

THE PERFECT VOICE



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RSS' stark warning to BJP: Listen to us or Perish

Sangh insists on criteria for candidate selection, prioritising grassroots connections and ideological commitment

By Kiran D. Tare

Mumbai: As Maharashtra gears up for the Assembly elections, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is expressing growing discontent with the BJP's approach to the polls. Sources familiar with the situation suggest that the RSS has issued a stern warning to the BJP: shape up or face consequences. This tension underscores the larger anxiety within the RSS over the BJP's dismal performance in Maharashtra in the June 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Implicit in the RSS's intervention is the threat that failure to heed its advice could lead to a rupture in the relationship between the two organizations.

"The RSS has indicated to the BJP that this will be the last opportunity for the party to correct itself. If it fails, the RSS may find an alternative to the BJP," said

a source close to the developments.

He revealed that the RSS has laid down specific guidelines and expectations for the BJP, emphasizing that this election represents the party's last chance to align with the Sangh's vision and restore its standing.

The source further said the RSS had made it clear that Maharashtra election was "a litmus test" for the BJP as far as its relations with the Sangh are concerned. "If the BJP does not listen to what Sangh says, the Sangh might explore other options in the near future. And this message has been clearly conveyed to the BJP leaders. Now, it is up to the BJP whether or not listen to the RSS."

In a series of meetings held across Maharashtra's key regions—Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Devgiri and Vidarbha—the RSS leadership conveyed its dissatisfaction directly



to senior BJP figures including Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, state BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, and former state president Chandrakant Patil.

One of the RSS's primary concerns is the disconnect between BJP leaders

and the party's traditional supporters. The Sangh has observed a growing sense of disillusionment among loyal BJP workers, who feel sidelined by what they perceive as the arrogance and aloofness of the current leadership. In its meetings, the RSS leadership stressed

the need for BJP leaders to engage more authentically with the party base.

"The RSS has categorically told to the BJP leaders that they will have to reach out to the party workers and sympathisers with an open heart and mind," the source said. "The RSS be-

lieves that the loyal BJP workers are dejected because of the arrogance and aloofness of the party leaders. If these workers are won over by the BJP could get back in a position to put up a fight in the election."

In June, a closed-door meeting in Pune's Moti Baug area further highlighted the depth of the RSS's concerns. The meeting, which included several BJP leaders — either defeated candidates and campaign managers from losing constituencies—served as a forum for the RSS to directly convey its displeasure with the BJP's campaign strategies and organizational shortcomings.

For the RSS, this is not just about winning an election; it is about safeguarding the ideological integrity of a movement that has shaped India's political landscape for nearly a century. After the current 'ultimatum,' the onus is on the BJP to correct course and realign with the Sangh's expectations.

The RSS prescription: Page 2

Bawankule's son in Hit-N-Run case

Nagpur: A luxury car owned by Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule's son Sanket hit several vehicles in the early hours of Monday in Ramdaspath area of Nagpur, following which two occupants, including the driver, were arrested. Sanket fled the scene after the accident, a police official said.

According to the Sitabuldi police station officer, the Audi car first collided with complainant Jitendra Sonkamble's car at 1 am and then with a moped, leaving two youth riding it injured.

The Audi car struck some more vehicles moving towards Mankapur area. At T-Point there, the vehicle hit a Polo car. Its occupants chased the Audi and stopped it near Mankapur bridge. Three occupants, including Sanket Bawankule, fled," he said.

"The car's driver, Arjun Hawre, and one more occupant, Ronit Chittamwar, were stopped by the occupants of the Polo car. They were taken to Tehsil police station, from where they were handed over for further probe to Sitabuldi police," he said.

The official said the occupants of the Audi were returning from a beer bar in Dharampath when the incident took place, though he did not give information



Sanket Bawankule

on whether anyone of them was drunk.

"A case of rash driving and other offences was registered on the complaint of Sonkamble. Hawre and Chittamwar were later released on bail. Further probe is underway," the Sitabuldi police station officer added.

Speaking to reporters about the incident, Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule admitted the Audi car was registered in the name of his son Sanket.

"Police should conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the accident without any bias. Those found guilty should be charged and appropriate action should be taken against them. I have not spoken to any police official. The law must be equal for all," the senior BJP leader said.

Protests conspiracy by Centre: Mamata

The WB CM targets the Centre after SC voices concern over missing document

By Press Trust of India

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday alleged that the Centre was conspiring over public outcry involving the alleged rape and murder of a doctor at a state-run hospital last month. She also claimed that some Left parties were involved in it.

Speaking at an administrative review meeting at

the state secretariat 'Nabanna', Banerjee also claimed she had never offered money to the deceased doctor's parents, dismissing a campaign that the family members of the postgraduate trainee were requested to accept compensation.

The CM took the opportunity to urge people to "return to festivities" as Durga puja is round the corner.

Banerjee, who heads the home department, revealed



that Kolkata CP Vineet Goyal had offered to resign multiple times in the past week but added, "We need someone who understands law and order and sees us through the Durga puja festivities".

Banerjee, who is also the health minister of the state, conveyed to the protesting doctors that their demands were fulfilled "as much as possible".

SC asks doctors to resume work

Earlier in the day, the top court directed the protesting resident doctors in West

Bengal to resume work by 5 pm on Tuesday and said it wouldn't stop the state from taking action against the striking doctors if they failed to meet the deadline.

The court passed the direction after the Bengal government assured it that no action, including punitive transfers, would be taken against the protesting doctors on resumption of work.

"The Supreme Court has requested you to join duty. I will repeat that request. If you have anything to say, you are always welcome. You can form a team of 5 to 10 members and meet me,"

This (the protests) is definitely a conspiracy by the Centre and some Left parties are also involved in it. Some people are taking advantage of the recent turmoil in our neighbouring country. They have forgotten that India and Bangladesh are separate nations.

-Mamata Banerjee, CM, West Bengal

she said, offering across-the-table talks with the agitating doctors.

Lack of evidence affects CBI probe: Page 5

First Mpox case in India confirmed

New Delhi: A man who recently travelled from a country experiencing mpox transmission has tested positive for the disease, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

"The previously suspected case of mpox has been verified as a travel-related infection. Laboratory testing has confirmed the presence of mpox virus of the West African clade-2 in the patient," it said.

The ministry said that it is an isolated case, similar to the earlier 30 cases reported in India from July 2022 onwards. It is not a part of the current public health emergency reported by WHO which is regarding clade 1 of mpox, it underlined.

"The individual, a young male who recently travelled from a country experiencing ongoing mpox transmission, is currently isolated at a designated tertiary care isolation facility. The patient remains clinically stable and is without any systemic illness or comorbidities," the minister said.

try said.

The case aligns with earlier risk assessments and continues to be managed according to established protocols, it said, adding that public health measures, including contact tracing and monitoring, are actively in place to ensure the situation is contained.

"There is no indication of any widespread risk to the public at this time," the health ministry stated.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) last month declared mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) for the second time in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa.

The Centre has advised states and Union territories to screen and test all suspect mpox cases in the community, and identify isolation facilities in hospitals for both suspect and confirmed patients.

-PTI



Vice Chief of Air Staff (VCAS) Air Marshal AP Singh, Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan fly in the indigenous Tejas fighter jet in the skies over Jodhpur air base.

Pic: PTI

Some don't want India to grow: Bhagwat

Pune: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday said some elements who don't want India to grow are creating hindrance in the path of its development, but there was no need to be scared as a similar situation prevailed during the times of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, but it was tackled using the power of "dharma" or religion and righteousness.

Bhagwat maintained that in the past "external" invasions of India were largely visible so people were alert, but now they are manifesting in different forms.

COVID antibody identified

New Delhi: Researchers have discovered an antibody that could counter all known variants of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and also distantly related ones that infect other animals.

The researchers, led by those at The University of Texas in Austin, US, isolated

SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus causing COVID-19, uses its spike protein to invade and infect another individual, or the host. Antibodies, produced by the host in response, bind to the spike protein to block its action and prevent infection.

the antibody 'SC27' from the plasma donated by four patients. These patients had breakthrough infections, which occur when a vaccinated individual gets infected.

The research has been published in the journal Cell Reports Medicine. Over the more than four years since the first case of COVID-19 emerged, SARS-CoV-2 has evolved to acquire certain characteristics which make the virus resistant to vaccines and treatments.

The authors said the 'SC27' antibody recognised all these various characteristics of the spike proteins across COVID-19 variants.

"One goal of this research, and vaccinology in general, is to work toward a

The researchers also found that hybrid immunity offered an increased protection against the disease, compared with infection or vaccination alone.

universal vaccine that can generate antibodies and create an immune response with broad protection to a rapidly mutating virus," said one of the lead authors William Voss.

However, the authors also acknowledged that "the small number of individuals analysed may limit the interpretation of the data and leave it unclear how common the SC27-like antibody might be in human populations."

-PTI

Amit Shah gives 5-point agenda for Mahayuti

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah, during his meeting with the Mahayuti core committee members on Sunday night, gave a five-point agenda to ensure that the alliance emerges victorious in the forthcoming assembly elections in the state.

Amit Shah Mantra

- ▶ No public spat
- ▶ Put up united front
- ▶ Avoid past mistakes
- ▶ Ruthless analysis of MLAs
- ▶ Be patient on seat sharing

While the state is expected to go in for the assembly elections in November, a recent survey has predicted that Mahayuti may win only 123 seats whereas the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) could win 152 seats. On this backdrop, Shah's meeting with the senior leaders in the state assumes importance.

The first and foremost thing Shah told the leaders was to avoid public spat and pose a united face in public. Recently several of the leaders from the Shiv Sena and the NCP were seen openly making derogatory statements against each other and even against



Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and Maharashtra DCM Devendra Fadnis returns after offering prayer at Lalbaugcha Raja during the Ganesh Festival in Mumbai on Monday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

some of the senior leaders of the alliance. Some of the BJP leaders too had locked horns against some of the leaders from the Shiv Sena. Shah's advice to put up a united face in public came on the backdrop of these display differences. Such statements send a wrong signal to public, Shah is

learnt to have told the leaders.

According to sources, Shah also advised the Mahayuti leaders to ensure that mistakes during the recent Lok Sabha elections are effectively avoided. Those include, choosing right candidates, aggressively retaliating various narratives

spread by the opposition and ensuring that various schemes and the work done by the government reaches the common voters effectively, said the sources.

Shah also advised the state leadership to be ruthless while assessing the performance of their MLAs and ensure that those with

dismal performance do not get the tickets.

Shah, who reached Mumbai on Sunday evening, first addressed a meeting of Mahayuti leaders and then also addressed state BJP core committee meeting which lasted for over two hours at the Sahyadri state guest house on

Sunday night. The key leaders also met at the airport on Monday noon before Shah departed for Delhi.

Shah is also learnt to have assured the Mahayuti partners that their demands will be honoured during seat sharing agreement, which is expected to be finalised this week.

Ajit Pawar's absence makes BJP uncomfortable



By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: Nationalist Congress Party leader and the Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was conspicuous by his absence during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Ganesh Darshan visit on Monday. When the BJP leaders realised that Dada is fuming, he was pacified by some of them. As a result, Ajit Pawar finally met Shah at the airport before his departure.

Shah visited the residences of the Chief Minister Ekanth Shinde, and DCM Devendra Fadnis to take darshan of Lord Ganesh. He also went to the famous Lalbaug Cha Raja pandal. Throughout this visit he was accompanied by Shinde and Fadnis. However, Ajit Pawar was nowhere to be seen. To avoid further embarrassment the BJP swung into action.

When the news started doing the rounds regarding Pawar's absence, baffled state BJP leaders contacted

him and requested to attend the meeting at the airport. Finally, the NCP Chief bugged and met Shah before his take off to New Delhi. Senior leaders Prafulla Patel and Sunil Tatkare were also present during the meeting.

Significantly, Ajit Pawar tried to play it down by saying he had informed Shah's office about his prior engagements in advance. "I was in Baramati on Friday. I have allotted my time for Pimpri Chinchwad, Pune and Baramati on Sundays, Mondays and Fridays, respectively. The annual meeting of Baramati Bazar Samiti, Baramati Bank, and Sahyog Grih Nirman Sanstha was scheduled in Baramati on Friday. I had already informed Amit Shah's office about the same," Pawar pointed out.

