olympics last month.

Hooda had vociferously supported the agitation by Phogat and other wrestlers, mostly from Haryana, against Singh over allegations of sexual harassment.

Phogat faced a heartbreaking exit at the Paris Olympics where she was disqualified for being overweight on the day of her 50kg final match. /PTI/

BJP will return to power with clear majority: Badoli

CHANDIGARH Haryana BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli said his party will return to power with a clear majority after next month's assembly polls on the basis of equitable development it has carried out in the state during its tenure. Attacking Congress, he alleged that the previous government had always prioritised regionalism and nepotism in development and jobs. He said the Congress has been repeatedly "rejected by people". They only spread lies and mislead the public, Badoli said.

Following the philosophy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas' and Pandit Deen

Dayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of 'Antyodaya', the pace of development has accelerated and equitable development has been ensured, he said.

"We undertook equitable development with the spirit of 'Haryana Ek, Haryanvi Ek'. People have made up their mind to bring back BJP to power and we will again form the government with a clear majority," Badoli told PTI. "We are seeking votes on the basis of our development works," Badoli further said.

He said the state has witnessed all-round development and welfare of all sections of society under the BJP rule during past ten years.

Asked about the rebellion which brewed when a few leaders rebelled over being denied tickets after the BJP released the first list of 67 of the 90 candidates, Badoli said there is no rebellion and added "jo thodi bahut narazgi hoti hai, toh usko hum miljul kar sab door karenge (whatever little resentment there may be, together we will sort it out)".

Asked when will the party announce the remaining candidates, he said, "We will do it soon." Meanwhile, Badoli said the BJP government in the state took several steps for the welfare of various sections including farmers, women and

the poor, while jobs were given on merit. In July, Badoli was appointed the party's state president.

A sitting MLA, Badoli lost the Lok Sabha election from the Sonapat seat to his Congress rival in a close contest. The BJP is aiming for a hat-trick in Haryana but faces a tough challenge from a resurgent Congress which is looking to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor.

Nayab Saini is the BJP's chief ministerial face for the assembly polls. The polling will take place on October 5 while counting of votes for the elections to the 90-member Assembly will be undertaken on October 8. /PTI/

Great teaching echoes Gita's wisdom, empowers students to think, question: UGC chairman

KURUKSHETRA University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Mamidala Jagadeesh Kumar on Friday said like Lord Krishna's guidance to Arjuna in the Gita, great teaching involves giving students the freedom to think, question, and make their own decisions. Kumar was the chief guest at the 17th Goyal Award ceremony organised by Kurukshetra University in the Senate Hall here.

Goyal Awards were instituted by late Ram S Goyal, an NRI settled in the US, in 1990, to honour scientists for their exceptional work.

Addressing the gathering at the event, Kumar highlighted that the teachings from the land of the Gita embody the essence of great teaching. "At the start of Mahabharata, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, I have

told you everything you needed to know about but now you decide what you want to do," Kumar said, citing the holy scripture.

"This is what a great teacher does to the students. They give the students the freedom to think and the freedom to question and know themselves and the world around them," he added.

He also said that "students should never become conformists, but keep questioning, challenging what you feel an accepted fact".

The UGC chairman said India has huge talent, and young people are our asset. More than 10 per cent of CEOs of multi-national companies are headed by people coming from the Indian education system. It is one of the biggest education systems. But, we have still to improve

and reform the system so that over 50 per cent of the companies are headed by Indians, he noted.

On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor of Kurukshetra University and chairman of the Goyal Award Organizing Committee Som Nath Sachdeva, during his address, said scientists make people's lives better in a meaningful and measurable way with their brilliant scientific research. Sachdeva also announced that the Goyal Peace Prize will be awarded shortly to ISRO Chairman S Somnath.

Sachdeva proposed to the scientists of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru that Kurukshetra University is ready to allocate 100 acres of land if the institute plans to set up a science research centre in Haryana. /PTI/

DIVYANG AND VOTERS ABOVE 85 CAN VOTE FROM HOME: AGARWAL

DW BUREAU / CHANDIGARH

HARYANA CHIEF Electoral Officer, Sh. Pankaj Agarwal said that the Election Commission of India has made provisions for Divyang (Persons with Disability) voters and those over the age of 85 years to cast their votes from home as well, ensuring their participation in the democratic process. This facility is optional, and such voters can also choose to vote at the polling station if they prefer.

Pankaj Agarwal emphasised that every voter should exercise their right to vote in a democracy.

Just like any other voter, Divyang individuals and those above 85 years of age should also exercise their right to vote. Therefore, this special facility has been made for them.

The Chief Electoral Officer stated that general elections, which occur once every five years, should be celebrated as a festival by every citizen. In Haryana, voting for the general elections of the Legislative Assembly will take place on October 5, 2024, and every voter should contribute to it by casting their vote.

To avail the facility of the home

voting, Divyang voters and those over the age of 85 need to fill out Form 12-D and submit it to the Returning Officer within five days of the election notification (September 5, 2024). Apart from this, Divyang voters must submit a copy of their disability certificate of more than 40 percent and should also be marked in the electoral roll, added the Chief Electoral Officer.

He further stated that BLOs would collect Form 12-D from such voters' homes and also a list of these voters will also be provided to the candidates so that they can appoint representatives to monitor the home voting process.

Briefly

SUBMISSION OF POLL MANIFESTO BY PARTIES MANDATORY: CEO AGARWAL



CHANDIGARH Haryana Chief Electoral Officer Pankaj Agarwal, stated that as per the directions of the Election Commission of India, political parties and candidates contesting the elections must submit three copies each of their election manifestos in Hindi and English to the Chief Electoral Officer's office within 3 days from the date of issuance of the manifesto. Pankaj Agarwal said that all political parties should thoroughly study all aspects of the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission and ensure full compliance during the election process. According to sub-clause 3 of Paragraph 8 of the Model Code of Conduct, in the interest of transparency, fair opportunities, and the credibility of promises, it is expected that election manifestos reflect the justification for their promises. Primarily, they should outline the methods and means to meet the financial requirements, and voter confidence should only be sought for promises that are feasible to fulfil. /DW BUREAU/

WOMAN SHOT DEAD IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AT HARYANA BUS STAND

MAHENDRAGARH A woman was shot dead in broad daylight at a bus stand here on Friday, the police said. The shooting triggered a commotion as people at the bus stand ran helter-skelter in panic. The victim has been identified as Munni Devi, a resident of Khudana village in Mahendragarh district. Munni Devi and her husband Dinesh had come to Mahendragarh for some work and were waiting at the bus stand to return to their village when a young man approached and shot her on the head. Munni Devi fell unconscious from the gunshot. She was rushed to the Mahendragarh Civil Hospital, where she was pronounced dead upon arrival. The police soon reached the crime scene and began the investigation. The incident was captured on CCTV, which shows a masked assailant shooting Munni Devi and then striking her twice on the waist before fleeing. He stumbled on the road but managed to escape, with several onlookers pursuing him. /IANS/

BJP LEADER GL SHARMA FROM GURUGRAM QUILTS PARTY OVER DENIAL OF TICKET, MAY JOIN CONGRESS

GURUGRAM Angered by the ticket distribution for Gurugram assembly constituency, BJP leader G L Sharma resigned on Friday along with his supporters. Sources said he will join the Congress. Earlier, BJP leader Naveen Goyal, an aspirant of ticket, also resigned along with his supporters. Besides, BJP workers held a protest march against the ticket given to Rao Narbeer Singh from Badshahpur assembly constituency. The protesters with banners raised slogans and reached the BJP district office, Gurukamal. State convener of BJP's Business Cell and state head of Environment Protection Department, Naveen Goyal, bid farewell to the party on Thursday, and decided to contest the elections as an independent candidate. More than 100 party officials and workers also announced to leave the party along with him. "By not giving me a ticket, the party has not only discriminated against me but also against the people of Gurugram. They can cancel my ticket but cannot remove me from people's hearts." /PTI/

GURUGRAM POLICE ARRESTS FIVE ACCUSED IN FRAUD CASE

GURUGRAM Gurugram Police arrested five accused, including two women, for allegedly committing a fraud of Rs 6.70 lakh on the pretext of providing cheap gold and branded clothes, they said. After around five months, a team of crime unit, Sector 40, arrested all five accused on Thursday night, they added. According to police, a woman had filed a complaint at the New Colony police station on April 23 that in February this year, some people had come to live in her house on rent in the Jyoti Park colony. They allegedly took Rs 6 lakh from her on the pretext of providing cheap gold from Dubai and Rs 70,000 for cheap branded clothes, she said in her complaint. /PTI/

SC asks HP HC collegium to reconsider names of two judicial officers



NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday asked the collegium of the Himachal Pradesh High Court to reconsider the names of two senior-most district and sessions judges for elevation as judges of the high court.

The apex court observed that the high court chief justice could not individually reconsider a recommendation and it could only be done by a high court collegium, acting collectively.

A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra delivered its verdict on a plea filed by the two senior-most district and sessions judges, alleging that their merit and seniority were not considered by the high court collegium in the selection of names for high court judgeship.

"There was no collective consultation and deliberation by the members of the high court collegium," the bench said while pronouncing its judgment.

"In light of the above, the high court collegium should now reconsider the names of Chirag Bhanu Singh and Arvind Malhotra for elevation as judges of the high court, following the Supreme Court collegium decision dated January 4, 2024..." it said.

During the hearing on May 13, the counsel appearing

for the two judicial officers referred to a Supreme Court collegium resolution of January 4 and the subsequent communication of the Union Ministry of Law and Justice to the Himachal Pradesh High Court and said that, according to these, the names of the petitioners should have been considered by the high court collegium.

While pronouncing its verdict, the top court bench said, "The decision of the chief justice of the high court on the suitability of the two petitioners, as conveyed in his letter dated March 6, 2024, appears to be an individual decision. The same stands vitiated, both procedurally and substantially." It said the writ petition filed by the petitioners was maintainable as it questioned the lack of effective consultation.

"The chief justice of the high court cannot individually reconsider a recommendation and it can only be done by a high court collegium, acting collectively," the bench said.

On May 13, the apex court sought a response from the registrar general of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on the plea.

The petition was filed by the two judicial officers, alleging non-consideration of their names for judgeship by the high court collegium. /PTI/

Art 370 will never come back: Shah at BJP manifesto launch



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Ravinder Raina, Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and G Kishan Reddy and others release the party's election manifesto ahead of the state Assembly elections, in Jammu on Friday. /PTI/

JAMMU Highlighting an appreciable decrease in terror-related and stone-pelting incidents in the past 10 years in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asserted that Article 370 has become "history" and will never make a comeback. Releasing the BJP's manifesto for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls at a press conference here, Shah also questioned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his party's alliance with the National Conference (NC), and urged people to vote for the BJP to continue good governance.

He said the last 10-year period will be written about in golden letters in the history of the country and Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah reached Jammu earlier in the day on a two-day visit to kickstart the BJP's campaign for the assembly polls scheduled to be held in three phases on September 18, 25 and October 1. This is the first election in the erstwhile state after its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution was revoked and it was bifurcated into two Union

territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh - in August 2019.

"It is sad; I have gone through the agenda of the NC and seen the Congress supporting it. I want to make it clear to the whole country that Article 370 and Article 35A have become history and will never make a comeback," Shah said before talking about his party's manifesto.

He said Article 370 is not part of the Constitution anymore. "This Article was the reason why weapons and stones were handed to the youth and they were then facilitated to tread the path of terrorism instead of contributing to development," Shah added.

The BJP leader also accused the previous governments of bowing down before separatism, and said peace, development and social justice were restored on the ground after the abrogation of Article 370.

"There used to be a time when separatists were calling the shots and making demands. The governments were bowing down before groups like the Hurriyat

Conference... different state and non-state actors linked to terrorism and separatism destabilised J&K as all the governments were involved in appeasement. But after 2014, whenever the history of India and J&K will be written, I believe these 10 years will be written about in golden words," he said. Shah added that the past 10 years saw peace, prosperity and development.

"The sound of guns and bomb blasts used to be heard in Kashmir for a very long time but everything changed in the last 10 years. A total of 7,217 (terror-related) incidents happened between 2004 and 2014 but the number dropped to 2,272 between 2014 and 2024, marking a 70 per cent decrease. The overall killings also dropped by 76 per cent and civilian killings by 80 per cent while there is a huge downward trend in security force casualties," the minister said.

He said stone-pelting incidents dropped from 2,654 in 2010 to zero post-August 2019, while Pakistan-sponsored strikes also came down to zero from 132 earlier.

Not a single person died nor were security personnel injured in stone peltings as compared to 112 deaths in the previous years, Shah said.

"After 30 years, Kashmir tourism has got a big boost. Nightshows have become the new reality and processions by Shia mourners are being allowed for the first time in more than 32 years. Amarnath Yatra and Vaishno Devi pilgrimage also witnessed record-breaking numbers," he said.

Referring to the NC manifesto, Shah said, "How could a party issue such a manifesto and the Congress support it? I want to ask Rahul Gandhi to make the party's position clear to the nation. Does it agree with the NC's agenda or not? Give us an answer in simple yes or no." "Your silence will not help. People know what is on the NC agenda, which talks about the release of stone pelters, review of cases of those arrested for terror links, review of strict action taken against relatives of terrorists and restoration of two flags by restoring Article 370," he said. /PTI/

PAC chairperson says panel to decide on Buch's appearance

NEW DELHI Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairman K C Venugopal said Friday it is for the panel to take a call on whether to ask SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch, who is facing allegations of conflict of interest, to appear before it or not.

Nishikant Dubey, a seasoned BJP lawmaker and member of the committee, appeared to question the suggestion that Buch may be scrutinised over the allegations as he told PTI that the PAC can take up a matter for scrutiny only based on "factual reports prepared by authoritative bodies".

Speaking to reporters on the raging row amid reports that the parliamentary panel may ask Buch to appear before it, the Congress leader

confined himself to highlighting the committee's decision to review the performance of regulatory bodies established by Acts of Parliament.

He said the committee decided to include the performance review of regulators such as SEBI and TRAI on the suggestions of its members. "Rest of the things, the committee has to take a decision," Venugopal said to questions on summoning the SEBI chairperson before the PAC.

Hinderburg Research, a US-based short-selling firm, had first levelled the allegation of conflict of interest against Buch, a charge which ignited a political controversy as the Congress seized on the report to target her and levelled fresh charges against her.

She has categorically denied the

allegations. Dubey suggested that a private firm report cannot be a ground for the PAC to investigate anyone. "PAC can only take up matters mentioned in factual reports, which must be prepared by authoritative bodies," he added.

Two other PAC members said on the condition of anonymity that the committee could always look into SEBI's work, and it does not necessarily mean that the allegations against Buch will be on the agenda.

Among the suo-moto subjects selected by the committee are the performance review of regulatory bodies established by Acts of Parliament, reforms in the banking and insurance sector, review of the implementation of centrally sponsored welfare

schemes, policy measures underway for transition in the energy sector and levy and regulation of fees, tariffs, user charges on public infrastructure and other public utilities.

The PAC has selected 161 subjects for examination during its tenure, in addition to the pending matters before the committee from the previous year. Buch is facing allegations of conflict of interest over the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) investigation into Hindenburg Research's claims against the Adani Group.

The Congress has questioned payments made to Buch by ICICI Bank, her former employer, after she became a whole-time member of SEBI, and sought an independent probe into the matter. /PTI/



SHIMLA The Himachal Pradesh government will consider possibilities of faster declaration of deaths of persons going missing in natural disasters, Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu said in the state Assembly on Friday. Intervening in reply to a question of Nand Lal (Congress) regarding ex-gratia grants to families of people missing in disaster, Sukhu said the frequency of incidents of cloud bursts was increasing and according to existing rules, a person going missing can be declared dead only after seven years. This is causing huge inconvenience and emotional trauma to families of the deceased, he said. Earlier, replying to the main question, Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi informed that during the past two years, 41 persons have gone missing in natural disasters but they will be declared dead only after seven years. The government had relaxed this condition for a limited period during natural disaster in Uttarakhand and the matter being serious, there is a need to make such provisions in future also but the matter pertains to the Union Government, Negi said. /PTI/

Omar Abdullah accuses BJP of using independent candidates to undermine his poll campaign

SRINAGAR National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Friday accused the BJP-led central government of trying to undermine his electoral campaign in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections by fielding many independent candidates against him. Speaking at election rallies in the Ganderbal Assembly segment, where he is contesting, Abdullah expressed his concerns, stating, "I always knew that Delhi would want to silence me in some way, but I never thought they would go to this extent."

Abdullah, former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, referred to a previous electoral experience during the Baramulla Lok Sabha elections, where an independent candidate, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, campaigned from jail and ultimately defeated him. "He recorded his message from jail and sought

votes based on emotions. He defeated me in the elections," he noted. Despite these challenges, Abdullah emphasised that he did not view the situation as particularly alarming. He said after the results of Baramulla Lok Sabha seat, he thought luck was on Rashid's side and it was his "bad luck".

"But when I decided to contest (assembly) polls from Ganderbal, reports started pouring in that another citizen (Sarjan Ahmad Wagay alias Barkati) who is in jail is going to contest against me. I was forced to think why these people are put only after me. Is there a conspiracy?" he asked.

Abdullah said he could understand Rashid contesting the Lok Sabha polls against him as he was a local from the constituency. "When they could not find a local (Ganderbal) person in jail, they brought one (Barkati) from Zainapora-Shopian. I still thought maybe it was a coincidence. I consulted a few of my colleagues and told them that I want to prove that it is a conspiracy from Delhi against me," he said. Abdullah said his team collected nomination papers from a couple of constituencies without revealing where they will file the papers from. "We collected forms and decided to take a call in the morning where to contest from (for second seat). Yesterday, it was proved that it is not a coincidence. Otherwise tell me, this person files papers from Ganderbal and then he collects papers from Beerwah, thinking that I was an MLA from there and would contest from there only. However, when I filed papers from Budgam in the afternoon, they were caught out," he said. /PTI/

FARM VARSITY LAND TO BE TRANSFERRED FOR TOURISM VILLAGE: CM SUKHU

SHIMLA Decision to transfer 112 hectares of land of Chaudhary Sarwan Kumar (CSK) Agriculture University in Palampur to Tourism Department for setting tourism village is final and the land will be transferred soon, Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu said in the state assembly on Friday. Intervening in the short discussion under Rule 63 (discussions on matters of urgent public importance), initiated by BJP's Vipin Singh Parmar BJP, the chief minister said he was passionate but not obstinate (Main Janooni Hoon, Ziddi Nahin) and will make decisions cautiously.

Asserting that infrastructure would be developed on this land for promoting tourism, he said the Casino would not be opened and dismissed the pleas against transferring the land to Tourism Village.

Sukhu said during the past 48 years, even 50 hectares of land was not developed by the University. If need arises in the future, the university would be provided with a private land. He said that tourism is the strength of Himachal and that notification under section 21 would be issued soon for transferring the land. /PTI/

Scuffle between protesting Jal Rakshaks, police in Shimla

SHIMLA A scuffle broke out between police personnel and 'Jal Rakshaks' here on Friday as the latter tried to head towards the Himachal Pradesh Assembly while it was in session, to raise their demand for better wages. Hundreds of protestors gathered at the Chaura Maidan near the assembly building and raised slogans against the state government for not fulfilling their demands, which also include job regularisation within 8 years.

The scuffle erupted when the protestors tried to break through the barricades installed to stop them from marching ahead.

'Jal Rakshaks', water guards or carriers who are crucial to managing water resources in rural areas, are hired by the government on a contractual basis and their services are regularised after 12 years.

The Jal Rakshak Mahasangh has warned the government of a hunger strike if its demands are not met? The association's president Roop Lal said the government is not ready to listen to their demands.

"Those who are getting salaries

in lakhs are getting paid on time but no one is paying attention to those who are being paid Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per month," Lal said while addressing reporters during the protest. He said it is becoming difficult for 'Jal Rakshaks' to bear their household expenses with the meagre salary.

"Jal Rakshaks who have completed 12 years of service should be regularised. The contract period should be reduced from 12 years to 8 years, and a permanent policy should be made" he said, reiterating the association's demand.

Lal further said that when the salaries of those earning in lakhs were delayed for five days, the opposition strongly raised the issue but fell silent when it came to the demands of the 'Jal Rakshaks'.

