

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Bow my head at Shivaji Maharaj's feet and apologise, says Modi

By Correspondent

Palghar: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday apologised to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and those hurt by the collapse of the warrior king's statue in coastal Sindhudurg district.

"Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is not just a name or a king. For us, he is our deity. Today, I bow my head at his feet and apologise to my deity," Modi said, after laying the foundation stone of the Rs 76,000 crore Vadhvan Port project in Palghar district.

Modi said when he was declared the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP, he visited Raigad, the capital of the Shivaji's kingdom, and meditated before the Maratha king's samadhi.

These are Modi's first remarks after the statue collapsed at the coastal Rajkot fort in Malvan tehsil of Sindhudurg district.

The collapse of the statue sparked a state-wide outrage, with the opposition targeting the government and accusing it of insulting Shivaji Maharaj. Modi had unveiled the



statue in December last year during the Navy Day celebrations in Sindhudurg district. The statue was aimed at honouring

the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj towards maritime defence.

The state government has announced that a joint

technical committee headed by the Navy with representatives from the state government and technical experts will investigate the

reasons for the statue collapse on Monday.

The statue had collapsed on August 26. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde

had claimed that winds blowing at a speed of 45 km per hour caused the collapse of the statue made of Bronze.

Champai Soren joins BJP

Ranchi: Two days after he quit the JMM, former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren joined the BJP on Friday.

Soren along with a large number of his supporters crossed over to the saffron camp in the presence of Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at a ceremony here.

The veteran politician visibly became emotional after he was welcomed into the saffron fold.

The joining of the 67-year-old tribal leader to the BJP was seen as a shot in the arm for the saffron party's efforts to boost its connection with the Scheduled Tribes, a community which has been the main voter base of the JMM.

He was a close aide of JMM supremo Shibu Soren. Champai Soren quit the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha on Wednesday, asserting that the state government's present style of functioning and its policies compelled him to leave the party he served for many years.

Champai has earned the nickname 'Jharkhand's Tiger' for his contribution to the fight to create a separate state in the 1990s. The elections to the 81-member assembly are due later this year. -PTI

MODI SPEAKS

"The moment I landed here, I first apologised to Shivaji Maharaj over the statue collapse. I also apologise to the people who were hurt by the collapse."

"Our values are different. For us, nothing is bigger than our deity," Modi said. "Some people keep abusing Veer Savarkar but are not ready to apologise for insulting him."

Preethi Pal wins bronze India's first track medal at Paralympics



Paris: Preethi Pal won India's first athletics medal in a Paralympics track event as she clinched a bronze in the women's T35 100m competition with a personal best time of 14.21 seconds at the Paris Games on Friday.

All the athletics medals India had won since the 1984 edition of the Paralympics have come from field events.

The 23-year-old Preethi, a farmer's daughter from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, opened India's athletics medal account on the

second day of competitions.

Preethi had come to Paris after winning a bronze in the same event at the World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan, as the same Chinese runners Xia and Qianqian had won gold and silver there too. -PTI

Committee formed for new statue

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Friday constituted a committee under PWD Secretary Manisha Mhaiskar for erecting a new statue at Malvan in Sindhudurg district.

History researcher Jaysinghrao Pawar will be a special invitee in this committee.

A Navy officer Commodore Doraibabu, influential person Raghujai Raje Angre, Rajeev Mishra, director of J.J. School of Arts, and two professors from IIT, Bombay will be other members of the committee.

The committee has been asked to design the new statue and work procedure for its erection. The government has asked the committee to submit its report as early as possible.

GDP growth slows to 15-month low

New Delhi: India's economic growth slowed to a 15-month low of 6.7 per cent in April-June 2024-25, mainly due to poor performance of the agriculture and services sectors, government data showed on Friday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 8.2 per cent in the April-June quarter of 2023-24.

India, however, remained the fastest-growing major economy, as China posted a 4.7 per cent growth in April-June 2024.

The previous low of 6.2 per cent was recorded in the January-March quarter of 2023.

"India's GDP growth expectedly slowed down in Q1 FY2025 relative to Q4 FY2024 (to a five-quarter low of 6.7 per cent from 7.8 per cent), even as the GVA growth surprisingly accelerated between these quarters (to 6.8 per cent from 6.3 per cent).



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday. Pic-PTI

"This divergent trend was led by the normalisation of the growth in net indirect taxes, and the slowdown in the GDP growth is not a cause for alarm, in our view," said Icria Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach, Aditi Nayar said.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO)

data, the agriculture sector gross value added (GVA) growth decelerated to 2 per cent from 3.7 per cent in the April-June quarter of 2023-24.

The expansion in 'financial, real estate and professional services' GVA too slowed to 7.1 per cent from 12.6 per cent in the year-ago

quarter.

However, the GVA in the manufacturing sector accelerated to 7 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal compared to 5 per cent a year ago.

"Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices in Q1 of 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 43.64 lakh crore against Rs

40.91 lakh crore in Q1 of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 6.7 per cent," NSO said in a statement.

It further stated that nominal GDP or GDP at current prices in Q1 of 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 77.31 lakh crore against Rs 70.50 lakh crore in Q1 of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 9.7 per cent.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and quarrying' accelerated to 7.2 per cent in the first quarter from 7 per cent a year ago.

Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services grew by 10.4 per cent from 3.2 per cent.

The construction segment also grew by 10.5 per cent from 8.6 per cent a year ago.

Trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting slowed to 5.7 per cent from 9.7 per cent a year ago. -PTI

Police hold security meet with JJ docs

In a rare gesture, the Mumbai Police have come forward for safety of doctors

By Swapnil R Mishra

Mumbai: In response to the recent tragic incident in Kolkata, Sir JJ Hospital convened an urgent security committee meeting today with the Additional Commissioner of Police, Dr Abhinav Deshmukh, to discuss and implement measures aimed at ensuring the safety of resident doctors and healthcare professionals.

The meeting, held at JJ Hospital's college council room, was attended by Dean Dr Pallavi Saple, Medical Superintendent Dr Sanjay Surase, MARD representatives, medical officers, PWD and Electric dept officials and senior security officials from both the hospital and Mumbai Police.

The discussions were driven by heightened concerns following a disturbing incident involving a resident doctor in Kolkata, underscoring the urgent need for improved safety protocols.

Supreme Court has recently constituted a National Task Force for the safety of resident doctors. Dean Dr Pallavi Saple is the only doctor from Maharashtra as a member of National Task Force. She started the meeting by expressing deep concern for the well-being of the resident doctors and hospital staff.

"The safety of our resident doctors and all staff members is paramount," she said. "We must take proactive steps to address vulnerabilities and ensure



a secure working environment."

Dr Abhinav Deshmukh Add CP South region, addressing the meeting, pledged the full support of

the police department in addressing these critical issues. "The safety of healthcare professionals is of utmost importance," he affirmed.

"We will collaborate closely with JJ Hospital to implement comprehensive safety measures and provide any necessary assistance."

Dean Dr. Pallavi Saple said "Ensuring the safety of resident doctors is top priority for us and this meeting will give a security boost". Dr Abhinav Deshmukh Add CP and Medical Superintendent Dr Sanjay Surase emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and safe environment for healthcare

professionals, particularly in light of recent events that have raised awareness about the risks faced by resident doctors and hospital staff.

Key resolutions at the meeting

- Increased Security Patrols:** A surge in police patrols around the hospital premises, particularly during night shifts when resident doctors are most vulnerable and a register to enter the patrolling details.
- Enhanced Surveillance Systems:** Upgrading CCTV security cameras, panic alarm and installing additional lighting in key areas to improve visibility and monitoring in Black spots
- Emergency Response Protocols:** Establishing clearer communication channels and rapid response protocols between hospital security and local police to ensure swift action in case of any incident.
- Pass System:** it will be implemented thoroughly so as to minimize the number of relatives entering the wards and to avoid overcrowding
- Regular Safety Audits:** Conducting periodic security reviews and risk assessments to adapt and respond to any evolving threats.

Vadhvan to boost the country's trade and economic growth, says Modi

By Correspondent

Palghar: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that a developed Maharashtra is an essential part of the resolve for a developed India.

"Therefore, over the past 10 years, we have taken continuous major decisions for Maharashtra's progress. To ensure that the state and the entire country reap benefits of Maharashtra's capacities, the foundation stone for Vadhvan Port has been laid today," he said.

Modi said his government is focusing more on the development of coastal villages.

To enhance capabilities, fishermen's cooperative societies are also being strengthened, he said.

The BJP and NDA governments have worked with complete dedication and honesty for the welfare of backward classes and

empowering the marginalised, he said.

"Our government is committed to empowering women and ensuring prosperity in the nation through the constant efforts and endeavours. It is actively promoting women's involvement in fish production," he said.

"Through the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, we have empowered thousands of women, enabling them to contribute significantly to this sector," he said, adding India has become the world's second-largest fish producing country.

In 2014, the country's fish production was only 8 million tons, but now India produces around 17 million tons of fish, he said. "This means that in just 10 years, we have doubled the fish production," Modi said.

"We have earmarked a whopping Rs 76,000 crore for Vadhvan project. This



Picture for representation purpose only

will be the largest container port in the country," he said.

Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 218 fisheries pro-

jects of Rs 1,560 crore.

Owing to its coasts, Maharashtra has centuries-old connection to international trade, Modi said.

"Today is a historic day

in India's journey towards progress," he said. The 'New India' knows its strength and has left behind the shackles of slavery, he added,

The Vadhvan Port is expected to be a world-class maritime gateway that will boost the country's trade and economic growth by catering to large container

vessels, offering deeper drafts, and accommodating ultra-large cargo ships.

The port, located near Dahanu town in Palghar district, will provide direct connectivity to international shipping routes, reducing transit times and costs.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, the port will feature deep berths, efficient cargo handling facilities, and modern port management systems.

The port is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, stimulate local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic development of the region.

The project incorporates sustainable development practices, with a focus on minimizing environmental impact and adhering to stringent ecological standards. Once operational, the port will enhance India's maritime

connectivity and further strengthen its position as a global trade hub.

Modi also launched the Rs 360 crore National Roll Out of Vessel Communication and Support system, under which one lakh transponders will be installed in a phased manner on mechanised and motorised fishing vessels in 13 coastal states and Union Territories.

The vessel communication and support system is an indigenous technology developed by ISRO, which will help in establishing two-way communication while fishermen are at sea and also help in rescue operations as well as ensure their safety.

Modi also laid the foundation stone for important fishery infrastructure projects including development, upgradation and modernization of fishing harbours, fish landing centres and construction of fish markets.

Fake doctor held in Thane

Thane: A fake doctor without a medical degree running a clinic in Maharashtra's Thane district was arrested on Friday, police said.

The police arrested Abdul Farid alias Saddam Sharif Khan (34), a resident of Gaibi Nagar in Bhiwandi town, in the early hours of the day, an official with the Shanti Nagar police station said.

Medical officers from the Bhiwandi Nizampur Municipal Corporation raided Khan's clinic and found that it was being operated without

a valid permit.

The accused treated patients with medicines and charged them exorbitantly, he said.

Based on a complaint by medical officers, an FIR was registered against the accused under sections 319(2) (cheating by personation), 318(4) (cheating), and 125 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Maharashtra Medical Practitioners Act, 1961, the official said.

Apologising won't do: Patole

Pune: Simply apologising for the collapse of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will not suffice as the episode has "hurt the pride of Maharashtra", senior Congress leader Nana Patole said on Friday while reacting to the statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"What made him to apologise? It means he has acknowledged he had made a mistake," Patole said.

Pawar says no to certain security measures

New Delhi: Nationalist Congress Party-SP (NCP-SP) chief Sharad Pawar, accorded Z-plus protective cover recently, is learnt to have turned down certain measures suggested by security agencies.