Nevertheless, Ajit Pawar Explained his 'No-Show' During Amit Shah's Mumbai Visit, the corridor of politics in the state is buzzing by this development

CRIME WATCH

'Social worker' among two arrested

Thane: Police have arrested two men, one of them claiming to be a social worker, for allegedly extorting Rs 50,000 from a businessman in Thane city last week following a series of threatening phone calls to him, an official said on Monday.

The individuals arrested on Sunday were identified by the police as Kaduba Mahadu Telure (60) from Kalwa and Vishal alias Balasaheb Sahebrao Bhosale (40), a "social worker" from Kopri Colony in the city.

The police seized valuables worth Rs 1,80,030 from the duo, the official said without elaborating.

According to the official at the Kopri police station, Bhosale has been extorting money from the businessman, who runs a sweet shop, since 2019 under the pretext of donations.

Between September 6 and 8, Bhosale made several threatening phone calls to the businessman, demanding Rs 50,000 and warning of violence if the amount was not paid, he said.

He also claimed to control criminal gangs operating in Thane district, the police said.

Rickshaw driver held for molestation

Thane: An autorickshaw driver was arrested in Kalyan in Thane district for allegedly molesting a student on Monday, a police official said.

The student, while returning home in the accused's vehicle, noticed him indulging in inappropriate behaviour and asked him to stop but the latter refused, the Kolshewadi police station official said.

"She had to jump out of the autorickshaw in fear. Accused Gopal Mudaliyar followed her and abused her. On her mother's complaint, a case was registered. Mudaliyar was arrested under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for molestation and other offences," he said.

One killed as 'drunk' driver crashes tempo

Pune: A 36-year-old woman was killed and three other persons were injured after a tempo, driven by a person allegedly in an inebriated condition, knocked down five vehicles in Maharashtra's Pune city, police said on Monday.

The accused driver, Ashish Pawar (26), has been arrested under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Motor Vehicles Act, an officer said. The accused was allegedly under the influence of alcohol.

Woman kills mother-in-law over property

Nagpur: A 33-year-old woman and her two relatives were arrested on Monday for allegedly murdering her mother-in-law over a property dispute in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, police said on Monday.

The accused woman allegedly paid her two male cousins to carry out the murder, and the 54-year-old victim was strangled on August 28, an official from Ajini police station said. The accused made it appear like the victim had died of a heart attack, and the murder came to light ten days after the last rites, he said. Based on a complaint



lodged on Sunday, the police arrested Vaishali Akhilesh Raut, her cousins Ritesh Prakash Hiwse (27), and Shrikant alias Sameer Narendra Hiwse (21), both residents of Pandhurna district of Madhya Pradesh,

for the murder of Sunita Omkar Raut, a resident of Mitra Nagar, he said.

Neighbours reported injuries on Sunita's body and inconsistencies in the circumstances of her death, the official said.

53 killed in rain-related incidents since June

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: As many as 53 people lost their lives in rain-related incidents in Marathwada since the beginning of the monsoon season this year, an official said on Monday.

As per a report shared by the revenue department, 1,269 animals have died due to rains from June 1 till September 6 across Marathwada, the official said.

A survey of losses is underway in eight districts of the region, he said.

At least 284 revenue circles in Marathwada received heavy rains on September 1, and later, heavy showers lashed isolated pockets of the drought-prone region, the official said. According to the revenue department, 53 people died in rain-related incidents between June 1 and September 6, while 16 people sustained injuries.

Of these casualties, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Nanded, and Latur districts recorded nine deaths each.

SC Order To Government Hand over alternative piece of land to man



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Maharashtra authorities to hand over "peaceful and vacant" possession of over 24 acres of an alternative land parcel to a person whose land was "illegally" occupied more than six decades ago.

The apex court also accepted the unconditional apology tendered by Rajesh Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary of the Forest and Revenue Department, against whom it had on August 28 issued a show cause notice asking why contempt action should not be initiated against him for "contemptuous remarks" made in an affidavit filed by the department.

The affidavit appeared to suggest that the apex court does not follow the law.

"The applicant as well as the court may not approve the fresh calculation made

by the Collector, Pune (for grant of monetary compensation to the applicant) but it is the bounden duty of the state to follow the provisions of law and to arrive at a proper calculation," the affidavit filed on behalf of Kumar said, which the court found contemptuous.

Kumar, in his affidavit, said the state was willing to offer the of Rs 48.65 crore as compensation. However, the applicant insisted the market value of the land was over Rs 250 crore. The applicant then sought a substitute parcel of land as compensation.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gawai and K.V. Viswanathan directed the collector, Pune, to ensure that 24 acres 38 gunthas of substitute land is measured, demarcated and its "peaceful and vacant possession be handed over to the applicant. -PTI

Jaleel to contest Assembly polls

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday said former Aurangabad Lok Sabha MP Imtiaz Jaleel will contest the upcoming Maharashtra assembly polls.

Addressing a press conference here, Owaisi also announced the names of MLAs Mufti Ismail and Shah Faruk Anwar as well as Farooq Shabdi and Raees Lashkariya as candidates of his party.

Ismail is MLA from Malegaon Central seat, while Anwar is legislator from Dhule city. Lashkariya is the party's Mumbai unit chief.

The constituency of Jaleel, who lost the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to Shiv Sena's Sandipan Bhumre, was not announced.

Speaking about the Waqf Amendment Bill tabled in Parliament, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen chief said the Ajit Pawar-led NCP must oppose it.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Jayant Patil, State President, Nationalist Congress Party (SP)

"There is need to focus on fundamental issues of the state. There should be vision for the state for the next 50 years. People want a farsighted government. That is why people must work towards ousting this government, which is on a temporary mission of retaining power."

-PTI

Is Pawar trying to shed his atheist image before elections?

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: On Monday morning while most of the media channels were busy reporting Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's absence during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Mumbai tour, his uncle Sharad Pawar made headlines by visiting the famous Lalbaug Cha Raja Ganesh pandal in central Mumbai ahead of Shah's scheduled visit there. The visit led to speculations whether Pawar Sr wants to shade his atheist image before elections.



Sharad Pawar visited the famous Lalbaug Cha Raja Ganesh pandal after 30 years on Monday.

Pawar, who visited the pandal along with his son-in-law Sadanand Sule and granddaughter Revati, later stated in a social media post that he prayed for the strength to fight for the causes of farmers and common people. According to office bearers of the Lalbaug Cha Raja Ganesh Mandal, last time Pawar had visited there around 30 years ago when he was the Chief Minister of the state. Referring to that, BJP MLC Pravin Darekar labelled Pawar's visit as 'pretentious'. "Pawar visited the pandal after so many years and that too for political reasons. It is highly pretentious of him to visit the pandal. Pawar had attended events where speakers insulted Hindu deities but never countered them," Darekar said, in a video clip sent to media by his office. He was referring to a recent program in Mumbai where a

senior Marathi editor and playwright had passed derogatory remarks about Lord Ram in presence of Pawar. However, such accusations and questioning his actions is not new to Pawar. In 2022, MNS Chief Raj Thackeray had accused him of engaging in cast politics while blaming it on him being an atheist. "I'm not an atheist. It is only that I do not pretend. Some people are trying to incite religious sentiments," Pawar had said back then while replying to Thackeray. Pawar had also reminded people that his election campaign, since years, have always begun by cracking coconut at the Hanuman temple at his ancestral village Katewadi near his hometown Baramati. Following this the BJP had

released an edited video of his speech and accused him of being a Hindu-hater, to which Pawar had replied that he was just reciting a poem at a program. However, Pawar had always backed progressive thoughts and built his own image as an atheist. He had even faced stark criticism for so. In September 2018, Sharad Pawar had stated that, "there is no need of Ramayana or Mahabharat in the country." His comments were in response to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's call for construction of Shri Ram temple at Ayodhya at the earliest. In this connection, Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya had even confirmed that the NCP supremo is known to be an atheist. It was over these views of Pawar, the Warkari commu-

nity, in the year 2020, had even issued a statement urging its members to refrain from calling Sharad Pawar for inaugurations and lectures alleging that he favours the "atheists" and those who insult gods, Hindus, and saints. And Pawar had hit back at the Warkari community stating that there was no need for anybody's permission for visiting temples. Political analysts point out that while Pawar enjoys the company of leftist leaning intellectuals and loves his own image as a progressive individual, his acts, especially ahead of elections, have always remained akin to those whom he always denigrates calling them as 'regressive' and accuses them of spreading hatred among religions in the name of God.

Nearly 4,000 police in Navi Mumbai

Thane: Nearly 4,000 police personnel have been deployed in Navi Mumbai to ensure safe and orderly celebration during the ten-day Ganesh festival, a senior official said on Monday. Talking to PTI, Navi Mumbai Police Commissioner Milind Bharambe said personnel from the reserve forces, state reserve police force (SRPF), riot control police, quick response teams (QRTs), and striking forces will operate around the clock to maintain law and order during the festivities.

Patrolling will be done on major roads and junctions to enhance security, he said. Police held meetings with Ganesh mandals to communicate safety protocols, emphasising the need for effective barricading and crowd management at pandals, especially those witnessing large crowds, Bharambe said.

There are separate queues for men and women to prevent harassment, and CCTV cameras were installed at several pandals, he said, adding that electrical meters and fire extinguishers were also arranged at pandals. Special measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of women and children, and the emergency number 112 will be active 24/7, with a targeted response time of five to ten minutes, he said.

He also addressed the upcoming Eid-e-Milad celebrations, which overlap with the Ganesh festival. The Eid-e-Milad procession is scheduled for September 16 in Zone 2 and September 18 in Zone 1. -PTI

No bail to Aaditya aid



Mumbai: A special PMLA court here on Monday denied bail to Shiv Sena (UBT) functionary Suraj Chavan in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the distribution of 'khichdi' to migrants in Mumbai during the COVID-19 pandemic. Special judge A C Daga noted that there is sufficient material on record to show that Chavan was not only involved in generating proceeds of crime but in layering it as well. The judge, in his order, stated that the first information report (FIR) has specific recitals about the findings by the investigating officer, concluding that instead of 300 gm of khichdi, 100 gm was prepared and distributed through the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM).

The court said at this juncture (bail hearings), there was prima facie material on record to show that the smaller quantity of the khichdi was packed in the packet. "For the sake of argument, if it is accepted that there is no evidence to show that less amount of khichdi was packed, still...the work order was obtained by cheating officials of the MCGM," it said. The court mentioned as far as the con-

spiracy was concerned, Chavan "is involved since beginning till end and has taken active part". The defence had argued that there was a pick-and-choose policy, as many people were named accused in the case, but only Chavan had been arrested. The court said the names of eight suspects were shown in the ED case, and the investigation has not yet been fully completed.

As such, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is carrying out further investigation, and as and when it arrives at a specific conclusion about the involvement of other suspects in the crime, the probe agency will decide whether to arrest them or not, the court said. The court said the ED had arrested Chavan after arriving at a conclusion about his role in the crime, and it cannot be said that it is following a pick and choose policy as claimed by the accused.

The ED arrested Chavan, a core committee member of the Yuva Sena, the youth wing of the Shiv Sena (UBT), on January 17, and he is currently in judicial custody. The money laundering case stems from an FIR registered by the Mumbai police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW). -PTI

Woman booked for cheating

Mumbai: The Mumbai police have registered a case against a woman for allegedly cheating a retired employee of India Post of Rs 15 lakh on the pretext of investing the money in a lucrative scheme, an official said on Monday.

Following a probe into a complaint, the Vile Parle police on Saturday registered a case against the accused Bharti Bhushan under sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code, the official said.

The complainant, Shripat Narayan Revgade (63), a retired senior postmaster, was acquainted with the accused, who had worked as a postal agent, he said.

On retiring from service in 2020, Revgade received Rs 8 lakh as gratuity, which he intended to invest in a postal scheme for senior citizens. Around this time, Bharti visited his home and claimed to work for L&T Finance, promoting several attractive investment schemes, the official said.