He said that Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu had promised to pay them a minimum wage but it is not yet known when it would be given. "The government should not force us to take any strict measure. If the government does not listen to us today, we will go on a hunger strike in Shimla," Lal cautioned. /PTI/

Briefly

HIMACHAL: THREE INJURED IN FACTORY BLAST, WORKERS ALLEGE LACK OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT

SHIMLA Three people have been injured in a blast at a factory in Jharmajri village in Himachal Pradesh's Baddi-Barotiwala industrial area, officials said on Friday. The incident, which took place on Thursday, came to light the following day when workers halted work in protest, shouting slogans at the gate over the lack of safety equipment and the management's indifferent attitude towards their welfare. Sunil Thakur, Rajiv and a trainee sustained burn injuries in the incident. Sunil has been referred to PGI Chandigarh for treatment, the officials said. According to Rajiv, the blast occurred due to a reaction while they were preparing a mixture for shaving cream. After news of the protest and blast spread on social media, Harbans Rana, General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) Federation, visited the site and spoke to the injured workers. Police were unaware of the incident until Rana filed a complaint with the Baddi police. The workers accused the management of negligence, alleging that basic safety equipment, such as gloves, was not provided, and called for safety measures to be enforced. /PTI/

MET OFFICE WARNS OF LOW FLASH FLOOD RISK IN 5 DISTRICTS OF HP, 40 ROADS CLOSED

SHIMLA As rains forced closure of 40 roads in Himachal Pradesh, the local Met office on Friday warned of low flash flood risk in five districts of the state. The local meteorological office has warned of low flash flood risk in parts of Shimla, Solan, Sirmour, Mandi and Bilaspur districts till Saturday. It has issued a yellow alert of heavy rain, thunderstorm and lightning in 10 out of 12 districts of the state, barring the tribal districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti on Friday. A total of 40 roads, including 16 in Mandi, 10 in Kangra, nine in Shimla, two in Kullu and one each in Sirmour, Una and Lahaul and Spiti districts are closed for vehicular traffic as per the state emergency operation centre. As many as 32 power schemes have also been affected in the state, the centre said. /PTI/

HP TO CONSIDER FASTER DECLARATION OF DEATHS OF PERSONS MISSING IN NATURAL DISASTERS: CM



SHIMLA The Himachal Pradesh government will consider possibilities of faster declaration of deaths of persons going missing in natural disasters, Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu said in the state Assembly on Friday. Intervening in reply to a question of Nand Lal (Congress) regarding ex-gratia grants to families of people missing in disaster, Sukhu said the frequency of incidents of cloud bursts was increasing and according to existing rules, a person going missing can be declared dead only after seven years. This is causing huge inconvenience and emotional trauma to families of the deceased, he said. Earlier, replying to the main question, Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi informed that during the past two years, 41 persons have gone missing in natural disasters but they will be declared dead only after seven years. The government had relaxed this condition for a limited period during natural disaster in Uttarakhand and the matter being serious, there is a need to make such provisions in future also but the matter pertains to the Union Government, Negi said. /PTI/

HP: TOURIST FROM M.P. KILLED, 3 INJURED AS VEHICLE HIT BY SHOOTING STONES

SHIMLA A tourist from Madhya Pradesh was killed while three others were injured as the vehicle they were travelling in was hit by shooting stones in Himachal's Bilaspur district, police said on Friday. The deceased was identified as Kalyan Dhakad (35), son of Banwari Lal Dhakad while the injured included Mahesh Dhakad, Suniel Dhakad and Sudeep Jadaun, all four were residents of Chorpura in Morena district in Madhya Pradesh, police said. The accident occurred on Thursday night near Tunnel no. 2 Kiratpur-Ner Chowk in Thapna village in Bilaspur when the vehicle was on its way to Chandigarh from Manalim, they said. /PTI/

NORTH

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Brutality against women, Siddharthnagar 'blot on humanity': Rahul



NEW DELHI Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the brutality against women in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain and Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar is a "blot on humanity", asserting that "propaganda-centric" governments have given birth to an insensitive system of which the biggest victims are women.

His remarks came after a scrap collector was raped by a man after he forced her to consume liquor in Ujjain's Agar Naka area. In another incident, a woman in Siddharthnagar was allegedly sexually assaulted by the driver and helper of a private ambulance that she hired to transport her terminally ill husband home.

"The brutality against women in Ujjain and Siddharthnagar is a blot on humanity. The continuously increasing crimes against women and the attitude of the police administration towards the victim and her family is proof of the cruelty of the system and is a matter of serious concern for the country," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

"Propaganda-centric governments have given birth to an insensitive system to create a false image of themselves, the biggest victims of which are women," he said. Gandhi said the time has come to make serious efforts towards the moral upliftment of the society for the safety of women

-- strict steps should be taken at every social, political and administrative level.

"Better citizens give birth to better systems, and better systems create a better society," he added.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the incident of rape of a woman on the footpath in broad daylight in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, is extremely horrifying.

"Today the whole country is stunned as to where our society is heading? According to reports, people passing by were making videos instead of saving the woman. Humanity has been tarnished by such an incident on the holy land of Ujjain," she said.

The police in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain have identified three to four suspects, who allegedly shot a video of a woman scrap collector's rape and efforts were on to nab them, an official said on Friday.

The incident came to light after a video of the rape went viral on social media, following which the prime accused in the case was arrested, the police said.

In the Siddharthnagar incident, the woman's husband was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Lucknow.

Due to financial constraints, she decided to take his discharge and take him home in a private ambulance on the evening of August 29, when while returning. /PTI/

Briefly

GORAKHPUR LINK EXPRESSWAY WILL BECOME BIGGEST ROAD FOR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES: AKHILESH YADAV



LUCKNOW Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday said the Gorakhpur Link Expressway will become the biggest road for illegal activities. In a statement issued at the SP headquarters, Yadav alleged, "Corruption is at its peak in the BJP government. Most of the construction and road projects in this government have fallen prey to corruption. "The Gorakhpur Link Expressway is going to become the biggest road for illegal activities. Even after being made as four lanes instead of six, it holds the record of being the most expensive expressway in the country per km."

A link expressway to Gorakhpur is being built about 190 km from the Purvanchal Expressway (Lucknow to Ghazipur) on which traffic has not started yet. Gorakhpur is the home district of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and it is one of his ambitious projects. /PTI/

ADITYANATH INAUGURATES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WORTH RS 635 CRORE IN UP'S GORAKHPUR

GORAKHPUR (UP) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of five development projects worth Rs 635 crore in Sonbarsa, here, an official statement said. Addressing the attendees, he said that the key to a prosperous future for the present and upcoming generations lies in the model of development and security. He urged people to support government initiatives rather than obstructing them, as these efforts are vital for shaping a better future. Adityanath said that entrepreneurship will grow only when there is development. He said that he has made arrangements to give interest-free loans to the youth in two phases to set up enterprises. /PTI/

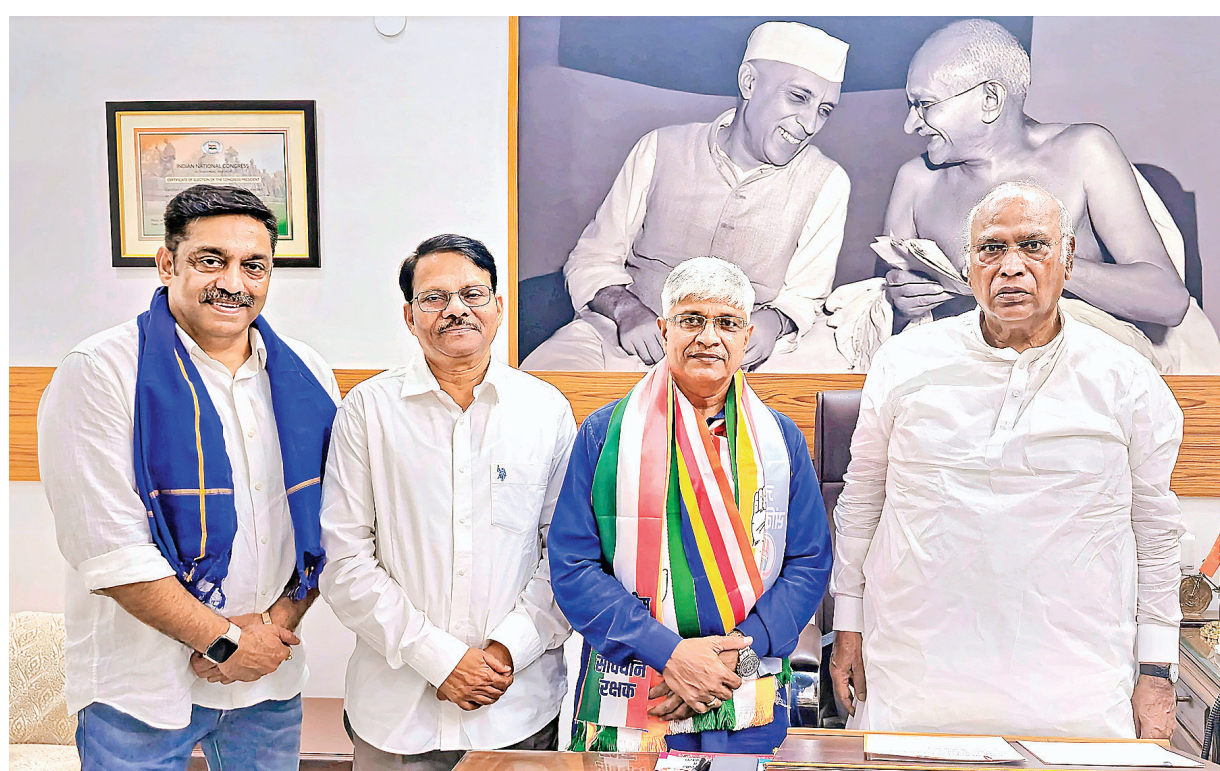
AMBULANCE HELPER HELD FOR MOLESTING WOMAN IN LUCKNOW, DRIVER STILL AT LARGE

LUCKNOW (UP) The helper of a private ambulance, who, along with the driver, sexually assaulted a woman transporting her terminally ill husband home, has been arrested, police here said. The accused disconnected the oxygen support of her husband, who later died, they had earlier said. Efforts are underway to locate and arrest the ambulance driver, they added. "The accused helper of the ambulance, Rishabh, has been arrested. Our teams are trying to arrest the accused driver," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (North), Lucknow, Jitendra Kumar Dubey said on Thursday. According to police, the woman's husband was undergoing treatment at a private hospital here. Due to financial constraints, she decided to take his discharge and take him home in a private ambulance on the evening of August 29, when while returning, the driver and helper allegedly harassed the woman, police said. /PTI/

UP: DALIT BOY DIES DURING TREATMENT; FAMILY ALLEGES MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE, STAGES PROTEST

AMETHI (UP) The family members of a two-year-old Dalit boy, died during treatment, staged protests outside the hospital premises here on Friday alleging medical negligence, police said. According to police, Mayansh, son of Ful Chand, a resident Madauli village, was admitted at the Sanjay Gandhi Hospital in the Munshiganj area on Sunday following a complaint of fever and cold. The family members have alleged that the minor was fine till Friday afternoon but he died within minutes of being administered a wrong injection in the afternoon, police said. However, the doctors at the hospital have refuted the allegations. "The child was given an antifungal injection which has no side effects," said Dr Amit Gaur, a paediatrician at the hospital. The child was being fed milk by his mother. /PTI/

AAP MLA RP Gautam quits party, minorities; joins Congress



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge meets newly joined party leader Rajendra Pal Gautam and party leaders K Raju, Rajesh Liothia, in New Delhi. /PTI/

NEW DELHI Former Delhi government minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Friday quit the AAP and joined the Congress, alleging discrimination against Dalit and minority leaders in the Arvind Kejriwal-led party. Minutes after announcing his resignation from the AAP and all posts held by him in the party, Gautam joined the Congress. He has also resigned as AAP MLA from the reserved Seemapuri Assembly constituency.

Reacting to Gautam's resignation, which came a few months before the Delhi Assembly elections likely to be held early next year, the AAP said it is normal for leaders to switch sides in politics, especially when they feel they might be denied a ticket.

In his resignation letter addressed to AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, Gautam criticised the party over appearing "very weak and helpless" before the BJP in raising issues like caste census, raising reservation limit above 50 per cent, ensuring population-based participation of 'Bahujan Samaj', and defending secularism. "I have to say it with a heavy heart that it's impossible to imagine about works

of social justice and social equality within AAP," he said in his resignation letter.

Gautam said, as a soldier of Babasaheb Ambedkar, he was feeling for sometime that he won't be able to achieve the first and last goal of his life which is social justice, while being in AAP.

The AAP gives no special representation to the SC, ST, OBC and minority, Gautam, who belongs to the Dalit community, said. "Party (AAP) supports upper caste MLAs or ministers when they face any allegations but it immediately abandons Muslim or Dalit even if the allegations are false. The party in a way internally blacklists the Muslim and Dalit and changes its behaviour which is painful," he charged in his letter to Kejriwal.

Gautam joined the the Aam Aadmi Party in November 2014 and went on to become minister in the Kejriwal government holding various portfolios, including social welfare. He had to resign from the minister's post amid a political storm over his alleged remarks against Hindu deities in October 2022. Gautam joined the Congress at the AICC headquarters in the presence of general secretary KC

Venugopal, party's Delhi chief Devender Yadav and Congress' media publicity department head Pawan Khera.

"It's a proud moment for us as Shri Rajendra Pal Gautam joins the Congress party," Venugopal said on the occasion.

"The Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra have given a new narrative to the country, and now the country is also accepting it with full might. Attracted by the Congress programs under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, he has decided to join the Congress," Venugopal said of Gautam.

Earlier in the day, Gautam said in a post in Hindi on X, "I am resigning from the membership and all posts of AAP in order to accelerate the struggle for social justice and participation of the Bahujan Samaj in all sectors.

AAP's Delhi unit vice president and MLA from Kondli reserved seat Kuldeep Kumar said in a statement, "Many of those who feel that party will not give them a ticket change sides during elections". He said Gautam was given all due respect in the party and elevated as minister in the government. /PTI/

Conflict in Asia resulting in disruptions in trade flow; need de-risking: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI The disruptions in crucial shipping routes and trade flows triggered by the ongoing conflict in West Asia strengthened the case for de-risking, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday. In an address at an India-Mediterranean business conclave, Jaishankar, referring to the proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), said it aims to become a "cornerstone of global connectivity". "The ongoing conflict in West Asia understandability has generated concerns about some of the contemporary initiatives," he said.

"Disruptions in crucial shipping routes that have increased shipping costs and necessitated the rerouting of trade flows, have added to our collective worries," Jaishankar said at the conference hosted by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).

"But if you reflect on these happenings, they only strengthen the case for derisking. As the three hubs of India, Europe and the Middle East step up their interactions, connectivity will be more needed, not less," he noted.

There were spate of attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea by Houthi militants earlier this year apparently in response to Israel's military operation in Gaza.

On the IMEC project that was announced on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Delhi last year, the external affairs minister said it has opened promising new perspectives. "The IMEC aims to become a cornerstone of global connectivity, providing a robust



framework for boosting trade and other flows across critical regions," he said.

"By integrating innovative logistics and sustainable practices, it holds the potential to significantly contribute to both growth and resilience," he added.

Jaishankar also underlined the importance security and stability. "In a volatile and uncertain world, security and stability have to be an integral part of the calculation," he said.

"Hence, it is natural that strengthening defence and security cooperation with Mediterranean nations should actually parallel deeper economic links," he added.

"This has taken the form of exercises, consultations and exchanges. But in an era of rapidly emerging technologies and supply chain disruptions, there is a strong case for more industry interaction." "After all, Make in India has now taken deep root in the defence domain as well," he said. /PTI/

Delhi court extends AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan's ED custody by 3 days



AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan being taken to be produced before a court by the Enforcement Directorate officials in connection with a money laundering case, in New Delhi, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. /PTI/

NEW DELHI A Delhi court on Friday extended AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan's ED custody by three days in a money laundering case, saying he may be required to be confronted with co-accused and witnesses.

Special judge Vishal Gogne passed the order on an application moved by the central probe agency, which had sought Khan's custody for 10 more days. The judge said that an investigation cannot be frozen to the desecration of the accused who may have joined the investigation on one occasion.

He said the examination of the case diaries by the court suggested the possibility that the statements or materials collected from about 48 witnesses or other persons connected with the investigation and who are not part of the first prosecution complaint (ED's equivalent to a charge sheet) may be required to be confronted with the accused. "Consequently, the court finds the prayer for extension of custody of the ED

over the accused to be justified by the outcomes of the investigation thus far," the judge said.

He said that moreover, the investigative agency may require extended time to unravel the multi-layered and masked financial transactions which may have been designed to launder a substantial amount of money (Rs 36 crores) into properties fronted by the agents of Khan.

"However, the prayer for the grant of further custody for 10 days is excessive. Three days of further custodial investigation is presently found sufficient by the court," the judge said and directed the ED to produce Khan before it on September 9. The judge said that the accused shall be medically examined after every 24 hours.

"Further, the interrogation of the accused shall be conducted under CCTV coverage, with audio or video recording facility. The audio or video recording of the same is directed to be preserved for production. /PTI/

SC grants bail to ex-Bhushan Steel promoter Neeraj Singal in money laundering case

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday ordered the release of Bhushan Steel's former promoter Neeraj Singal in a money laundering case arising from an alleged bank fraud of Rs 46,000 crore, saying due procedure was not followed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) while arresting him. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar noted that Singal has been in jail for 16 months and the trial was not likely to be over soon.

As the hearing commenced, the bench observed, "A line has

to be drawn somewhere in economic offences. You can't shake up the economy, shake up confidence of the market and shareholders.

"But if trial is never going to get over, we have to match that aspect of liberty. It (alleged money laundering) is fraud on entire society," the bench said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Singal, said his client cannot be forced to remain behind bars for such a long period before the trial. "He has been inside for 16 months. Pan-kaj Bansal judgement (where

court said ED has to compulsorily furnish the grounds of arrest to the accused) squarely applies. It cannot be punishment before trial," Sibal said.

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED, opposed the bail application, saying a serious offence has been committed.

"We are concerned with non-grant of reasons to the accused while making arrest. Sixteen months he has been inside. By this time...normally one would expect trial to be over within two to three years. /PTI/

ASI says Waqf making claims on its monuments, opposition members criticise some of its claims

NEW DELHI The on Friday presented a list of over 120 monuments, which are officially under its protection but are claimed by different state Waqf boards, before the parliamentary panel examining the Waqf (Amendment) Act but drew criticism from the opposition members for its contention that these Muslim bodies can claim any property as theirs.

Sharp words were exchanged during the first session of the meeting between some of the opposition and the BJP members, and the Ar-



chaeological Survey of India faced piercing questions from both sides, sources said.

While the opposition members accused the Culture Ministry, which supervises the and was represented by its

secretary, of "misleading" the panel's members and peddling "WhatsApp university" misinformation with its claim that Waqf Boards can declare ownership over any property.

Sources said the presentation included a list of 53 monuments claimed by Waqf. Some of them were declared as Waqf properties almost a century after they, whose history predates the country's independence, announced them as protected monuments.

One such example on the list is the tomb of Ahmad Shah, a Nizam ruler, in Ahmednagar

in Maharashtra, which the declared as a protected monument in 1909 while it was declared a Waqf property in 2006.

Zakat Foundation of India and Interfaith Coalition for Peace represented by Syed Zafar Mahmood, who is president of both bodies, former Delhi LG Najeeb Jung, retired Lt General Zameer Uddin Shah, also a former AMU vice-chancellor, and Packiam Samuel also deposed before the Joint Committee of Parliament headed by veteran BJP MP Jagdebika Pal. /PTI/

EDITORIAL

"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers."

CHARLES W. ELIOT

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

CLIMATE
EXTREME

MORE THAN 85 per cent of districts in India are exposed to extreme climate events such as floods, droughts and cyclones, according to a new study. The study by IPE Global and Esri India also found that 45 per cent of the districts were experiencing a "swapping" trend, where traditionally flood-prone areas were becoming drought-prone and vice versa.

Using a penta-decadal analysis, the study compiled a catalogue of extreme climate events during a 50-year period from 1973 to 2023, employing spatial and temporal modelling. The last decade alone saw a five-fold increase in these climate extremes, with a four-fold increase in extreme flood events, it said. Districts in eastern India are more prone to extreme flood events, followed closely by the country's northeastern and southern parts. The study also shows there has been a two-fold increase in drought events, especially agricultural and meteorological droughts, and a four-fold increase in cyclone events. It found that more than 60 per cent of districts in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Assam were experiencing more than one extreme climate event.

Abinash Mohanty -- head of climate change and sustainability practice at IPE Global and the study's author -- said, "The current trend of catastrophic climate extremes that makes nine out of 10 Indians exposed to extreme climate events is a result of a 0.6 degree Celsius temperature rise in the last century." "Recent Kerala landslides triggered by incessant and erratic rainfall episodes, floods in Gujarat, the disappearance of Om Parvat's snow cover, and cities getting paralysed with sudden and abrupt downpours is a testament that climate is changed. Our analysis suggests that more than 1.47 billion Indians will be highly exposed to climate extremes by 2036," he said.

The study revealed that more than 45 per cent of districts were experiencing a swapping trend, ie, some flood-prone districts were becoming more susceptible to droughts and vice versa. The number of districts that have transitioned from experiencing floods to facing droughts surpassed those that have shifted from droughts to floods.

Damaged cells and kidney problems

A STUDY shows new insights on how damaged cells interact with disease-infested micro environments following acute kidney injury (AKI). AKI is a serious global health hazard, especially community-acquired AKI (CA-AKI).