The Centre accorded him the Z-plus cover of the Central Reserve Police Force's (CRPF) VIP security wing after a threat assessment review by central agencies. However, Pawar is learnt to have conveyed to them that



he has not been told why his security is being increased.

Pawar was also amenable to increasing the height

The 83-year-old former Maharashtra Chief Minister is learnt to have rejected the proposals to deploy additional security personnel inside his house in the national capital, change the vehicle he uses to travel within the city and that he be escorted by two security personnel inside his vehicle.

of the boundary walls of his house in Delhi as part of the enhanced security measures.

The former defence minister is learnt to have conveyed this to the representatives of security agencies -- the CRPF and the Delhi

Police -- at a meeting here on Friday.

Besides them, representatives of the Delhi Fire Service, the Central Public Works Department, the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Union home ministry were also part of the

meeting.

Sources had said that after the assessment recommended a strong security cover for Pawar, the Union home ministry asked the CRPF to give him Z-plus protection. Fifty-five armed CRPF personnel have been earmarked for the task.

Pawar had said that the Union government has given him enhanced security to keep a watch on his personal and political movements. -PTI

Nod for survey of Nashik-Dahanu line



Mumbai: The railway ministry has sanctioned the final location survey for the Nashik-Dahanu new line via Trimbakeshwar and Vangaon, an official said on Friday.

The 100-kilometre line will connect Nashik and Dahanu in Palghar districts and will reduce the travel time considerably between the two important places, a Central Railway spokesperson said.

"Currently, to reach Dahanu from Nashik, trains travel via Kalyan-Bhiwan-

di-Vasai on the south side or Dhule-Nandurbar-Surat via the north side. The new link is expected to reduce travel time and distance between the two cities. It will boost tourism and provide rail transportation to devotees desirous of visiting Trimbakeshwar temple for darshan of one of the 12 Jyotirlingas and to Panchavati (where Lord Ram stayed during the exile) in Nashik," a Central Railway release stated.

The new line will also provide connectivity from

Deccan plateau to Vadhvan port in Dahanu, the foundation stone of which was laid during the day by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officials said.

"This line will connect multiple towns of Nashik and Palghar districts, thereby, fostering economic growth and development in the region. For the final location survey of the new railway line the ministry has sanctioned Rs.2.50 crore," the spokesperson said.

- PTI

Bandh in Latur over molestation

Latur: A vegetable vendor was arrested for allegedly molesting a 24-year-old woman at a market in Latur city of Maharashtra, police said on Friday.

The incident occurred on Thursday when she was buying vegetables from the accused, they said.

Following the incident, the Mahatma Phule Vegetable Market, where the incident occurred, remained shut on Friday after some Hindu organisations gave a "bandh" call.

"In her complaint lodged at the Gandhi Chowk police station, the woman alleged that the vendor touched her inappropriately when she was buying vegetables from him at the market in the morning. Angry with his act, she slapped him and later approached the police with her family members," a police official said.

Based on her complaint, the police arrested the accused, identified as Azim Kazi, aged around 25.

The city unit of the BJP and members of some Hindu organisations held a press conference on Thursday evening and demanded strict punishment against the accused. -PTI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various developmental projects, in Palghar district on Friday.

Pic-PTI

Five booked for assaulting pregnant woman

Thane: Thane Police have registered an FIR against five relatives, including the husband, of a pregnant woman for assaulting her, an official said on Thursday.

The complainant, who works as a nurse, was attacked on August 14 after she confronted her husband

over his "behaviour" with other women, said the official.

Her husband Miraj Mohammad Ali Momin allegedly kicked the pregnant woman in the stomach and face. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law also joined him, the official said. The complainant's mother was

also allegedly attacked when she tried to intervene.

The woman received treatment at the Thane Civil Hospital. After recovery, she filed a complaint at the Nizampura police station in Bhiwandi.

The five accused have been booked under Bharati-

ya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 91 (act done with intent to prevent a child being born alive or to cause death after birth), 115(2) for voluntarily causing hurt (352) and 351(2) for criminal intimidation.

Police are awaiting medical reports to know the status of the woman's pregnancy, the official added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Sudhir Mungantiwar,
Minister for Cultural Affairs

"The operators of touring talkies and tent cinema operators should show movies based on historical events to take the legacies of prominent figures to remote areas. They can also show some advertisements related to state government schemes. Such advertisements could provide them with another source of income."

Ensure Ganesh mandals follow norms, says HC

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra government to inform all 'sarvajanik Ganesh mandals' to mandatorily follow guidelines imposing ban on use of plaster of Paris (PoP) for making idols that will be immersed in water.

A division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar said all mandals have to follow guidelines issued in May 2020 by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) imposing a ban on PoP idols.

In cases where the permissions to erect mandals have



already been granted, an additional condition shall be "immediately" added that they shall not install idols made of PoP, the HC further directed.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation filed by Thane-based Rohit Joshi

and others, including nine clay-based and small-scale craftsmen of idols, seeking strict implementation of the 2020 CPCB guidelines.

The bench noted the concerned stakeholders were not implementing the guidelines in letter and spirit and

said it would be compelled to pass an order banning sale and use of PoP idols.

The bench directed the commissioners of municipal corporations in the state to convene a meeting with the senior most officer of the police department for incorporating additional conditions on sarvajanik mandals in view of revised guidelines of the CPCB.

State Advocate General Birendra Saraf informed the bench that a circular has been issued by the environment department to all the district magistrates, CEOs of zilla parishads and chief of-

ficers of municipal councils in which these bodies have been directed to "scrupulously implement revised guidelines for idol immersion".

The court also impressed upon the state to take a policy decision on implementing the guidelines. "Take some policy decision. Something needs to be done which will act as a deterrent," the bench said.

The state, all municipal corporations and other respondents have been asked to file their reply affidavits. The HC has kept the matter for hearing on October 21. -PTI

Collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Statue

Structural consultant arrested; opposition mounts attack

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The incident of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue collapse has sharpened challenges before the Mahayuti government. As the political turmoil in the state is on the rise and the state government which is at the receiving end managed to make the first arrest in this case.

A consultant involved in the structural designing of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg, which collapsed recently, has been arrested. The arrest comes days after protests from Opposition leaders seeking a thorough investigation into the collapse. Chetan Patil, the structural consultant of the statue, was arrested by Kolhapur Police on Thursday night.

Patil had been on the run since the incident on Monday that has sparked a massive public outrage and political furore, as the sculptor Jaydeep Apte still eludes the police net. At least six probe teams of the Kolhapur, Sindhudurg and Thane Police were on the lookout for the duo whose mobile phones were off, but Patil was caught by the cops.

Against this backdrop, the protest continued across the state against the government's stand on this particular incident. State Congress president Nana Patole, after staging the protest at Nagpur said, "There is intense public anger in the state after the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

collapsed due to the corrupt BJP government. The statue was hastily inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The corruption involved in the construction of the statue for political gain has outraged the public. Although the Chief Minister is now apologizing, it is of no use".

"The BJP alliance government is driven by commission, and they even exploited the construction of the Maharaj's statue. This government has crossed all the limits of corruption.

The fact that the statue collapsed within just eight months shows how substandard the construction was," he said. Leader of the opposition in the state legislative council Ambadas Danve raised serious doubts about the scientific study of the site prior to the erection. He also sought to know if a specific height of the statue was maintained to fulfil the political ambitions of someone.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut visited the crash site on Friday. After the visit he alleged that the statue was illegal. We demand a thorough probe into the whole episode.

The statue was aimed at honouring the legacy of the Maratha Navy and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj towards maritime defence and security, and its historical linkage with the modern Indian Navy. However, the tragedy has put the state government, which is under fire from all four sides, in a fix.



Ajit Pawar vows to erect grand statue

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday visited the Rajkot fort here where a 35-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj collapsed earlier this week and vowed to erect a grand structure of the warrior king at the same place.

In a post on X, Pawar called Shivaji the pride and self-respect of Maharashtra. "Very soon, a grand statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will be installed at the same place. This is my word," Pawar said.

On Wednesday, Pawar apologised to the people of the state for the collapse of the structure, which was installed in the coastal Sindhudurg district's Malvan tehsil, around 480km from Mumbai. On Thursday, his party NCP also staged a protest against the collapse of the statue.

Amid relentless attacks by the opposition over the episode, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday asserted he would not hesitate to touch the feet of the warrior king 100 times and apologise for the incident if required.

The government has set up a technical committee to find out the reasons for the statue collapse. It has pointed out that the Indian Navy handled the project.

Structural consultant held from Kolhapur

Chetan Patil, the structural consultant named in the FIR registered in connection with the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, has been arrested from Kolhapur, police said on Friday.

Patil was taken into custody late on Thursday night and was handed over to the Sindhudurg police for further

investigation, said Kolhapur Superintendent of Police Mahendra Pandit.

According to the Sindhudurg police, Patil has been arrested in the case. Patil, a resident of Kolhapur, had claimed on Wednesday that he was not the structural consultant for the project. Speaking to a Marathi news channel, Patil had said that he

had submitted the design of the platform to the Indian Navy through the state's Public Works Department (PWD) but had nothing to do with the statue itself.

"A Thane-based company did the statue-related work. I was just asked to work on the platform on which the statue was being erected," Patil had said.

Police detained us, claims Varsha Gaikwad

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad claimed on Friday that police had detained her and many of her party workers ahead of their planned protest during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mumbai.

Modi addressed the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2024 in the city and lay the foundation stone of Vadhran Port project worth around Rs 76,000 crore in Palghar on Friday.

"The police are there at my residence since 7 am. They are not even allowing me to walk two steps. What can I say if asking (PM) to apologise or stage a silent protest is a crime. If questions cannot be asked to the country's prime minister, then whom should we pose our questions to," she said.

The Mumbai Congress had planned a protest during PM's visit to Mumbai.

"We have been detained for raising our voice for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, for Maharashtra's pride. But we will not be deterred. The Prime Minister



Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad carries a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with party workers in protest against the NDA government over the recent collapse of Malvan's Shivaji Maharaj statue in Mumbai on Friday. Pic-PTI

must apologise for the insult to our icon," Gaikwad, who is also the Mumbai Congress chief, wrote on X. The Congress has said that the PM, who had unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj that collapsed at Rajkot fort in Sindhudurg district

earlier this week, should take responsibility.

As a precautionary measure, to avoid any kind of agitation during the PM's visit to the city, police presence has been increased outside several Congress leaders' homes, an official said.

Some Congress leaders and their supporters were also detained as a precautionary measure, said a police official. Besides Gaikwad, police teams also went to her party colleague Nasim Khan's residence at Jari Mari in the Sakinaka area, the official said.

Efforts to push for early return of child

By Correspondent

Thane: The Ministry of External Affairs is making efforts to push for an early return of a three-and-a-half-year-old girl from Mira-Bhayandar, who has been in foster care in Germany for the past 36 months following allegations of minor physical abuse, MP Naresh Mhaske has said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has assured him that the government is expediting legal processes to secure the return of the girl, Ariha. Her parents, who are currently in Germany, can now meet their daughter twice a month.

Ariha's parents Bhavesh and Dhara Shah are residents of Mira Bhayander in Thane district. After Mhaske raised the matter in Parliament earlier this month, the foreign minister wrote to him detailing the efforts being made through his ministry. It was as a result of "our" intervention that the German Youth Welfare Authorities decided against appealing the court orders granting visitation for the parents, Jaishankar said in his letter dated August 16.

Badlapur sexual abuse HC seeks govt's response to suspended education officer's plea

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra government to respond to a plea filed by an education officer from Thane district seeking a stay on his suspension following the alleged sexual abuse of two girls at a school in Badlapur.

The officer, Balasaheb Rakshe, urged the high court to stay the suspension order pending a final hearing of his petition before the Maharashtra Ad-

ministrative Tribunal (MAT), which refused him interim relief on August 26.