The woman convinced Revgade that the invested amount would double within three years, and he initially handed her Rs 5 lakh.

He gave her Rs 10 lakh more for investments in his name and his wife's, he said.

Bharti allegedly failed to provide the investment documents, raising Revgade's suspicion. She later admitted that she had used his money for her personal expenses, the official said. -PTI

Two killed in road accident



Thane: Two men were killed and two others injured when their speeding motorcycle crashed into a road divider in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Monday.

The accident occurred on the Mumbra-Panvel Road when the victims were heading towards Kalyan Phata on Saturday night, an official said.

The two-wheeler was speeding when it crashed into a road divider, killing two riders on the spot, he said.

Two others riding pillion sustained minor injuries, the official said.

A case has been registered under section 106(2) (causing death by rash and negligent driving) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and a probe is underway, he said.

Over 62,000 idols immersed on 2nd day

By Correspondent

Mumbai: More than 62,000 idols were immersed in various water bodies in Mumbai on the second day of the Ganesh festival, civic officials said on Monday.

The festival began on Saturday with families and 'savajanik mandals' (public groups) installing the idols of their beloved god at homes and community pandals in the city.

The idols were taken out for immersion from Sunday afternoon after one-and-a-half days.

Till midnight, 62,569 idols were immersed in the sea, other water bodies and artificial ponds, the Bri-

hanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials said.

"No untoward incident was reported anywhere during the immersion," the BMC said.

On Sunday, 62,197 household idols and 348 sarvanik (public) idols of Lord Ganesh were immersed, a civic official said.

At least 29,923 household idols and 234 public mandal idols were immersed in artificial ponds, set up to avoid pollution in natural water bodies.

During the 10-day Ganapati festival, devotees bid adieu to the deity after one-and-a-half days, five days, seven days and the last day (Anant Chaturdashi).

Two held with LSD

Thane: Two persons have been arrested for alleged possession of LSD and cannabis worth Rs 13.43 lakh in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Monday.

A team from the Vartak Nagar police station apprehended the accused, Swapnil Jitendra Sawant (23) and Sanket Sandeep Lad (26), near a mall on Saturday, an official said.

They were allegedly found in possession of 58 LSD dots and 9.551 gm of cannabis, worth Rs 13.43 lakh, he said. According to the police, the accused procured the drugs from one Sahil Augustine of Thane and Devesh Trivedi, a resident of Navi Mumbai, and were planning to sell the substances.

Survey shows Congress getting 85 seats

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadetiwar on Monday said his party would get 85 seats in the upcoming assembly polls as per an internal survey.

He also said the party has requested senior leader Rahul Gandhi to hold a considerable number of rallies during the poll campaign to give the Congress a further boost.

"All parties conduct such surveys. Our survey, which covered 150 seats, shows us winning 85 seats. The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi will fight together and will ensure good governance to the people of Maharashtra," the Leader of Opposition in the assembly asserted.

The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi comprises the Congress, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad

Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (SNP).

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the Congress managed to win 13 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra, powering the MVA to 31 seats (including that of Sangli won by a rebel Congressman). The ruling alliance got just 17 seats.

Polls to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly is likely to be held in November.

Decomposed body found

Thane: A policeman was found dead in his house in Kalwa in Thane city, an official said on Monday.

The body was found in the bathroom of the house on Saturday after neighbours alerted about a foul smell coming from inside. Ajay Sonaji Shinde (42), attached to Thane Rural police, may had died some days ago.

Iron girder on Gokhale Bridge completes

Mumbai: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) successfully completed the sliding operation of the iron girder on the south side of the Gopal Krishna Gokhale Bridge, which connects Andheri East and West. The girder, measuring 90 meters in length, was shifted into place late at night on 8 September. Over the next

few days, this beam will be gradually lowered to a height of 8 meters in phases. This challenging technical task will be carried out under expert supervision to ensure precision and safety.

Once the beam reaches the planned height, further work on the flyover corridor will commence. This will happen following the necessary approv-

als from the Western Railway Administration. The process will also require receiving a Block a scheduled pause in train movement and power supply to ensure the safe continuation of the work. In this regard, the BMC administration has been coordinating closely with the Western Railway to ensure the seamless execution of the project.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Vijay Wadetiwar, Leader of Opposition

Since the Union government has been formed with the support of the TDP, (Union Agriculture Minister) Shivraj Singh Chouhan went to Andhra Pradesh. When will he come to Maharashtra? Why has no Central delegation come to Maharashtra to assess rain damage?

Ajit will contest from Baramati, says Bhujbal

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Food and Civil Supplies Minister Chhagan Bhujbal on Monday called NCP president and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar as the "captain" of the party and emphasised he would contest the upcoming assembly polls from Baramati, his home turf in Pune district.

Bhujbal's assertion came a day after Ajit Pawar suggested Baramati should get a new MLA so

that the constituency's voters realise his importance.

The Nationalist Congress Party president is the sitting MLA from Baramati, which is part of the Lok Sabha seat of the same name which is represented by his cousin Supriya Sule of the rival NCP faction led by veteran politician Sharad Pawar.

Speaking at a gathering in Baramati on Sunday, Ajit Pawar remarked that despite undertaking ex-



tensive development works in the constituency, voters did not support him during the recent Lok Sab-

ha elections, where his wife Sunetra was pitted against Sule, who won for the fourth consecutive times.

Sunetra Pawar lost the elections to Sule, daughter of Sharad Pawar, by more than 1.50 lakh votes.

Ajit Pawar said once there is a new representative, the people of the Baramati assembly constituency will realise his importance.

Asked about the possibility of the NCP president

not seeking re-election from Baramati, his party colleague and minister Bhujbal asserted, "Ajit Pawar is our captain. He cannot put down weapons like this. He will contest from the Baramati assembly constituency and win with a huge margin."

Assembly polls in Maharashtra are likely to be held in November. The NCP is part of the ruling Mahayuti coalition, which also consists of the Shiv Sena and the BJP.

Four energy pacts inked between India, UAE

New Delhi: India and the United Arab Emirates on Monday inked four agreements to expand energy cooperation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, focusing on boosting overall strategic ties.

An Agreement for long-term LNG supply between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and another between ADNOC and India Strategic Petroleum Reserve Ltd (IS-PRL) are among the four pacts.

Emirates Nuclear Energy Company (ENEC) and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) also inked an MoU for the operation and maintenance of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The fourth pact is a production concession agreement for Abu Dhabi onshore block-one between Urja Bharat and ADNOC. A sep-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan before meeting, at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday. Pic: PTI

arate pact was inked between the Gujarat government and Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company PJSC on setting up food parks in India.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said PM Modi

and Crown Prince Al Nahyan discussed the multifaceted relations between India and the UAE with an aim to broaden the comprehensive strategic partnership.

"The two leaders discussed the multifaceted India-UAE relations and avenues to broaden the comprehensive strategic partnership to new and emerging areas," Jaiswal said.

The Crown Prince arrived here on Sunday.

In their talks, Modi and Al Nahyan were understood to have also deliberated on pressing global challenges, including the situation in Gaza.

The India-UAE ties have witnessed a major upswing in the last few years. Following the landmark visit of Modi to the UAE in August 2015, bilateral relations between the two countries were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Both countries signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February 2022 and a Local Currency Settlement (LCS) System in July 2023 to promote the use of Indian Rupee and AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham) for cross-border transactions.

-PTI

Less GST on helicopter for religious travel

New Delhi: Uttarakhand Finance Minister Prem Chand Agarwal on Monday said the GST Council has decided to cut tax on helicopter services for religious travels to 5 per cent.

The 54th meeting of the GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is currently underway.

"Helicopter services for religious purposes like Kedarnath, Badrinath has been reduced to 5 per cent from 18 per cent. There was no clarity on this. After this, there will be clarity," Agarwal told reporters.

The Council is slated to deliberate on a host of issues, including lowering of taxes on life and health insurance premiums, as well as levy of GST on payment aggregators for small digital transactions up to Rs 2,000, via debit and credit cards.

Agarwal further said the Council has referred the issues of levy of 18 per cent GST on payment aggregators (PAs), like BillDesk and CCAvenue, for small digital transactions up to Rs 2,000, via debit and credit cards to the fitment committee.

Currently, payment aggregators are exempt from paying GST on transactions amounting to less than Rs 2,000. The council is also likely to discuss a fitment committee report on taxation of life and health insurance premiums.

In 2023-24, the Centre and states collected Rs 8,262.94 crore through GST on health insurance premium, while Rs 1,484.36 crore was collected on account of GST on health reinsurance premium.

MONEY MATTERS

Successful investing requires patience



By
Kautubh Kale

As the aroma of freshly steamed Modaks fills homes during the festive season, this humble sweet offers more than just a delectable treat. My mouth is already watering at the thought!

Modak, traditionally prepared to honour Lord Ganesha, carries within its delicate layers profound lessons about investing.

At first glance, the Modak may appear simple—a soft rice flour shell filled with jaggery and coconut. However, the process of making it requires patience, precision, and a balance of ingredients—the same qualities essential for successful investing and financial planning.

The Importance of Patience

Just as preparing Modak takes time and care, successful investing requires patience. Investments, like the Modak dough, need time to settle before they can be shaped. Rushing the process can lead to imperfections—both in the sweet and in your portfolio. Investors must resist the urge to seek quick returns, understanding that true wealth is built over time, much like the slow cooking of the jaggery filling.

Precision in Diversification

The Modak's structure also teaches the importance of precision and diversification. The thin outer layer of rice flour must be just the right thickness to hold the sweet filling without breaking—too thick, and the Modak becomes tough; too thin, and it risks falling apart. Similarly, an investment portfolio must be carefully diversified. Over-concentration in one asset can lead to undue risk, while too much diversification can result in low returns. A well-balanced fi-



ancial plan, like a well-made Modak, holds together, providing both security and returns.

The Value of Tradition and Adaptability

While Modak is rooted in tradition, over time, it has adapted to modern tastes with variations and flavours such as chocolate, dry fruits, etc. This adaptability is a key lesson for investors. While traditional products like FDs and LIC policies have their place, modern investments like stocks, mutual funds, and even riskier products like startups and derivatives (futures and options) are crucial for beating inflation and reaching financial goals. A flexible approach helps build generational wealth.

Enjoying the Fruits of Labor

Just as a well-made Modak brings joy, so too does a well-executed investment strategy. The reward for patience, precision, and adaptability in investing is the financial security that allows you to enjoy life's sweet moments.

In conclusion, as we prepare Modaks for this Ganesh Utsav, let's reflect on the valuable lessons they offer about investing. Like crafting the perfect Modak, successful investing is about patience, balance, and enjoying the journey.

Wishing you a joyful Ganesh Utsav filled with Modaks and prosperity!

Ganpati Bappa Morya!
(The writer is a Chartered Accountant and CFA (USA). Financial Advisor. Views personal.)

Pitch for regional air connectivity

New Delhi: Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu on Monday pitched for sustainable practices in the aviation industry, including the use of sustainable aviation fuel.

As part of boosting regional air connectivity, the civil aviation ministry has also identified around 106 airports and airstrips that can be developed for regional flight operations.

Naidu said sustainable aviation practices should be promoted that will help in reducing overall carbon emissions and mentioned that some airports are already carbon neutral.

Speaking at the conference organised by industry body Ficci, Naidu also said efforts are on to ensure that 1 per cent of SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) is blended with jet fuel for international commercial flights by 2027 and then increase the SAF quantum to 2 per cent by 2028.

The global framework for using SAF has been set out by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) under which international flights should use jet fuel blended with at least 1 per cent SAF by 2027.

According to the minis-

157	No of airports, heliports and waterdromes in India
400	No of airports needed in the next 20-25 years
106	No of airports and airstrips identified to be developed for regional air connectivity

ter, India should have global aviation hubs and also highlighted the growth of regional air connectivity, especially with the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme.