In nations like India, the International Society of Nephrology's "0 by 25" slogan, with the goal to eliminate unnecessary fatalities from AKI to zero by 2025 is unachievable, presumably because there is a dearth of information and action to address this pressing public health concern, especially in third world countries that struggle with the most basic of needs, owing to factors like low GDP, income disparity, less access to resources, etc.

A study using a cutting-edge tool called seqFISH, developed by University of South California and Caltech, has found that over 1,000 genes in damaged kidney tissue can be analysed. The researchers identified micro-environments associated with injury and predicted cellular interactions associated with the progression to chronic kidney disease (CKD). This could help identify targets for preventing kidney failure and CKD. Scientists have identified a pathological micro-environments in

the kidney's outermost layer, which they named "ME-5," which contains a proximal tubule cell (PT) -- the cell that filters waste from blood, located in the kidneys, vulnerable to injury. In ME-5, injured PTs and fibroblasts exchange signals promoting inflammation and fibrosis.

Another injury-associated micro-environments, dubbed "ME-16", contains tertiary lymphoid structures -- a place in the body where immune cells gather to fight diseases, contributing to chronic inflammation, distributed throughout the injured organ, which is what makes things worse in patients, because it does not stay in one place only, it spreads to other organs in the vicinity, making things much more debilitated for the patient.

We're ecstatic that advances in technology have made it possible to comprehend kidney illness and injury on a deeper level. The value of interdisciplinary and cross-institutional cooperation in advancing biomedical research is demonstrated by this study, although further experiments like this will help cement this as a reliable treatment, Dr. Long Cai, a Professor of Biology and Biological Engineering at Caltech noted.

Georgia school shooting stirs debate about safe storage laws for guns

DAVID A. LIEB

Just a couple of weeks ago, a special panel of Georgia state senators convened to study potential laws aimed at keeping firearms safely locked up and out of the hands of children. A day after a 14-year-old was charged in a deadly shooting at his Georgia high school, that same panel gathered again Thursday to discuss safe gun storage policies.

The lawmakers are still talking about the issue because -- like many state legislatures across the US -- they have been unable to agree in recent years on whether new gun safety measures provide a solution to the all-too-frequent occurrence of mass shootings at schools and public places.

The Georgia school shooting marked the 30th mass killing in the US so far this year, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University. At least 127 people have died in those killings.

Under federal law, no one younger than 18 can legally purchase a rifle or other long gun from a licensed firearm dealer. Yet authorities say Colt Gray used a semiautomatic assault-style rifle to kill two students and two teachers at Apalachee High School near Winder, just outside of Atlanta. Nine others were injured. His father, Colin Gray, was charged Thursday with second-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter in connection with his son's actions and for "allowing him to possess a weapon," Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Hosey said.

Lawmakers, meanwhile, are wrestling with what to do.

"While we sit here and mourn the families and the kids, what are we doing about it?" state Sen. David Lucas, a Democratic member of the study committee, rhetorically asked. "Are we talking? Or are we doing something to try to make sure that legislation is passed in order to give us some kind of relief when it comes to guns?"

Republican state Sen. Frank Ginn, a panel member whose district includes Apalachee High School, said he agreed that "we need to take some action on things". But Ginn said the focus should be on mental health. "Firearms are not the enemy," Ginn said. "The enemy is the mentally deranged."



FIREARM STORAGE

A recent report by the RAND Gun Policy in America Initiative found supportive evidence that safe gun-storage laws reduce firearm injuries and deaths among youth.

A total of 26 states -- including Democratic-led California and New York and Republican-led Florida and Texas -- have laws requiring gun owners to lock up firearms or penalising them if a child gains access to an unsecured gun, according to Everytown for Gun Safety, a national advocacy group that works to fight gun violence. Georgia is not among them. But Georgia lawmakers have considered a variety of firearms storage proposals.

In February, Georgia's Senate passed legislation that sought to promote safe firearm storage by exempting gun safes and other firearm safety devices from state sales tax. A couple weeks later, the House passed legislation to create a state income tax credit of up to USD 300 for the purchase of gun safes, trigger locks, other firearms security devices or the costs of instructional courses on safe firearms handling.

But neither chamber signed off on the other's approach.

Republican state Rep. Mark Newton, a lead sponsor of the proposed income tax credit, said Thursday that he hopes senators will take a close look at the plan during the 2025 legislative session.

The Senate Safe Firearms Storage Study Committee is considering proposals for next year.

This year's rival bills both "had strong support and demonstrated the desire to incentivise gun safety," Republican state Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, the sponsor of the Senate version, said

Thursday. "I am certain that we will be continuing the conversation next session." Meanwhile, Democrats gained little traction on legislation that would have created a misdemeanor crime for negligently failing to secure firearms accessed by children.

However, in a test case that's being challenged in court, the Democratic-led city of Savannah enacted an ordinance that imposes fines and possibly jail time for people who leave guns inside unlocked cars.

SCHOOL SAFETY

State lawmakers and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp have approved multiple rounds of school security grants in recent years, totalling USD 184 million.

The state budget that began July 1 includes more than USD 100 million in ongoing funding, enough to provide USD 47,000 a year to each public school to address safety needs. Schools can use that for whatever security purpose they believe is most pressing, though Kemp has said previously that he wants it to help underwrite a security officer for each school.

Kemp called the shooting "our worst nightmare." But he declined to discuss what state government could have done differently.

"Look, we've done a tremendous amount on school safety," Kemp told reporters outside Apalachee High School on Wednesday night.

Apalachee High School had recently equipped teachers and staff with wearable panic alert buttons as part of its safety efforts. A school employee used the alert during Wednesday's shooting, automatically summoning authorities to the scene. The school safety

company Centegix said its CrisisAlert system is used at about 12,000 sites nationwide, primarily in K-12 schools.

After numerous high-profile shootings, school security has become a multibillion-dollar industry in the US, with some companies lobbying policymakers to write their particular corporate solutions into state law.

Legislatures in some states, including Iowa, Nebraska and Tennessee, passed laws this year expanding the potential for armed personnel in schools. It's been legal for Georgia school districts to let employees carry guns for years, but very few of the state's 180 districts are known to have enacted such policies. Georgia Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, a Republican, travelled last year to an elementary school in Winder to outline a plan to pay up to USD 10,000 annually to teachers who hold a firearms training certificate and carry guns in schools. But the proposal went nowhere in the Legislature.

RED FLAG LAWS

The teenager charged in the Georgia shooting had previously been interviewed by a sheriff's investigator following a tip from the FBI that the boy, then 13, "had possibly threatened to shoot up a middle school".

The threat was made on Discord, a social media platform popular with video gamers, according to a Jackson County sheriff's report obtained by the AP. The boy denied making the threat and an investigator wrote that no arrests were made because of "inconsistent information" on the Discord account. In some states, concerns about the potential for someone to cause harm with a gun can provide grounds for authorities to temporarily remove firearms from a home. Twenty-one states have extreme risk protection laws, sometimes referred to as red-flag laws. Georgia is not among them.

Resistance to such laws has grown in Republican-led legislatures. After a deadly shooting at a Christian elementary school in Nashville, Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee pushed for a statewide measure that would allow some version of extreme risk protection orders. But the GOP-led Legislature declined to pass it.

An AP analysis found many US states barely use their red flag laws, a trend blamed on a lack of awareness of the laws and resistance by some authorities to enforce them.

Haryana politicians' gimmickry and gumption

RAJBIR DESWAL

In any political discourse in the country, if any reference ever is to be made to crossing floor, or horse trading, the wisecrack "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" has come to gain currency and has evolved itself to the usage to convey an akin political correctness, suggesting the lighter side of a heavy political situation, in the state of Haryana.

Come elections and politicians of all hues in Haryana are found to be at their wittiest best, not only to woo voters, but also to outdo the opponents in their repartee and banter, however illlogical, ill-founded and ill-conceived. The given thing here is presumed to be a fact that the public can be fooled easily.

Sample a Mani Ram Bagri,

an M.P. from Hisar, telling his electorate that the claims of Bansil Lal, another powerful politician of Haryana, to have brought waters to the dry region of the state, had been rendered useless, as "electricity had already been taken out of the waters at Bhakhra Nangal Dam. Also that, Bansil Lal's claim of having brought electricity to the villages is fake since there is no current in the wires on the poles. Worth taking note is the rejoinder by the redoubtable Bansil Lal, that if Mani Ram Bagri had the courage, he should touch these wires and know the truth for himself.

Devi Lal who is touted to be the leader of masses once lured the people saying that once they made him reach Delhi, seat of power, he would turn the currency notes spinning side of the machine with

the Centre, towards Haryana, after which the state shall not remain in penury anymore. When his detractor Bhajan Lal, yet another C.M. defected to the Congress side with thirty-five legislators siding with him, in his quintessential style Devil Lal had dubbed the M.L.A.s as sheep, since they move in one direction "en flock" meaning "en bloc".

Bansil Lal was a man of strong likes and dislikes. To certain reports in the press that he thought were uncharitable to him, he had retorted that the worth a newspaper after one day is not even "char anna" (twenty five paise). He is said to have told a Pakistani diplomat to "tell his Bhutto, that this time the defence minister was Bansil Lal." Grapevine has it that when this issue was raised before Indira Gandhi, she laughed it away saying that

"our defense minister is from Haryana and is just robust in his speaking style." Having won Sanjay Gandhi by his side, by offering land for Maruti Project, in the then Gurgaon, he used to say that he had the calf in his care, and the cow has nowhere else to go leaving it obvious reference was to the mother-son duo. Remember cow and its little one was a symbol of the Indira-congress party then.

Loudmouthing and swash-buckling is the prerogative of politicians in power but the Haryana brand is immensely stentorian. A politician who served a jail term for recruitments boasted that he did it for the youth of the state and for employment! Another one to whom a complaint of corruption was made in Chandigarh told the complainant not to have spent fare upto the

City Beautiful, instead paid the bribe money at this native place only! Yet another, a recent one lamented that his party leader had grabbed a dozen departments and was in an advantageous position to indulge in "loot"! While in the ensuing elections, from different factions' perspective, a party is being seen to be pushed beyond the Yamuna. Enough din is being created to bring the ruling dispensation clean in maths (hisab)-meaning there by to account for. Yet another war cry is on labelling actions of a ruling party as U-turns indulged in and the oldest political party is seen as a divided house. All said and done, wit had to stay for sure.

The author is a retired IPS officer and an advocate who lives in Panchkula

Bhasha Bharati - Voice of India

Brahmi in the 1st Millennium CE: Regional, National, and International Reflections

By the beginning of the 1st CE, Brahmi had evolved into a fully developed script capable of representing Sanskrit and Prakrit, including complex sounds like double and conjunct consonants. While Kharosthi (Aramaic script brought by the Achaemenid Empire) remained dominant in the northwest (now Afg-Pak region) for writing Gandhari Prakrit, Brahmi achieved a pan-Indian presence. The southern variant of Brahmi featured unique characteristics to accommodate the sound variety of the south. Brahmi continued to adopt several features reflecting the socio-cultural attributes under the subsequent dynasties throughout the first millennium CE. As political and

creative activities increased, new features were incorporated into Brahmi, often named after the ruling monarch of that time. Having a single script for formal writing throughout India is an achievement that was never seen again.

During the Kushan period, Brahmi became a popular script. Later, under the Guptas, two styles of Brahmi developed served two purposes - one for stone inscriptions, and another for writing on palm leaves and birch leaves. It seems that there were regional styles of Brahmi as well and whenever it came to the use of Brahmi in the Central Government, the regional styles would assert themselves. This suggests an early emergence of the rise of regional identity that eventually led to the development of

regional scripts for modern Indian languages.

Significantly, in this phase of expansion, Brahmi was brought to Central Asia and employed for writing Khotanese and Tocharian languages. Indian knowledge and wisdom spread internationally through Brahmi. Gradually, it spread to South-East Asia and East Asia. Initially, the use of Brahmi was limited to writing the Sanskrit, although later it was used to write local languages. Brahmi's legacy can be seen in the writing system of Southeast and East Asia. Eventually, the spread of Indian wisdom shows that as an intellectual product, Brahmi was suitable for expressing thoughts of diverse cultures across the boundary.

In Harshvardhan's period, Brahmi was renamed

as Siddhamatrika. Siddhama means-perfected. There was a practice of writing alphasyllabary 'Siddhamastu' (May there be perfection!) as a benediction at the beginning of a composition. Due to this reason, Brahmi of Harshvardhan's period became famous by the name Siddhamatrika. After the demise of Harshvardhan, the once-unified Central Government fragmented into various regional powers. This political fragmentation paralleled a linguistic evolution reflecting geographical, social, and functional subcultures - Siddhamatrika Brahmi script bifurcated into three distinct regional branches - Sarada, Devanagari, and Kutila.

The script of the northwestern region, Sarada, emerged gaining prominence through

the great Sanskrit texts produced in Kashmir. However, the Muslim conquest of Kashmir led to a forced abandonment of Sarada due to the widespread conversion to Islam. Sriharsha script prevailed in the southwest and central India and evolved into Devanagari, which became the standard script for Sanskrit throughout India, eventually symbolizing the nation's linguistic identity. The Gujarati script although a distinct script, is a simplified form of Devanagari. Marathi, a modified form of the southern Brahmi was earlier written in Modi (मोडि). In the eastern regions, from Uttar Pradesh-Bihar to Nepal and Assam, the Kutila script was used. Over time, the languages of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Nepal adopted Devanagari while Bengali, As-

samese, and Oriya developed their unique scripts.

Southern Brahmi developed two distinct script groups - Tamil-Malayalam-Grantha and Telugu-Kannada. Around the fifth century AD, the Tamil language underwent significant simplification leading to corresponding changes in the southern Brahmi script. However, Sanskrit continued to be written in the original Brahmi, which became known as Grantha. Malayalam and Sinhalese (Sri Lanka) alphabets subsequently evolved from Grantha. In contrast, Telugu and Kannada scripts evolved directly from the original southern Brahmi. On the other hand, in the Northeast, Lepcha, and Rong, two variants of Brahmi emerged. In addition to the Brahmi-based native scripts,

the Nastaliq (Perso-Arabic) script remained in use due to the influence of Muslim rule in India. Urdu adopted the Nastaliq script as a corollary, however, attributable to the political impact, Kashmiri and Sindhi also had to adopt the Nastaliq script. Due to the foreign influence, Roman script was employed to write many Tribal Languages. Contemporarily, there is an ever-growing trend to use Roman scripts for writing Indian languages, particularly Hindi, on mobile devices. If this ad hoc Romanization persists, it could potentially compromise the orthography of Hindi/Indian languages.

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D.A.P. SHARMA

EAST, WEST & SOUTH

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SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

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Briefly

MEDIC RAPE, MURDER: BJP SEEKS MAMATA'S RESIGNATION, SAYS FAIR PROBE NOT POSSIBLE IF SHE REMAINS CM



NEW DELHI The BJP on Friday upped the ante against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and demanded that she immediately step down, saying a fair probe into the Kolkata medic rape-murder case was not possible so long as she remained at the helm. The BJP's latest salvo came after the medic's family members, who joined the protesting doctors at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on Wednesday, accused the Kolkata Police of attempting to suppress the case by hastily cremating the body. Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters in Delhi, party national spokesperson and Lok Sabha MP Sambit Patra said the victim's father raised many questions of "paramount importance". /PTI/

ELDERLY MAN KILLED, FIVE INJURED IN BOMB ATTACK IN EX-MANIPUR CM'S HOUSE

IMPHAL An elderly man was killed and five others were injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a residential area of Moirang in Bishnupur district on Friday afternoon, officials said. The rocket which fell on the compound of former chief minister Mairambam Koireng's residence seemed to be an improvised one. It is the second rocket that was fired in the district on Friday. "The elderly man was preparing for some religious rituals in the compound when the bomb exploded. He died on the spot," the official said. Five others, including a 13-year-old girl, were injured in the explosion. The rocket fell at a spot around two km from the INA headquarters. On April 14, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Ali of the Indian National Army (INA) hoisted the Tricolor Flag of free India for the first time on Indian soil under the guidance of INA Supreme Commander Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Moirang. /PTI/

THOUSANDS FORM HUMAN CHAINS IN MANIPUR TO PROTEST DRONE ATTACKS

IMPHAL Thousands of people across five districts of Imphal Valley on Friday formed human chains to protest the recent drone and gun attacks in Manipur that resulted in two civilian deaths and 12 injuries. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the ongoing conflict in the state. Organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COMI), the rally saw school and college students in uniform, as well as women from various localities, lining up along roadsides in Thoubal Bazar, Lilong Chajing in Thoubal district, and Sekmai, Kwakeithel, Singjamei in Imphal West district raising slogans condemning the recent attacks in Koutruk and Senjam Chirang. Protesters carried placards with messages such as "Drone bombing is an act of terrorism," "We condemn Manipur government's timidity," "Take action against Kuki terrorists," "Manipur's territorial and administrative integrity cannot be compromised," and "We want peace; save Manipur," among others. /PTI/

MINOR'S SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE: HC REFUSES BAIL TO WIFE OF SUSPENDED DELHI GOVT OFFICER KHAKHA

NEW DELHI The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to grant bail to the wife of suspended Delhi government officer Premoday Khakha, who allegedly raped a minor girl several times and impregnated her. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma dismissed the bail application of Seema Rani Khakha, saying the case "strikes at the root of trust between two families" and the possibility of influencing witnesses can't be ruled out at this stage. Premoday Khakha has been accused of allegedly raping a minor girl several times between November 2020 and January 2021 and is currently in judicial custody after being arrested in August 2023. The minor was the daughter of a person known to the accused, according to the police. /PTI/



Union Health Minister JP Nadda with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at the newly-constructed regional eye institute, at Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Science, in Patna, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. /PTI/

ED raids houses of ex-RG Kar hospital principal, aides over finance irregularities

KOLKATA The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday detained Prasun Chattopadhyay, a data entry operator at the Calcutta National Medical College and a known associate of arrested ex-RG Kar hospital principal Sandip Ghosh, in connection with alleged financial irregularities at the latter institution, an officer said. Chattopadhyay was seen being taken out of his residence at Subhasgram in South 24 Parganas district around 2 pm by ED officials, who previously conducted search operations at the premises for over seven hours.

He was then taken to Madhya Narayanpur in Canning area at the district where Ghosh had allegedly built a multi-crore farm house-cum-bungalow over a two-bigha plot three years ago and which Ghosh, according to local eyewitnesses, frequented with his family members. Chattopadhyay, who allegedly used to identify himself as "Ghosh's

PA", was also spotted amid the crowd from the purported August 9 video at the RG Kar hospital seminar hall crime scene where the murdered trainee doctor's body was discovered.

The CNMC employee allegedly used sign attendance registers at his official place of work but spent his days with Ghosh's office in RG Kar. "I have replied to all questions of the ED officers," Chattopadhyay told reporters while walking with the agency officials outside his residence. Chattopadhyay denied he was arrested.

His neighbours, mostly women, came outside their homes and were heard shouting the "We Want Justice" slogan even as he was escorted to the agency vehicle by central paramilitary jawans. The ED raids were part of the multipronged and simultaneous search operations in at least nine locations in the city and its suburbs since early Fri-

day morning in connection with the alleged financial misconduct at the RG Kar hospital during Ghosh's tenure as principal, the officer said.

Ghosh and three other associates were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the same case on September 3.

The ED has filed an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) against Ghosh, which is analogous to a First Information Report (FIR) in criminal cases.

Besides Subhasgram, raids were conducted at Ghosh's Beliaghata residence in east Kolkata and at dual apartments belonging to his relatives in Milan Palli area near Airport Gate number 2 in the northern fringes of the city.

In Beliaghata, ED was granted entry to Ghosh's house at 9.30 am after waiting for nearly three hours. Ghosh's wife, who was not at home early morning, opened the locks for the central agency's team. "The charges brought

against my husband are false. His innocence will be proved in due time," she alleged.

ED officers also reached the residences of arrested medical equipment supplier Biplab Sinha and at the house of Kaushik Koley in the same neighbourhood in Sankrail, Howrah. Koley worked as an accountant in Sinha's firm.

At Milan Palli, ED officials began search operations from around 11.30 am at two apartments owned and rented by Ghosh's sister-in-law Arpita Bera and her husband Pritin. Both doctors at government establishments, the Bera couple had rented a second apartment in the complex which Ghosh used to visit, a neighbour said.

An ED official was seen carrying a black trolley bag out of one of the apartments during the course of the raid. Another team of ED officers reached the address of Ghosh's in-laws in Baidyabati in Hooghly around 7 am. /PTI/



Former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, Maharashtra State Excise Minister Shambhuraj Desai, Kadsiddheshwar Maharaj of Kaneri Math, Udaysinh Patil-Undalkar and others during the unveiling of a statue of late senior Congress leader Vilasrao Patil-Undalkar at Karad, in Satara district, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. /PTI/

Mahesh Kumar Goud appointed T'gana PCC prez; BC leader gets key post

HYDERABAD The Congress on Friday appointed B Mahesh Kumar Goud, a backward class leader who rose through the ranks, as the new president of its Telangana unit, replacing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge appointed Goud as the president of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) with immediate effect, AICC General Secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal said in a party statement.