He requested the high court to restrain the state government from appointing any other officer in the post. Rakshe moved the Bombay High Court seeking a stay on his suspension order, claiming the government order was "politically motivated" and he had been made a "scapegoat". A division bench of Justices A.S. Chandurkar and Rajesh Patil directed the government to file an

affidavit by September 6 when it would hear the plea.

Rakshe's advocate, S.B. Talekar, sought the court to order a status quo until then, but the court said it would consider the same in the next hearing. Talekar argued that there was no misconduct on Rakshe's part and that the government merely wanted to save its face after the Badlapur incident.

Two kindergarteners were sexually abused by a male attendant inside a school in Badlapur.

Mhatre gets interim protection from arrest

Mumbai: The alleged utterances made by Shiv Sena leader Waman Mhatre against a woman journalist were not to humiliate her on the basis of caste, the Bombay High Court said on Friday while granting him interim protection from arrest.

Mhatre was booked under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act for allegedly making derogatory remarks against the woman journalist during the Badlapur school sexual assault protests. He filed an appeal in the High Court on Friday challenging a Kalyan sessions court order refusing him pre-arrest bail.

Woman cop dies after anaesthesia shot at pvt hospital

Mumbai: A 28-year-old woman constable of the Mumbai police died after she developed complications when she was administered anaesthesia for an ear surgery at a private hospital here. Constable Gauri Patil was admitted to Axis Hospital in Lokhandwala in Andheri.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Tanaji Sawant, Minister for Health

I am a hardcore Shiv Sainik. I would never get along with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leaders. Even if we sit next to each other in the Cabinet, I feel like vomiting after coming out."

Couple in Audi booked for assaulting cabbie

Mumbai: A couple was booked for allegedly assaulting an aggregator cab service driver after an argument over his car dashing their Audi vehicle, a Mumbai police official said on Friday.

A video which went viral on social media purportedly showed the man throwing the 24-year-old cab driver onto the ground, due to which the latter suffered head injuries, the official added.

"The incident happened

around 11:20pm on August 18 when Ola cab driver Kayamuddin Ansari was travelling towards Ulwe in Navi Mumbai with a passenger. He submitted a complaint of assault on Wednesday. As per the complainant, he was going from Asalpha metro rail station when an Audi car dashed his car from the rear," the Parksites police station official said.

"When Ansari got down to check if his vehicle had suffered any damage, the

couple in the Audi car, identified as Rishabh Chakravarti (35) and his wife Antara Ghosh (27), got down and started abusing him. Ghosh also allegedly pulled the Ola cab device from Ansari's vehicle and left from the spot," he said quoting the complaint.

Ansari followed the Audi and his vehicle hit the luxury car at the entrance of a building opposite a mall in Ghatkopar, following which Chakravarti slapped him, the official said.



"Chakravarti lifted Ansari and slammed him to the ground, resulting in the latter suffering head injuries. Ansari was first taken to Rajawadi hospital in

Ghatkopar and then shifted to state-run JJ hospital. His statement has been recorded. The assault on him has been captured by CCTV cameras.

Promoting Fintech Sector

Removed Angel Tax, taking policy measures: PM

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the government is making necessary policy changes, like removal of Angel Tax, to promote the fintech sector, even as he asked the regulators to take additional measures to check cyber frauds which can have a crippling impact on startups.

Lauding the fintechs for democratising financial services, Modi said the sector, which has attracted USD 31-billion investment in the last 10 years, has played a key role in denting the parallel economy.

The Prime Minister was addressing the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2024, jointly organised by the Payments Council of India, the National Payments Corporation of India and the Fintech Convergence Council.

He said the domestic economy and the capital market are in a celebratory mood at a time when the nation is also going through a festive period.

Modi underlined that the government is making all necessary changes on the policy level to assist the fintech sector and gave examples of doing away with Angel Tax, allocating Rs 1 lakh crore to encourage research and innovation in the country and implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection Act.

Broadly, fintech refers to

entities utilising technologies for providing financial services.

Expressing the need to put an end to cyber fraud, he urged the regulators to take major initiatives to boost digital literacy.

It is equally important to ensure cyber fraud does not come in the way of the growth of fintech and startups in the country, Modi said. In his speech, the Prime Minister also cautioned about the dangers of a parallel economy for the world.

Fintech, he said, has played an impactful role in denting such a system and credited the emergence of transparency.

He said that digital technology has introduced transparency in India and gave the example of the implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer used in hundreds of government schemes that has prevented leakages in the system.

"Today, people can see the benefits of aligning with the formal banking system," he said.

Modi further said the trinity of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile have broken down the mentality of 'Cash is King' and made way for approximately half of the digital transactions in the world taking place in India.

"India's UPI has become a major example of fintech in the world," he said, adding that it has enabled 24x7 banking services in every village and city in all weather



conditions.

Underlining the role of fintech in democratising financial services, the Prime Minister gave examples of readily available loans, credit cards, investments and insurance.

He said that fintech has

scheme that has enabled street vendors to avail collateral-free loans and further expand their business with the help of digital transactions.

"Sustainable economic growth is India's priority to

efficient systems to strengthen financial markets with advanced technologies and regulatory frameworks.

About 800 speakers, including policymakers, regulators, senior bankers, industry captains, and

What Modi highlighted

- Indian fintech companies have experienced an astonishing increase of 500% in the past decade, with the local fintech community drawing in investments exceeding \$31 billion.
- The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) stands as a prime illustration of India's success in fintech, with the nation now leading the global charge in digital transactions.
- Services like telemedicine, online education, and skill development would not be feasible without the advancements in fintech. The fintech movement in India is significantly contributing to enhancing the quality of life and dignity.
- India's fintech landscape will make life easier for people worldwide. We are on the cusp of achieving great things.

made access to credit easy and inclusive, and gave the example of PM SVANidhi

day," he said and emphasised that the government is creating robust, transparent and

academicians, from India and other countries are participating in the fest.

Viacom 18 merger with Star India

New Delhi: The NCLT on Friday approved the scheme of merger of Reliance Industries-owned Viacom 18 Media -- the holding company of the group's media and entertainment assets -- with Star India.

A two-member bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved the composite Scheme of Arrangement among Viacom 18, Digital18 and Star India, a unit of global media giant The Walt-Disney.

The development comes two days after the Competition Commission of India approved the merger of media assets of Reliance Industries and The Walt Disney Co to create the country's largest media empire worth over Rs 70,000 crore.

Approving it, the NCLT observed: "From the material on record, the Scheme appears to be fair and reasonable and is not violative of any provisions of law and is not contrary to public policy".

The NCLT in its 22-page-long order also observed that the scheme "will be made effective, in terms of the Scheme, only upon the receipt of the approval of the Competition Commission of India".

The scheme had proposed the transfer and vesting of Media Operations Undertaking from Viacom 18 and Jio Cinema into Digital 18, which is a subsidiary of Viacom 18. This would be followed by "demerger, transfer and vesting of V18 Undertaking from Digital 18 into Star India".

Global Investment Summit 2024

Rajasthan CM lands in Mumbai seeking investment

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The inaugural roadshow of the 'Rising Rajasthan' Global Investment Summit 2024 took place on Friday at the Trident Hotel in Nariman Point, Mumbai. The event saw the participation of Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, who engaged with industry leaders, inviting them to invest in the state. During the roadshow, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed, securing investments worth Rs 4.50 lakh crore, expected to generate employment for approximately 6.78 lakh people. Following the event, the Chief Minister announced that the responsibility for the 'Rising Rajasthan' initiative has been assigned to 21 IAS officers from the state.

In the coming two months, the Rajasthan government plans to conduct additional roadshows in major cities and countries, including Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom (UK), and Germany. A high-level delegation of Rajasthan government officials will lead these efforts.

The main event, 'Rising

Rajasthan' Global Investment Summit 2024, is scheduled to take place in Jaipur on December 9, 10, and 11. The summit is being organized by the Rajasthan government in partnership with the Department of Industry and Commerce, Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP), and Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO), with BIP serving as the nodal agency.

The summit aims to attract both domestic and international investors, encouraging the establishment of various industries within the state. Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma emphasized the significance of the summit, stating, "This platform showcases our capabilities and opens up opportunities for future-oriented ideas. Your investment will not only be profitable but also a crucial step on our journey towards sustainable development. I invite all of you to join this journey and assure you that we will deliver on our promises."

He also said that filmmaker K.C. Bokadia had met him and had urged him to establish a film city in Jaipur, to which he immediately asked senior level officer to look into the matter.

Vistara-Air India Merger Singapore Airlines gets FDI nod from Indian govt

By Gurdip Singh

Singapore: Singapore Airlines on Friday said it has received approval from the Indian government for the foreign direct investment as part of the proposed merger of Vistara with Air India, a deal that will create one of the world's largest airline groups.

With the clearance in place, the merger that will see Singapore Airlines acquiring a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India, is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The proposed merger was announced in November 2022.

Air India is owned by



Tata Group and Vistara is a 51:49 joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines.

In a regulatory filing on Friday, Singapore Airlines (SIA) said it has received approval from the Government of India for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the enlarged Air India as part of the proposed merger.

"The FDI approval, together with anti-trust and merger control clearances and approvals, as well as other governmental and regulatory approvals received to-date, represent a significant development towards the completion of the proposed merger," the airline said in the filing to the Singapore Stock Exchange.

Last Vistara on Nov 11

- Vistara will operate the last flight under its brand on November 11 and the full-service carrier's operations will be unified with Air India from November 12.
- "Starting 03 September 2024, customers will, progressively, no longer be able to make bookings with Vistara for travel on or after 12 November 2024," Vistara said in a release on Friday.
- Thereafter, Vistara aircraft will be operated by Air India and bookings for the routes operated by these planes will be redirected to Air India's website.
- "Vistara will continue to take bookings and operate flights as usual till 11 November 2024," the release said.
- The merger of Vistara with Air India was announced in November 2022 and post-completion of the deal, Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India.

Gangwal offloads stakes in IndiGo

New Delhi: InterGlobe Aviation promoter Rakesh Gangwal and his family trust have reduced their stakes in the airline by selling a combined 5.83 per cent shareholding for about Rs 10,500 crore.

A total of 2.25 crore shares or 5.83 per cent holding in InterGlobe Aviation were sold by Gangwal and Chinkerpoo Family Trust, whose trustees are Shobha Gangwal and JP Morgan Trust Company of Delaware.

In two separate regulatory filings, Rakesh Gangwal sold 22.50 lakh shares of InterGlobe Aviation and the Chinkerpoo Family Trust disposed of more than 2.02 crore scrips of the airline.

After the share sale, Gangwal's stake in InterGlobe Aviation has come down to 5.31 per cent from 5.89 per cent, while the Chinkerpoo Family Trust's stake has declined to 8.24 per cent from 13.49 per cent, the filing said.

UPI expands globally; thanks to innovation

By Mangesh Kulkarni

Mumbai: Shaktikanta Das, the governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), unveiled plans to expand UPI and RuPay globally to enhance cross-border payment systems. The central bank is focused on establishing UPI-like frameworks abroad and connecting UPI with other nations' swift payment systems. The Governor emphasized that the primary goal is to develop "UPI-like infrastructure in foreign territories, enable QR code-based payment acceptance via UPI applications at international merchant outlets, and link UPI with Fast Payment Systems (FPS) of other countries for facilitating cross-border remittances.

UPI, introduced by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016, has quickly gained traction. Its broad adoption highlights the critical need for secure, efficient, and user-friendly payment solutions. In 2021, approximate-



ly 777 million Indian consumers engaged in cross-border shopping. To streamline payment processes, NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) entered into a partnership with PPRO Financial of the UK on November 17, 2021, to broaden UPI's reach into foreign markets, with a particular focus on China and the United States, which account for half of India's international transactions.