"UDAN has democratised air travel in the country," he said and added that the scheme will be extended for 10 more years. The scheme is to end in 2027. ATR Regional Aircraft Chief Commercial Officer Alexis Vidal said the company is eager to cooperate with the Indian aviation ecosystem.

Currently, ATR planes in India are operated by IndiGo, Alliance Air and fly91.

India, Japan to promote financial cooperation

New Delhi: India and Japan have agreed to promote financial cooperation and strengthen bilateral relations at the second India-Japan Finance Dialogue in Tokyo, a finance ministry statement said.

The participants exchanged their views on the macroeconomic situation in both countries.

"They discussed cooperation in third countries, bilateral cooperation, and international issues. The participants also shared views on financial sector issues, including regulation and supervision, financial digitalisation, as well as other policy initiatives in both countries," it said.

The participants were also joined by representatives of Japan's financial services industry for a session to discuss various financial regulatory issues towards further expansion of investment in India, it said. Both sides agreed to continue discussions for further promoting financial cooperation and strengthening bilateral relations, and agreed to explore holding the next round of the Dialogue in New Delhi.

Bajaj Housing Finance IPO – Good for long term?



By Correspondent

Mumbai: Bajaj Housing Finance is set to launch its IPO with an equity share sale and a fresh issue of equity shares, totaling Rs 3,000 crore and Rs 3,560 crore, respectively. This move is aimed at meeting the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) requirement that by September 2025, major non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) must be listed on the stock exchanges. Let's explore some key aspects of this IPO.

Since FY18, Bajaj Housing Finance has been involved in mortgage lending, offering home loans and loans against properties, primarily targeting individual residential housing loans. However, its clientele spans from individual homebuyers to large

developers, with an average loan amount of Rs 46 lakh, which is the highest in the sector.

Bajaj Housing Finance stands out as the most versatile entity in the market, both in terms of its product range and geographical presence. The company boasts an extensive suite of mortgage lending products, including home loans, loans against property, and developer finance, among others. With 215 branches across 20 states and three union territories, covering 174 locations, it's a well-established player.

The company's customer base is predominantly salaried, accounting for 87 per cent, highlighting its prudent lending strategy. Its gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio has remained exceptionally low,

dipping as low as 0.3 per cent during FY22-24. As of June 30, 2024, Bajaj Housing Finance had 3,23,881 active customers, with 83.2 per cent of them being home loan clients. By March 31, 2024, the company's assets under management had reached Rs 913,704 million, showcasing a CAGR of 30.9 per cent from FY 2022 to FY 2024.

The lead managers for the IPO include Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, BofA Securities India Ltd, Axis Capital Ltd, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Ltd, SBI Capital Markets Ltd, JM Financial Ltd, and IIFL Securities Ltd. LKP Research has issued a report on Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd, recommending a "Buy" rating for the IPO in its research report dated September 04, 2024.



Paris Olympics bronze medallist shooter Manu Bhaker poses with the Tata Motors car gifted to her during a felicitation ceremony at Tata Motors showroom in Gurugram on Sunday. Pic: PTI

Honda partners with Bhago

Mumbai: Honda Power Company on Monday said its subsidiary Honda Power Pack Energy has partnered with sustainable transportation solution provider Bhago Mobility to offer green fleet management services for last-mile delivery in the electric vehicle segment.

Under the collaboration, Bhago Mobility will deploy

Honda e: Swap-powered electric vehicles at strategic locations in Bangalore and Delhi, benefiting the e-commerce fleets as well as vehicles engaged in passenger mobility, the company said.

Bhago Mobility will launch 100 vehicles within the next few months of 2024 and aims to reach 10,000 vehicles in the next three years, it said. -PTI

BSE SENSEX	TOP GAINERS	PTI
% +2.95	Hindustan Unilever	2922.10
+2.43	ICICI Bank	1237.85
+1.96	ITC	511.50
+1.59	Kotak Bank	1792.00
+1.40	IndusInd Bank	1428.00
+0.99	Axis Bank	1770.65
+0.64	HDFC Bank	1647.50
+0.53	UltraTech Cement	11487.45
+0.50	M&M	2710.50
+0.48	Nestle India	2516.35

BSE SENSEX	TOP LOSERS	PTI
% -2.68	Tech Mahindra	1579.95
-1.32	NTPC	389.95
-1.22	Tata Steel	149.40
-0.96	Tata Motors	1038.60
-0.41	Power Grid	328.35
-0.41	Titan	3678.80
-0.39	Infosys	1894.70
-0.35	HCL Tech	1748.00
-0.29	Sun Pharma	1818.00
-0.25	Maruti	12153.20

MoU with GSV in logistics operations

New Delhi: The Indian Army and the IAF on Monday signed an agreement with Vadodara-based Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV), as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described the collaboration as a "monumental partnership" towards further strengthening the logistics backbone of the armed forces in sync with the vision of 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.

The Memorandum of Understanding will enable the two Services to acquire higher expertise on logistics. It will ensure development of in-house expertise on various facets of logistics operations and contribute effectively towards the national development plans -- PM Gati Shakti

National Master Plan 2021 and National Logistics Policy 2022, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Singh and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in New Delhi.

The defence minister described the collaboration as "a monumental partnership towards further strengthening the logistics backbone of the armed forces in sync with the vision of 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence".

He emphasised that logistics is no longer just a support function of the armed forces, but is emerging as an important factor in military operations and national security.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Vinod Aggarwal, President, SIAM

"The Indian automotive industry has crossed a landmark figure of Rs 20 lakh crore in FY24. We are contributing almost 14-15 per cent of the total GST collected in the country. The auto industry will contribute more and more to the GDP of the country from the current level of around 6.8 per cent."

Doctor Rape And Murder Case

Can of worms opened but lack of evidence affects CBI probe

By Sudipto Chowdhury

Kolkata: Thirty days have passed after the body of a woman medic, raped and murdered, was recovered from state-run Kar Medical College and Hospital here, but investigators are still clueless about what led to the crime that has opened a can of worms.

CBI detectives, who took up the probe into the case after the Calcutta High Court transferred the investigation from the Kolkata Police on August 13, said that they were unable to join several dots due to lack of evidence from the crime scene, a senior official said.

This, he said, has affected the investigation of the crime which came to light after the body of the trainee doctor was found in the seminar room of the hospital on August 9.

The police arrested Sanjoy Roy, a Kolkata Police civic volunteer, the next day in this connection.

It was found during the investigation that former principal of the hospital Dr Sandip Ghosh ordered the demolition of a restroom and a toilet close to that seminar room on August 10. As a portion of the two areas were demolished by the PWD, it is suspected that key pieces of evidence were lost.

Besides, a video surfaced on social media showed the seminar room was crowded with people soon after the body was found. The police, however, claimed that the spot inside the room was cordoned off.



The CBI has grilled witnesses including Ghosh, other doctors, officials, security guards and the arrested prime accused, Sanjay Roy.

"There is a lack of evidence in this case. That is the reason why our detectives are unable to come to a conclusion. From circumstantial evidence, questioning of people and the DNA evidence do not show involvement of multiple persons in the sexual assault on the woman," the officer told PTI.

"Separate DNA profiling on samples gathered from the victim and Roy and the DNA comparing with other seized evi-

dence from the crime scene also corroborated the CFSL report," he stated.

Echoing the claims of the CBI about tampering with evidence, the parents of the deceased also alleged the same.

"When we reached there (after her death), we found several people inside the seminar hall, one policeman guarding the entrance of it and many more standing outside. It can be assumed that the entire scene was very carefully arranged. Going by the brutality of the crime, the scene could not be so," the mother of the victim said.

The counsel of the accused

claimed that her client had been framed to shield the actual criminals.

In the case of financial irregularities in the hospital for which the ex-principal Ghosh was arrested along with three others, the CBI officer said they found more names who were involved.

"More people were involved in the irregularities which were carried out in a well-planned manner," he said, adding that at times there were no footprints of the financial misconduct.

The central probe agency has submitted before a court that Ghosh had played a vital role in

siphoning off funds and orchestrated 84 illegal appointments during his tenure at the hospital as the principal from 2022 to 2023.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also conducting a simultaneous investigation of the financial irregularities case revealing that the former principal and his wife own a luxurious bungalow in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

They also discovered more property owned by Ghosh and confiscated several "important" documents during search operations at his residence, as well as those of his relatives and

CBI is unable to join several dots due to lack of evidence from the crime scene

Dr. Sandip Ghosh ordered the demolition of a restroom and a toilet close to that seminar room. That led to loss of key pieces of evidence

The forensic tests conducted at the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) confirmed a match between the DNA of the victim and the arrested civic volunteer Sanjay Roy

accomplices.

The ED has filed an ECIR against Ghosh and started their probe. An ECIR is generally filed by the ED as the case information report. It is similar to a first information report (FIR) in criminal cases. Media reports also claimed that a racket was functioning in the health department, which controls various aspects of the administration including transfers. The racket also allegedly indulges in unfair means during examinations of students. -PTI

CBI to file fresh status report

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the CBI to submit a fresh report by September 17 on the probe in the rape and murder case of a postgraduate medic at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud perused the report filed in a sealed cover by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI.

"A status report has been filed by CBI, it appears that investigation is in progress, we direct the CBI to file fresh status report... We don't want to guide the CBI on its investigation," the bench said.

Mehta told the bench also comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that the probe agency has decided to send forensic samples to AIIMS for further investigation.

The apex court also directed a senior officer of the West Bengal government's Home department and a senior CISF officer to ensure all three companies of the CISF, which are deputed for security at the RG Kar Hospital, are given accommodation. It also directed that all requisition, security gadgets needed by the CISF should be handed over to it on Monday.

At the outset, the West Bengal government told the top court that 23 people have died as doctors are on strike protesting the rape and murder of the postgraduate medic. -PTI

Damage to Ganesh idol triggers clash in Surat

Surat: An idol of Lord Ganesh was damaged after some persons allegedly threw stones at a pandal during the ongoing Ganapati festival in Gujarat's Surat city, police said on Monday.

After some minors were detained in connection with the incident which took place in Saiyedpura locality late Sunday night, a mob of around 300 persons gathered at Lalgate police station to protest the action against their community members.

Two groups there pelted stones at each other in which some cops were injured and a police vehicle was damaged, Surat Police Commissioner Anupam Singh Gahlaut told reporters.

Police resorted to baton charge and fired teargas shells to disperse the mob, he said. So far, 32 persons have been detained and two separate FIRs registered in connection with these incidents, officials said.

Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi and senior police officers visited the incident site and promised strict action against the culprits.

"Every single person

Anti-encroachment drive

The civic authorities in Surat city carried out an anti-encroachment drive involving a bulldozer in Saiyedpura on Monday, hours after the locality witnessed rioting after some minors threw stones at a Ganesh pandal. Authorities, however, were quick to clarify that the anti-encroachment drive was not linked to the violence on Sunday but was planned weeks in advance. A bulldozer was pressed into action by the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) to raze illegal concrete and temporary constructions and remove handcarts of street vendors in the area.

"A mob of 200-300 persons gathered and gheraoed the police station over some minors from their community being detained. In the riot that ensued, some policemen were injured and a police vehicle was damaged," an official said.

who has disturbed peace of the city will be nabbed and none will be spared," Sanghavi told reporters.

As per police, some miscreants travelling in an autorickshaw threw stones at the Ganesh pandal, damaging the idol. Police detained some minors in this connection and brought them to Lalgate police station.

Gahlaut said when the mob gathered at the police station to register their pro-

test against the detention of persons from their community, two groups started pelting stones at each other in which some police personnel were injured.

"Police fired teargas shells and used batons (to disperse the protesters). We are carrying out a combing operation in the area and have detained several accused. We have CCTV footage and video camera recordings which will be used to arrest the accused and ensure strict punishment to them," he said.

The persons who allegedly threw stones at the idol were booked under various Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita provisions, including unlawful assembly, injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult religion of any class.

Two terrorists killed in Rajouri

Rajouri/Jammu: Two heavily armed terrorists were killed in a gunfight as alert Army troops thwarted an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Monday.

The gunfight broke out late Sunday night in the Laam sector of Nowshera after the troops picked up the movement of a group of terrorists trying to infiltrate from across the border, they said.