The party appreciates the contribution of outgoing PCC president Revanth Reddy, the statement further said.

Revanth Reddy, who was appointed PCC president in 2021, continued in the post even after becoming the Chief Minister in December last year. Goud, currently serving as Working President (organisation) of TPCC and MLC, has been a Congress activist for more than three decades.

Born in 1966, Goud was the president of National Students' Union of India (NSUI), student wing of the Congress, in his native Nizamabad district between 1986 and 1990 and rose to become the PCC General

Secretary in 2016. Goud's role in managing party affairs as Working President in-charge of organisational affairs won him accolades.

With Goud's appointment as PCC president, the Congress leadership appears to have tried to strike a balance in caste equations. While Revanth Reddy belongs to the OC community of Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is a Dalit leader.

Goud said he is humbled by the faith shown in him by Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in appointing him as the PCC president. In a post on social media platform X, he also thanked Congress activists for their hard work. "Building on the vision set by outgoing president Shri Revanth Reddy Garu and with the guidance of our senior leaders, I look forward to uniting our efforts and taking the party to greater heights in service of Telangana's people," he said. /PTI/

Odisha MP Sujeet Kumar resigns from Rajya Sabha, BJD expels him from party



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar accepts the resignation of Sujeet Kumar from the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), in New Delhi. /PTI/

BHUBANESWAR The BJD on Friday expelled its Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar for "anti-party activities", soon after he tendered his resignation from the Upper House of Parliament. Kumar joined the BJP in Delhi in the presence of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, MP Bhartruhari Mahabata, the party's Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and other senior leaders.

Former Odisha chief minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik, in a statement said: "Sri Sujeet Kumar MP, Rajya Sabha representing the Biju Janata Dal is expelled from the party with immediate effect for anti-party activities. He has let down the party which sent him to Rajya Sabha and hopes and aspiration of people of

Kalahandi." Taking to X, BJD leader Saurabh Srivastava said: "It is disappointing that @SujeetKOfficial has betrayed the trust our Party President @Naveen Odisha Sir. Today, he was expelled from @bjd.odisha... He has let down both our leader and the people of Kalahandi." Kumar, however, said he resigned in the interest of Kalahandi.

"Kalahandi's development suffered during the BJD regime due to rampant corruption. Crores of rupees were looted there. I raised my voice against corruption as nobody listened to me to stop the practice. Some BJD leaders, government officers and others were involved in financial irregularities," he alleged after joining the BJP. Kumar claimed he was "ignored

and sidelined" in the BJD, and "indirectly threatened" to be removed from the party. "It is ridiculous that I was expelled, as I had resigned from the party before the BJD issued the expulsion order," he asserted.

In his resignation letter to the Rajya Sabha chairman, Kumar said he took the decision "consciously". Reacting to the development in the assembly, Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik dubbed Kumar as "selfish".

"He was there in the party till the BJD was in power. The moment the party lost the elections, he fled for better opportunities," Mallik said.

BJD leader Santrupt Mishra in a video message said: "It is unfortunate that Kumar has betrayed the trust of the party and that of the leadership,

which was reposed on him to build Odisha and represent the people of Kalahandi." The party's MLA Kalikesh Singh Deo from Bolangir district, a major part of the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) region to which Kumar belonged, asserted that his absence would have no impact on the party.

"The BJD is in the hearts of 4.5 crore people of Odisha and the party will flourish further," Deo said.

Meanwhile, former Union minister and BJP MP from Balasore, Pratap Sarangi, said before Kumar, Mamata Mohanta had also quit the BJD. She was recently elected unopposed to the Upper House as a BJP MP. "This shows how the leaders feel suffocated in the BJD." /PTI/

SC stays Madras HC order directing TN Ministers Ramachandran and Thenarasu to face trial: DA case

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday imposed an interim stay on Madras High Court order setting aside trial court orders discharging Tamil Nadu Revenue Minister KKSSR Ramachandran and Finance Minister Thangam Thenarasu from disproportionate assets cases. A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and P K Mishra issued notice to the Tamil Nadu government on an appeal filed by the ministers. The matter is posted for hearing after four weeks.

The apex court passed the order after senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the parties in the case, argued that the procedure adopted by the High Court in setting aside the discharge in a suo motu criminal revision was not correct.

The lawyers submitted that the high court, while exercising criminal revision, could not have held that the closure reports filed by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) were

not acceptable. Tamil Nadu Advocate General Pattabhi Sundar Raman submitted that the Tamil Nadu government was planning to file a special leave petition against the order as it interfered with the findings of the DVAC.

Setting aside trial court orders discharging Ramachandran and Thenarasu from disproportionate assets cases, the Madras High Court had on August 7 directed the lower court to frame charges against them. Passing an order on the criminal revision petition, Justice N Anand Venkatesh set aside the orders of the Special Court for MPs and MLAs cases, Virudhunagar, dated July 20, 2023 and December 12, 2022 respectively, discharging Ramachandran and Thenarasu from the disproportionate wealth cases.

The ministers, both senior DMK leaders, have to face trial in the cases registered against them by the DVAC. As prima facie materials were available to frame charges, the Special

Court shall proceed to frame charges and thereafter proceed in accordance with law, the high court had said.

The high court judge said that one of the most striking aspects of the two cases was the meticulous manner in which the DVAC officials colluded with each other to ensure that criminal trials against two sitting ministers were "quietly and indecently buried within the precincts of the Special Court." The high court judge directed Ramachandran to appear before the Special Court on September 9. Thenarasu has to appear before the Special Court on September 11.

The high court judge said as the cases originated in 2011 and 2012, the proceedings of the Special Court shall be conducted on a day-to-day basis keeping in mind the directives of the Supreme Court in Vinod Kumar vs State of Punjab, and disposed as expeditiously as possible. "This Court has not examined or commented upon the merits of the case, which

shall be decided by the Special Court on merits, without being influenced by any of the observations made herein above," the HC judge said.

Narrating various principles, the judge had said, the conclusion was that the orders of the Special Court deserves to be set aside on the short ground that it had committed a manifest jurisdictional error in discharging the accused in the face of relevant material, the correctness of which could not be the subject matter for inquiry at the stage of discharge. Additionally, the very fact that the Special Court has not assigned a shred of independent reasoning was another reason warranting interference in exercise of revisional powers, he had added.

What was evident was a clearly orchestrated plan, the judge had observed.

Once the two ministers were back to power, the DVAC officials decided or were told by their higher ups to find ways and means to ensure that the prosecutions were "torpedoed," he had said. "The perfect plan was thus drawn up. When the three accused persons filed an ostensible written argument, the DVAC, with all sincerity. /PTI/

Heavy rain in Rajasthan's Bhilwara, Bisalpur dam gates opened

JAIPUR Heavy rain battered many places in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district while four gates of the Bisalpur dam, a water lifeline of several districts, were opened on Friday due to good rain received in the state this monsoon season.

As the water level reached the sufficient level, the four gates were opened by Water Resources Minister Suresh Singh Rawat after offering prayers.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma extended his hearty congratulations and best wishes to all people of the state on the Bisalpur dam being fully filled for the seventh time.

Rawat in the morning opened two gates after prayers. In view of the inflow of water, two more gates were opened at 5:30 pm.

Tonk District Collector Dr Saumya Jha said that two gates of Bisalpur Dam, the main source of drinking water supply in Jaipur, Ajmer and Tonk districts, were opened on Friday morning due to the water level reaching sufficient level and two more gates were opened in the evening in view of

the inflow of water. 36,060 cusecs of water is being drained from the four gates of the dam.

The chief minister wrote on X, "It is a matter of great joy and pride that for the first time in the last 26 years, the gates of the dam have been opened in the month of September. Adding to the significance of this historic moment, the gates of the dam were opened only after due worship and traditional rituals, which reflects our rich cultural heritage and respect for nature."

He further said, "I am confident that the availability of this water resource will give new impetus to agriculture and industrial development in the state. Also, it will play an important role in dealing with the water crisis and solving the problem of drinking water." According to the Meteorological Center, Jaipur, heavy rainfall was recorded at some places in Bhilwara district and the highest rainfall of 105 mm was recorded in Shahpura neighbourhood Bhilwara in the 24 hours till 8.30 am on Friday. /PTI/

ASIA

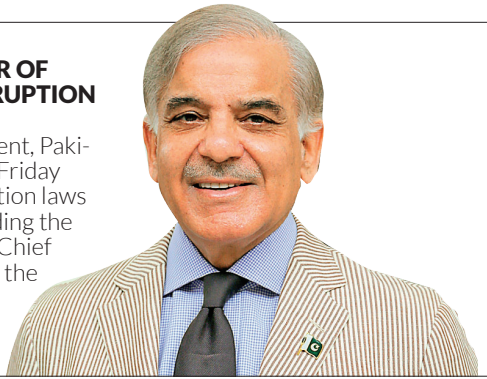
SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

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News
makers

PAKISTAN SUPREME COURT RULES IN FAVOUR OF GOVT TO REINSTATE CHANGES IN ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS

In a major relief to the Shehbaz Sharif-led government, Pakistan's Supreme Court in an unanimous decision on Friday reinstated the changes in the country's anti-corruption laws that had benefited several leading politicians, including the prime minister and his elder brother Nawaz Sharif. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa pronounced the verdict reserved by a five-member bench on June 6 after hearing intra-court appeals (ICAs) filed by the federal government and other parties.



SOUTH KOREA OPEN TO READJUSTING MEDICAL SCHOOL QUOTA

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol is open to readjusting the country's medical school admission quota for 2026 and would welcome it if a negotiating panel is formed between the rival parties, the government and the medical community to discuss the issue, an official said on Friday. The position raises hope for a breakthrough in the prolonged walkout by thousands of junior doctors protesting the government's decision.



SOUTH KOREA GETS NEW DEFENCE MINISTER

President Yoon Suk Yeol approved the appointment of Kim Yong-hyun, former head of the Presidential Security Service, as defence minister and presented a certificate of appointment on Friday, his office said. Kim, a retired three-star Army general and close aide to Yoon, was nominated to the post last month to replace then-minister Shin Won-sik, who has since served as the national security adviser, reported Yonhap news agency.

Briefly

POWERFUL TYPHOON YAGI MAKES LANDFALL IN CHINESE ISLAND PROVINCE AFTER IT SWEEPS BY HONG KONG



HONG KONG A powerful typhoon made landfall on the Chinese tropical vacation island of Hainan Friday after it swept south of Hong Kong, bringing many aspects of life in the region to a halt and forcing about a million people in the country's south to leave their homes. The Hainan province's meteorological service said Yagi - earlier packing winds of up to about 245 kph near its center - made landfall in the province's Wenchang city at around 4:20 pm. It is expected to sweep toward other parts of the island before moving to the Beibu Gulf, it said. China's national meteorological authorities said Yagi was the strongest autumn typhoon to have landed in China. They predicted it would make a second landfall in Xuwen County in neighboring Guangdong province on Friday night. Ahead of the afternoon landfall, nearly 4,20,000 residents were relocated in Hainan, and so were more than half a million people in Guangdong, state media said. / AP /

PRINCE HISAHITO BECOMES THE FIRST ROYAL MALE IN JAPAN TO REACH ADULTHOOD IN 4 DECADES

TOKYO In a big milestone for Japan's royal family, Prince Hisahito turned 18 on Friday, becoming the first male royal family member to reach adulthood in almost four decades. It is a significant development for a family that has ruled for more than a millennium but faces the same existential problems as the rest of the nation - a fast-aging, shrinking population. Hisahito, who is set to become the emperor one day, is the nephew of Japanese Emperor Naruhito. His father, Crown Prince Akishino, was the last to do so, in 1985. Hisahito is the youngest of the 17-member all-adult imperial family, which currently has only four men. His status as the last heir apparent poses a major problem for a system that doesn't allow empresses. / AP /

PAK COURT ORDERS REMOVAL OF SERVING ARMY GENERAL FROM KEY POSITION IN RARE VERDICT

LAHORE In a rare verdict, a Pakistani court on Friday ordered the removal of a serving general of the Pakistan Army from heading a key organisation, which regulates government databases and statistically manages the sensitive registration database of all citizens of the country, stating that his appointment to the position was "unauthorised" and in violation of the rules. The Lahore High Court (LHC) annulled the appointment of National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) Chairman Lieutenant General Munir Afsar on a petition filed by a citizen, Ashba Kamran. In October 2023, Afsar became the first serving military officer to be appointed as Nadra's chairman. / PTI /

YEMENI MILITARY OFFICER KILLED IN ARMED ATTACK DURING PATROL

ADEN A senior officer of the Yemeni military and one of his bodyguards were killed in an armed attack on a routine military patrol in the country's north-eastern province of Marib, said a security official. The security source, requesting anonymity, said that the attack took place near the Safer oil field in Marib when a group of masked gunmen targeted the military patrol from the 107th Infantry Brigade. / IANS /

Japan's leader makes farewell visit to Seoul; reaffirms sympathy for Korean victims



Pope Francis is taken past a guard of honour ahead of his departure from Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Indonesia, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. AP / PTI

SEOUL Less than a month before leaving office, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Seoul and reaffirmed sympathy for the suffering of Koreans during Japan's colonial rule, as he and his South Korean counterpart Friday underscored the need to maintain warming ties between the Asian neighbours.

Since early last year, Kishida and conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol have worked together repair ties badly frayed over grievances stemming from Japan's brutal 1910-45 occupation of the Korean Peninsula. As a result, the two countries revived high-

level talks and withdrew reciprocal economic restrictions imposed due to wrangling over Koreans forced to work for Japanese companies during the colonial period. But now, experts say challenges lie ahead after Kishida's departure.

"It's important to uphold the efforts by our predecessors to overcome difficult periods and cooperate with the Republic of Korea for the future," Kishida said at the start of a meeting with Yoon, according to Yoon's office.

Kishida said he has "strong pains in my heart" over the suffering of victims of forced labour, Yoon's office said, simi-

lar to comments he made last year. On both occasions he avoided a new, direct apology for colonization.

Yoon said "difficult issues" between the two countries remain but he hopes that Seoul and Tokyo will continue their pushes to achieve "a brighter future" for them.

South Korea and Japan, both key US allies in Asia, face same major challenges like the intensifying strategic rivalry between the US and China, North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal and supply chain vulnerabilities.

Their cooperation is also crucial for US efforts to up-

grade its regional alliances in response to increasing Chinese influence and North Korea's nuclear threat.

Kishida said close cooperation between Tokyo and Seoul is essential for regional peace and stability. Yoon said positive momentum for bilateral cooperation is necessary to reinforce a trilateral South Korea-US-Japan partnership.

No big announcement was made after the Yoon-Kishida summit, their 12th. However, the leaders reached an agreement on strengthening cooperation on protecting each other's citizens living in third countries. Kishida's two-day

trip was arranged after he "actively" expressed hope for a meeting with Yoon to end his term on a high note in bilateral relations, South Korean officials say. That shows what legacy Kishida - who is credited with boosting Japan's security and diplomatic partnerships with neighbouring countries but suffered low popularity due to his governing party's political scandals - wants to leave. "Prime Minister Kishida has put his personal political capital on the line to improve relations with South Korea. With President Yoon, Kishida upgraded bilateral diplomatic and security cooperation and elevated trilateralism with the United States" at a summit at Camp David in the United States last year, said Leif-Eric Easley, professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.

"This farewell summit in Seoul is meant to solidify that legacy," he said.

Kishida's visit still drew a bitter reaction from some South Koreans, who have criticised Yoon's government for downplaying Japan's colonial atrocities while trying to appease Tokyo. Yoon's creation of a South Korean corporate fund to compensate former Korean forced labourers without Japanese contributions triggered a massive backlash from his liberal rivals at home.

On Friday, dozens of protesters scuffled with police in downtown Seoul as they rallied in front of a statue of Adm. Yi Sun-shin, a medieval naval hero who is lionized for his role in repelling a Japanese invasion in the 16th century. / AP /

Attempt to revisit Sri Lanka's debt sustainability assessment can derail IMF programme: FM

COLOMBO Any attempt to revisit Sri Lanka's debt sustainability assessment (DSA) can derail the ongoing IMF programme bailout, the finance ministry said on Friday. "Any country can of course stand its ground and refuse to move forward based on the IMF's DSA if it disagrees with the outcomes of the model and the IMF's assessment," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement titled "Clarifications on Debt Restructuring and the Debt Sustainability Analysis".

It added that a standoff in such a scenario would only delay an agreement on a financing programme for several months if not years.

The statement highlighted that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cannot proceed with a financing programme if a country's debt is deemed unsustainable.

The statement comes as Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) front National People's Power (NPP) in its manifesto for the September 21 presidential election said last week that it would work for an alternative debt sustainability analysis and the Washington-based global lender's condition of revenue-based fiscal consolidation. The finance ministry statement asserted that Sri Lanka's agreement with creditors for sovereign debt restructuring needed IMF endorsement "to confirm as the independent actor that the negotiated terms indeed provide the required debt relief to comply with the debt targets".

The ministry's warning on DSA aligns with incumbent president Ranil Wickremesinghe's narrative that the current bail-out programme requirements must persist for Sri Lanka to achieve complete recovery. The opposition parties have heavily criticised Wickremesinghe's steer of the economy since the island nation declared its bankruptcy in April 2022, announcing its first-ever sovereign default. / PTI /

Revival of SAARC spirit can solve many regional problems: Yunus

PRADIPTA TAPADAR / DHAKA

THERE should be a revival of the "spirit of SAARC," Muhammad Yunus, the head of Bangladesh's interim government has said, underlining that the eight-member bloc can solve many of the region's problems. In an interview with PTI at his official residence in Dhaka, Chief Adviser Yunus said that although the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)



was formed with a great cause, it now exists only on paper and is not functioning.

The regional grouping comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Yunus mentioned that he would try to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session scheduled to be held later this month. He also mentioned that he will try to get the heads of

state of SAARC nations together for a photo op.

"Obviously, we will try to meet (Prime Minister Narendra Modi). I will try if all the heads of state of SAARC nations come together and take a photo. SAARC was formed for a great cause; it now exists only on paper and is not functioning. We have forgotten the name of SAARC; I am trying to revive the spirit of SAARC," he said. Prime Minister Modi is likely to address the high-level

UN General Assembly session on September 26, according to a provisional list of speakers issued by the UN. The high-level General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly will take place from September 24-30.

"The SAARC summit has not taken place for quite a long time. If we come together, a lot of problems will be resolved," Yunus said.

Nepal has been making efforts to activate the regional grouping,

which has not been very effective since 2016.

The 2016 SAARC Summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances". The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the Islamabad meet. / PTI /

Singapore jails Gurkha Contingent officers for running unlawful money transfer services

SINGAPORE Five officers from the Gurkha Contingent (GC), Singapore's most trusted police force division, were sentenced to jail terms after they pleaded guilty to operating unlawful cross-border money transfer services, with each man's case involving transactions between SGD 1,03,473 and SGD 2.86 million. They were given jail sentences on Thursday after they pleaded guilty to charges under the Payment Services Act (PSA), The Straits Times reported.

The Gurkha officers from a special unit of the police force are deployed in sensitive areas here.

Officer Sitaram Tamang's case involved over SGD 2.86 million in total and he was sentenced to five months in jail. The 40-year-old had pleaded guilty to a charge under the PSA involving nearly SGD 1.6 million. Three other charges were also considered during sentencing.

Dik Bahadur Gurung, 32, was sentenced to 14 weeks in jail after he pleaded guilty to two charges relating to more than SGD 1 million in total.

Ganga Prasad Rai, 43, pleaded guilty to two charges involving more than SGD 6,00,000 and was sentenced to 10 weeks in jail.

Ashok Kumar Thapa Magar, 39, and Mingmar Sherpa, 44, pleaded guilty to one charge each under the PSA. Mingmar's case involved nearly SGD 4,72,000, and he was sentenced to seven weeks in jail, while Ashok, whose case was linked to more than SGD 1,03,000, was ordered to spend four weeks behind bars. / PTI /

Pope arrives in Papua New Guinea for 2nd leg of his Southeast Asia and Oceania trip

PORT MORESBY (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) Pope Francis arrived in Papua New Guinea on Friday for the second leg of his four-nation trip through Southeast Asia and Oceania, becoming the second pope to visit the poor, strategically important South Pacific nation.

A cannon salute and marching band greeted the 87-year-old pope on the tarmac of the Port Moresby airport as he arrived after a six-hour flight from Jakarta, Indonesia. During the brief welcome ceremony, the pope momentarily lost his balance while maneuvering from his wheelchair to a chair, but his security guards steadied him.

While he was travelling, Indonesian police revealed they had detained seven people from the Java and Sumatra regions on suspicion of making threats on social media of staging suicide bombings during papal events and disrupting the pope's security protocol.