Additionally, Liquid Group, a cross-border digital payment service provider, signed an agreement with NIPL in September 2021 to introduce a UPI-based QR code payment system in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan.

By July 4, 2022, India had initiated discussions with 30 countries on integrating

UPI. On July 13, 2021, UPI was made available in Bhutan through the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan, marking Bhutan as the first nation to accept UPI transactions via the BHIM app. In 2021, Malaysian firm Merchantrade Asia collaborated with NIPL to facilitate remittances to India via UPI infrastructure. On October 12, 2022, India extended UPI and related technologies to the Commonwealth of Nations. Following discussions with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 20, 2024, India's commitment to linking its UPI with PayNet. Eiffel Tower became the first merchant in France to offer UPI payments.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is actively advocating for the internationalization of UPI due to geopolitical considerations. However, several nations, including Canada, are hesitant to adopt UPI due to opposition from American companies.

BSE SENSEX	TOP GAINERS	PTI
% +2.03	Bajaj Finance	POINTS 7206.15
+1.75	M&M	2806.10
+1.56	NTPC	416.40
+1.55	Bajaj Finserv	1782.45
+1.46	Bharti Airtel	1588.95
+1.29	Power Grid	337.40
+1.28	Sun Pharma	1821.40
+0.92	TCS	4551.85
+0.86	Infosys	1949.00
+0.78	Titan	3562.20

BSE SENSEX	TOP LOSERS	PTI
% -0.92	Tata Motors	POINTS 1109.40
-0.69	Reliance	3019.75
-0.67	Tech Mahindra	1635.70
-0.61	ITC	501.85
-0.34	HDFC Bank	1632.95
-0.28	Nestle India	2497.00
-0.24	Maruti	12421.25
-0.13	Tata Steel	152.80

HC seeks stand on "misbranding" Patanjali

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the Centre's stand on a petition seeking action against the alleged misbranding of Patanjali's "Divya Dant Manjan" as a vegetarian product.

The petitioner's counsel claimed that though the dental care product was being sold with a "green dot", symbolising that it was a vegetarian commodity, it contains fish extract, a non-vegetarian ingredient.

Justice Sanjeev Narula issued notice to the Centre, the

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as well as Patanjali, Divya Pharmacy, Yoga guru Ramdev and other related parties on the petition by lawyer Ytatin Sharma.

The law does not mandate declaration of a "drug" as vegetarian or non-vegetarian but the packaging of "Divya Dant Manjan" wrongly carries a "green dot", which qualifies as "misbranding" under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, the petitioner's counsel argued.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry

"An Indian company buying products from another Indian company will actually help create that ecosystem, help insulate and secure itself in the long run from any disruptions. Two wars, the Red Sea crisis, Mpox (Monkeypox), a new pandemic hovering around, we have enough to be worried about the world".

In a complex situation a PM coming was not necessary: Biren

The CM says whatever he did was to protect Manipur

By Vijay Joshi and Kumar Rakesh

Imphal: Rejecting any suggestion of stepping down from his post, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has claimed that people are with him in his efforts to "protect" the state so there is no question of him resigning.

He made a strong defence of his record despite being panned by opposition parties for allegedly stoking violence and being accused by Kuki groups of favouring Meiteis in the ethnic clashes that broke out in May last year.

Singh cited his government's drive against drugs and identifying illegal immigrants as the underlying reasons for the violence, which ranged Meiteis and Kukis against each other.

According to Singh, the BJP's loss in both Lok Sabha seats from Manipur, including the Meitei-dominated Inner Manipur, was a reflection on his popularity, and not because his party was any less popular. He said people blamed him for not doing enough to quell the violence despite having security forces at his command.

"People got emotional that I could not do much despite being the CM. Despite having forces at my command, they believed I did not get back at those using guns," Singh said.

The Chief Minister claimed he always believed that the solution will come not from hitting back but through dialogue and peace.

Singh has been accused by Kuki groups of favouring Meiteis, a community he himself comes from, in the ethnic violence that has claimed 226 lives since May 2023 according to official count and displaced thousands of families. Opposition parties have demanded his resignation, saying it will help repair the torn social fabric.

Singh said his government intensi-



fied its "war on drugs" in its second term and the drive to detect illegal immigrants from Myanmar while clearing encroached reserve forests, measures which did not go down well with a section of people.

Though he did not say it directly, Meitei groups have alleged that a section of Kukis were linked to poppy plantation in hilly areas inhabited by them and to protecting illegal immigrants who are of the same ethnic stock as they are.

"Whatever I did was for the country, for the state. It was not for Biren," Singh said, expressing concern over the use of reserve forests for poppy plantations and illegal settlements.

Referring to his apparent bid to step down in June last year before he changed his mind after his supporters tore his resignation letter, Singh said he might have considered it at one point of time wondering if he still had people's trust but no longer does so.

"Public is with me. Then why should I (quit)," he said. Though an uncertain calm has returned to the state, the two ethnic groups remain separated, wary of venturing into each other's territories.

Why can't PM play peacemaker, asks Cong

The Congress on Friday wondered why Prime Minister Narendra Modi can't be the peacemaker by visiting

violence-hit Manipur when he is going "all over the world" trying to play that role.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asserted that N Biren Singh has "lost all credibility" and things cannot improve under him.

Ramesh told PTI, "The people of Manipur want the PM to come to the state and the PM has not gone. It is an extraordinary situation, he has gone all over the world but he has not found to go to Manipur even for a few hours. What the chief minister is saying about the PM is unacceptable."

-PTI

"PM coming or not coming has been made an issue by people. The PM may not have come but he has sent his Home Minister. And PM has so often spoken about Manipur, even from Lal Quila on Independence Day ... and whatever is being done here in terms of security, funding etc, is under his leadership only. In a complex situation a PM coming was not necessary."

"Why should I resign? Have I stolen anything? Is there a scandal against me? Have I worked against the nation or state?"

"I don't think it will stretch long. Within 5-6 months peace should return. It is our hope and I am also confident."

"I have saved the state from illegal migration, illegal poppy cultivation. My job is to protect Manipur and people of Manipur. There is no question (of resigning)."

"I am Chief Minister of every community, be it Meiteis, Kukis or Nagas."

Assam Assembly abolishes namaz break

Guwahati: The Assam assembly will do away with a two-hour break provided on Fridays to facilitate Muslim legislators to offer 'namaz', Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The rule will be implemented from the next session, an assembly official said.

In a post on X, Sarma said, "By doing away with the 2 hour Jumma break, @AssamAssembly has prioritised productivity and shed another vestige of colonial baggage. This practice was introduced by Muslim League's Syed Saadulla in 1937."

"My gratitude to Hon'ble Speaker Shri @Biswajit-Daimar5 dangoriya and our legislators for this historical decision," Sarma added. For the last time, this two-hour break was provided on Friday, the final day of the Autumn session of the assembly, the official said.

An official statement circulated in the House, a copy of which was made available to reporters, said the Rules Committee of the assembly had unanimously agreed to drop this practice. "Accordingly, today, the House adopted a motion to amend this rule so as to provide for sitting of the House for conduct of its proceedings on Fridays like any other day," the statement added.

The Assam Assembly on Thursday passed a bill to repeal a law to register marriages and divorces of Muslims. Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan had on August 22 tabled The Assam Repealing Bill, 2024 in the Assembly to abolish the previous act. -PTI

Outrage grows in Kerala; impact in TN too

Kochi/Thiruvananthapuram:

Protests raged in Kerala on Friday as outrage grew over shocking accounts from several female actors in the Malayalam film industry, with the Leader of the Opposition, V D Satheesan, accusing the CPI(M)-led government of shielding the culprits, including actor-politician Mukesh, who stands accused of sexual assault.

Mahila Congress activists in Kochi and Kollam took to the streets, demanding the resignation of CPI(M) MLA Mukesh and a thorough investigation into the shocking allegations of sexual misconduct made by female actors in the Malayalam film industry to the Justice Hema Committee. In Kochi, demonstrators vented their anger by beating effigies of Mukesh, Sidhique, and Ranjith -- all accused of sexual assault -- with brooms.

In Kollam, a protest march was held outside Mukesh's residence, with activists calling for his immediate resignation as MLA. Satheesan alleged that the accused in the Malayalam film industry scandal are being protected by a "power group" within the ruling CPI(M), led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

He claimed that even Left leaders who have called for action against the accused, such as CPI(M)'s Brinda Karat and CPI's Binoy Viswam, are being intimi-



Things are so bad in Tamil film industry: 'Kutty' Padmini

Chennai: Actor 'Kutty' Padmini and one of the members of the internal complaints committee set up by the South Indian Artists' Association (SIAA) in 2019, during #metoomovement, on Friday said nothing will come out of all the actions being promised against sexual

abuse in the film industry, unless it is backed by proper laws. "In fact, the situation is so bad that I have not let my three daughters come anywhere near the Tamil film industry," the actor told PTI. Padmini, who had started her acting career as a three-month-old baby and went on to win the National

Award for Child Artist for her performance in 'Kuzhandaiyum Deivamum' (1965), alleged that when she was only 10 years old, she faced sexual abuse. "I told my mother about it and when my mother questioned the producers, we were simply chucked out of the film," said Padmini.

dated by the party's "power group."

The so-called progressive leaders are weak in the face of

this "power group," he said.

"The government is shielding the culprits. Despite causing so much trouble, they are facing no

consequences, but the film industry will face even more difficulties in the coming days," the opposition leader said.

Armed with the Justice K Hema Committee report, which detailed explosive allegations of sexual abuse by male actors in the Malayalam cinema industry, several female actors came forward with complaints against their male counterparts, leading to the registration of FIRs against actor-politician Mukesh, Sidhique, Jayasurya, Maniyanpilla Raju, Idavela Babu, and director Ranjith.

Second case against Jayasoorya

Kerala police have registered a second sexual assault case against Malayalam film actor Jayasurya within a span of 48 hours, following a fresh complaint from a woman actor alleging sexual misconduct, in addition to the existing case registered against him on August 28.

Police said the new FIR under Section 354 (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against Jayasurya was registered at the Karamana police station here on Thursday.

Section 354 C of the IPC, which deals with voyeurism, has also been invoked against the actor based on the complaint by the female actor, police said.

The woman, in a complaint, alleged that he molested her at a movie set near Thodupuzha during 2012-2013.



RSS coordination meeting in Kerala

Palakkad (Kerala): The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Friday said it will be holding a three-day long coordination meeting in the district to discuss various issues of national importance and also the initiatives it intends to launch as part of the completion of its centenary year in 2025.

Sunil Ambekar, the Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh of the RSS, told reporters that the meeting will begin from Saturday. The meeting will see the participation of around 32 "RSS inspired organisations" represented by around 320 'karyakartas' (workers), he said at a press conference held

here. He said it was not an executive meeting of the RSS, but a meeting of the organisations connected with it. Ambekar said that what is happening in Bangladesh would also be discussed in the meeting.

He further said that as the organisation is going to enter its centenary year on Vijayadashami in 2025, it will be launching five initiatives for social reformation and nation building.

"These initiatives would be Social Harmony, Family Awakening (Kutumb Prabodhan), Environmental issues, Selfhood, and Civic duties (Nagrik Kartavya)," he said. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



A Revanth Reddy,
Chief Minister,
Telangana

"I am a firm believer of the judicial process. I unconditionally express my regret for the statements reflected in the press reports. The remarks attributed to me in such reports have been taken out of context. I have unconditional respect and highest regard for the Judiciary and its independence."

Odisha Government Decision

Breastfeeding cabins in public places

Bhubaneswar : The Odisha government has asked all senior officials to set up breastfeeding cabins in offices and public places, an official said.

The additional secretary of the Women and Child Development Department, Reena Mohapatra, in a letter to all the department secretaries, directors and district collectors asked them to set up breastfeed-

ing cabins in all offices to boost the practice and also enhance the standard of governance in the state.