In a post on X, the Army's Jammu-based White Knight Corps said that based on inputs from intelligence agencies and police regarding a likely infiltration bid, an anti-infiltration operation was launched on the intervening night of September 8 and 9 in the general area of Laam. "Two terrorists have been neutralised and a large quantity of war-like stores including two AK-47s and one pistol (have) thus far (been) recovered. Search operation is in progress," it said.

The officials said the Army troops illuminated the area and kept it under strict surveillance throughout the night following the encounter and the search operation was launched at first light. -PTI

BJP Bengaluru office was first target

New Delhi: The NIA on Monday chargesheeted four men in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case and said the accused were involved in a "failed IED attack" at the Bengaluru BJP office on the day of the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

It said two of the key accused were ISIS (banned terrorist organisation Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) radicals who used fraudulently obtained "Indian SIM cards and Indian bank accounts" besides "various Indian and Bangladeshi Identity documents downloaded from the dark web (which is accessible only through specialised browsers) in carrying out their nefarious

Rameshwaram Café Blast Chargesheet



activities.

In a charge sheet filed before a court in Bengaluru, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) named Mussavir Hussain Shazib, Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taaha, Maaz Muneer Ahmed and Muzammil Shareef, as accused. All of them were ar-

rested earlier and are currently in judicial custody in the case, a statement issued by the NIA said. Taaha and Shazib were funded by their handler through cryptocurrencies, which Taaha converted to cash with the help of various Telegram-based peer-to-peer or P2P plat-

forms, it said. "The funds were used by the accused to perpetrate various acts of violence in Bengaluru, investigations further revealed. These included a failed IED attack at the state BJP Office, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, on the day of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony at Ayodhya on January 22, 2024, after which the two key accused planned the Rameshwaram Cafe blast," the statement said.

The Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion, which took place on March 1, at the popular cafe in Bengaluru's Brookfield left nine people injured and caused extensive damage to the property. -PTI

17-year-old girl raped in moving car

Gonda (UP): A 17-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly raped by two persons in a moving car here, with police saying the accused fled after the vehicle hit an electric pole as they harassed teenager.

City Police Station incharge Manoj Kumar Pathak said they have registered a case and arrested the two accused based on a complaint filed by the victim's mother

on Sunday that the girl was raped the previous day.

The woman has written in the complaint that her daughter was lured by Mohammad Arif and Mohammad Rizwan and dragged inside their car, Pathak said. They then took the girl to a secluded place on the Circular Road and raped her in the moving car, the Station House Officer said, citing the complaint. -PTI

While they raped her, they lost control of the car which hit an electric pole after which the accused fled leaving the vehicle there, he said. The girl somehow reached her home and informed her family members about the incident. Her mother made a complaint to the police on Sunday. Pathak said an FIR was registered and the accused were arrested. -PTI

Russian tourist drowns in Goa

Panaji: A 33-year-old Russian national on a visit to Goa drowned in the Arabian Sea while his woman partner was rescued by locals, police said on Monday.

The incident took place on Sunday at Morjim beach. Dimitri Lvov (38) was holidaying in North Goa along with his partner Irina Rudemko (28).

QUOTE OF THE DAY



P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, Governor, Goa

I spoke to a senior priest. I told him that the percentage of Catholic community members in Goa has come down to 25 per cent while the Islamic community members have gone up to 12 per cent from the earlier three per cent.

Railways accepts Vinesh, Bajrang's resignation

New Delhi: The Railways on Monday accepted the resignations of wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia, officials said.

In separate notices issued on Monday, the Northern Railway said their resignations tendered on September 6 were "accepted by the competent authority with immediate effect." Both Punia and Phogat joined the Congress recently. Phogat has been given a party ticket to contest the Haryana assembly polls from the Julana constituency.

The Northern Railway relaxed the provision of three-month notice period in their cases. Speculations were rife that Phogat might not be

able to contest the elections in view of the notice period norm.

According to election rules, she needed to get officially relieved from the Railways to be eligible to contest the October 5 polls. Now, since the Railways has relieved the two Olympians from their service, Phogat can contest the elections.

The NR had earlier issued show cause notices to them after they met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi before joining his party. It had said the show cause notice was part of the service norm as they were government employees. Following the notices, both resigned from the Railways. -PTI



Vietnam storm deaths rise to 59

Hanoi: A bridge collapsed and a bus was swept away by flooding Monday as more rain fell on northern Vietnam from a former typhoon that has caused at least 59 deaths in the Southeast Asian country, state media reported.



A bridge collapse due to floods triggered by typhoon Yagi in Phu Tho province, Vietnam on Monday.
Pic:AP/PTI

Nine people died during the typhoon, which made landfall in Vietnam on Saturday before weakening to a depression, and 50 others died during the consequent floods and landslides. The water levels of several rivers in northern Vietnam were dangerously high.

A passenger bus carrying 20 people was swept into a flooded stream by a landslide in mountainous Cao Bang province Monday morning. Rescuers were deployed but landslides blocked the path to where the incident took place.

rescue operations were continuing after a steel bridge over the engorged Red River collapsed Monday morning. Reports said 10 cars and trucks along with two motorbikes fell into the river. Three people were pulled out of the river and taken to the hospital, but 13 others were missing.

Typhoon Yagi was the strongest typhoon to hit Vietnam in decades when it made landfall Saturday with winds up to 149 kph. It weakened to a tropical depression Sunday, but the country's meteorological agency has still warned of the continuing downpours could cause floods and landslides.

On Sunday, a landslide killed six people including an infant and injured nine others in Sa Pa town, a popular trekking base known for its terraced rice fields and mountains. Overall, state media reported 21 deaths and at least 299 people injured during the weekend. Skies were overcast in the capi-

Storms like Typhoon Yagi were "getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall."

-Benjamin Horton, Director, Earth Observatory, Singapore.

149 kph **Speed of winds**

tal, Hanoi, with occasional rain Monday morning as workers cleared the uprooted trees, fallen billboards and toppled electricity poles. Heavy rain continued in northwestern Vietnam and forecasters said it could exceed 40 centimetres in places.

Haiphong city on Sunday and approved a package of USD 4.62 million to help the port city recover. Yagi also damaged agricultural land, nearly 116,192 hectares where rice is mostly grown. Before hitting Vietnam, Yagi caused at least 20 deaths in the Philippines last week and four deaths in southern China. -AP

Suzlon bags largest wind energy order

New Delhi: Renewable energy solutions provider Suzlon on Monday said it has bagged India's largest wind energy order of 1,166 MW from NTPC Green Energy Ltd.

Suzlon will install a total of 370 wind turbine generators (WTGs) of S144 equipped with a Hybrid Lattice Tubular (HLT) tower and a rated capacity of 3.15 MW each at two projects of NTPC Renewable Energy Limited and one project of Indian Oil NTPC Green Energy Pvt Ltd (a group company of NGEL) in Gujarat, a company statement said.

This order win takes Suzlon's cumulative order book to around 5 GW as of September 3, 2024. "We are delighted to partner with NTPC Green Energy Ltd, the renewables arm of India largest utility NTPC Ltd, in our capacity as the nation's

premier Wind Energy Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM)," said Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman, Suzlon Group.

This project will emerge as the largest wind energy initiative by a PSU in Gujarat, cementing the state's leadership in renewable energy, he said.

Upon completion, it will set a new benchmark for future projects, substantially contributing to India's energy self-sufficiency, economic prosperity, and NGEL's ambitious target of adding 60 GW renewable energy capacity by 2032, it said. As part of the agreement, Suzlon will supply the wind turbines (equipment supply) and execute the project, including erection and commissioning, in Gujarat as well as undertake operations and maintenance services post-commissioning.

NGT seeks reply over flooding in Delhi

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought a response from the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and others regarding the incidents of urban flooding in the national capital and its connection to the disappearance of water bodies or wetlands.

The green body was hearing a matter where it had taken suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report, according to which, experts largely attributed the problem of inundation to the disappearance of water bodies and inadequate drainage infrastructure, though short bursts of heavy rainfall.

Leopard mauls over three dozen animals

Hamirpur (HP): A leopard on the prowl in Barsar revenue sub division here has left residents living in fear after it mauled over three dozen animals including dogs, in recent days, officials said.

Reports reaching here said that the leopard was spotted in Sujampur, Bhoranj and Nadaun areas, prompting locals to approach the Forest Department to capture the wild animal.

In a latest incident, the leopard was seen in Saheli village of Badsar subdivision in the evening forcing

villagers to hide in their houses during the evening hours. A CCTV footage of the animal entering a house has also gone viral on social media.

The villagers said that they are scared to send their children to school or tend to their fields, fearing the leopard's presence.

Forest department officials said that they have received complaints from people regarding the matter. A CCTV footage of the leopard has also surfaced and efforts are afoot to capture the leopard, they added. -PTI

NE highly susceptible to wildlife crimes

Guwahati: Northeast India is highly vulnerable to wildlife crimes and serves as a major gateway for trafficking animals and their body parts, Wildlife Crime Control Board (WCCB) deputy director Arvind Kumar Chaurasia said here on Monday.

Chaurasia emphasised that wildlife crimes should not be viewed in isolation but rather in connection with other illicit activities such as drug trafficking, arms dealing, human trafficking, and money laundering. "Wildlife crimes are a threat to national security as sales and proceeds of wildlife trafficking is often used to fund terrorism, militancy and other related activities," he said.

Gujarat to set up solar rooftop on govt buildings

Ahmedabad: Solar rooftop systems of 48 MW will be installed on various government buildings in Gujarat in the current financial year for which Rs 177 crore have been allocated, the state government said on Sunday.

To tap into Gujarat's solar energy potential, the state Climate Change Department is actively installing such systems on government buildings, it said.

"By March 2024, a total of 3,023 solar rooftop systems, generating a combined capacity of 56.8 MW, have been set up across various government departments



in the state," the government said in a release.

"To advance this initiative, a 48 MW solar rooftop system will be installed on government buildings throughout the state this year. The state government has allocated Rs 177.4 crore to support the project," it said.

In 2023-24, Gujarat gener-

Air quality panel gets new head

New Delhi: IAS Rajesh Verma on Monday took charge as the new full-time chairperson of the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), tasked with preparing strategies for air pollution reduction in Delhi-NCR.

Verma, a 1987-batch IAS officer, has been appointed for a period of three years. He succeeds M.M. Kutty who led the commission for three years.

Prior to his superannuation on August 31, Verma served as the Secretary to President Droupadi Murmu. -PTI

Mumbai, Thane, Akola reduce pollution

New Delhi: Ninety-five of the 131 cities covered under the National Clean Air Programme have shown an improvement in air quality, with 21 reducing PM10 pollution by more than 40 per cent compared to 2017-18 levels, CPCB data shows.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) also said that only 18 of the 131 National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities adhered to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10, set at 60 micrograms per cubic metre.

India launched the NCAP in 2019 with a target to reduce particulate pollution by 20-30 per cent by 2024, using 2017 as the base year.

The target was later revised to a 40 per cent reduction by 2026, using 2019-20 as the base year.

In practice, only PM10 concentration is being considered for performance assessment.

The Union environment ministry presented the National Clean Air City Awards during the Swachh Vayu Survekshan - 2024, held at a national workshop celebrating the International Day of Clean Air

Cities which reduced pollution by 10 to 20 per cent

Delhi, Howrah, Thane, Latur, Nellore, Gajraula, Alwar, Chittur, Kala Amb, Mandi Gobindgarh, Amravati, Patiala, Jaipur, Ongole, Chandrapur, Nashik, Jhansi, Sangli, Kota, Devanagere and Rajahmundry.

Cities which reduced pollution by 40 per cent


Varanasi, Dhanbad, Bymihati, Bareilly, Firozabad, Dehradun, Tuticorin, Nalagarh, Moradabad, Khurja, Trichy, Kohima, Lucknow, Kanpur, Kadapa, Sivasagar, Sunder Nagar, Agra, Greater Mumbai, Rishikesh and Parwanoo.