The spokesperson for the Indonesian police's elite counter-terrorism squad, Aswin Siregar, described the threats as primarily a publicity-seeking exercise, but added that the investigation was continuing. Francis' packed three-day Indonesia visit culminated with a jubilant Mass on Thursday afternoon before a crowd of 1,00,000 that filled two sports stadiums and overflowed into a parking lot.



Pope Francis, left, is welcomed by rear-Admiral Philip Polewara as he arrives at Port Moresby's "Jackson" International Airport, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. AP / PTI

"Don't tire of dreaming and of building a civilization of peace," Francis urged them in an ad-libbed homily. "Be builders of hope. Be builders of peace." While in Indonesia, Francis sought to encourage the country's 8.9 million Catholics, who make up just 3 per cent of the population of 275 million, while also seeking to boost interfaith ties with the country boasting the world's largest Muslim population.

In the highlight of the visit, Francis and the grand imam of Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, Southeast Asia's largest, signed a joint declaration pledging to work to end religiously inspired violence and protect the

environment. In Papua New Guinea, Francis' agenda is aligned with more of his social justice priorities. The strategically important Commonwealth nation is home to more than 10 million people, most of whom are subsistence farmers.

John Lavu, the choir conductor at St Charles Luwanga parish in the capital, Port Moresby, said the visit would help him grow stronger in his Catholic faith. "I have lived this faith all my life, but the coming of the Holy Father, the head of the church, to Papua New Guinea and to be a witness of his coming to us is going to be very important for me in my life. / AP /

VIETNAM TO CANCEL OVER 300 FLIGHTS IN RESPONSE TO SUPER TYPHOON YAGI

HANOI Vietnam will cancel more than 330 flights on Saturday, including 240 domestic and 70 international flights, as super typhoon Yagi nears, local media reported. The country will suspend services at four airports -- Noi Bai in the capital Hanoi, Van Don in Quang Ninh, Cat Bi in Hai Phong and Tho Xuan in Thanh Hoa -- during certain hours on Saturday, Xinhua news agency reported, citing local media.

Ten localities forecast to be directly hit by the typhoon in the north, including Hanoi, Hai Phong, Thai Binh, and Ha Nam, will shut schools on Saturday for 5.6 million students. Vietnam has deployed 457,460 military personnel along with more than 10,100 vehicles to combat the super typhoon. Yagi is expected to make landfall on Vietnam's coastline on Saturday, bringing heavy rain of up to 400 mm in volume. The typhoon made landfall in southern China on Friday as it forced more than a million evacuations, shuttered schools and businesses, disrupted travel and raised alarms about the risks of landslides and floods. / IANS /

EUROPE & AUSTRALIA

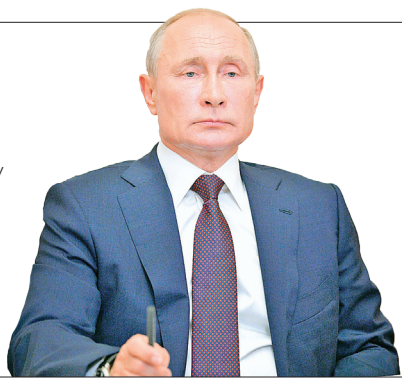
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Newsmakers

PUTIN URGES QUICK ADOPTION OF LAW FOR FAR EAST DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday called on the State Duma (the lower house of parliament) and the government to expedite legislation necessary for establishing international priority development areas (PDAs) in the Far East region. "The first international PDAs are planned to be established here in Primorsky Krai," Putin said at the Eastern Economic Forum plenary session. "They are expected to offer globally competitive conditions for foreign investors, primarily from friendly countries."



UKRAINE APPOINTS NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

The Ukrainian Parliament has voted to appoint Andrii Sybiha as the country's new Foreign Minister, replacing Dmytro Kuleba, according to lawmaker Olexsii Honcharenko. Sybiha won the support of 258 of 315 lawmakers present. Honcharenko said on Thursday on Telegram. Earlier on Thursday, the Parliament voted to dismiss Kuleba, who tendered his resignation on Wednesday, Xinhua news agency reported.



'FEEL FREE TO INTERPRET': PUTIN SPOKESMAN ON 'BACKING' FOR KAMALA HARRIS

A day after Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed a preference for Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, in the upcoming US presidential polls, and praised her "infectious laugh", sparking off a debate about whether he spoke tongue in cheek, his spokesman on Friday said that people were free to interpret his remarks anyway they liked. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said American domestic politics does not figure high on the Russian President's agenda, but that he does comment on international affairs when asked, RT reported.

UN-backed rights experts seek wider arms embargo and 'impartial force'



Mohamed Chande Othman, chair of the of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission, presents its first investigative report to the media during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Friday, Sept. 6, 2024. AP/PTI

GENEVA UN-backed human rights investigators on Friday urged the creation of an "independent and impartial force" to protect civilians in Sudan's war, blaming both sides for war crimes including murder, mutilation and torture and warning that foreign governments which arm and finance them could be complicit.

The fact-finding team, in their first report since being created by the UN's main human rights body last October, also accused the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which are fighting Sudan's army, and its allies of crimes against humanity including rape, sexual slavery and persecution on ethnic or gender grounds.

"The people of Sudan have suffered greatly, and the violations against them must stop. This cannot be done without ending

the fighting," Mohamed Chande Othman, the chair of the team, told a news conference.

The experts called for the expansion of an arms embargo on Sudan's long-restive western Darfur region to the entire country.

The findings from the team mandated by the 47-country Human Rights Council come as more than 10 million people have been driven from their homes – including over 2 million to neighbouring countries – and famine has broken out in one large camp for displaced people in Darfur.

The conflict that erupted in April last year has killed untold thousands of people, and humanitarian groups are struggling to gain access to people in need. In December, the UN Security Council voted to end the world body's political mission in the

country under pressure from the military leadership.

While the killings, displacements and forced starvation have been long known, the call for creation of an independent force marks the latest sign of desperation from rights advocates both within the country and abroad to halt the bloodshed, displacement and food crisis.

"Given the failure of the parties to protect civilians so far, the fact-finding mission recommends the deployment of an independent and impartial force with a mandate to protect civilians in Sudan," the team's report said.

The experts did not specify what might make up that force, nor did they say which countries might be complicit in the crimes through their backing of rival sides. Sudan's military has

accused the United Arab Emirates of supporting the RSF, a claim the Gulf country has denied.

Neighbouring Egypt is among the backers of Sudan's armed forces.

"The fact-finding mission considers that fighting will stop once the arms flow stops," the report said. It called for an immediate end to funneling weapons, ammunition and other support to any side, "as there is a risk that those supplying arms may be complicit in grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law".

The experts focused on a period from January and August this year. They visited three neighbouring countries and took testimonies from over 180 survivors, relatives and witnesses to the conflict that now has spread to 14 of Sudan's 18 states. /AP/

Briefly

BRITISH SIKH GROUP RAISES CONCERN OVER 'FLAWED' DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

LONDON A British Sikh organisation has written to the UK's Deputy Prime Minister to caution against the government incorporating into law a "flawed" definition of Islamophobia as it would jeopardise the factual discussion of the history of the Indian subcontinent and persecution of religious minorities around the world. The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) on Wednesday wrote to Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, who is also the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, after she told Parliament that the newly elected Labour government was "actively considering" its approach to a definition of Islamophobia. Back in 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims had defined Islamophobia as a "type of racism" that targets expressions of Muslimness. "Adoption of this contested definition into law would have serious implications on free speech, not least the ability to discuss historical truths," reads the NSO letter. /AP/

JAPANESE MAN ARRESTED IN BELARUS ON CHARGES OF ACTING AS SPECIAL SERVICES AGENT

TALLINN (ESTONIA) A Japanese man has been arrested in Belarus and is facing charges of working for Japan's special services by photographing military and civilian infrastructure near the border with Ukraine. A report on Belarusian state TV on Thursday said suspect Masatoshi Nakanishi was arrested in July, and faces seven years in prison if convicted. The TV report said Nakanishi took 9,000 photographs of military installations, airfields, railway lines, bridges and other infrastructure in the Belarusian-Ukrainian border area. Nakanishi had lived in Gomel, Belarus' second-largest city, near the border, since 2018 and taught Japanese at a local university, the report said. Belarus has been a staging point for Russian troops in the war in Ukraine, but Belarus has not sent its own troops into Ukraine. The state TV report showed Nakanishi confessing and showing some places he had photographed. Belarusian TV has frequently shown reports of criminal confessions and statements of regret that are widely regarded as made under duress. /AP/

AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES ISSUE WARNING OVER RISING CHILD EXPLOITATION ONLINE

CANBERRA Australian authorities have issued a warning over a rise in the number of children being coerced into producing sexual and violent content online. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) on Friday cautioned parents and guardians over an online trend emerging in Australia involving young victims who are being coerced over the internet to produce extreme content, Xinhua news agency reported. The AFP said that sadistic extortion is a growing type of internet crime where online communities target children as young as 12 and pressure them to self-produce an image or video of an explicit sexual or violent act to gain acceptance into the community. Once the image or video is produced and sent to an offender. /IANS/

WORLD RECORDS HOTTEST AUGUST WITH 2024 POISED TO BE WARMEST YEAR

BRUSSELS August 2024 has tied with August 2023 as the hottest August on record globally, with the average surface air temperature hitting 16.82 degrees Celsius, 0.71 degrees Celsius above the average August temperature from 1991 to 2020, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S). The data also showed that August 2024 was 1.51 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels, marking the 13th time in the past 14 months that the global average surface air temperature has surpassed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a critical threshold set by the Paris Agreement. /IANS/

Zelenskyy meets top military leaders in Germany as the US announces aid to Ukraine

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE (GERMANY) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met Friday with top United States military leaders and more than 50 partner nations in Germany to press for more weapons support Friday as Washington announced it would provide another USD 250 million in security assistance to Kyiv.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the meeting of the leaders was taking place during a dynamic moment in Ukraine's fight against Russia, as it conducts its first offensive operations of the war while facing a significant threat from Russian forces near a key hub in the Donbas.

So far the surprise assault inside Russia's Kursk territory has not drawn away President Vladimir Putin's focus from taking the Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk, which provides critical rail and supply links for the Ukrainian army. Losing Pokrovsk could put additional Ukrainian cities at risk.

While Kursk has put Russia on the defensive, "we know Putin's malice runs deep," Austin cautioned in prepared

remarks to the media before the Ukraine Defence Contact Group met. Moscow is pressing on, especially around Pokrovsk, Austin said.

Recent deadly airstrikes by Russia have renewed Zelenskyy's calls for the US to further loosen restrictions and obtain even greater Western capabilities to strike deeper inside Russia. However, the meeting Friday was expected to focus on resourcing more air defence and artillery supplies and shoring up gains on expanding Ukraine's own defence industrial base, to put it on more solid footing as the final days of Joe Biden's US presidency wind down. Zelenskyy said he would continue to press for the long-range strike capability. "Strong long-range decisions by partners are needed to bring the just peace we seek closer," Zelenskyy said Friday on Telegram.

Western partner nations were working with Ukraine to source a substitute missile for its Soviet-era S-300 air defence systems, Austin said. The US is also focused on resourcing a variety of air-to-ground mis-

siles that the newly delivered F-16 fighter jets can carry, including the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, which could give Ukraine a longer-range cruise missile option, said Bill LaPlante, the Pentagon's top weapons buyer, who spoke to reporters travelling with Austin.

No decisions on the munition have been made, LaPlante said, noting that policymakers would still have to decide whether to give Ukraine the longer-range capability.

"I would just put JASSM in that category, it's something that is always being looked at," LaPlante said. "Anything that's an air-to-ground weapon is always being looked at." For the past two years, members of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group have met to resource Ukraine's mammoth artillery and air defence needs, ranging from hundreds of millions of rounds of small arms ammunition to some of the West's most sophisticated air defence systems, and now fighter jets. The ask this month was more of the same – but different in that it was in person. /AP/

The Dutch govt is expanding export restrictions for processor chip machines

THE HAGUE The Dutch government is expanding export restrictions on equipment used to make advanced processor chips that can be integrated into weapons systems, a Cabinet minister announced Friday, citing security risks. Dutch company ASML, one of the world's leading makers of chip machines, already faced export restrictions on other machines ahead of the announcement. The measures are seen as part of a U.S. policy that aims at restricting China's access to materials used to make chips, which can be used in military technology.

The new measure means the company will have to apply for government authorization whenever it wants to export deep ultraviolet lithography equipment to buyers outside the European Union, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Reinette Klever said in a statement.

"I've made this decision for reasons of security. We see that technological advances have given rise to increased security risks associated with the export of this specific manufacturing equipment, especially in the current geopolitical context," Klever said.

ASML said in a statement that the measure "will harmonize the approach for issuing export licenses" and said it "is not expected to have any impact on our financial outlook for 2024 or for our longer-term scenarios." /AP/

GOOGLE IS BLASTED BY UK WATCHDOG FOR WHAT IT CALLS ANTI-COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGH DIGITAL ADS



GOOGLE was slammed on Friday by UK regulators who say it's taking advantage of its dominance in digital advertising to thwart competition in Britain, ratcheting up pressure that the tech giant is facing on both sides of the Atlantic over its "ad tech" business practices.

Britain's Competition and Markets Authority said the US company gives preference to its own services to the detriment of online publishers and advertisers in Britain's 1.8 billion pound (USD 2.4 billion) digital ad market. The watchdog levelled its accusations after an investigation, and the findings could potentially lead to a fine worth billions of dollars or an order to change its behaviour.

Google is a major player throughout the digital ad ecosystem, providing servers for publishers to manage ad space on their websites and apps, tools for advertisers and media agencies to buy display ads, and an exchange where both sides come together to buy and sell ads in real time at auctions.

"We've provisionally found that Google is using its market power to hinder competition when it comes to the ads people see on websites," the watchdog's interim executive director of enforcement, Juliette Enser, said in a press release.

The watchdog's charges, known as a statement of objections, arrive two years after it opened its investigation. Google's digital ad business is also the focus of a European Union antitrust investigation and a US Justice Department lawsuit that's set to go to trial this month.

The CMA said that Google's "anti-competitive" conduct is ongoing, but the company disputed the allegations on Friday. "Google remains committed to creating value for our publisher and advertiser partners in this highly competitive sector," the company said in a prepared statement. "The core of this case rests on flawed interpretations of the ad tech sector. We disagree with the CMA's view and we will respond accordingly." The UK watchdog alleged Google has been exploiting its dominance since 2015 to strengthen the market position of its own AdX ad exchange and protect it from rivals. AdX is where Google charges the highest fees in the ad tech system, taking about 20 per cent of the amount from bids, the CMA said.

The regulator's accusations include charges that Google manipulates advertiser bids so they have higher value when they go into AdX auctions than rival exchanges. AdX also gets to bid first in auctions run by Google's publisher ad server, potentially shutting out rivals from the chance to bid, the watchdog said. Google now has the chance to reply to the charges. The CMA said it's considering what is needed to make sure Google ceases the anti-competitive practices. It has the power to impose a fine worth up to 10 per cent of a company's annual worldwide revenue. /AP/

Telegram CEO defends himself in first public comments

PARIS Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov promised to step up efforts to fight criminality on the messaging app, his first public comments since French authorities handed him preliminary charges for allegedly allowing the platform's use for criminal activity.

In a Telegram post late Thursday, Durov defended himself against the French judicial investigation, suggesting that he shouldn't

have been targeted personally.

"Using laws from the pre-smartphone era to charge a CEO with crimes committed by third parties on the platform he manages is a misguided approach," the post said. "Building technology is hard enough as it is. No innovator will ever build new tools if they know they can be personally held responsible for potential abuse of those tools."

While insisting that Tele-

gram is not "some sort of anarchic paradise," Durov said surging numbers of Telegram users "caused growing pains that made it easier for criminals to abuse our platform." "That's why I made it my personal goal to ensure we significantly improve things in this regard. We've already started that process internally, and I will share more details on our progress with you very soon," he said. French investigators detained Du-

rov at Le Bourget airport outside Paris in late August and questioned him for four days as part of a sweeping probe opened earlier this year. Released on 5 million euros bail, Durov has to report to a police station twice a week. Russia-born, he has amassed multiple citizenships, including French.

French allegations against Durov include that Telegram is used for child sexual abuse material and drug trafficking, and that the

platform refused to share information or documents with investigators when required by law.

In his post, Durov said that while in police detention, "I was told I may be personally responsible for other people's illegal use of Telegram, because the French authorities didn't receive responses from Telegram." "This was surprising for several reasons," he added. He said Telegram has an official representative. /AP/

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Hungary signals it's serious about sending buses of asylum seekers to EU headquarters

BUDAPEST (HUNGARY) Hungary's anti-immigrant government signaled Friday that it is serious about implementing a plan to provide asylum seekers free one-way travel to Brussels, a measure meant to pressure the European Union into relenting on heavy fines against the country for its restrictive asylum policies.

At a news conference in the capital Budapest, State Secretary Bence Retvari claimed the EU wanted to force Hungary to allow "illegal migrants" across its borders, and said the country would "offer these illegal migrants, voluntarily, free of charge, one-way travel to Brussels." Backdropped by a row of passenger buses with illuminated signs reading "Roszke-Brussels" – a route that would take migrants from Hungary's southern border with Serbia to the EU headquarters in Belgium – Retvari said the transport would be conducted "after the implementation of the European procedure," but did not detail what status the asylum seekers would have

upon being transported. "If Brussels wants illegal migrants, Brussels can have them," he said.

The provocative proposal to bus migrants to Brussels, which echoes similar moves taken earlier by right-wing Republican governors in the United States, comes in response to a June ruling by the European Court of Justice that ordered Hungary to pay a fine of 200 million Euros (USD 216 million) for persistently breaking the bloc's asylum rules, and an additional 1 million Euros per day until it brings



its policies into line with EU law. The bloc takes issue with Budapest for forcing people seeking international protection to travel to Hungarian embassies in Serbia or Ukraine to apply for a travel permit, violating EU rules that oblige all member countries to have common procedures for granting asylum.

The government of nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has said it will file legal proceedings against the EU over the fines, and has demanded compensation for the billions it says it has spent on border protection including the construction of fences protected by razor wire on its southern borders with Serbia and Croatia.

Orbán, a consistent opponent of the EU on issues ranging from immigration to foreign policy to support for Ukraine, has cast his long-serving government as a defender of Europe's Christian culture, and has come under fire for comments saying Hungary did not want to become a "mixed race" nation. /AP/

CANADA & USA

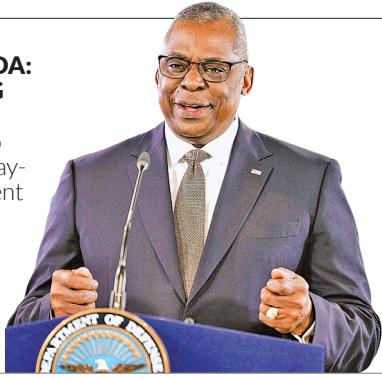
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News
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AMERICAN COMPANY, RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA: NEW KREMLIN TACTIC REVEALS ESCALATING EFFORT TO SWAY US VOTE

Russia has long sought to inject disinformation into U.S. political discourse. Now, it's got a new angle: paying Americans to do the work. This week's indictment of two Russian state media employees on charges that they paid a Tennessee company to create pro-Russian content has renewed concerns about foreign meddling in the November election while revealing the Kremlin's latest tactic in a growing information war.



NEW YORK SEEKING TO CHARGE HARVEY WEINSTEIN WITH MORE SEX CRIMES AS BRITAIN DROPS ITS CASE

Spared from prosecution in Britain on Thursday, Harvey Weinstein now faces the prospect of a new indictment in New York, where prosecutors are retrying the disgraced movie mogul's rape case as taking steps to potentially charge him with up to three additional sex assaults. Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, which authorised two charges of indecent assault against Weinstein in 2022, announced that it decided to discontinue the proceedings because there was "no longer a realistic prospect of conviction".



NEPAL PM OLI TO VISIT USA ON HIS FIRST FOREIGN TRIP

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli will be embarking on his maiden foreign visit to the USA to take part in the UN General Assembly, breaking the tradition of visiting a neighbouring country first. The date of his departure has not yet been announced. A cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Oli on Thursday endorsed his visit to the USA, government-run Gorkhapatra daily reported quoting a senior cabinet minister. The 79th UN General Assembly will be held in New York from September 10 to 28.

Trump in court as lawyers fight to overturn verdict in E. Jean Carroll sex abuse suit



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at the Economic Club of New York, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024, in New York. AP/PTI

NEW YORK Veering from the campaign trail to court, Donald Trump watched Friday as one of his lawyers fought to overturn a verdict finding the former president liable for sexual abuse and slander. Trump walked into a federal appeals court quietly and passed right in front of his accuser, writer E. Jean Carroll, who was already seated at her table. He did not acknowledge her or look at her.