While the secretaries and directors will look after the setting up breastfeeding cabins in offices, the district collectors will ensure setting up the cabins in public places and private institutions, the official said.

This is a part of the se-



Reena Mohapatra

ries of measures taken by the state's new BJP government after sanctioning one day's paid menstrual leave for the women employees on August 16.

The state has also announced "Subhadra" Yojana to provide financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to women. The scheme will be launched on September 17, the official said.

Meanwhile, sources in the family welfare department said that as per National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 68.5 per cent of infants are breastfed within the first hour of

birth which is significantly higher than the national average of 41.8 per cent.

The rate of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is 72.9 per cent in Odisha, compared to the national average of 63.7 per cent. The recent government order was issued after observation of the World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) from August 1 to August 7. -PTI



Shruthi and Jason at the Puthumala graveyard, in Wayanad. Shruthi who lost her family in the landslides of July 30, will be getting married in September. -Pic-PTI

Assam allows oil exploration near wildlife sanctuary

Guwahati: The Assam government said it has approved an oil exploration project near Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary by the Vedanta group and forwarded the proposal to the Centre for consideration.

Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the State Board of Wildlife (SBWL) has approved the proposal to check the possibility of oil exploration around 13 km from the sanctuary.

The minister made the remark while replying to a query by the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, on Thursday.



"We have forwarded it to the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) and they will make a final decision. Before the final approval, we will discuss with experts," the minister said.

Saikia criticised the government's decision and

environmentalists have opposed the idea of giving oil exploration permission in and around the forest.

"Earlier, the NGT had asked the Assam government to take action against then PCCF MK Yadava, who permitted diversion of forest

land to construct a commando battalion. The Assam government sought forgiveness to the NGT. Will the Assam government violate forest laws and destroy the jungle every time, and then seek forgiveness?" asked the senior Congress leader.

On August 9, the National Green Tribunal expressed "surprise" over diversion of land inside Geleky Reserve Forest to construct a commando battalion of Assam Police violating the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The 20.98 sq-km Hoollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary in Jorhat district is home to India's only ape -- the Hoolock Gibbon.

WASTE TO BEST

And that is how, we generate the trash!



By
Dr. Sanjay Joshi

Sunil and Anil went for their daily walk. This time they decided to walk through the by-lanes in their area instead of taking a regular, 90 feet wide road. So, they moved ahead and within half an hour or so, they came back frustrated, disgusted, covering their nose with handkerchiefs.

They vowed never to enter those by-lanes again! What must have happened? Why were they feeling frustrated? Simply because while walking through those by-lanes, the duo encountered heaps and piles of trash all around the localities.

That trash was 'heterogeneous' meaning it contained different types of wastes including plastics, cardboard boxes, leathery items, worn out clothes, dead and worn-out electric bulbs, fixtures, a piece or two of broken wooden furniture, batteries, tampons, sanitary pads, diapers, papers, left over vegetable and fruit residues, food waste, 'nirmalya'-a type of waste comprising stale flowers and garlands which were offered to gods on the previous day-etc.

Now food waste and fruits, vegetable residues, floral waste are biological meaning those are derived from living entities.

When mixed with all different types of 'non-living' entities that

Sunil and Anil saw, this 'living waste' would rot creating an unbearable foul smell, polluting the surrounding air. That is what happened to Sunil and Anil.

Also, such heaps presented very ugly sight. On top of that, it attracted diverse life forms such as stray dogs, cows, rats, flies etc. Sunil and Anil couldn't bear the stench and that sight. That's why they rushed

bags and what not. We get fresh fruits and vegetables from the market. Fruits like bananas, pineapples, oranges, pomegranates, watermelons, muskmelons, mangoes etc. need to be peeled off to eat the inside pulp. Different types of vegetables need proper cleaning by removing their unwanted parts which we do not use in cooking. Such 'unwanted' fruit peels and residues of the vegetables



back to their original walk way that provided relatively fresh air, and a good amount of greenery etc.

Again, Sunil and Anil are representatives of billions of people including you and me. We also encounter such heaps of trash lying along the streets, by-lanes etc. almost every day while walking on the road.

Now the question is where does this trash come from? We clean the house as a daily ritual, collect all the dust and whatever is in the range of that broom we use for cleaning, collect it in a pan and unload that pan into a dustbin. And that is how we generate trash.

It might contain cardboard boxes, tetrapacks, plastic bottles, plastic

are collected in plastic carry bags and thrown away in the dustbin. Similarly leftover and stale food is also collected in such plastic bags to be discarded in the dustbin. And that is how we generate trash! In many households, it is a daily custom to offer prayers and worship the gods/goddesses by performing 'pooja' and offering flowers, garlands etc.

Next day, before starting the pooja, these 'stale' flowers, garlands etc. are removed to make a place for the fresh ones, collected in a plastic bag and are temporarily stored. And that is how we generate trash!

(The writer is an environmental expert. Views personal)

Making Kshipra pollution free

Makeshift houses to be cleared from catchment areas



Indore: Ahead of the Simhastha-Kumbh Mela in 2028 in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain, the authorities in Indore have decided to remove about 1,500 encroaching makeshift houses in the catchment areas of the Kanh and Saraswati rivers, an official has said.

The decision is a part of the campaign to make the Kshipra river pollution-free, the official said.

Simhastha Mela is held in

Ujjain every 12 years. Tens of thousands of Hindus take a holy dip in Kshipra during Simhastha in Ujjain. According to Hindu scriptures, Kshipra originated from the heart of Varaha, the boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

"In the first phase, about 1,500 kuccha houses encroached upon the catchment area of the Kanh and Saraswati rivers will be removed," Indore Collector Ashish Singh

told reporters here on Thursday.

He said that the work of shifting the people from the catchment areas, some of whom have been served notices, has been affected due to rains. It will be taken up in the next five to ten days, the collector said.

Singh said that the National Green Tribunal and MP High Court have already passed directions for clearing the encroachment up to 30 metres from the banks of the rivers in the area.

Officials said the administration has identified around 3,000 encroachments in the catchment areas of both rivers in Indore. In addition to makeshift houses, these also include permanent residential and commercial buildings, they said. The Kshipra river, which originates from the rural areas of Indore, flows to Ujjain. However, in the country's cleanest city, Indore, the highly polluted waters from the Kanh and Saraswati flow into the Shipra, further contributing to its pollution. Locals have reported that due to heavy pollution, the water of Shipra in Ujjain is not even suitable for 'achaman' (ritual sipping).

To rid Kshipra of pollution before the Simhastha, the Indore administration has prepared a blueprint for a Rs 600-crore rejuvenation plan. -PTI



A submerged temple following the rise of River Ganga's water level after rains, at Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi on Friday. -Pic-PTI

Depression intensifies into cyclone Asna

New Delhi: A deep depression that triggered torrential rains and floods in Gujarat on Friday intensified into cyclone Asna off the coast of Kachchh and the adjoining areas of Pakistan, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

This is the first cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea in August since 1976. The name Asna, given by Pakistan, means "the one to be acknowledged or praised".

Between 1891 and 2023, only three cyclonic storms formed in the Arabian Sea

during August (in 1976, 1964, and 1944), according to the IMD.

The 1976 cyclone originated over Odisha, moved west-northwestward, entered the Arabian Sea, followed a looping track, and weakened over the north-

west Arabian Sea near the Oman coast. The 1944 cyclone intensified after emerging into the Arabian Sea before weakening. In 1964, another short-lived cyclone developed near the South Gujarat coast and weakened near the coast.

Indoor air pollution poses greater health risk than outdoor

New Delhi: Indoor air pollution is a bigger health risk than outdoor air pollution in India, and sometimes cities are cleaner than nearby villages where household pollution is higher, according to the country's two top policy experts.

Addressing the India Clean Air Summit (ICAS) 2024, Principal Advisor, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Soumya Swaminathan said, "Studies done in Delhi have shown that women's average exposure to high levels of black carbon (women

who are mostly at home) is as much as auto-rickshaw passengers going around outdoor exposed to the ambient air pollution in Delhi, resulting in high systolic blood pressure."

"Cities contribute less than 20 per cent to the overall state emissions, whereas they have been assessed, but household emissions predominate, ranging between 20 per cent and 40 per cent. Across the country, we are seeing is that sometimes cities are cleaner than the surrounding villages where household air pollution predomi-



nates," she said at the summit organised by think-tank Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.

This builds a strong case for expanding the scope of India's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which currently focuses on non-

attainment cities.

Air pollution is a major threat to public health and contributes to a significant amount of morbidity as well as mortality.

Apart from PM2.5 and PM10, short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon, methane, ozone, and hydrocarbons have the potential to harm the environment and warm the atmosphere even more than CO2. Black carbon can cause chronic respiratory illnesses, lung cancer, emphysema, pneumonia, asthma, heart disease, and low birthweight.

12 family members killed in landslide

Peshawar: At least 12 members of a family, including nine children, were killed when a massive landslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain hit a house in northwestern Pakistan on Friday, officials said.

The tragic incident took place in the Maidan area of Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

The law enforcers said all 12 bodies have been retrieved from the debris and sent to the hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Two women, one man and nine children were killed in the incident, the Dawn newspaper quoted an official as saying.

Indians deficient in iron, calcium, folate

New Delhi: People across all age groups in India, both men and women, are consuming inadequate amounts of micronutrients critical for health, including iron, calcium and folate, as estimated in a study published in The Lancet Global Health journal. The study is the first to provide estimates of insufficient consumption of 15 micronutrients across 185 countries, according to an international team, including researchers from Harvard University, US.

The findings suggested that around the world, almost 70 per cent, or over five billion, people do not con-

sume enough iodine, vitamin E, and calcium. The researchers also found that within a country and an age group, more women were consuming inadequate amounts of iodine, vitamin B12 and iron, compared to men, whereas more men were consuming inadequate amounts of magnesium, vitamin B6, zinc and vitamin C, compared to women.

In India, while more women consumed insufficient amounts of iodine, compared to men, more men consumed inadequate amounts of zinc and magnesium, compared to women, the team found.

Another round of Harris vs Trump

Trump would restrict women's rights as he did earlier

New York: In her first sit-down interview of her presidential campaign US Vice President Kamala Harris has said "my values have not changed," as she was questioned along with her running mate Tim Walz, Governor of Minnesota.

The interview with CNN's Dana Bash on Thursday gives Harris a chance to quell criticism that she has eschewed uncontrolled environments, while also giving her a fresh platform to define her campaign and test her political mettle ahead of an upcoming debate with former President Donald Trump set for Sept 10. But it also carries risk as her team tries to build on momentum from the ticket shakeup following Joe Biden's exit and last week's Democratic National Convention.



Harris was asked about changes in her policies over the years, specifically her reversals on fracking and decriminalizing illegal border crossings. "I think the most important and most significant aspect of my policy perspective and decisions is my values have not changed," she replied.

Harris also brushed off Trump's questioning of her racial identity after the

former president said she "happened to turn Black." Harris, who is of Black and South Asian heritage, said it was the "same old, tired playbook."

She also said she would name a Republican to serve in her Cabinet if she were elected, though she didn't have a name in mind.

Harris and Walz are still introducing themselves to voters, unlike Trump and

Biden, of whom people had near-universal awareness and opinion.

Harris went through a list of Democratic concerns: that Trump will further restrict women's rights after he appointed three judges to the US Supreme Court who helped overturn Roe, that he'd repeal the Affordable Care Act, and that given new immunity powers granted presidents by the US Supreme Court, "imagine Donald Trump with no guard rails."

Harris' lack of media access over the past month has become one of Republicans' key attack lines. The Trump campaign has kept a tally of the days she has gone by as a candidate without giving an interview and have suggested she needs a "babysitter" and that's why Walz will be there.