Cities which reduced pollution by 30 to 40 per cent

- Ahmedabad, Ghaziabad, Rajkot, Jalandhar, Raebareli, Amritsar, Kolkata, Jammu, Silchar, Vijayawada, Naya Nangal, Dimapur, Baddi and Jodhpur
- Surat was on Saturday ranked as the top major city in India for air quality improvements, followed by Jabalpur and Agra.

Cities which reduced pollution by 20 to 30 per cent

Khanna, Durgapur, Kurnool, Dera Baba Nanak, Vadodara, Allahabad, Asansol, Hyderabad, Gorakhpur, Ranchi, Bengaluru, Akola, Ananthapur, Durg Bhilai Nagar, Surat and Noida



for Blue Skies in Jaipur. While Surat, Jabalpur and Agra secured the top three positions among cities with populations of more than 10 lakh, Firozabad (Uttar Pradesh), Amravati (Maharashtra) and Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) were recognised as the best among cities with populations between

three and 10 lakh. Raebareli (Uttar Pradesh), Nalgonda (Telangana) and Nalagarh (Himachal Pradesh) topped the list among cities with populations under three lakh. Swachh Vayu Survekshan is an initiative by the environment ministry to rank cities based on the

implementation of activities approved under the city action plan and air quality in cities covered under NCAP. These cities were awarded for significant improvements in air quality through various best practices to reduce air pollution. Key activities included paving roads, pro-

moting mechanical sweeping, bioremediation of legacy waste, solid waste management, converting reclaimed land from dump sites into green spaces, greenbelt development, intelligent traffic management systems, and Miyawaki afforestation. -PTI

NGT seeks reply over Bageshwar mining

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal has sought a response from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and others regarding the alleged rampant mining in the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand resulting in a Joshimath-like situation, where cracks had appeared in homes, temples and roads.

The green body had taken suo motu cognisance of the matter based on a media report alleging mining continued in the area despite numerous complaints, putting the entire region at risk, and that there had been no safety audit or involvement of geological experts to assess the damage.

In a recent order, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad said, "The news item raises a substantial issue relating to compliance with environmental norms." It impleaded as respondents or parties the Dehradun regional office of the MoEF&CC, district magistrate of Bageshwar, Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board and Central Pollution Control Board. -PTI

Clip of unresponsive jackal being dragged surfaces

Khandwa (MP): A video of a man dragging an unresponsive Indian jackal by a string tied around its neck in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district has surfaced on social media after a wild canid bit five people.

The clip has emerged when an invasion of wolves is keeping the forest authorities on their toes in the Bahraich district of neighbouring Uttar Pradesh.

A wild dog-like animal attacked three men and two women sleeping out in the open in the early hours of Friday at Malgaon village in tribal-dominated Khalwa tehsil, some 20 kilometres from Khandwa.

"We have also come across the video clip in which an unresponsive Indian jackal is being dragged. We are verifying it," East Kalibheet Sub-Divisional Officer of Forests Sandeep Waskale told PTI over the phone.

Malgaon village residents told officials that the animal was captured on the spot but became unresponsive. When they left it for a while, the jackal darted into a wooded patch near a river, the official said citing

the locals' version. "Canids, including foxes and wolves, pretend to be lifeless in difficult situations before fleeing," he added.

The five people bitten by the wild animal sustained minor wounds. They were admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital at Khandwa and given anti-rabies shots and other medicines, the forest official said. A wolf has big and sharper canines and inflicts deeper wounds, the forest official said, suggesting that the wild animal was most likely an Indian jackal.

"Two of our teams with seven to eight people are still searching for the wild animal," he said. Earlier, officials had claimed that a wolf had attacked the villagers.

The canid attack in MP comes at a time when wolves targeting humans in Uttar Pradesh have hit national headlines.

Wolves, which are bigger than jackals, are suspected to have killed at least six people and wounded several, all within a very short span, in UP's Bahraich district. -PTI

20 vultures sighted in Rajasthan's Aravali

By Neha Mishra

Bharatapur (Rajasthan): About 20 vultures have been sighted by the World Wide Fund in Bayana Aravali Pahad, known for its Egyptian and Indian vultures, in a head-count exercise undertaken for the bird which is facing extinction despite being the nature's own clean-up crew.

The Bengalensis vulture, more commonly known as white-rumped vulture, was among the varieties spotted by the project members.

On August 31, the WWF for Nature launched Vulture

Count 2024, a nationwide citizen-science initiative designed to monitor and conserve the country's rapidly declining vulture populations. The programme is being led in association with Bird Count India.

Vultures contribute to keeping an ecological balance by scavenging pests like rats, mice, and snakes.

The Indian vulture, characterised by its sandy brown body, black wings, and yellowish bill, has become a rare sight due to reduced food availability, loss of nesting sites, and disturbances near cliffs.

According to a local conser-

vationist who has been studying these birds in Bayana Aravali Pahad for the last three years, the region is notable for its Egyptian and Indian vultures, with sightings of Himalayan vultures also reported in winters.

Vultures in the area begin their breeding season in October, with pairing activities happening in November, he said.

"Each pair typically produces only one egg during this period," said Hemendra Kumar, Project Officer, WWF-India.

The conservationist said vultures are being sighted here for years, mostly around sunrise

and sunset.

Vulture counting takes place during sunrise, as some may travel to nearby areas for feeding, not returning for several days, he said. "The vulture population is seeing a noticeable decline caused by several factors. Predominantly nesting in high-stress areas, these vultures face threats from agricultural pesticide use, habitat degradation, and other environmental pressures.

"By feeding on carrion, vultures prevent the spread of diseases affecting wildlife, livestock, and humans. Their role in decomposing animal car-

casses aids in nutrient cycling and maintaining ecological balance," he said.

Kumar said that public health is now being viewed beyond human concerns, since animals and humans often share the same diseases.

"If animals are affected, it will soon impact us, since we are all interconnected. So we must pay attention," he said.

WWF-India has identified 20 locations across the country, including two in the national capital — Ghazipur Landfill and Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary — as key spots for public participation. -PTI



Israel strikes in Syria kill 14



By Albert Aji

Damascus: A series of Israeli strikes hit multiple areas in central Syria late Sunday, killing at least 14 people, wounding 40 and sparking fires, state media reported.

Syria state news agency SANA reported that Syrian air defences "confronted an aggression that targeted several points in the central region," damaging a highway in Hama province and sparking fires that firefighting teams were battling to control early Monday.

At least four dead and 13 wounded people arrived at the Masyaf National Hospital in western

Hamas province, SANA said, citing hospital head Faysal Haydar. It was not immediately clear if they were civilians or militants.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based war monitor, reported that one of the strikes targeted a scientific research centre in Maysaf and other sites where "Iranian militias and experts are stationed to develop weapons in Syria." Local media also reported strikes around the coastal city of Tartous.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Israel has carried out

hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of war-torn Syria in recent years, but it rarely acknowledges or discusses the operations.

The strikes often target Syrian forces or Iranian-backed groups. Israel has vowed to stop Iranian entrenchment in Syria, particularly since Syria is a key route for Iran to send weapons to the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Hezbollah has been clashing with Israeli forces for the past 11 months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas — an ally of Hezbollah — in Gaza.

-AP

Six injured in explosion targeting polio workers

Peshawar: At least six people, including three policemen, were injured in a bomb explosion that targeted a vehicle carrying workers associated with the Pakistan Polio Programme in the country's restive northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, authorities said on Monday.

The explosion resulted in injuries to three frontline polio workers and three policemen in South Waziristan district's Wana town. The injured were immediately shifted to a hospital and their condition is stated to be stable.

Police contingents rushed to the explosion site and launched a combing operation to arrest the accused.

Authorities in Pakistan last week reported its first polio case in the capital Islamabad in the last 16 years, a setback to the national efforts aimed at eradicating the crippling virus from the country.

The country came close to achieving zero poliovirus cases in 2021 when only one infection was reported.

So far this year, 12 cases have been reported from Balochistan, three from Sindh, and one from Punjab and Islamabad each.

Separately in Peshawar, the capital of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a suicide vest was thrown by two motorcyclists when they were signalled to stop by police at Jameel Chowk, Ring Road. A bomb disposal squad has been called to defuse the jacket that has seven kilograms of explosives.

-PTI

RSS believes India is one idea. We believe India is a multiplicity of ideas

Rahul attacks RSS while interacting with Indian diaspora in the US

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: Love, respect and humility are missing in Indian politics, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said in his address to the Indian American community in Texas, where he also criticised the RSS for believing that India is "one idea".

Gandhi made the remarks on Sunday in Dallas during his first interaction with the Indian diaspora after becoming Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha this summer.

"RSS believes that India is one idea. We believe that India is a multiplicity of ideas," he said.

"This is the fight. The fight crystallised in the election when millions of people in India clearly understood that the Prime Minister of India was attacking the Constitution of India. Because what I am saying to you is the union of states, respect to languages, respect to religions, respect to traditions, respect to caste. This is all in the Constitution," Gandhi added.

In his address, Gandhi said his role was to inject values of love, respect and humility into Indian politics.

"I think what is missing in our political systems and across parties is love, respect and humility. Love to all human beings, not necessarily only people of one religion, one community, one caste, one State, or to those who speak one language," he said.

"Respect to everybody



“Have you heard of the Eklavya story? If you want to understand what is happening in India, it is millions and millions of Eklavya stories every single day. People with skills are being sidelined—they are not being allowed to operate or thrive, and this is happening everywhere.”

“Very much like the United States, we believe everybody should be allowed to participate. We believe that everybody should be allowed to dream, (and) everybody should be given space, regardless of their caste, language, religion, tradition, history.”

who is trying to build an India, not just the most powerful, but the weakest

“We saw that immediately, within minutes of the election result, nobody in India was scared of the BJP, of the Prime Minister. These are huge achievements. These are huge achievements of the people of India who realised democracy, of the people of India.”

and humility, not in others, but in oneself. I think that is how I see my own.” he

-PTI

8 Taliban soldiers killed in clash with Pakistani forces



Islamabad/Peshawar: At least eight Afghan Taliban soldiers, including two key commanders, have been killed in a fierce clash with the Pakistani security forces in the border region near the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The exchange, which was reported in the Khurram border district of the province over the weekend, also injured 16 Afghan Taliban soldiers.

The Afghan side attacked a Pakistani checkpoint with heavy weapons in the Palosin area on the Pak-Afghan border on Saturday morning, the Dawn newspaper reported, quoting sources. "We have reports about heavy losses on the other [Afghan] side. So far, eight Afghan Taliban have been killed, and 16 others have

sustained injuries in retaliatory firing by the Pakistani forces," sources said, adding that two 'key' commanders were also killed.

There was no official word on the incident from the Pakistan military's media wing - the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

This is not the first time Afghan troops have opened fire on Pakistani security forces posted at the border. In the past, Islamabad shared its concerns with Kabul over such incidents. The Afghan Taliban, apart from facilitating militant activities inside Pakistan, were now openly attacking the forces along the international border, sources said. Due to the tense security situation, trade between the two countries remained suspended over the weekend.

Enhancing ties with China

Singapore: Singapore is committed to enhancing and deepening bilateral ties with China, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said on Monday.

Balakrishnan, who is on a two-day official trip to Beijing, made the remarks in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. "Prime Minister Lawrence Wong is committed — and I send you his greetings — to enhancing and deepening our relationship with China," The Straits Times newspaper quoted Balakrishnan as saying.

In the meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Balakrishnan said the upgrading of the bilateral relationship in 2023 reflected "the unique, the longstanding and the very close ties between our two countries".

Singapore and China upgraded ties to an "all-round, high-quality, future-oriented partnership" in April 2023, when then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

Balakrishnan also noted that 2025 will mark the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Singapore and China.

-PTI

Activists criticise high cost of Pope's visit to East Timor

Dili: East Timor pulled out all stops for Pope Francis' historic visit to one of the world's youngest and poorest countries to the tune of USD 12 million, drawing rebuke from activists and human rights organisations in a nation where almost half the population lives in poverty.

The cost for the two-day visit starting Monday was approved by the government through the Council of Ministers in February, including USD 1 million to build an altar for a papal Mass.