Attorney D. John Sauer told 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals judges that the civil trial in Carroll's lawsuit was muddled by improper evidence. "This case is a textbook example of implausible allegations being propped up by highly inflammatory, inadmissible" evidence, Sauer said, noting that the jury was allowed to consider such items as the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape in which Trump boasted years ago about grabbing women's genitals.

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, said the evidence in question was proper, and that there was plenty of proof in the nearly two-week-long trial of Carroll's claim that Trump attacked her in a luxury department store dressing room decades ago.

"E. Jean Carroll brought this case because Donald Trump sexually assaulted her in 1996, in a dressing room at Bergdorf Goodman, and then defamed her in 2022 by claiming that she was crazy and made the whole thing up," Kaplan said. The three-judge panel didn't immediately rule on Trump's appeal of a jury's finding that he sexually abused Carroll. Trump denies it. That jury awarded Carroll USD 5 million. Trump's lawyers say the jury's verdict should be tossed because evidence was allowed at trial that should have been excluded and other evidence was excluded that should have been permitted. /AP/



President Joe Biden waves as he walks toward Air Force One at La Crosse Regional Airport in La Crosse, Wis., Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024, after visiting Westby, Wis., for an event to promote his Investing in America agenda. AP/PTI

Teen charged in a deadly shooting at Georgia high school appears in court

WINDER (US) The father of the 14-year-old suspect in the deadly shooting at a Georgia high school will remain jailed without bail after a Friday morning hearing. Colin Gray's hearing came shortly after a court appearance for his son, Colt Gray, who's accused of killing four people in a shooting at Apalachee High School. The teen will also remain in detention.

The 14-year-old suspect in a shooting at a Georgia high school that killed four people will stay in detention as his lawyer declined to seek bail at a Friday morning court hearing. After the hearing, Colt Gray was escorted out in shackles at the wrists and ankles in khaki pants

and a green shirt. The judge then called Colt Gray back to the courtroom to correct an earlier misstatement that his crimes could be punishable by death. Because he's a juvenile, the maximum penalty he would face is life without parole. The judge also set another hearing for December 4.

Friday's hearing comes a day after the teen's father was also arrested for allowing his son to have a weapon.

According to arrest warrants obtained by The Associated Press, Colt Gray is accused of using a semiautomatic assault-style rifle to kill two students and two teachers at Apalachee High School in Winder, outside At-

lanta. Nine people were also hurt in Wednesday's attack. Authorities have not offered any motive or explained how Gray obtained the gun or got it into the school.

The teen's father, Colin Gray, 54, was charged Thursday in connection with the shooting, including with counts of involuntary manslaughter and second-degree murder, Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Hoesy said.

"His charges are directly connected with the actions of his son and allowing him to possess a weapon," Hoesy said. Colin Gray's first court appearance also was set for Friday. It's the latest example of prosecutors holding par-

ents responsible for their children's actions in school shootings.

In April, Michigan parents Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first convicted in a US mass school shooting. They were sentenced to at least 10 years in prison for not securing a firearm at home and acting indifferently to signs of their son's deteriorating mental health before he killed four students in 2021.

Before Colin Gray's arrest was reported, the AP knocked on the door of a home listed for him seeking comment about his son's arrest. Court records early Friday didn't indicate whether either had a lawyer yet ahead of their court hearings. Colt Gray

was charged as an adult with four counts of murder in the deaths of Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14, Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53.

A neighbour remembered Schermerhorn as inquisitive when he was a little boy. Aspinwall and Irimie were both math teachers, and Aspinwall also helped coach the school's football team. Irimie, who immigrated from Romania, volunteered at a local church, where she taught dance.

Before Colt Gray's hearing at the Barrow County courthouse, court workers set out boxes of tissue along courtroom benches, and relatives. /AP/

INDIA-US PARTNERSHIP TO GROW REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: MUKESH AGHI



USISPF President and CEO Mukesh Aghi in conversation with PTI, in Washington, DC. /PTI

LALIT K JHA / WASHINGTON

THE INDIA-US relationship would continue its upward trajectory regardless of who wins the presidential elections, USISPF president and CEO Mukesh Aghi said, underlining that the contest between Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump was "too close to call". The geopolitical alignment between the two countries is very strong, Aghi said in an interview with PTI on Thursday.

"What are the implications, regardless of who comes in? I think India stays critical to US geopolitical ambitions. That is trying to contain the rise of aggressive China. It also serves India's interest. That it has a partner to deal with a neighbour who will never accept India as an equal partner.

"The alignment geopolitically is very, very strong between the two countries. So, regardless of who comes in, either Trump or Kamala Harris, the partnership will continue to go in that direction," he said. The US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) chief said the elections are "very, very close" at the moment.

Even though the momentum has "shifted in favour of" Harris, "it is too close to call, especially when you have an electoral college and we expect around 40,000 votes to make a difference among the swing states itself".

Amidst tension between the US and China, the American corporate sector is looking at de-risking that supply chain, Aghi said.

"Yes, you have countries like Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand providing but nothing can provide the scale India can provide. So, India becomes critical in the de-risking of the supply chain. But more importantly, India also becomes a market for a lot of these companies," he said. /PTI/

Briefly

IRANIAN, BAHRAINI FMS VOW TO CONTINUE BILATERAL POLITICAL TALKS

TEHRAN Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi and his Bahraini counterpart, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, have highlighted the necessity to continue political talks between the two countries. In a phone call, the Bahraini Foreign Minister congratulated Araghchi on his recent appointment as Iran's Foreign Minister and noted the significance of ties with Iran for his country, according to a statement released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Thursday. Al Zayani also expressed his hope that bilateral political talks would be promoted during the new Iranian administration's term, Xinhua news agency reported. Araghchi, for his part, said that expanding relations with neighbours was among the Iranian administration's main priorities, calling for the continuation of bilateral talks and discussions within the framework of the agreements between the two countries. In late June, Iran and Bahrain announced in a joint statement that they had agreed to start talks on the resumption of bilateral political relations. /IANS/

AFRICA CDC WARNS OF RISING MPOX CASES AS DEATH TOLL REACHES 643

ADDIS ABABA A total of 24,851 suspected mpox cases, including 5,549 confirmed cases and 643 deaths, have been reported across the African continent since the beginning of 2024, said Jean Kaseya, director general of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), during an online press briefing on Friday. Kaseya warned of an "upward trend" in mpox cases across Africa, Xinhua news agency reported. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). /IANS/

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

A fire in a school in Kenya kills 17 students and seriously burns 13 others

NAIROBI (KENYA) A fire in a school dormitory in Kenya killed 17 students and seriously burned 13 others, police said on Friday. There are fears that the death toll may rise, police said. The cause of the fire Thursday night at Hillside Enderasha Primary in Nyeri county was being investigated, police spokesperson Resila Onyango said. The school caters to children up to the age of 14.

Nyeri County Commissioner Pius Murugu and the education ministry reported that the dormitory that caught fire housed more than 150 boys. Since most of the buildings are built with wood planks, the fire spread very fast.

The school, which has 824 students, is located in the country's central highlands, 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the capital, Nairobi, where wooden structures are common.

Anxious parents who had been unable to trace their children among survivors waited at the school, engulfed with grief. President William Ruto called the news "devastating". "I instruct relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate this horrific incident. Those responsible will be held to account," he wrote on the social media platform X.

His deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, urged school administrators to ensure that safety guidelines recommended by the education ministry for boarding schools are being followed. School fires are common in Kenyan boarding schools, often due to arson fuelled by drug abuse and overcrowding, according to a recent education ministry report. Many students stay at school because parents believe it gives them more time to study without long commutes. Some fires have been started by students during protests over the workload or living conditions. In 2017, 10 high school students died in a school fire started by a student in Nairobi. /AP/

Israeli forces appear to withdraw from Jenin but the operation may not over

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP (WEST BANK) Israeli forces appeared to have withdrawn from three refugee camps in the occupied West Bank by Friday morning, after a more than weeklong military operation that left dozens dead and a trail of destruction. Overnight, Israeli armoured personnel carriers were seen leaving the Jenin refugee camp from a checkpoint set up on one of the main roads, and an Associated Press reporter inside the camp saw no evidence of any remaining troops inside as dawn broke early Friday morning.

During the operation, Israeli military officials said they were targeting militants in Jenin, Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camps in an attempt to curb recent attacks against Israeli civilians they say have become more sophisticated and deadly. Troops were pulled out of the Tulkarem camp by Friday morning and had left Al-Faraa earlier, but in a statement the Israeli military suggested the operation was not yet over. "Israeli security forces are continuing to act in order to achieve the objectives of the counterterrorism operation," the military said in a statement.

Hundreds of Israeli troops have been involved for more than a week in what has been their deadliest operation in the occupied West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began, employing what the United Nations called "lethal war-like tactics". The main focus has been the Jenin refugee camp, a stronghold of Palestinian militancy that has grown since the Hamas attack on Israel that started the war in Gaza

nearly 11 months ago. Fighting in Jenin accounts for 21 of 39 Palestinians who local health officials say have been killed during the Israeli push in the West Bank - most of whom, the military says, have been militants. The fighting has had a devastating effect on Palestinian civilians living in Jenin. Water and electric services have been cut, families have been confined to their homes and ambulances evacuating the wounded have been slowed on their way to nearby hospitals, as Israeli soldiers search for militants.

During the operation, Israeli forces sent military bulldozers into the camp, ripping up roads in search of buried explosives. When asked by an AP reporter about the infrastructure damage caused to the Jenin camp, an Israeli military official acknowledged the destruction but said it was a result of a militant strategy planting explosives in civilian areas. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with military regulations.

In the quiet morning Friday, Jenin residents took advantage of the lull to rummage through the rubble of destroyed buildings and take stock of the damage. Twisted rebar protruded from the concrete of collapsed buildings, and walls still standing were pockmarked by bullets and shrapnel. In the Tulkarem camp, resident Ziad Abu Tahoun looked with dismay at the torn up streets and crumbled buildings all around him.

"Look at the condition of the camp, the camp is in a deplorable state," he said. "They've set

us back 60 years." In southern Gaza, health workers resumed vaccinating children against polio, continuing the second phase of a large-scale immunisation campaign. Children lined up early in the morning outside a United Nations health centre in Khan Younis to receive the vaccine, which was being administered by local health care crews in coordination with UNICEF and the World Health Organisation.

The first phase started Sunday in hospitals and medical locations in the central Gaza Strip. The final phase was to focus on the north, finishing September 9.

The operation was undertaken as an urgent measure to prevent a large-scale polio outbreak after health officials confirmed the first reported polio case in 25 years, in a 10-month-old boy who is now paralysed in the leg.

The WHO reached an agreement with Israel for limited pauses in the fighting to allow for the vaccination campaign to take place. In all, the WHO hopes to be able to vaccinate 640,000 Palestinian children in Gaza against polio. The war in Gaza began when Hamas and other militants staged a surprise attack on Israel on October 7, killing around 1,200 people, primarily civilians. Hamas is believed to still be holding more than 100 hostages. Israeli authorities estimate about a third are dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. /AP/

ISRAELI SOLDIERS SHOOT & KILL AMERICAN WOMAN DURING WEST BANK PROTEST, WITNESS SAYS

NABLUS Israeli soldiers killed an American woman participating in an anti-settlement protest in the West Bank on Friday, another protester who witnessed the shooting told The Associated Press. Two doctors said she was shot in the head. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller confirmed the death of the 26-year-old woman but did not say whether she had been shot by Israeli troops. He said the US was gathering more information about the circumstances of her death and would have "more to say." He and the doctors who treated her released the woman's name, but the activist organisation she was volunteering with, the International Solidarity Movement, said her family had asked she not be identified.

The Israeli military said it was looking into reports that troops had killed a foreign national while firing at an "instigator of violent activity" in the area of the protest.

The woman who was fatally shot was attending a weekly demonstration against settlement expansion, protests that have grown violent in the past: A month ago, American citizen Amado Sison was shot in the leg by Israeli forces, he said, as he tried to flee tear gas and live fire.

Jonathan Pollak, an Israeli who was also participating in the protest, said the shooting occurred shortly after dozens of Palestinians and international activists held a communal prayer on a hillside outside the northern West Bank town of Beita overlooking the Israeli settlement of Evyatar.

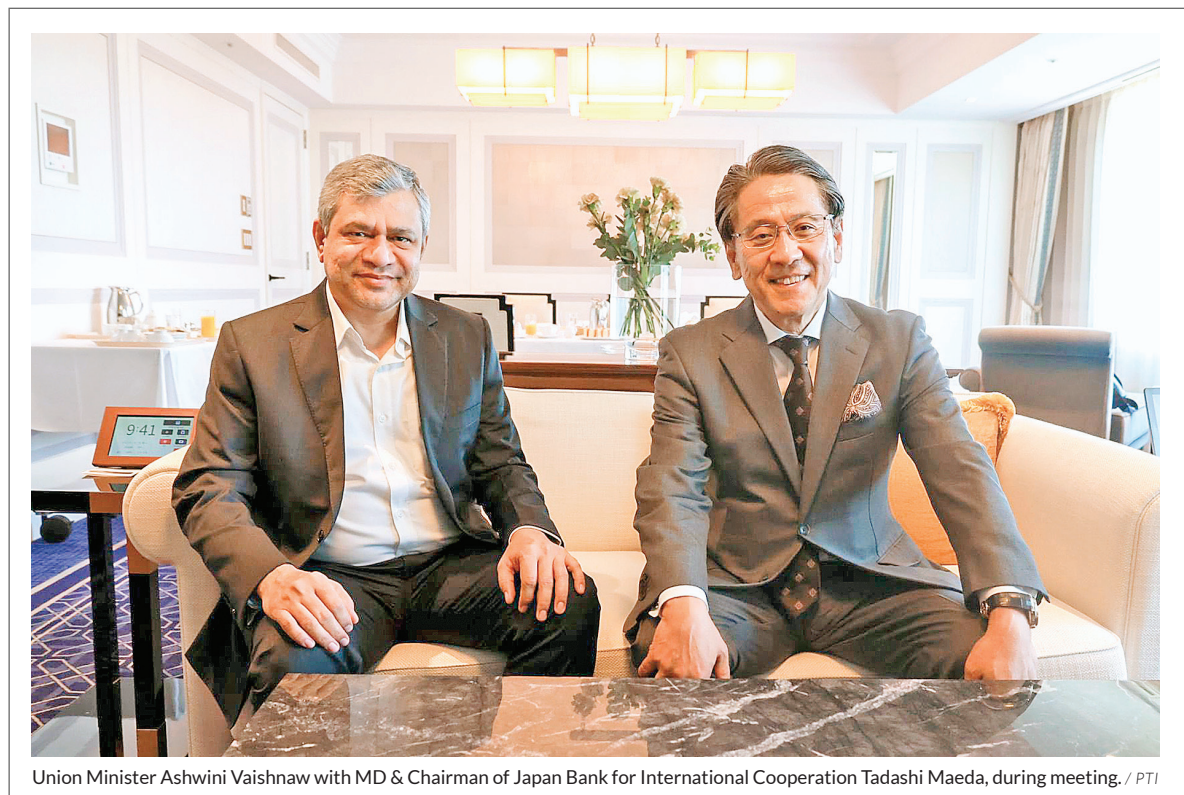
Soldiers surrounded the prayer, and clashes soon broke out, with Palestinians throwing stones and troops firing tear gas and live ammunition, Pollak said.

The protesters and activists, including Pollak and the woman, retreated from the hill and the clashes subsided, he said. He then watched as two soldiers standing on the roof of a nearby home trained a gun in the group's direction and shot at them. He saw the flares leave the nozzle of the gun when the shots rang out. /AP/

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SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

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Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw with MD & Chairman of Japan Bank for International Cooperation Tadashi Maeda, during meeting. / PTI

Adani Group plans \$10 bn semi conductor project with Israel

MUMBAI The Adani Group plans to invest Rs 83,947 crore (USD 10 billion) with Israeli partner Tower Semiconductor in setting up a chip manufacturing plant in Maharashtra, the state chief minister said. The conglomerate led by billionaire Gautam Adani has businesses ranging from seaports to airports, renewable energy, gas, commodities, data centres and media, and this will be its maiden foray into semiconductor manufacturing.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, in a post on X that listed projects approved by the state cabinet's sub-committee on Thursday, said the Adani-Tower will set up the chip manufacturing facility at Talaja on the outskirts of Mumbai.

Without giving timelines, he said the project will manufacture 40,000 wafers (a thin slice of semiconductor material that is used in fabricating integrated circuits) per month in Phase I and 80,000 wafers per month after Phase II.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde also posted about the approval on X. The government has been pushing for setting up semiconductor units in the country to cut reliance on imports. India's semiconductor market is expected to be worth USD 63 billion by 2026.

The chips manufactured at the upcoming facility of Adani will be used in drones, cars, smartphones and other mobility solutions.

Tower has chip-making factories in Israel, Italy and the US. Its sales are,

however, a fraction of industry giants Intel and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.

Tata Group is setting up semiconductor units in Assam and Gujarat, which will every month produce 50,000 of the so-called mature chips - using 40-nanometer or older technology - that are still widely used in consumer electronics, automobiles, defence systems and aircraft.

In all, the Maharashtra government gave approval to four high technology mega projects, which entail a cumulative investment of Rs 1.17 lakh crore and with the potential of creating 29,000 jobs in Marathwada, Vidarbha, Pune and Panvel near Mumbai.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the cabinet sub-committee of the industries department on Thursday evening, officials said.

The projects would result in investment in sectors like semiconductors and electric vehicle manufacturing, a statement from the chief minister's office (CMO) on Friday said, adding that it would help Maharashtra get the identity of a leader state in the EV sector.

These projects would help develop a strong local supply chain and give a major boost to technical innovation, research and development, Shinde said.

"It would help micro-small and medium industry stakeholders and also enable the local labour force to get training and skill development opportunities, which would raise employability

and the skill bar needed for upcoming technologies," he said.

As per the statement, Tower Semiconductor company and Adani Group would jointly launch a mega semiconductor manufacturing project at Panvel in the neighbouring Raigad district, with an investment of Rs 58,763 crore in the first phase and Rs 25,184 crore in the second phase. The total investment will be Rs 83,947 crore, and it would generate employment for 15,000 persons.

An electric vehicle manufacturing project of Skoda Auto Volkswagen India, with an investment of Rs 12,000 crore, will be set up in Pune, and it would provide employment to 1,000 persons. The CMO statement said Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar would be the location for a mega electric vehicle manufacturing project of Toyota Kirloskar Motor Company. This project would have an investment of Rs 21,273 crore and result in the generation of 12,000 jobs.

The MSME sector in Marathwada, of which Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar is a part, would benefit from this project, while the use of EVs will reduce greenhouse gases, the statement added. "Under the textile policy, Raymond Luxury Cottons would set up a mega-project at Amravati for manufacturing products through spinning, yarn dyeing, weaving jute, weaving cotton, jute, mesta and cotton. This project would come up at Nandgaon Peth MIDC with an investment of Rs 188 crore. / PTI /

Congress levels fresh conflict of interest charges against SEBI chief, asks why PM is not acting

NEW DELHI Levelling more conflict of interest allegations against SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, the Congress on Friday claimed that she received rental income from an entity affiliated with a company that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases, including that of insider trading. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the question really had to be asked of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and no one else on how much more evidence was needed to show the collapse of transparency and integrity, as far as the capital markets regulator was concerned.

"By the NSE's data, there are now 10 crore Indians with unique PANs who have some form of investment in this market. Don't they deserve better? Why does he not move? What is he afraid of?" Ramesh said in a post on X.

The Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said that between 2018 and 2024, Buch -- as a whole-time member and later chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) -- had been receiving rental income amounting to Rs 2.16 crore from "Carol Info Services Limited", a company affiliated to Wockhardt Limited. Wockhardt Limited was being investigated by SEBI for various cases, including that of insider trading during 2023, he said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters in Delhi.

Khera asserted that this was an outright case of corruption that invoked conflict of interest, violating sections 4, 7 and 8 of SEBI's 2008 code on conflict of interests for members of its board.

"The SEBI chairperson was appointed on March 2, 2022, by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, which the prime minister heads. Was her appointment cleared on the condition that she could maintain her previous financial relationships, provided she acted in line with the wishes of the prime minister and his close associates?" the Congress leader asked.

Previous SEBI chairpersons went to great lengths to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, both in their roles at SEBI and in their earlier positions, he pointed out. "For instance, M Damodaran sold his 50 SBI shares when he took

over UTI in 2001, and CB Bhavne recused himself from all matters involving the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL), where he was formerly chairman. In contrast, Ms Buch merely transferred her investments to her spouse, which raises concerns about credibility," Khera said. He asked why there was no effort to verify whether Buch would follow these established standards.

"Or was this lack of scrutiny part of a mutually beneficial arrangement?" Khera asked. "If the head of the regulatory body is compromised, then that head becomes pliable. Perhaps that was the objective," the Congress leader said.