New York: Former President Donald Trump has said that if he wins a second term, he wants to make IVF treatment free for women, but did not detail how he would fund his plan or how it would work.

"I am announcing today in a major statement that under the Trump administration, your government will pay for — or your insurance company will be mandated to pay for — all costs associated with IVF treatment," he said at an event in Michigan on Thursday. "Because we want more babies, to put it nicely."

IVF treatments are notoriously expensive, and can cost tens of thousands of dollars for a single round. Many women require multiple rounds and there is no guarantee of success.

The announcement



comes as Trump has been under intense criticism from Democrats for his role in appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe v Wade, ending the constitutional right to an abortion in the country.

The decision is expected to be a major motivator for Democrats this November, and was a major theme of the party's national convention last

week as well as Vice President Kamala Harris' speech as she accepted her party's nomination.

In response, Trump has been trying to present himself as moderate on the issue, going as far as to declare himself as "very strong on women's reproductive rights".

In an interview with NBC ahead of the event, Trump also suggested that he will vote to repeal Flor-

ida's six-week abortion ban, which limits the procedure before many women even know they are pregnant.

Trump did not explicitly say how he plans to vote on the ballot measure when he casts his vote this fall.

But he repeated his past criticism that the measure, signed into law by Republican Governor Ron DeSantis last year, is too restrictive.

"I think the six weeks is too short. It has to be more time," he said. "I am going to be voting that we need more than six weeks."

Trump has held multiple conflicting positions on abortion over the years. After he considered various potential national cut-off times, he decided earlier this year that regulating abortion should be left to the states.

Thai-Chinese train tunnel collapsed

Bangkok: The bodies of three foreign workers who were trapped for days in a railway tunnel in northeastern Thailand that collapsed during construction have been retrieved after an intensive rescue effort, Thai officials said on Friday.

The tunnel is a part of a Thai-Chinese high-speed railway project linking the capital Bangkok to the

northeastern province of Nong Khai, bordering Laos. Part of it collapsed on Saturday night while three foreign workers, one from Myanmar and two from China, were inside. The tunnel is in Nakhon Ratchasima province, 250 kilometers (155 miles) northeast of Bangkok.

Investigation of the accident is ongoing, but Thai media reported that Depu-

ty Transport Minister Surapong Piyachote said on Monday that it appeared that the earth above the tunnel had become especially heavy due to days of rain. The body of one worker, a truck driver from Myanmar, was found Thursday and the other two on Friday, Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul told the media.

He said the two Chinese

victims were a supervisor and a backhoe operator.

Autopsies carried out at a provincial hospital would ascertain the cause of death, he said. "The initial result indicated that the first victim we found yesterday died of suffocation," Anutin said. The 126-hour rescue operation was led by the State Railway of Thailand and a rescue team from China, which arrived

at the scene on Tuesday.

The ambitious two-stage rail project has a total investment cost of more than 520 billion baht (USD 15.3 billion).

The 243-kilometer (151-mile) Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima segment is expected to be completed by 2028, and the 356-kilometer (221-mile) Nakhon Ratchasima to Nong Khai segment by 2029. -AP

Indian jailed for molestation

Singapore: A former Indian national yoga instructor was on Friday sentenced to 23 months in prison and four strokes of the cane for molesting three women while conducting classes with them.

Rajpal Singh, 35, who worked at Trust Yoga in Telok Ayer Street at the time of the offences, no longer conducts lessons there. -PTI

Indian-origin woman admits killing daughter

London: A 33-year-old Indian-origin woman on Friday admitted to the killing of her 10-year-old daughter, who was found dead at their home in a town in the West Midlands region of England earlier this year.

Jaskirat Kaur, also known as Jasmine Kang, had been charged with the murder of Shay Kang on

March 4 when West Midlands Police said the girl had been found with injuries at an address in the town of Rowley Regis and pronounced dead at the scene.

Kaur pleads guilty to her daughter's manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. -PTI

Germany deports Afghans for first time since 2021

Berlin: Germany deported Afghan nationals on Friday for the first time since August 2021, when the Taliban returned to power.

A government spokesman described the Afghan nationals as convicted criminals but did not immediately respond to a request for comment to clarify their offenses. The deportations occurred a week after a deadly knife attack in Solingen where the suspect is a Syrian citizen who had applied for asylum in Germany.

The suspect was supposed to be deported to Bulgaria last year but reportedly disappeared for a

time and avoided deportation. He was ordered held Sunday on suspicion of murder and membership in a terrorist organization pending further investigation and a possible indictment.

The Islamic State militant group has claimed responsibility for Friday's attack, without providing evidence. The extremist group said on its news site that the attacker targeted Christians and that he carried out the assaults "to avenge Muslims in Palestine and everywhere." The claim couldn't be independently verified. The Solingen attack comes amid debate over immigration

ahead of regional elections Sunday in Germany's Saxony and Thuringia regions where anti-immigration parties such as the populist Alternative for Germany are expected to do well.

In June, Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed that the country would start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant left one police officer dead and four more people injured.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser announced a plan to tighten existing knife laws, according to German news agency dpa. -AP



Serbian honor guard soldiers arrive before the welcoming ceremony for French President Emmanuel Macron in Belgrade, Serbia on Thursday. Macron aims sale of 12 Rafale fighter jets. Pic: AP/PTI

Pakistan PM speaks to Yunus

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday spoke to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus during which the two leaders agreed to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries.

During the telephone con-

Expressed desire to boost relations

versation, they further agreed that "greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia", according to an official statement here.

Sharif's telephone call to Yunus marks the first high-level direct contact between the leaders of the two countries since the change of government in Dhaka.

Sharif emphasised the shared historical, religious, and cultural bonds and expressed a "keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts." -PTI

Members shouldn't have religious beliefs

Beijing: The ruling Communist Party of China headed by President Xi Jinping has issued a new set of rules to remove incompetent members deemed lagging in their faith, loyalty and performance, in a bid to further strengthen the party's control over the conduct of its nearly 100 million members.

The General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee released regulations on Thursday outlining how underperforming and unqualified party members should be dealt with, aiming to ensure the advanced nature and integrity of its membership by providing institutional guaran-

Chinese Communist Party tightens rules of behaviour

tees, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Comprising 27 articles, these new rules are crucial for exercising full and rigorous Party

self-governance, an official from the Organisation Department of the CPC Central Committee told Xinhua.

They are essential for pro-

moting the party's self-reform, establishing a team of Party members with strong beliefs, political reliability, reasonable composition, outstanding qualities, strict discipline and significant contributions, the official noted.

The CPC has more than 99.18 million members at the end of

2023, up by more than 1.14 million from 2022. The party members in various walks of life and professions including in various ministries of the government carry significant influence in public affairs.

The party discipline stipulates that the members should be atheists. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Sanchez Amor, Member of the European Parliament, on Sri Lanka election

"This election is crucial to fortify democratic institutions through the ballot box. Hence it will be important that the election is conducted peacefully in a transparent and inclusive manner and that all voters and candidates retain confidence in the process and the outcome."

4-year-old broke 3,500-year-old jar

Museum forgives him, invites him back

Haifa (Israel): A 4-year-old boy who accidentally broke a rare 3,500-year-old jar in an Israeli museum has been forgiven and even invited back, as curators hope to turn the disaster into a teachable moment.

Alex Geller, the boy's father, said his son — the youngest of three — is not a kid that usually destroys things, he just wanted to see what was inside. The Bronze Age jar is one

of many artifacts exhibited out in the open, part of the Hecht Museum's vision of letting visitors explore history without glass barriers, said Inbar Rivlin, the director of the museum, which is associated with Haifa University in northern Israel.

Rivlin said the jar was displayed at the museum entrance, and that the family quickly left without finishing their visit. She wants to use the restoration as an

educational opportunity and make sure they feel welcome to return. Geller and his family live in the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, just a few km south of the border with Lebanon, in an area that has come under Hezbollah rocket fire for more than 10 months in a conflict linked to the war in Gaza.

They were spending the summer break visiting museums and taking day trips around Israel to escape the tensions, Geller said. There were a lot of kids at the museum that day, and Geller said he fervently prayed the damage had been caused by someone else. When he turned around and saw it was his son, he was "in complete shock". Geller said his son didn't quite understand the international interest in the broken jar, but their tight-knit community in Nahariya

was following the media reports with interest and was proud of their local celebrity.

Using 3D technology and high-resolution videos of the jar, experts plan to complete the restoration in a matter of days. It could be back on display as early as next week. The jar was one of the only containers of its size and period that was still complete when it was discovered. -AP

EDITORIAL

A Cloudy Gambit

In an era where data is the new oil, Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man (as per Forbes India) and the force behind Reliance Jio, has once again stirred the waters of the Indian telecommunications market. His latest announcement—that Jio users will receive up to 100 GB of free cloud storage—signals not just a strategic masterstroke, but also a broader shift in the dynamics of digital consumption in India. Ambani's offering is not merely about storage but a calculated move to further entrench Jio into the digital lives of millions, while simultaneously expanding India's burgeoning data economy.

Since its inception in 2016, Jio has been synonymous with disruption. The company's aggressive pricing strategies decimated competition, slashing mobile data costs and effectively democratizing internet access across the subcontinent. Ambani's cloud storage gambit builds on this foundation, adding a new layer to Jio's ecosystem that already spans telecommunications, entertainment, e-commerce, and more. With free cloud storage, Jio aims to bind its users more tightly into this ecosystem, offering not just connectivity but also the tools to manage their growing digital lives.

India is already the world's second-largest internet market, with over 850 million users. By offering free storage, Jio is not just catering to an existing need but is actively shaping future digital behaviour. More users are likely to flock to Jio's services, attracted by the convenience of storing, accessing, and sharing their content on the go—all at no extra cost.

Yet, Ambani's announcement is not just about convenience for consumers; it is also about control for Jio. The offer of free cloud storage is a gateway, drawing users deeper into Jio's proprietary platform.

Jio's move is akin to a supermarket offering free groceries to attract footfall, only to upsell premium products down the aisle. In the digital realm, once users are embedded within a cloud ecosystem, switching costs—both financial and psychological—are high.

Jio's competitors, from Airtel to international tech giants like Google and Amazon, are certainly not oblivious to this. However, the scale and audacity of Ambani's approach stand apart. While Google Photos and Amazon Cloud Drive have long offered cloud storage, their models are more conservative, tiered, and often come with hidden limitations.

Jio's free offering is broad and direct, tapping into the Indian market's innate price sensitivity. Moreover, with India's data privacy laws still nascent, the broader implications of Jio owning vast swathes of personal data remain a hazy concern on the horizon.

There is also a geopolitical dimension to consider. As India charts a more assertive course in its digital policy—emphasizing data sovereignty and resisting global tech hegemony—Jio's cloud offering dovetails neatly with nationalist ambitions. By providing a homegrown alternative to Western cloud services, Jio is positioning itself as a pillar of India's digital autonomy.

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

A famed Dutch diplomat's forgotten Indian tryst



By
Laurence Westwood

India had changed. After spending ten days perusing the antiquarian bookshops of Kolkata, Robert Hans van Gulik arrived by train in New Delhi with his Chinese wife, Shui Shifang, on February 17, 1952. Dutch diplomat, orientalist, and author, van Gulik had been appointed as a Counsellor at the Dutch Embassy. He had been in New Delhi before, during WW2, where he had been an advisor to the centre for anti-Japanese psychological warfare, headed by the supremely talented spy, journalist, and author Peter Fleming, elder brother to Ian Fleming of James Bond fame. Now, unhappily, he was going to be working for the Dutch Ambassador Anton Winkelman, whom he thought uncultured—Winkelman was first and foremost a businessman—and with whom he had very divergent ideas about how a diplomat should conduct themselves. Gifted in almost every respect, van Gulik had always been in the habit, wherever posted, of dispensing with his diplomatic work through the

Robert van Gulik, a multifaceted scholar-diplomat renowned for his classic Judge Dee novels, had a little-known tryst with Ind



morning, playing billiards and perusing local bookshops for rare and exotic tomes in the afternoons, and working hard on his many intellectual pursuits at home during the evenings.