Walls were still being dabbled with fresh paint and banners and billboards filled the streets of the seaside capital, Dili, to welcome the pontiff, who earlier visited Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The non-governmental agency, known locally as Lao Hamutuk, has submitted several papers to the government and parliament asking to cut expenditures on ceremonies and prioritize issues that affect people, Ferreira said. "The governments have ignored the poor in the country," he said. East Timor's Minister of State Administration Tomas Cabral, who heads

42 per cent	No of East Timor's population of 1.3 million below the poverty line
27 per cent	No of population to experience acute food insecurity from May to September, according to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation
USD 3.16 billion	The country's budget for 2023
USD 4.7 million	Government's provision to increase food production
USD 12 million	Expense for the papal visit
USD 1.2 million	Money allocated for transportation and logistics of people from across the country to welcome the pontiff and attend his Mass on Tuesday
USD 1 million	Money spent to build an altar for a papal Mass

the national organising committee for the pope's visit, said the USD 12 million was excessive but it was also being used for infrastructure development, such as road constructions, renovating churches and other public facilities.

"Don't compare our country with neighbouring nations that have proper facilities and infrastructure to host international events or high-ranking state guests," Cabral said. "Here, we have to build it from the scratch."

East Timor views the visit as a prime opportunity



ty to put the world's spotlight on the small nation with a turbulent path to independence. It's the youngest country in Asia where 97 per cent of the population identify as Catholic.

The highlight of Francis' visit will be a Eucharistic celebration on Tuesday where more than 300,000 faithful are expected. -AP

India, US to explore ways to strengthen partnership

Washington: The third edition of the two-day INDUS-X summit will begin on Monday, during which India and the US will explore ways to strengthen partnerships in defence innovation, according to an official release.

The India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit, themed: "Harnessing Investment Opportunities to Enhance Cross-Border Defence Innovation Ecosystems," will be held at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California from September 9-10, said a press release by the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF).

It will focus on the critical role of private capital in advancing the defence innovation sector, bringing together leading defence policymakers from Washington and New Delhi.

"The event will facilitate interactions between American and Indian leaders in defence innovation, including startups, venture capitalists, academia, accelerators, and industry professionals, to foster co-production and investment opportunities," according to the press release.

It will include sessions with leaders from the private

and the public sectors touching on themes of "strengthening defence and advanced technology partnerships, funding defence innovation, and resilient supply chains".

The summit will be co-hosted by the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) and Stanford University.

INDUS-X, which stands for enhanced strategic and defence partnership between India and the US, was launched on June 21 last year by the US Department of Defence and the Indian Ministry of Defence during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington, DC.

The two countries have inked key defence and security pacts over the past few years, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 that allows their militaries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.

The two sides also signed COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) in 2018 which provides for interoperability between the two militaries and also provides for the sale of high-end technology from the US to India. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Dmitry Peskov,
 Spokesman,
 Kremlin

Iran is our important partner. We are developing our trade and economic relations. We are developing our cooperation and dialogue in all possible areas, including the most sensitive ones, and will continue to do so in the interests of the peoples of our two countries.

'Nacho Nacho' song to mobilise South Asians

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: To harness the power of Bollywood music, an Indian-American entrepreneur and a major fundraiser for the Democratic party has released a music video to mobilise South Asians in key battleground states to vote for presidential candidate and Vice President Kamala Harris in the November 5 election.

The song, "Nacho Nacho", has been performed by Bollywood singer

“In the 2020 campaign, we saw Bollywood-inspired videos go viral, and we will repeat that success. The South Asian vote could be decisive in this election and we will work tirelessly to turn out every vote”

-Ajay Jain Bhutoria,
 Member, National Finance Committee, Harris for President

Shibani Kashyap and produced by Ritesh Parikh and his creative team is the brainchild of Ajay Jain Bhutoria, National Fi-

nance Committee member for Harris for President "Nacho Nacho" isn't just a song, it's a movement. This campaign aims to connect

with the diverse South Asian-American community across battleground states and key districts.

"With over 4.4 million Indian-Americans and 6 million South Asians eligible to vote, our goal is to help propel Vice President Kamala Harris to victory in 2024. The video transcends language and cultural barriers, resonating with voters in Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Bengali and more," said Bhutoria.

Parikh, the founder of

Awesome TV, said, "Bollywood has always been about breaking barriers and telling stories that unite us. Kamala Harris embodies that same vision — bringing people together and championing a future where diversity is our greatest strength. Her journey is a story we all believe in." Bhutoria said the lyrics and dance moves reflect the festive spirit of the community and send a strong message to vote for Harris.

-PTI

EDITORIAL

Beyond Cricket

India's historic performance at the Paris Paralympics, where the contingent clinched 29 medals—including seven gold, nine silver, and 13 bronze—marks the country's most successful campaign in the competition's history. Not only did India surpass its previous records, but it also crossed the 50-medal milestone in Paralympic Games history, finishing 18th in the overall standings. In doing so, India surpassed sporting powerhouses such as Switzerland, South Korea, Belgium, and Argentina. Yet, the significance of this achievement extends far beyond the numbers; it represents a paradigm shift for a nation long obsessed with cricket, highlighting the untapped potential of para-sports and the athletes who defy the odds to reach the podium.

This success is not merely a triumph over physical limitations but also a triumph over systemic challenges, including limited infrastructure, inadequate funding, and societal stigma. The sports ministry included 59 para-athletes in its Target Olympic Podium Scheme roster, 50 of whom qualified for Paris. However, much more needs to be done to sustain and build upon these gains.

For most athletes, the Paralympics is not just about winning medals but overcoming disability in a society that is often ill-equipped and unsympathetic.

Despite these achievements, the road ahead is fraught with challenges, particularly in the realm of sponsorship and support. India's sports ecosystem remains heavily skewed in favor of cricket, with other sports often struggling for funding, media coverage and public support. To remedy this, there must be a concerted effort to incentivize corporate sponsorships in para-sports. Tax benefits, government-backed campaigns, and structured sponsorship frameworks could help shift the focus from cricket to a more inclusive sporting culture.

Para-sports need the kind of coverage that can inspire millions and create role models. Public broadcasters, private media companies, and streaming platforms must commit to showcasing para-athletes not just during the Paralympics but throughout the year. The challenges faced by India's para-athletes extend beyond the playing field. Everyday struggles, such as finding accessible facilities, navigating public spaces, and securing proper equipment, are compounded by the lack of societal awareness and infrastructure.

The financial burden of being a para-athlete is also significant. Regular physiotherapy is a prohibitive expense for most families. Government subsidies for essential equipment and services along with robust insurance schemes, could alleviate this and enable athletes to focus on their training and performance.

India's para-athletes have demonstrated that with grit, determination, and the right support, they can compete at the highest levels and bring glory to the nation. Their success at the Paris Paralympics is a powerful reminder that India's sporting potential extends far beyond cricket. By giving these athletes the platform they deserve, India can foster a culture of inclusivity that extends beyond mere tokenism.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

FOCAC 2024: China's Expanding Influence in Africa

By
Sumant Vidwans

The 2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in Beijing from September 4 to 6 highlighted China's deepening role in Africa's economic development. Themed "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future,"

The 2024 FOCAC summit highlighted China's deepening role in Africa's development, focussing on infrastructure, green growth, and digital innovation. Amid rising debt concerns, China committed to smaller projects. The summit underscored the need for Africa to craft a cohesive strategy in its relations with China.

brought together African heads of state and key Chinese leaders.

The discussions focused on strengthening partnerships in infrastructure, green development, and digital innovation. In response to African debt concerns, China shifted its lending policies, committing to smaller, risk-managed projects. These efforts align with Africa's Agenda 2063, the African Union's 50-year plan for inclusive growth, peace, prosperity, and a stronger global role.

The summit produced the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2025-2027), focussing on renewable energy, healthcare, education, and industrialisation. China pledged continued investments in Africa, while both sides emphasised cooperation on global challenges like climate change, poverty, and food security.

The China-Africa relationship is more intricate than it seems. Since its inception in 2000, FOCAC has largely operated within a donor-recipient framework, with China dictating the agenda and African countries responding. This imbalance has sparked concerns about whether African nations are truly reaping the benefits of this partnership or simply becoming economically reliant on China, highlighting the potential risks of such involvement.

China-Africa relations date back to the 1950s, with China supporting African anti-colonialism and anti-imperialist movements. China's involvement grew in the 1970s, with key projects like the Tanzania-Zambia Railway. The establishment of FOCAC in 2000 shifted focus to economics, making China Africa's



largest trading partner, heavily investing in infrastructure, energy, and telecommunications to support its own growth needs.

China's infrastructure projects like ports and energy plants, part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), have been instrumental in Africa's development. China has provided capital for projects that would otherwise have languished. By 2023, Chinese firms had installed over 25 gigawatts of power generation capacity, and trade between China and Africa reached a robust \$282 billion, a potential for mutual economic growth and development.

African countries are increasingly concerned about rising debt linked to Chinese loans, with nations like Zambia and Kenya fearing economic exploitation and potential asset seizures in case of defaults. The influx of Chinese workers for infrastructure projects has caused social tensions, as local communities feel marginalised by the lack of job opportunities. Despite criticism from Western powers viewing China's presence as a geopolitical strategy, its influence in Africa continues to expand.

China's heavy involvement in Africa is no coincidence. Africa has vast natural resources, from

rare minerals to oil reserves, crucial to China's industrial machine. Beyond resources, Africa's markets offer significant opportunities for Chinese goods, and its geopolitical positioning makes it a key ally in global diplomacy. African nations, in turn, often support China on contentious international issues, such as Taiwan's status and territorial claims in the South China Sea.

FOCAC provides a stage for China to assert its influence and further its ambition of becoming a global power. Yet, the imbalance in power dynamics between China and Africa must be addressed. While China is clear about its objectives, African nations have struggled to craft a unified strategy for engaging with China on their own terms. This leaves many African countries at a disadvantage, relying on state-to-state negotiations where their leverage is limited.

Western nations, particularly the US and EU, view China's activities sceptically, accusing Beijing of pursuing "debt trap diplomacy." They argue that China's investments are designed to make African nations economically indebted to Beijing, ultimately giving China undue influence over the continent's political decisions. The West has also launched initiatives like the

Build Back Better World (B3W) to offer alternative funding sources to African nations, though these efforts remain in their infancy.

Japan and India are also increasing their involvement in Africa. Through platforms like the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), Japan aims to strengthen ties and counterbalance China's dominance. India, too, has ramped up its engagement with Africa, mainly through trade and investment forums such as the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) and the India-Africa Defence Dialogue.

The 2024 FOCAC summit underscores the evolving nature of China-Africa relations. While China remains a crucial partner for Africa's development, the power imbalance in this relationship continues to raise concerns. To truly benefit from this partnership, African nations must take the lead in developing a more cohesive and strategic approach to engaging with China, ensuring that they protect their sovereignty and secure long-term gains. Taking a proactive approach is crucial in navigating international relations.

As global competition for Africa's resources and political alliances intensifies, the continent must navigate these external influences carefully. FOCAC's outcomes may paint a picture of prosperity. Still, the true test will be whether Africa can emerge from these partnerships with greater autonomy, economic strength, and a sustainable path forward.

(The writer is an IT professional. Views personal)

TURNING POINT

What If Rabindranath Tagore Had Stayed a Lawyer?