Khera said he was challenging the SEBI chief to come out and deny the charges against her. The Congress had on Thursday demanded an independent inquiry into the matter, asserting that it was in the national interest to have a probe as foreign investors were getting concerned and there were doubts about the integrity of India's stock markets.

The opposition party on Monday also levelled conflict of interest allegations against SEBI Chairperson Buch and asked Modi to come clean as the head of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on her appointment.

The opposition party had said the Supreme Court should take cognisance of these fresh revelations and demanded that the SEBI chairperson be dismissed immediately. The Congress had alleged that since the current SEBI chairperson took office in 2017, she was not only drawing a salary from SEBI but had also been holding an office of profit at ICICI Bank, continuing to receive income from it.

Subsequently, ICICI Bank said it had not paid any salary or granted ESOPs to Buch after her retirement on October 31, 2013, as alleged by the Congress.

The Congress, in turn, questioned ICICI Bank's assertion that it had not paid any salary or granted ESOPs to the SEBI chairperson after her retirement and asked that if the amount paid to her was her "retiral benefit", why it was non-uniform -- both in terms of its frequency and amount. These allegations come days after Hindenburg Research launched a fresh broadside against Buch. / PTI /

Trending news

RBI PENALISES 3 HOUSING FINANCES FIRMS FOR VIOLATING NORMS

NEW DELHI The Reserve Bank of India on Friday imposed monetary penalties on Godrej Housing Finance Ltd, Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd, and Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd over non-compliance. The central bank imposed a fine of Rs five lakh each on Godrej Housing Finance and Aadhar Housing Finance, and Rs 3.5 lakh on Housing and Urban Development Corporation. The penalties have been imposed in the exercise of powers conferred on RBI under provisions of Section 52A of the National Housing Bank Act, 1987. The statutory inspection of the Godrej Housing Finance was conducted by the National Housing Bank with reference to its financial position as of March 31, 2022. / IANS /

ILLEGAL HOARDINGS, ENCROACHMENTS DEMOLISHED IN SOUTH DELHI MARKET

NEW DELHI Authorities carried out a demolition drive in a South Delhi market on Friday against illegal hoardings and encroachments by shop owners, prompting local traders to stage a protest. The drive was conducted amid heavy police deployment in the market of the Deoli locality against illegal encroachment alongside the main street. There was no immediate confirmation from the agency which carried out the demolition drive. Visuals from the spot showed bulldozers in action as they removed hoardings mounted on shops and any other construction that extended onto the road. A large crowd had gathered at the site causing traffic jam on the road. Police personnel, including traffic police, were deployed to prevent any untoward incident, visuals recorded by PTI Videos showed.

SWIGGY DISCLOSES RS 33 CRORE FRAUD BY EX-JUNIOR EMPLOYEE, TAKES LEGAL ROUTE

NEW DELHI IPO-bound food delivery platform Swiggy has disclosed that a former junior employee allegedly embezzled more than Rs 33 crore over a period of time from one of its subsidiaries. As per reports, the Zomato rival initiated a probe with an external team and has filed a legal complaint against the individual whose name was withheld in its annual report for the financial year 2023-24. "The Group, during the current year, identified embezzlement of funds in one of the subsidiaries by a former junior employee amounting to INR 326.76 Mn over the past periods," the annual report mentioned. Based on review of the facts discovered during the investigation, "the Group has recorded an expense for aforementioned amount during the year ended March 31, 2024," the report added. / IANS /

Sensex tanks 1,017 pts to close at 2-week low tracking weak global trends

MUMBAI Falling for the fourth straight day, benchmark Sensex tanked 1,017 points to close at a two-week low on Friday due to selling in IT, oil & gas and PSU bank shares triggered by weak global trends and foreign fund outflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,017.23 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 81,183.93, the lowest closing level since August 23. As many as 24 Sensex shares closed in the red while six advanced. During the day, it plunged 1,219.23 points or 1.48 per cent to 80,981.93. The NSE Nifty dropped 292.95 points or 1.17 per cent to close at 24,852.15, its third day of decline.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, State Bank of India tanked over 4 per cent. NTPC, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank and ITC were the other major laggards.

Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, JSW Steel and Maruti were among the gainers. "The domestic market was in panic today due to the SEBI's deadline over FII's disclosure norm, however this is not expected to impact India's lucrativeness to FIIs in the long-term.

"Coupled with lack of new market catalysts and elevated valuations, a muted trend is expected to continue in the short-term. Global markets are also adopting a cautious stance ahead of the release of the US non-farm payroll data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The sell-off was broad-based, with the banking and energy sectors taking the biggest hit. Broader indices also saw declines, losing more than a per cent each. The recent weakness in US markets has stalled the momentum in Indian markets, causing participants to



become cautious ahead of the upcoming jobs data, Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dropped 1.41 per cent while the BSE smallcap index declined 0.96 per cent. All indices ended in the negative territory. Telecommunication plunged 3.23 per cent, oil & gas (2.19 per cent), bankex (1.93 per cent), capital goods (1.70 per cent) and services (1.58 per cent).

A total of 2,541 stocks declined while 1,406 advanced and 87 remained unchanged on the BSE.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,181.84 points or 1.43 per cent while the Nifty declined 383.75 points or 1.52 per cent.

"World shares held near three-week lows on Friday, and crude oil languished near this year's lows, as caution prevailed ahead of the crucial US jobs data that could decide the size and speed of coming rate cuts in the world's largest economy," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai

and Hong Kong settled lower.

European markets were trading in the red. The US markets ended mostly in the negative territory on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 688.69 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.14 per cent to USD 72.79 a barrel.

"The near-term trend in the market will be influenced by the US jobs data to be published tonight," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

On Thursday, the BSE benchmark failed to hold on to initial gains and declined 151.48 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at 82,201.16. The NSE Nifty dipped 53.60 points or 0.21 per cent to 25,145.10 despite a positive beginning of the trade. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower.

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Investors become poorer by Rs 5.49 lakh cr as markets slump

NEW DELHI Investors' wealth plummeted by Rs 5.49 lakh crore on Friday as markets faced a massive correction tracking a weak trend in global peers and fresh foreign fund outflows. Falling for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,017.23 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 81,183.93. During the day, it plunged 1,219.23 points or 1.48 per cent to 80,981.93.

The BSE benchmark had hit its all-time high of 82,725.28 on Monday. Following the weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed

firms slumped by Rs 5,49,925.16 crore to Rs 4,60,18,976.09 crore (USD 5.48 trillion).

"Markets witnessed intense profit-taking after the recent upsurge and key benchmark indices crumbled on fears a subdued US economic data could push Fed chairman to postpone rate cut decision.

"Investors trimmed their bullish bets ahead of the US jobs report, as any uptick in the numbers could prompt the Fed to maintain the status quo on interest rates," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, State Bank of India tanked over 4 per cent. ICICI Bank, NTPC, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, ITC, Axis Bank and Adani Ports were the major laggards.

Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, JSW Steel and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were trading in the red. The US markets ended mostly in the negative territory on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities. / PTI /

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Anil Kapoor are among Time magazine's 100 most influential people in AI

NEW YORK Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani and actor Anil Kapoor are among Indians who have been honoured in Time magazine's prestigious list of the 100 "Most Influential People in AI 2024". The list, released on Thursday, features 15 Indian or Indian-origin people. Among them are Sundar Pichai of Google, and Satya Nadella of Microsoft.

Writing about 54-year-old Vaishnaw, the magazine said under his leadership, India hopes to become one of the top five countries for semiconductor manufacturing-a key component for modern AI systems within the next

five years. "Yet, Vaishnaw faces significant challenges in realising these ambitions. India's tech sector struggles with low private R&D investment and a lack of advanced manufacturing ecosystems. Its educational system is also catching up to produce the specialised workforce needed for cutting-edge AI and semiconductor development," it said.

India- the world's fifth largest economy- is trying to become a major player in the world of AI, it said. Kapoor, 67, has been included in Time's AI list after a landmark victory in September 2023 over unauthorised AI use of his likeness. The actor took up the case after a large number of distorted videos, gifs, and emo-

jis bearing his likeness began circulating online. Nilekani, 69, is Co-founder of Infosys and co-founder & chairman of EkStep. "Nilekani, the billionaire co-founder of Infosys, has spent five years in and out of government developing digital public infrastructure for the world's most populous country, earning him nicknames like 'India's Bill Gates'," the magazine wrote about the entrepreneur.

"Nilekani led India's Aadhaar programme, the world's largest biometric identity card programme. He promoted the programme as a salve to welfare fraud, alongside a means to help improve tax collection, and ease bank customer verification, among other benefits,"

the magazine added. "If the world of AI was dominated by the emergence of startup labs like OpenAI, Anthropic, and their competitors in 2023, this year, as critics and champions alike have noted, we've seen the outside influence of a small number of tech giants..." TIME Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs said.

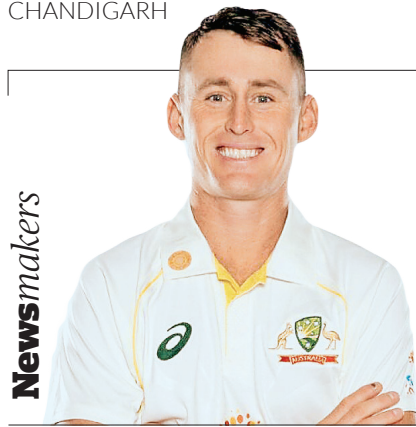
The 2024 TIME100 AI list features 40 CEOs, founders and co-founders, including Mark Zuckerberg of Meta, Pichai of Google, Nadella of Microsoft and Arvind Srinivas of Perplexity among others. Amba Kak, Co-executive Director, of AI Now Institute, Arati Prabhakar, Director, of the US Office of Science and Technology Policy. / PTI /

SPORTS

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024
CHANDIGARH

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Newsmakers

**INDIA'S FAST BOWLING MAKES THEM DIFFICULT TO BEAT IN AUSTRALIA: LABUSCHAGNE**

Star batter Marnus Labuschagne reckons fast bowlers make India a "difficult" side to beat in Australian conditions as the hosts look to end their barren run in Border-Gavaskar Trophy which has lasted nearly a decade. India have won every bilateral Test series against Australia since losing 1-2 in an away affair in 2014-15. They have recorded identical 2-1 series wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21 Down Under to remain on top. "India's fast bowling is very good, which is really what brings them in Australian conditions and make them such a tough team to beat in Australian conditions," Labuschagne told Star Sports.

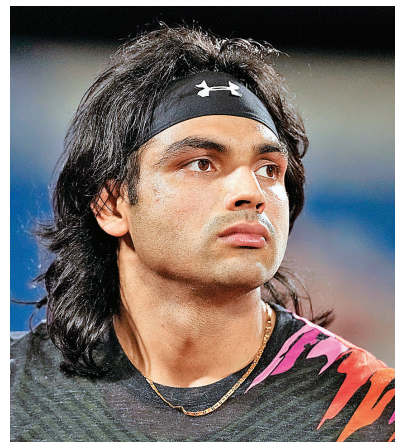
'I DON'T BREAK RECORDS, THEY HAUNT ME': RONALDO ON 900 GOALS MILESTONE

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 900th career goal for club and country, a feat which has never been done before. The six-time Ballon d'Or winner scored Portugal's second goal during their 2-1 win over Croatia in the UEFA Nations League group fixture. Following the tremendous achievement, Ronaldo stated that he does not break records but rather "they haunt him." "900 goals seems like any other milestone, but only I know how hard it is to work every day to score your 900th goal. It's a unique milestone in my career."

**ANDERSON TO CONTINUE AS ENGLAND'S FAST-BOWLING MENTOR FOR PAKISTAN, NEW ZEALAND TOURS**

Former fast-bowler James Anderson said he will continue to be the fast-bowling mentor in England's upcoming Test tours of Pakistan and New Zealand. Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, retired from international cricket following the first Test against West Indies at Lord's in July. "At the minute, I'm due to go to Pakistan and New Zealand in the winter. Then nothing concrete after that. I'm very new to this, I'm still learning as we go."

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for Diamond League season finale in Brussels



NEW DELHI India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world.

The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday.

The 26-year-old is two points adrift of Czechia's Jakub Vadlech. Grenada's Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber occupy the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively. Peters had pipped Weber in the Zurich meet.

Chopra, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and added a silver to his kitty in the Paris edition last month, has been struggling with his fitness this season.

The Haryana-lad has talked about a groin injury troubling him since before the Olympic Games that has come in the way of his quest to hit the 90m mark. /PTI/

US Open: Pegula beats Muchova and will face Aryna Sabalenka in the women's final



Aryna Sabalenka, of Belarus, returns a shot to Emma Navarro, of the United States, during the women's singles semifinals of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024, in New York. AP/PTI

NEW YORK Jessica Pegula shrugged off a sluggish start and came back from a set and a break down at the U.S. Open to defeat Karolina Muchova 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 for a berth in her first Grand Slam final.

The No. 6-seeded Pegula, a 30-year-old from New York, has won 15 of her past 16 matches and will meet No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka for the title on Saturday.

Sabalenka, last year's runner-up to Coco Gauff at Flushing Meadows, returned to the championship match by holding off a late push to beat No. 13 Emma Navarro of the U.S. 6-3, 7-6 (2).

Things did not look promising

for Pegula early: Muchova, the 2023 French Open runner-up but unseeded after missing about 10 months because of wrist surgery, employed every ounce of her versatility and creativity, the traits that make her so hard to deal with on any surface.

The slices. The touch at the net. The serve-and-volleying. Ten of the match's first 12 winners came off her racket. The first set lasted 28 minutes, and Muchova won 30 of its 44 points.

Muchova grabbed eight of the first nine games and was one point from leading 3-0 in the second set. But she couldn't convert a break chance there, flubbing a forehand volley,

and everything changed.

Quickly, the 52nd-ranked Muchova went from not being able to miss a shot to not being able to make one. And Pegula turned it on, demonstrating the confident brand of tennis she used to eliminate No. 1 Iga Swiatek, a five-time major champion, in straight sets on Wednesday. Pegula had been 0-6 in major quarterfinals before that breakthrough.

Took Pegula a while to play that well Thursday, but once she got going, whoa, did she ever. All told, she collected nine of 11 games, a span that allowed her to not merely flip the second set but race to a 3-0 edge in the third. /AP/

ERRANI AND VAVASSORI WIN US OPEN MIXED DOUBLES TITLE IN YOUNG'S FINAL MATCH BEFORE RETIRING



NEW YORK Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori won the U.S. Open mixed doubles title with a 7-6 (0), 7-5 victory Thursday over Taylor Townsend and Donald Young, who fell just short of a Grand Slam title in his final match before retiring.

Errani, who won a career Grand Slam in women's doubles with fellow Italian Roberta Vinci, added her first career mixed doubles title to the Olympic gold medal in women's doubles she won last month with Jasmine Paolini.

"It's incredible for me this year. It's amazing," Errani said.

Townsend and Young, who have been friends since they were kids, were given a wild card into the event for what was the 35-year-old Young's final tournament. The former top-ranked junior hadn't played much in recent years, having made the switch to pickleball.

"Obviously wasn't the result we wanted," Young said, "but I can't think of a better spot, place to go out in, having watched that as a kid, and playing with someone I've known our whole life. It's pretty cool for me." He and Townsend made their way through the draw, knocking off defending champions Anna Danilina and Harri Heliovarra in the quarterfinals. /AP/

Rahul Dravid joins Rajasthan Royals on multi-year contract



MUMBAI Former India captain Rahul Dravid was on Friday announced as the head coach of the Indian Premier League team Rajasthan Royals on a multi-year contract. Dravid's tenure as India's head coach ended in June with the team winning the T20 World Cup for the second time. PTI had reported a few days ago that Dravid was set for his next move to RR.

"The former Royals' captain and coach spent five seasons with the franchise from 2011 to 2015, and will commence with the team immediately, working with Royals' director of cricket Kumar Sangakkara to implement the franchise's overall cricketing strategy," the franchise said in a statement.

Dravid has coached Rajasthan Royals in 2014 and has held different roles with the India U-19 team as well as at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru.

"His exceptional coaching capabilities are evident with the transformation he's driven in Indian cricket. He also has a deep connection to the franchise, and we've seen that passion come through in all our conversations," Jake Lush McCrum, CEO of the Royals Sports Group said.

"Rahul has already got to work with Kumar (Sangakkara) and the rest of the team, as we prepare for this exciting new period for the franchise starting with IPL retention and the auction just around the corner," he said. /PTI/

Praveen's record-breaking jump helps India hit a golden six in Paralympics

PARIS High jumper Praveen Kumar upgraded his Tokyo silver to a gold with a record-smashing performance, helping India nose ahead of the likes of Canada and Korea in the overall standings as the country's para-athletes continued to defy projections in their best ever Paralympic performance here.

The 21-year-old from Noida, who was born with a short leg, jumped to a new Asian record of 2.08m in the T64 category, which also featured athletes of T44 classification.

He clinched the top honours ahead of USA's Derek Loccident (2.06m) and Uzbekistan's Temurbek Giyazov (2.03m).

T64 is for athletes with movement

moderately affected in one lower leg or the absence of one or both legs below the knee, while T44, to which Praveen belongs, is for athletes with movement affected at a low or moderate degree in one lower leg.

The country's medal haul swelled to 26, including six gold, nine silver and 11 bronze medals. The performance surpasses all pre-Games projections and with one more day of competitions left, it is expected to get better.

Opting to start from 1.89m, Kumar aced seven jumps in his first attempt to put himself in pole position. The bar was then raised to 2.10m, with Kumar and Loccident fighting for the top spot but both failed to clear the mark. /PTI/



HARVINDER, PREETI TO BE INDIA'S FLAG-BEARERS FOR PARALYMPICS CLOSING CEREMONY

PARIS Gold medal-winning archer Harvinder Singh and sprinter Preeti Pal, who made history by becoming the first-ever Indian woman to win two medals at the Paralympics, will be the country's flag bearers during the closing ceremony of the Paris Games on Sunday. Harvinder, 33, who had also scripted history by becoming the first Indian archer to clinch a gold at the Paralympics to add to the bronze he won in Tokyo in 2021, said carrying the country's flag during the closing ceremony was the highest honour he could have dreamed of. /PTI/

Duleep Trophy: Musheer, Saini keep balance in favour of India B

G UNNIKRISHNAN / BENGALURU

NAVDEEP SAINI reminded of his presence among the fringe pacers with a quality new ball spell that helped India B to keep India A in check at 134 for two in the first innings, after the second day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Friday. India B needed their bowlers to carry on the excellent effort of Musheer Khan (181, 373b, 16x4, 5x6) that powered 'B' to 321 in their first innings.

KL Rahul (23, 80 balls) and Riyan Parag (27, 49 balls) are



India B player Musheer Khan plays a shot during the second day of Duleep Trophy 2024 match between India A and India B teams, at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, Friday, Sept 6, 2024. /PTI/

at the crease at stumps, with India A in arrears by 187 runs.

Saini, who is out of favour since the 2021 away series against Australia, showed some spark to eke out the wickets of India A skipper Shubman Gill (25) and his opening partner Mayank Agarwal (36).

The right-arm quick broke the first-wicket alliance 57 between Gill and Agarwal at the stroke of tea to give his side the first breakthrough.

Gill, who crunched a couple of exquisite fours off left-arm seamer Yash Dayal, shouldered arms to an incoming delivery that crashed onto the stumps.

Agarwal, who is also on a comeback trail after going out of favour since the 2022 Pink Ball Test against Sri Lanka here, looked comfortable during his stay in the middle.

His cover drive off Saini was a lovely piece of timing, but the right-hander soon fell to the same bowler, jabbing a down-the-leg delivery to stumper Rishabh Pant.

Pant, who was tidy behind the stumps, made an acrobatic dive to his left to complete a wonderful catch to send back Agarwal. /PTI/

FIFTIES FROM PADIKKAL, IYER TAKE INDIA D'S LEAD TO 202 RUNS

ANANTAPUR (Andhra Pradesh) Fluent fifties from skipper Shreyas Iyer and Devdutt Padikkal saw India D stretch their lead to 202 runs against India C on the second day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Friday.

Seeking to make an India comeback, Iyer struck 54 off 44 balls and laced his innings with nine fours and a six, while Padikkal compiled a 56-run knock off 70 balls, hitting eight boundaries during his stay in the middle.

At stumps, India D were 206/8 in their second innings with Axar Patel (11 off 37 balls) and Harishit Rana at the crease.

Rana was yet to open his account, and he will look to support the experienced Axar in the first session of the third day as India C look to extend their lead and put pressure on their opponents. /PTI/

Argentina minus Messi beats Chile to lead South American World Cup qualifying



Argentina's Lautaro Martinez heads the ball during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup 2026 against Chile in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024. AP/PTI

BUENOS AIRES Without injured Lionel Messi and the retired Angel Di Maria, Argentina eased past Chile 3-0 to remain on top of the South American 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

Alexis Mac Allister opened the scoring in the 48, Julián Alvarez added a goal in the 84th and Paulo Dybala capped the scoring in the 90th for the Argentinians, who have 18 points after the first seven rounds.