He now also found the Indian government officials with whom he was required to interact, tiresome and irritating, having little time for their criticism of Dutch policies toward the Netherlands' former and remaining possessions in Indonesia—a subject close to van Gulik's heart having spent his childhood in Batavia. In hindsight, we can say that these officials were just looking for their post-colonial voices. But at the time van Gulik was having none of it and believed that no one of any interest worked in New Delhi, that all the best Indian scholars and artists resided in Varanasi, Chennai, and Kolkata.

Continuing in the practice he had perfected in posts in Japan and China of avoiding diplomatic work wherever possible, in New Delhi he continued to seek out those people who could aid him in his artistic and scholarly pursuits. His best friend was British, the eccentric Sir Hilary Waddington, attached to the Archaeological Survey in India. He mixed



with Chinese scholars, refugees from Mao's China, he and his wife taking every opportunity to dress up in Chinese clothes. Soon to be world-famous for his Judge Dee mysteries, van Gulik also found a Professor Chang Li-Chai to help him translate his latest mystery into Chinese. And, having studied Sanskrit at university—his doctorate had been on the horse cult in China and Japan and its origins in India and Tibet—he socialised with eminent Sanskrit scholars, such as Professor Raghu Vira and Doctor Lokesh Chandra, who encouraged him to write a history of Sanskrit studies in China and Japan.

Van Gulik had little time for modern China—even if he understood the political forces consuming China very well. During his posting to Chongqing (1943-46), the wartime capital of China, he had immersed himself in the traditional arts and literature of China. These days most remembered in academic circles for his book on the sexual culture of China—a subject studiously avoided by 'serious' academics at the time—he also penned works on the Chinese lute, Chinese imperial law, and the gibbon. He was especially interested in the propagation of

Buddhism from India to China in the first centuries of the Common Era and the importance of the Siddham script as a vehicle for this propagation. Having little interest in India or its languages, Chinese Buddhist monks utilised Siddham script as a basis for the pronunciation of mantras. Chinese not suitable for writing the sounds of Sanskrit. The usage of Siddham eventually spread all over East Asia. Van Gulik's history, Siddham: An Essay on the History of Sanskrit Studies in China and Japan, was published in 1956. Though it is not the most remembered of van Gulik's works, and his conclusions are contested, this essay is still cited to this very day.

Suffering eye problems, van Gulik left India in September 1953 to seek medical attention back in the Netherlands, never to return. His friends, Professor Vira and Doctor Chandra, would both go on to have political careers. Sadly, Professor Vira died before his time in a car accident, but Doctor Chandra is still with us today, at the venerable age of 97.

(The author is a novelist and retired investigator with an abiding passion for Chinese history)

SATTIRE WITH SWAG



Chirag says he is inseparable from Modi

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Friday rejected rumours of a rift between his Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and the BJP, asserting that he views himself as "inseparable" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Paswan said he was willing to contest the upcoming Bihar assembly polls as an NDA partner "if the BJP so desires", and made light of estranged uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras' recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Chirag Paswan talked to PTI. Excerpts...

My love for Narendra Modi is unshakeable. I am inseparable from him, for as long as he is Prime Minister. As a matter of fact, my views always reflected the government's



stand. A case in point is sending the Wakf Bill to the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

The fact is, our party has an alliance with BJP in Bihar and at the Centre. So, we will abide by coalition dharma at national level and in my home state. And although we have no strings attached in states like

Jharkhand, it does not mean we are averse to a tie-up with BJP there. If the BJP and other NDA partners want us on board, we are game.

Paras has lost all public support. He had been meeting all people ahead of Lok Sabha polls, too. That exercise proved to be of no avail.

I think the matter (Kangana Ranaut controversy) should have been closed once the BJP made it clear that she had expressed a personal view which the party did not agree with. We cannot trivialise a crime that causes so much trauma to the victim. Especially at a time when the nation's conscience has been rocked by the horrific incident involving a doctor in Kolkata, which has evoked such strong remarks from the President, the highest constitutional authority".

STATES WATCH

Jharkhand's Game of Thrones

The political landscape of Jharkhand is once again in turmoil, with former Chief Minister Champai Soren's defection to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) setting the stage for a new chapter in the state's ongoing political drama.

Soren, a seasoned leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) joined the BJP today, citing growing disillusionment with his former party's leadership. The move was officially confirmed after days of speculation, marking a significant shift in Jharkhand's political dynamics ahead of the upcoming assembly elections. MLA Ramdas Soren replaced him in the state Cabinet led by Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren.

Soren's disgruntlement dates back to his brief stint as Chief Minister after the arrest of Hemant Soren, the incumbent CM and key figure of JMM, in a money laundering case. Champai was thrust into leadership in the interim, a position he was unceremoniously removed from once Hemant Soren was granted bail and resumed his role.

Champai Soren's bitterness was evident in his public statements as he spoke of the humiliations he reportedly endured during his short-lived tenure as CM. According to him, his programs were cancelled, and he was sidelined by his own



party in what he described as the most degrading moments of his four-decade-long political career.

The run-up to his switching over to the saffron party was marked by twists and turns. On the social media platform X, Assam Chief Minister and BJP's Jharkhand election co-charge, Himanta Biswa Sarma, had first announced Soren's induction into the BJP. This announcement, along with photos of Soren meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, had further fuelled the buzz that had been building since Soren removed the JMM leader tag from his social media profile and began expressing grievances against his own party.

Champai's switch to the BJP has echoes of political betrayals familiar to Indian politics. His defection is reminiscent of Jitan Ram Manjhi's revolt against Nitish Kumar in Bihar, where Manjhi was removed from his Chief Ministerial position and subsequently formed his own party.

The ramifications of Champai's departure are significant. His exit from JMM not only deprives the party of a key leader but also signals potential vulnerabilities in the party's leadership structure.

Known as the 'Kolhan Tiger' for

his influence in the tribal-dominated Kolhan division, Soren's potential exit from the JMM could reshape the electoral landscape ahead of the polls. Kolhan, encompassing East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, and Seraikela-Kharsawan, is not just a JMM stronghold but also a strategically important region with 14 legislative constituencies out of Jharkhand's 81.

Soren's political roots run deep in Jharkhand's fight for statehood, alongside JMM supremo Shibu Soren. As the third Chief Minister from Kolhan, his stature surpasses those of predecessors Arjun Munda and Madhu Kora, thanks to his grassroots connection and organizational prowess.

The opposition BJP sees opportunity in the upheaval. Although it was shut out in Kolhan in the 2019 elections, where JMM and Congress dominated, BJP insiders believe the current scenario might work in their favour.

The concentration of power within the Soren family and the sidelining of other senior leaders could result in further fractures within JMM, a scenario the BJP is keen to exploit as the Assembly poll inches closer.



KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 A labourers works during the development of Noida International Airport (NIA) on Thursday.
- 2 Wrestler Vinesh Phogat and boxer Lovlina Borgohain during an event at Lovely Professional University (LPU), in Jalandhar on Thursday.
- 3 People cross a flooded street after heavy rains, in Ahmedabad on Thursday.
- 4 Puerto Rico's singer Ricky Martin performs in concert at his Sinfonico tour in Panama city on Thursday.
- 5 A vendor sells vegetables amid rains at Dal Lake, in Srinagar on Thursday.



All Pictures PTI, AP

TALK OF THE TOWN

Angry Young Men: Half Baked Story



By
Abhijit Joshi

When the teaser of “Angry Young Men” appeared on Prime Video, there was a strong urge to watch the documentary series. The teaser features various celebrities talking about the iconic duo Salim-Javed, along with the duo themselves discussing their work. It also includes film clips from Amitabh Bachchan’s movies, like the famous dialogue, “Main aaj bhi pheke hue paisa nahi uthata.” For those who lived through the golden era of Bachchan, this series is a must-watch.

“Angry Young Men” is a new three-part documentary series on Amazon Prime, directed by Namrata Rao.

As I watched it, I couldn’t help but feel that it’s like a half-baked cake. You enjoy watching the process and wait eagerly for the final outcome, but when you finally get to taste it, it’s not fully done. That was my reaction.

However, despite this, it’s definitely a one-time watch for film buffs like us. I won’t go into all the details of each film or what people said but will focus on the specific elements and incidents that people are more interested in.

Let’s start with the good parts: Salim-Javed, who came from well-off families in Indore and Gwalior, respectively, arrived in Mumbai to pursue their dreams. They worked hard, often going hungry, facing disagreements and failures, but they never thought of giving up. The two accidentally met on the set of the film Sarhadi Lootera. Salim Khan was a small-time actor, and



Sarhadi Lootera was one of the last films he acted in before he turned his focus to writing. Javed Akhtar was a clapper boy for the film and was later made the dialogue writer.

This marked the beginning of their bond.

Both Salim and Javed were outsiders in the film industry, but they shared the same zeal to do something different. They both had a natural flair for writing and storytelling, but unfortunately, they had to take up other jobs to earn money. But as they say, if you love your work, there’s always light at the end of the tunnel. The same happened with them when they got their first film Andaz, and the rest is history.

Now, let’s discuss the shortcomings:

The film industry owes Amitabh Bachchan’s rise to Salim-Javed. Without Zanjeer, the industry might not have had the ultimate superstar, and the story behind this casting is fascinating. However, the documentary

fails to delve into the details of Amitabh’s journey during that period. It would have been insightful to know the director’s approach, how Salim-Javed convinced Prakash Mehra, and why he agreed to cast Bachchan. This story is significant because the success of Zanjeer not only elevated

Amitabh but also cemented Salim-Javed’s legacy. The documentary misses out on these crucial firsts in their careers.

When Zanjeer happened and the industry went crazy for Amitabh and Salim-Javed, how were those days? Did anything change in the way they were treated? The series could have explored these aspects more widely.

Both Sholay and Deewar were released in the same year, and both films are iconic. They firmly established Amitabh as the “angry young man. While Deewar won all the awards and Sholay missed out, the series mentions this but doesn’t provide enough insight into what was happening during the shooting of these

films. What were the actors’ perspectives? There must have been many interesting incidents during that time that could have been discussed.

One of the best movies, Shakti, was not even discussed, which makes the series feel incomplete. Shakti is one of Amitabh’s finest performances, where he stood his ground against the legendary Dilip Kumar, despite having limited scope in the film. This should have been elaborated on and discussed in depth.

The series also lacks discussion about the relationship between Salim-Javed and various actors. This aspect could have been explored more. Additionally, the documentary fails to address the specific roles each of them played in their work. Sharing their experiences regarding dialogue writing and screenplay would have been very interesting.

The most important part missing from the documentary is the reason behind Salim-Javed’s split. While the family members and industry insiders talk about

it, the duo themselves don’t say much. The series doesn’t delve into how the industry reacted post-split, whether any stars approached them, who those stars were, and what their reactions were. No one took the initiative to address the split, and the documentary doesn’t explain why.

Despite these gaps, the series will resonate with the 70s-80s generation, as they experienced those days firsthand and enjoyed them. For the younger generation, this series should serve as a reference book, showcasing the struggles of Salim-Javed, the history they created, and, most importantly, their brilliance. They were absolute geniuses who crafted some of the best movie dialogues and scenes ever.

That’s why they were paid more than Amitabh Bachchan himself for the film Dostana—such was the power of Salim-Javed.

(The writer is a communication professional. Views personal)

GLAMOUR QUOTIENT



Pic: Prime Video

Varun Dhawan and Family launch the trailer of 'Binny and Family' along with the debut Anjini Dhawan at PVR Juhu. Star cast of the film Pankaj Kapur, Himani Shivpuri, Rajesh Kumar, Charu Shankar and Naman Tripathy were present.



Archer Sheetal Devi from India prepares to fire during the Paralympic Games in Paris on Thursday.

Pic: APPTI

History For Refugee Paralympic Team Afghan taekwondo para-athlete wins

Paris: Zakia Khudadadi made history at the Paris Paralympics by becoming the first athlete from the Refugee Paralympic Team to win a medal.

Khudadadi won bronze in the women's 47kg category after defeating Turkey's Ekinci Nurcihan on Thursday. When the final buzzer sounded at the Grand Palais in central Paris, Khudadadi erupted in joy, throwing her helmet and mouthpiece into the air.

"It was a surreal moment, my heart started racing when I realized I had won the bronze," Khudadadi said, her voice shaking with emotion. "I went through so much to get here. This medal is for

all the women of Afghanistan and all the refugees of the world. I hope that one day there will be peace in my country."

Khudadadi, who was born without one forearm, began practicing taekwondo in secret at age 11 in a hidden gym in her hometown of Herat, in western Afghanistan.

Originally blocked from competing following the rise of the Taliban in 2021, she was later evacuated from Afghanistan and was allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics for her country following a plea from the international community.

After the competition, she settled in Paris and was later offered

the opportunity to compete with the refugee team at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

"This medal means everything to me, I will never forget that day," Khudadadi said. "I won because of the great support I got from the crowd."

The atmosphere in the Grand Palais was electric as the French crowd cheered her on as if she were one of their own. Since fleeing Afghanistan, Khudadadi has been training at INSEP, France's national institute of sport, in Paris with her French coach Haby Niare, a former taekwondo world champion.

-AP

Avani bags back-to-back gold

Paris: The incredible Avani Lekhara won a second successive Paralympic Games gold medal in women's 10m air rifle (SH1) event here on Friday as compatriot Mona Agarwal claimed a bronze.

Winner of the Tokyo Paralympics gold three years back, Avani, 22, shot a superb 249.7 to erase her own record of 249.6 set in Japanese capital, while Mona, who took up shooting sport in 2022, notched up 228.7 for the bronze.

Avani, who is wheel-chair bound after a car mishap left her paralysed below the waist when she was 11-years-old, had become the first woman shooter from the country to win medals in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021.

Avani Lekhara qualified for the final in second place. She shot a 625.8 to be placed behind Iryna Shchetnik, who broke the Paralympic Qualification Record with



Avani Lekhara

a score of 627.5, Mona, the two-time World Cup gold medalist competing in her maiden Paralympics, shot 623.1.

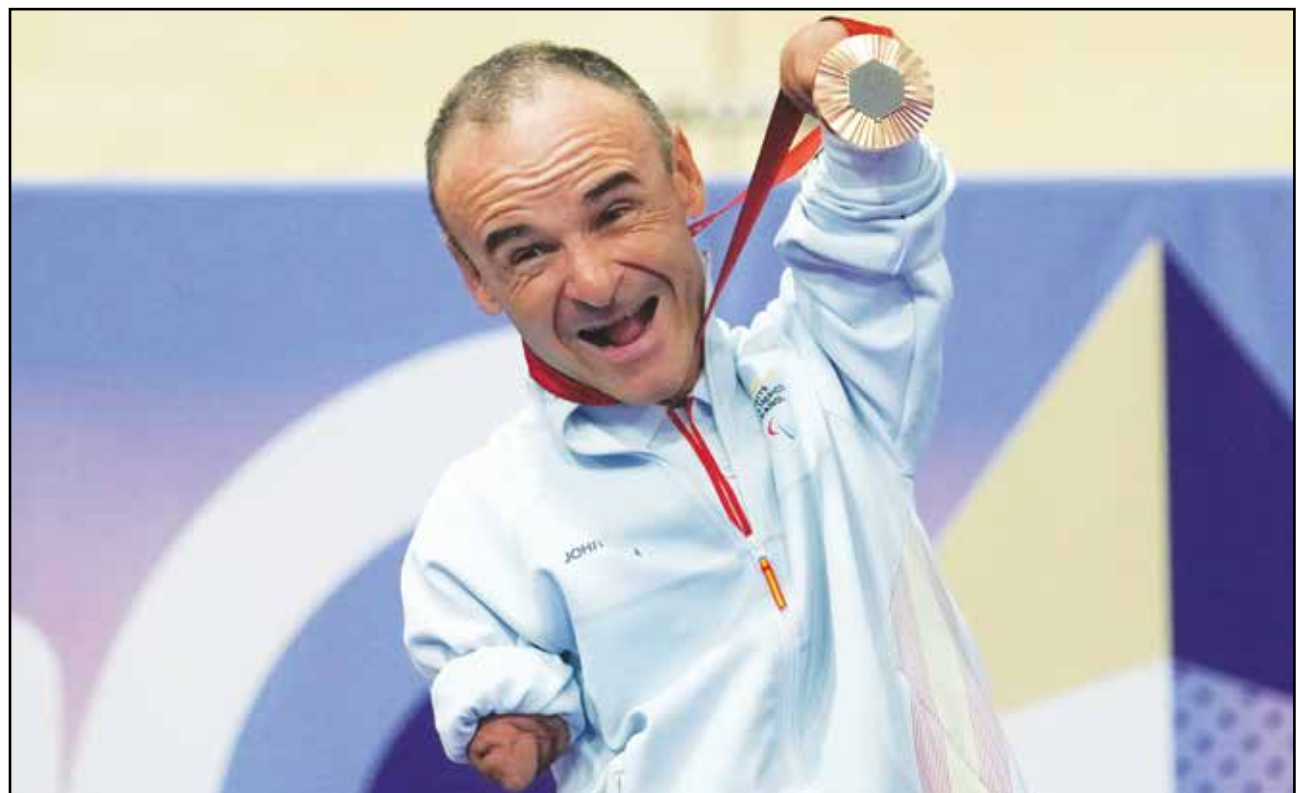
Avani, who is wheel-chair bound after a car mishap left her



Mona Agarwal

paralysed below the waist when she was 11-years-old, had become the first woman shooter from the country to win medals in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021.

-PTI



Ricardo Ten Argiles, from Spain, shows his bronze medal after the Men's C1 3000m individual pursuit final in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines outside Paris on Thursday.

Pic: APPTI

Pickleball Tour

Tennis legend Agassi to visit India

New Delhi: Eight-time Grand Slam champion and former World No. 1 tennis player Andre Agassi is set to visit India in January next year to inaugurate the PWR DUPR Indian Tour and League, a major event that aims to popularise pickleball in the country.

The PWR DUPR Indian Tour and League follows the recent introduction of a new rankings structure by Pickleball World Rankings (PWR), along with the launch of the PWR World Tour and PWR World Series.

In a video message to his Indian

fans, Agassi said, "I'm excited to visit India and bring the excitement of pickleball to its fans. I look forward to the PWR DUPR Indian Tour & League and hope it will be a great

success in the country."

Agassi has won four Australian Open titles, a French Open and Wimbledon each, and two US Open titles, as well as a gold medal in men's singles at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Ahead of the main event in Jan-

uary, the PWR DUPR India Masters, including the "Battle of the League: Stage 1," a PWR 700 event, will take place in New Delhi from October 24 to 27 this year.

The Battle of the Leagues is a unique team-based competition designed for amateur players, with event partners including Dynamic Universal Pickleball Rating (DUPR), Minor League Pickleball, Pickleball United, FansPlay, the Indian Pickleball Association, the Asian Pickleball Association, and the Global Pickleball Federation.

-PTI



Davis Cup Coach Ashutosh Speaks

Trust is important in team atmosphere

By Amanpreet Singh

New Delhi: India's Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh is new to the job but not to the players in the national team.

When his name cropped up as a possible candidate for the post, which fell vacant following the sudden resignation of veteran Zee-shan Ali, it did not take much time for the top players to agree to Ashutosh's name.

Ashutosh has been interacting with the country's leading players for years, discussing their matches, giving his opinion and hearing them out patiently.

At 41, Ashutosh is perhaps the youngest to be appointed the Davis Cup coach. He might be new to the high-profile role but seems ready for a long haul.

In an interaction with PTI, Ashutosh shared his coaching philosophy, approach and style of functioning.

"Many a time, it's not

even about tennis. It's not technical," Ashutosh said emphatically.

"Many a time, players are going through something in their personal life. Because the Tour is such a lonely place, they just need someone who can listen to them. Providing that kind of comfort."

Ashutosh said man-management plays a big part in any team situation.

"The players are going to have people (in support staff) who are not part of your regular team. At least you can provide that kind of feeling of comfort to the players. That there is someone that I can really confide in."

The expertise in the sport, the ability to prepare strategies and executing them are essential, without which you don't earn respect, and winning the trust of players is an important part of Ashutosh's working philosophy.

He was called to assist the Indian team to prepare for the tie against Pakistan in



Islamabad. During the training camp in Delhi, the inputs he provided to the players was much appreciated and it would have played a part in players agreeing to his candidature.

"My past experience on grassroots in fast conditions, that must have played on their minds before they approached me. Also, I have

an individual rapport with almost all the players. I also have quite a bit of experience playing against Pakistan in Pakistan.

Ashutosh had advised the players that Aqeel Khan, being a double-hander on his forehand, they needed to make a lot of body serves.

"Because, then, you take

Pooja breaks national record

Lima (Peru): India's Pooja Singh rewrote the national U20 women's national record in high jump to qualify for the final with a ninth-place finish in the qualification round at the ongoing World Athletics U20 Championships here.

The 17-year-old, who hails from Fatehabad district of Haryana, cleared a height of 1.83m to finish second in qualification round group B and ninth overall late Thursday night and qualify for the final to be held on August 31.

Daughter of a mason, Pooja broke her own national U20 record of 1.82m set last year in Korea while winning a silver medal at the Asian U20 Championships.

-PTI

US OPEN

Bopanna-Ebden move to second round



New York: India's Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden moved into the second round of the US Open men's doubles competition with a win over Netherlands' Sander Arends and Robin Haase.

Bopanna and Ebden sailed past their Dutch opponents 6-3, 7-5 in a 64-minute opening round contest on Thursday night.

Last edition's runner up, the Indo-Australian pair

has arrived to the final Grand Slam of the season on the back of three consecutive losses but the duo backed itself and got the job done.

Bopanna and Ebden initially struggled, losing their serve in the third game. However, they quickly regained their composure, breaking their opponents' serve twice to win the next four games.

In the second set, they

faced a similar challenge, falling behind but managing to equalise the set at 5-5. They then broke their opponents' serve once more to clinch the match.

The second seeds, who are the current Australian Open champions, will face the unseeded pair of Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena and Federico Coria of Argentina in the second round on Friday.

-PTI

Alcaraz, Osaka eliminated

New York: Iga Swiatek and Jannik Sinner flashed their No. 1 form with powerful performances that moved them into the third round of the U.S. Open.

Carlos Alcaraz and Naomi Osaka couldn't quite find the games that once had them on top of the rankings. Those past U.S. Open champions were both knocked out Thursday night, with the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam winning streak halted by a 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 loss to 74th-ranked Botin van de Zandschulp.

Swiatek raced by Japanese qualifier Ena Shibahara 6-0, 6-1, finishing off the match in 65 minutes. It took the 2022 U.S. Open champion longer than that



to play the second set of her first-round match, when she needed a tiebreaker that she eventually closed out in 72 minutes.

Osaka's forehand faltered in key moments and the two-time U.S. Open champion was eliminated by Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Sinner dropped the first set in his opening match in New York but didn't encour-



ter much trouble while facing his second straight American on Ashe. The Italian earned his 50th victory of the season, including his ATP Tour-leading 30th on hard courts.

His previous one was a little shaky after a slow start against Mackie McDonald, so Sinner got in a practice session after that match and was happy with the results Thursday.

-AP