The top six teams in the South American standings will qualify

for the World Cup which will be played in the United States, Mexico and Canada in 2026. The team that finishes seventh will advance to a playoff against another confederation.

After winning the Copa America in the United States, Argentina overcame the absence of the 37-year-old Messi, who suffered a right ankle injury in the final against Colombia. His future playing status remains uncertain. /AP/

Briefly

INDIANS SHINE IN COMMONWEALTH RAPID CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

WASKADUWA (SRI LANKA) Indian chess players delivered an impressive performance at the Commonwealth Rapid Chess Championship, securing three podium finishes. Grandmaster Mitra Guha claimed the gold medal with 6.5 points, while GM Panneerselvam Iniyar took silver with six points. GM Laxman Rajaram secured the bronze with 5.5 points. Out of the 14 Indian participants, all finished within the top 30. Notable rankings among Indian men included Shyaam Nikhil P (5th with 4 points), Sayantan Das (8th with 4.5 points), and Hari Madhavan NB (9th with 4 points). Other top finishes included Adireddy Arjun (11th with 4 points), Arul Prakash N (19th with 3.5 points), Vaibhav Suri (25th with 3 points), and Krishna CRG (27th with 3 points). /PTI/

VIKRAM RATHOUR, RANGANA HERATH ADDED TO NEW ZEALAND COACHING STAFF

AUCKLAND Former India batting coach Vikram Rathour and Sri Lanka spin great Rangana Herath were on Friday added to New Zealand's coaching staff ahead of Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

New Zealand will play a one-off Test against Afghanistan before heading to Sri Lanka for a two-Test series. The one-off Test against the Afghans will be held at the Greater Noida Sports Complex Ground from September 9 to 13. The Kiwis are also due to play a three-Test series against India in October-November. While Herath has been appointed for Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka as New Zealand's spin bowling coach, Rathour will be with the Kiwi side only for the contest against Afghanistan. Rathour had a successful run as India's batting coach under head coach Rahul Dravid. His tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup win in June this year. /PTI/

Daily Spice

www.dailyworld.in



Nicole Kidman says she has a 'normal life'

Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman, who is married to musician Keith Urban, shared that she has a "normal" lifestyle.

Kidman told 'Extra': "I have a very normal life. I'm right now going, 'Yes, I'll be at the parent-teacher (conference) tomorrow night.'"

The 57-year-old stars alongside Liev Schreiber in "The Perfect Couple" and she relished the experience of working with the 56-year-old actor.

She said: "I love working with him because he's one of the greats."

The Hollywood star always thought that Schreiber was the perfect candidate for the role, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She shared: "I said, 'You got to give me Liev because I got to have a husband, a scene partner, to play with, who's going to be really, really rigorous with the script.'"

The actress, who has Sunday and Faith with Urban as well as Isabella and Connor with former

husband Tom Cruise in a conversation with Entertainment Tonight, had spoken about how her daughters wreck havoc in her closet.

Asked if her girls raid her closet, Kidman said: "They actually do. They go into my closet and I am like and it looks like a bomb's hit it. They go crazy in there. They just take a T-Shirt but they wreak havoc."

Kidman stars in "Babygirl", the new erotic thriller film, and the actress recently said that she hopes it proves to be a "liberating story" for women.

The actress confessed that she found making the movie to be a "very freeing" experience.

She said at the Venice Film Festival: "This is one woman's story and this is, I hope, a very liberating story."

"It's told by a woman, through her gaze - Halina (Reijn) wrote it and she directed it - and that's to me what made it so unique because suddenly I was going to be in the hands of a woman with this material. It was very dear to our shared instincts and very freeing." / IANS /



When Winona Ryder was arrested on charges of shoplifting

Hollywood actress Winona Ryder, who is known for 'Beetle-juice', 'Girl, Interrupted', 'Black Swan' and others, was once arrested on shoplifting charges, as she stole \$5000 worth of designer clothes from Saks Fifth Avenue in Beverly Hills in 2001.

The actress stood trial in the next year, and made several court appearances. During her appearances in the court, she would always be dressed in stunning outfits.

Her taste in fashion was so exquisite that it earned her a campaign and built a friendship with one of the designers, Marc Jacob, whose merchandise she stole.

The actress told 'Esquire' magazine, "It's so funny, because there's so much lore around that story, but it really couldn't have been more of me thinking 'I'm going to my car to get something.'"

She has often talked openly about the shoplifting scandal before, shared some details about her life at the time of the incident.

She had been prescribed painkillers for a broken arm, and had been struggling with her mental health, among other things.

When asked how she dealt with the heightened media attention surrounding her case at the time, Ryder said that she had "checked out" as a way to cope with it all. / IANS /

NEW YORK SEEKING TO CHARGE HARVEY WEINSTEIN WITH MORE SEX CRIMES AS BRITAIN DROPS ITS CASE

discontinue the proceedings because there was "no longer a realistic prospect of conviction".

"We have explained our decision to all parties," the CPS said in a statement. "We would always encourage any potential victims of sexual assault to come forward and report to police, and we will prosecute wherever our legal test is met." At the same time, the Manhattan district attorney's office in New York has begun presenting evidence to a grand jury of up to three previously uncharged allegations against Weinstein - two sexual assaults in the mid-2000s and another sexual assault in 2016.

The New York grand jury's term expires Friday, and a vote on an indictment could happen by the end of the week, though it's possible the process could extend beyond that. Prosecutors said they would seek to combine any new charges with ones previously brought against Weinstein so that they could be tried together.

In April, New York's top court overturned Weinstein's rape and sexual assault convictions and ordered a new trial. The state's Court of Appeals found that the judge in the 2020 trial unfairly allowed testimony from women whose claims against Weinstein weren't part of the case.

Prosecutors shared some information about the additional allegations that the grand jury is weighing at a court conference on Tuesday.

They include alleged sexual assaults at the Tribeca Grand Hotel, now known as the Roxy Hotel, and in a Lower Manhattan residential building between late 2005 and mid-2006, and an alleged sexual assault at a Tribeca hotel in May 2016.

Judge Curtis Farber elicited the details as Weinstein's lawyers weighed potentially having his testify before the grand jury, which they said he'd wanted to do. Weinstein was not present at the conference.

Aidala said Thursday that he's decided against testifying, citing a lack of sufficient information about the new allegations. He criticized prosecutors for seeking to add additional

accusers to the case rather than simply trying Weinstein's original indictment again.

"The case was overturned in April and they spent six months trying to dig up someone to come after him," Aidala said.

Weinstein, 72, has denied that he raped or sexually assaulted anyone. He remains in custody in New York while awaiting a retrial in Manhattan that's tentatively scheduled to begin November 12. He is expected back in court for a pretrial hearing September 12. / AP /



MICHAEL R. SISAK AND DANICA KIRKA

Spared from prosecution in Britain on Thursday, Harvey Weinstein now faces the prospect of a new indictment in New York, where prosecutors retrying the disgraced movie mogul's rape case are taking steps to potentially charge him with up to three additional sex assaults.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, which authorised two charges of indecent assault against Weinstein in 2022, announced Thursday that it decided to

HALSEY SAYS SHE WAS OBSESSED WITH MAKING DOLL HOUSES AMID HEALTH CRISIS



Popstar Halsey shared that she became obsessed with making doll houses when she was at home suffering from Lupus and a rare lymphoproliferative disorder.

Halsey, who uses she/they pronouns revealed she used her time to focus on a new hobby - building tiny furniture from scratch and even making her own wallpaper.

"It was something I could do inside, and it was something I could do that was creative, and it was something quiet that I could do when my son was asleep. I couldn't go out, obviously, I couldn't drink, I couldn't be in a social environment," She told Paper magazine, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I was home a lot, and I just heard about doll housing, and I loved it."

Halsey said the hobby also helped with some of her symptoms, adding: "It was also great for me, because I had a really hard time with my motor function. My fine motor skills were not great."

"When I was sick, I couldn't even open an envelope, or peel a sticker off a thing; it required me to be focused and meticulous with my fine motor action, which I really wanted to retain."

Halsey said that she wanted to be able to play the piano and guitar.

"I knew if I started playing music again, I wanted to be able to play piano and guitar. I couldn't practice either while my kid was asleep at night, so I was doing doll housing, and I just got so obsessed with it. I started building furniture from scratch, and then making my own wallpaper." / IANS /

Singer Taylor Swift was seen arriving at the Kansas City Chiefs season opener to support her beau Travis Kelce.

Swift was seen dressed in a denim corset top, matching shorts, and maroon thigh-high boots. She was captured saying hello to workers as she arrived to the football stadium.

"Hello... how are you guys?" she greeted folks, reports Rolling Stone.

The "Lovestory" hitmaker's arrival at the game comes just a day after Kelce's team debunked a letter that claimed to have a "comprehensive media plan" for Kelce's relationships "following breakup with Taylor Swift."

His team called the document "entirely false and fabricated" in a statement to People.

"We have engaged our legal team to initiate proceedings against the individuals or entities responsible

for the unlawful and injurious forgery of documents," a full Scope spokesperson said.

Swift is currently on a month-ish pause from her Eras Tour after wrapping the European run of her Eras tour and was recently featured in the NFL's promo for the new season.

"She had just been so open to learning the game, she didn't know much about the rules or anything...I think she was just curious about the profession," Kelce said on the Rich Eisen Show.

"I know none of the plays have gotten to Coach (Andy) Reid yet, but if they ever do I'll make sure everyone knows it was her creation." Swift is set to return to the Eras Tour for its last leg of shows on October 18 with shows in Miami, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Toronto, and Vancouver through mid-December. / IANS /



Taylor Swift arrives to cheer for beau Travis Kelce at Chiefs-Ravens game



A Ukrainian war veteran wearing prosthetics takes to the runway to demonstrate outfit by designers Andreas Moskin and Andriy Bilous during Fashion Week show in Kyiv, Ukraine. AP/PTI

Sudhir Mishra on 'IC 814: Kandahar Hijack' row: Won't find more patriotic Indian than Anubhav Sinha



RAVI BANSAL

It is hard to find a more patriotic Indian than Anubhav Sinha and he has made the story of "IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack" with a lot of thought, says veteran director Sudhir Mishra, dismissing the controversy surrounding the series. Sinha's show, which dramatises the 1999 hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC 814, has triggered a row after a section of viewers objected to the Hindu code names of the terrorists, contending that distortion of their real identities amounted to misrepresentation of historical events.

Netflix updated the opening disclaimer of the show to include both real and code names of the hijackers after the controversy.

Mishra, the director of several critically-acclaimed movies such as "Is Raat Ki Subah Nahin", "Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi" and a close friend of Sinha, said he found the show to be very good.

"He has made the series quite thoughtfully. It is up to you to react or not react. But I found it to be very good... Now if you say, Anubhav Sinha is not patriotic, then it is very wrong because I know him very well," the filmmaker told PTL.

"You will not find a more patriotic Indian than Anubhav Sinha... He is very patriotic, he grew up in Benaras and studied in Aligarh. Ram Ram kehnte bada hua hai. It would be wrong to say bad things about him," he added.

The show, which features a stellar cast of Vijay Varma, Pankaj Kapur, Naseeruddin Shah, Arvind Swamy, Dia Mirza and Patralekhaa, was also criticised by some social media users for its humane projection of the terrorists.

Mishra, however, believes Sinha was only following the "dharma (duty) of storytelling".

"Otherwise, how will anyone play it? If you show a character as a villain and he just roars and shouts, then you will not identify him in real life. A villain looks like a human but there is evil beneath the skin. One should learn to identify that," the

director said.

Sinha has often spoken about his friendship with Mishra and other contemporary directors in Hindi cinema. Mishra also shares the same fondness for each of them.

"I love them. Anurag (Kashyap) dedicated 'Kennedy' to me. Anubhav and I talk with each other every morning.

"Vishal (Bhardwaj) is a multi-talented filmmaker. I feel jealous of him. Then there is Hansal (Mehta) and Subhash Kapoor, Abhishek Choubey, Intiaz Ali... There is a lot of talent in this city at the moment. There is also Avinash Arun, who made this great film called 'Three of Us'," Mishra said.

The filmmaker, who is returning with the second installment of SonyLIV series "Tanaav", said he is inspired by these directors and there is no one-upmanship among them.

"I remember, when Anurag made 'DevD', he was my assistant first, and he told me during the making of the film that I was his inspiration. I believe that we should all stand together. This jealousy and fights, 'meri kameez tumhari kameez se zyada safed hai', we should just forget about this. People will judge later who is better," the filmmaker said.

"I believe if Anurag succeeds, then I will also succeed. Similarly, if Anubhav succeeds, then I will succeed. If you look at us as a group of filmmakers, who make certain kinds of films, then the environment will remain positive and we will make better movies," he added.

The second season of "Tanaav" brings back the original cast of Manav Vij, Arbaaz Khan, Rajat Kapoor and Satyadeep Mishra. The series, backed by Applause Entertainment, will premiere on SonyLIV on September 12. An adaptation of the popular Israeli show "Fauda", the story of "Tanaav" is set in Kashmir. In the second season, Kabir (Manav Vij) and the Special Task Group (STG) return to action when Fareed Mir aka Al-Damishq, a young man seeking vengeance, emerges as a formidable threat.

Mishra shares the directing duties for season two with E Niwas. /PTI/

Bollywood actress Karisma Kapoor has revealed that she has five children, and their names are sure to melt everyone's hearts.

In a promo shared by the makers of dance reality show 'India's Best Dancer Season 4', we get a glimpse of the many moods of Lolo aka Karisma.

Karisma, who is also a judge on the show, can be heard saying: "Bebo (Kareena Kapoor Khan) mere liye meri pehli beti hai... I would say mere paanch bache hain... Bebo, mere bache, Taimur and Jeh."

(Bebo is my first daughter. I have five kids: Bebo, my two children, and Kareena's boys, Taimur and Jeh).

In the behind-the-scenes video, we can hear Karisma saying: "As an artist, we have to keep growing. I think kabhi bhi esa koi bhī time nahi tha ki maine socha ki I am a good dancer. Hamesha wo book thi ki mai next acha kya karun? I hope mera ye dance hit ho jaye. It was always striving to do better."

"Jo bhī mai hun, its honestly my mazdoori... ham bahut hard work karte the," she concluded. (Whatever I am today, it's honestly because of my hard work).

Alongside Karisma, the show also features Geeta Kapur, and Terence Lewis as the judges on 'India's Best Dancer 4', which airs on Sony.

Karisma is the daughter of actors Randhir Kapoor and Babita. Her younger sister, Kareena is married to actor Saif Ali Khan.

Karisma was married to industrialist Sunjay Kapur. The couple have a daughter Samaira and son Kiaan. However, the couple got officially divorced in 2016.

On the work front, she made her acting debut in 1991 at the age of 16 with the romantic drama 'Prem Qaidi', alongside Harish Kumar.

She has then been a part of movies like 'Anari', 'Raja Babu', 'Andaz Apna Apna', 'Gopi Kishan', 'Raja Hindustani', 'Dil To Pagal Hai', 'Hum Saath Saath Hain', 'Fiza', 'Zubeidaa' and many more.

Karisma last appeared in a mystery thriller film, 'Murder Mubarak'.

The film is directed by Homi Adajania and produced by Dinesh Vijan. It features Pankaj Tripathi, Sara Ali Khan, Vijay Varma, Dimple Kapadia, Sanjay Kapoor, and Tisca Chopra. /IANS/



Karisma Kapoor says she has five children

Bollywood actor R. Madhavan shared that he feels sorry for kids today, reflecting on the difference in upbringing people got in the 70s and 80s.

Madhavan appeared on the podcast of Ranveer Allahbadia, called 'The Ranveer Show.'

Ranveer asked Madhavan: "What was it like growing in the 70s, in a not-so-rich India versus now?"

The 54-year-old actor said: "All the time and I feel sorry in my own judgemental way for the kids who are here right now. I feel so sorry for them. We had the best time climbing trees, catching tadpoles, getting into fights, getting out of fights."

"What it is to swallow your ego, and pride and say sorry brother, and not having our parents interfere in our fights and taking a stance," he shared.

Madhavan went on to say: "And I think the only justification I will give for people born in 70s in India: look at all the CEOs in the world today. They were all born in the 70s and 80s in India. They are not from any other country."

"We did something really really right. Look at every successful and influential high-net-worth Indian today, he's from our generation. We did something right," Madhavan asserted.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Madhavan has been a part of movies like 'Mumbai Meri Jaan', 'Dil Vil Pyar Vyar', 'Rang De Basanti', 'Guru', '3 Idiots', 'Tanu Weds Manu', 'Tanu Weds Manu: Returns'.

He made his directorial debut in 2022 with the biographical drama 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect', which he also wrote and produced. The film is based on the life of Nambi Narayanan (played by Madhavan), a scientist at Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Madhavan was recently seen in 'Dhokha: Round D Corner' and 'Shaitaan'.

He will be next seen in 'Amriki Pandit', 'Adhirshataali', 'De De Pyaar De 2', 'Shankara', and 'Dhurandhar'. /IANS/



DILJIT DOSANJH JOINS CAST OF 'BORDER 2'

Actor-musician Diljit Dosanjh has boarded the star-studded cast of war drama "Border 2", the makers announced on Friday. Dosanjh, currently basking in the glory of back-to-back successes of "Amar Singh Chamkila" and "Crew", will feature alongside Sunny Deol and Varun Dhawan in the follow-up. "The 'Border 2' family just got bigger! Welcoming the incredible Diljit Dosanjh to the epic saga," T-Series posted on

its social media handles.

Deol had also headlined the 1997 original, which was helmed by JP Dutta and became a major box office hit. The sequel, to be directed by Anurag Singh, is backed by Dutta alongside Bhushan Kumar. Dosanjh said he is honoured to be a part of the movie. "Pehli Goli Dushman Chalaega aur Akhri Goli Hum! Honoured to stand with such a powerful team and walk in the footsteps of our Soldiers! #Border2," the Punjabi superstar posted on Instagram. /PTI/

'Emergency' postponed, new release date to be announced soon: Kangana



Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut on Friday said her directorial debut movie "Emergency" has been postponed and a new release date will be announced soon. The political period drama, also written and co-produced by Ranaut, was scheduled to hit theatres across the country on Friday but the makers are yet to get a clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and the matter is currently in court.

"With a heavy heart I announce that my directorial 'Emergency' has been postponed, we are still waiting for the certification from censor board, new release date will be announced soon, thanks for your understanding and patience," Ranaut, the BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, said in a post on X. Ranaut, who essays the role of former prime minister late

Indira Gandhi, had earlier this week accused the CBFC of stalling the certification to delay the release.

The film has been caught up in controversy after Sikh organisations, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, which accused it of misrepresenting the community and getting facts wrong.

On Wednesday, the Bombay High Court had refused to grant any urgent relief in the wake of the directive issued by the Madhya Pradesh HC directing the censor board to consider objections to the movie before certifying it. /PTI/



Kareena reveals what rescued her from 'shooting in every weather'

Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan has revealed that a "hot bag" rescued her from shooting in "every weather." Kareena took to Instagram, where she shared three photographs from the sets of her upcoming film "The Buckingham Murders."

The first image has Kareena wearing a thick bomber jacket with her arms wrapped around. The second is a monochrome photograph, where she is seen smiling dressed in a sweater and pants. The last picture has the actress holding on to a hot bag.

"Shooting in every weather. PS: Hot bag to the rescue, hahaha. #7daystogo #TheBuckinghamMurders in cinemas on September 13," she wrote.

"The Buckingham Murders" is helmed by Hansal Mehta, who is known for 'Aligarh', 'Shahid' and 'Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story'. The film also stars Ranveer Brar, Ash Tandon, Ranveer Brar, and Keith Allen.

The upcoming film follows the character Jasmeet Bhamra, a British-Indian detective who has recently lost her child. She is assigned the case of a murdered 10-year-old child in Buckinghamshire.

Presented by Balaji Telefilms, produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Mahana Films and TBM Films, the film is set to bow in theatres on September 13, 2024.

Kareena also has 'Singham Again' in the pipeline which marks her return to the 'Singham' franchise. The film is directed by Rohit Shetty, and will release on November 1. /IANS/



KJO REMEMBERS FATHER YASH JOHAR ON 95TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY: MISS YOU EVERY DAY PAPA

On late filmmaker Yash Johar's 95th birth anniversary on Friday, his son and

director Kara Johar remembered his "papa" and shared a string of throwback pictures.

Karan took to Instagram, where he shared a handful of images some from his childhood days featuring his father and him.

For the caption, he wrote: "Stole a few moments of nostalgia to share here today, marking my papa's birthday... 1. A quick moment of family hugs...something that

you could find in my family in abundance, thanks to him 2. My 30th birthday!!! I had directed my film and it was out in the world...and I think my father was proud 3. Like I said...in abundance!!! 4. A moment shared on stage with him...etched in my mind & heart!"

"Miss you every day papa, thank you for being the brightest guiding light for me, till date," he added. /IANS/