By
Shoumojit Banerjee

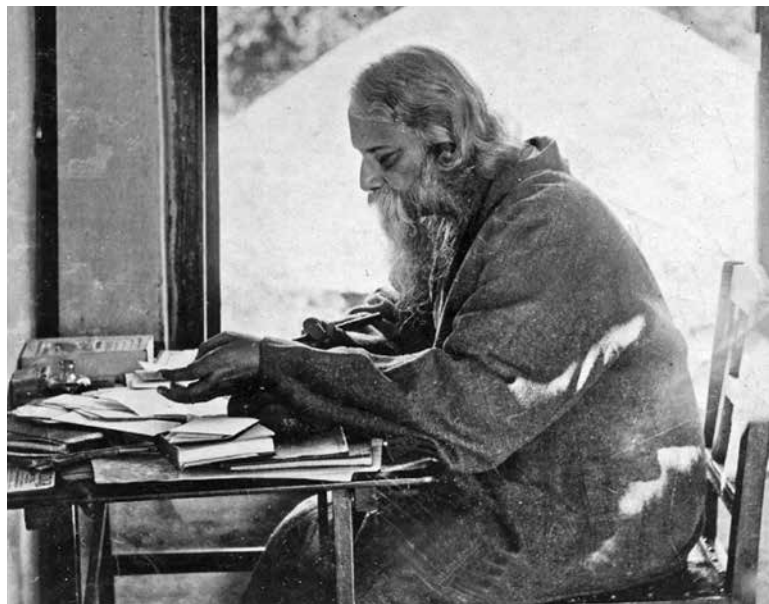
The remarkable cultural efflorescence known as the 'Bengal Renaissance' triggered by Warren Hastings' appointment as governor of Bengal in 1772 can be bookended between the birth of Ram Mohun Roy (the same year) and the death of Rabindranath Tagore in 1941.

This Renaissance threw up luminaries from William Carey to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay to Toru Dutt to Swami Vivekananda and Jagadish Chandra Bose. The movement, marked by a synthesis of Eastern and Western intellectual traditions, found its zenith in Rabindranath Tagore. But what if Tagore had succumbed to familial pressures to pursue a career in law rather than the arts?

Born in 1861 into a remarkable and dazzlingly erudite family (the Tagores of Jorasanko), Rabindranath was youngest of Debendranath Tagore's 14 children.

In his superb and wonderfully accessible book 'Awakening: the story of the Bengal Renaissance' (2010) Subrata Dasgupta describes how Rabindranath's elder brother, Satyendranath, in an exasperated bid to make his precocious 17-year-old brother "professionally respectable, took him to England to study for the Bar." After two years as a quintessential dilettante, Rabindranath returned to India which he later said was one of "utter disorderliness."

Yet this decision to forsake a conventional career would mark the beginning of a path that redefined Indian cultural identity. Two years



after his return as a lawyer manqué, he produced 'Sandhya Sangeet' (1882), which was highly regarded by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. In 1883, he wrote 'Nature's Revenge' and his first novel

These early works set the stage for a career that would eventually lead to the creation of 'Gitanjali'—the immortal collection of poems which sent W.B Yeats (and countless others since then) into raptures earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, making him the first non-European laureate.

While he may have still written some luminous short stories or poetry, a full-time career in law would have stifled these creative impulses, leaving a gaping void in both Bengali and global literature.

But the instant recognition and influence of Tagore as composer has even exceeded that of Tagore the poet and novelist. In Rabindra Sangeet, he created a completely new genre of contemporary popular music. India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka would not have had their national anthems had he remained a lawyer and iconic songs like 'Ekla Chalo Re' would perhaps not have come into being.

But Tagore's influence extended far beyond his literary works. His establishment of Santiniketan in 1901 and Visva-Bharati University later on redefined education in India, promoting a learning environment that valued creativity and intellectual freedom over rote memorization. His role in the Bengal Renaissance was not just as a cultural icon but also as an educational reformer whose vision reshaped the pedagogical landscape of India. A life in the courtroom would have precluded these contributions, depriving India an education of one of its most visionary architects.

Moreover, Tagore's global appeal—rooted in his ability to bridge Eastern and Western thought—might have been confined to the courtroom. His interactions with legions of Western intellectuals like Ezra Pound, H.G. Wells, G. B. Shaw and his dialogues on spirituality and universalism, created a unique intercultural dialogue that enriched global understanding. Without his towering voice, a vital conduit for East-West exchange would have been lost and India would have been deprived of a profound cultural ambassador.

STATES WATCH

A Battle of Words and Bulldozers

The political rivalry between Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party (SP) has escalated into a fierce confrontation notably after the BJP's underwhelming performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, where it managed to win only 36 of the 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

In the aftermath of the elections, Akhilesh Yadav's criticism of Yogi Adityanath has grown more pointed. In a thinly veiled swipe, Yadav dismissed Adityanath's relevance, referring to him as "someone on his way out." Yadav's comments reflect his belief that Adityanath's grip on power is weakening, a sentiment buoyed by the BJP's electoral losses and the perception that the Chief Minister has lost influence within his own party. "Those who have no say in their own party, who will now pay heed to their words?" Yadav remarked on X (formerly Twitter), questioning Adityanath's authority both in governance and within the BJP.

The conflict between the two leaders has also intensified over the issue of law and order in Uttar Pradesh, particularly Adityanath's controversial use of bulldozers to demolish properties of alleged criminals, a policy Yadav has condemned as le-

The Intensifying Feud Between CM and BJP leader Yogi Adityanath and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is heating up UP's political scene well before he 2027 Assembly election



Uttar Pradesh

petitions challenging the demolition of homes of individuals merely accused of crimes, questioning the legality of such actions. The bench, led by Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan, highlighted the problematic nature of punishing individuals without due process, noting that houses cannot be demolished even in cases involving convicted persons.

The BJP's electoral setback in Uttar Pradesh was largely due to

its failure to balance caste equations, with non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits, including the Khatik and Kurmi communities, shifting to the IN-DIA bloc. Internal disarray and ineffective counter-narratives further weakened the party's position.

The BJP's challenge will be to rebuild its fractured vote base and counter the Opposition's narrative of constitutional change, while the SP will aim to consolidate its gains and present itself as the rightful alternative to Adityanath's rule.

As Uttar Pradesh braces for the 2027 Assembly elections, the battle between Yogi Adityanath and Akhilesh Yadav will only intensify. For Adityanath, maintaining his image as a no-nonsense leader is critical while Akhilesh Yadav is positioning himself as a champion of lawful governance and social justice, seeking to leverage the BJP's electoral missteps to reclaim power in the state.



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KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Angelina Jolie arrives on the red carpet for the premiere of 'Without Blood' at TIFF Lightbox, during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto on Sunday.
- 2 India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant meets Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay during the World Bank conference on the economic development of Bhutan.
- 3 Devotees from Sindhi community carry earthen pots covered in red clothes on their heads during a religious procession called 'Matki Sarghs' to mark the end of 'Chaliho Sahib' in Ahmedabad on Monday.
- 4 In this photo provided by the Senate Social Media Unit, dismissed Baman Mayor Alice Guo, a fugitive recently arrested in Indonesia, holds her glasses during a Senate hearing in Pasay City, Philippines on Monday.
- 5 Security personnel search a house following the fresh bout of violence that left several people dead in Manipur.



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All Pictures PTI, AP

READERS' CHOICE

China-Pakistan-Bangladesh Pact: A Strategic Shift India Must Face



By
Shreyas Pannase

The proposed joint trade and security agreement between China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh is a complex web of historical, political, and economic factors. China's ambitions align with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with Pakistan as a key partner via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Bangladesh has become increasingly involved with Chinese infrastructure and energy sectors. The trilateral cooperation signifies a step reflecting shared interest in counterbalancing India's regional dominance, compounded by historical rivalries and disputes involving India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

China's ambition to expand its influence aligns with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Pakistan is a key partner in the BRI and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a flagship project. Pakistan sees alignment with China as a counterweight to India's superior military capabilities, while Bangladesh views the agreement as an economic opportunity amidst challenges with India over water sharing and border management issues.

India faces strategic challenges from a potential rise in Chinese military presence, expanded bases, and joint intelligence-sharing. The development of dual-use infrastructure like ports and airports could enhance China's power projection into the Indian Ocean, challenging India's security and trade interests. Bangladesh's evolving role might lead to increased coordination with China on maritime security, directly impacting India's influence in the Bay of Bengal and beyond.

India's relationships with the United States, Japan, and Australia with-

in the framework of the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) are likely to be tested by this development. The agreement could also strain India's relations with ASEAN countries as the regional dynamics shift in favour of a China-centric economic and security framework. India's strategic autonomy may be challenged, necessitating a reevaluation of its defence posture and alliances.

The potential enhancement of intelligence sharing among the three countries could undermine India's security interests. Pakistan's history of harbouring terrorist organisations and the recent trends of radicalisation in Bangladesh pose direct threats to India's security and complicate India's counter-terrorism efforts, leading to increased infiltration along the borders and a rise in asymmetric threats.

India may face isolation with fewer regional allies. This could lead to an arms race, with India seeking to bolster its conventional and nuclear capabilities to deter any potential aggression.

This agreement could disrupt existing trade routes and partnerships, forcing India to seek alternative markets and trade corridors. China's influence in Bangladesh and Pakistan could lead to trade agreements that marginalise Indian exports and re-route goods through China-backed infrastructure. With China's dominance in global supply chains, it could be increasingly difficult for India to compete in manufacturing and technology. The potential isolation of India from regional trade agreements could exacerbate its trade deficits and limit its access to critical markets.

India's manufacturing sector could face additional challenges if the agreement leads to the reorientation of regional supply chains. The potential for Chinese companies to gain preferential access to markets in Pakistan and Bangladesh could further disadvantage Indian manufacturers in the textile, electronics, and pharmaceutical sectors. In addition, the Belt and Road Initiative's expansion through Bangladesh and Pakistan could lead to the development of alternative trade corridors that bypass

India, diminishing its strategic and economic significance in the region.

Bangladesh's integration into the Belt and Road Initiative, alongside Pakistan's involvement, could undermine India's infrastructure projects like the North-South Transport Corridor and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. This strategic alignment with China might limit India's ability to secure funding and partnerships, weakening its influence over regional connectivity. A China-centric economic bloc could marginalise India in South Asia, reducing its influence over trade policies and market share and potentially impacting its growth prospects through decreased foreign investment and export slowdowns.

India's relationship with Bangladesh on border management, water sharing, and counter-terrorism could be strained if Bangladesh becomes more aligned with China and Pakistan. Increased Chinese influence could shift Dhaka's foreign policy, making it less receptive to India's concerns, complicating issues like Teesta River water sharing and border management.

India may struggle to assert its traditional leadership in SAARC, with a China-Pakistan-Bangladesh bloc potentially undermining India's ability to shape the agenda. Similarly, China's growing influence through Bangladesh could hinder India's effectiveness in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration within BIMSTEC.

The trilateral cooperation signals a recalibration of power in South Asia, with China strengthening its foothold through infrastructure and security investments. As India grapples with potential economic marginalisation and security threats, its regional influence may be put to the test. In Part 2 of this series, we will explore how India can navigate these challenges and leverage strategic partnerships to turn the situation to its advantage.

(The writer is a Senior Research Associate, Vishwa Samvad Kendra, Mumbai. Views personal)
Next part on September 13.

EXPLAINER

Why US Congress takes up series of bills targeting China?

Washington views Beijing as its biggest geopolitical rival, and the legislation is touted as ensuring the US prevails in the competition. Many of the bills scheduled for a vote this week appear to have both Republican and Democratic support, reflecting strong consensus that congressional actions are needed to counter China.

Advocacy groups worry about the impact, warning against rhetoric that hurts Asian Americans and could create "an atmosphere of guilt by association or fuel divisiveness," said Christine Chen, executive director of Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington called the legislation "new McCarthyism" that hypes the tensions in an election year. If passed, the bills "will cause serious interference to China-US relations and mutually beneficial cooperation, and will inevitably damage the US's own interests, image and credibility," spokesman Liu Pengyu said in a statement.

Targeting Beijing-linked biotech

A bill seeks to ban a group of five biotechnology companies with Chinese ties from working with anyone that receives federal money. The companies include those that work to help doctors detect genetic causes for cancer or do research and manufacturing for American drugmakers, considered a key step in developing new medications.

America's biotech companies have said the bill would disrupt their partnerships with Chinese contractors, resulting in delays in clinical trials for new drugs and higher costs. Supporters say the legislation is necessary to protect US health care data and reduce the country's reliance on China for its medical supply chain.

BGI, one of the Chinese companies named in the bill, called it "a false flag targeting companies under the premise of national security." The company, which offers genetic sequencing for research purposes in



the US, said it follows the law and has no access to Americans' personal data.

Banning Chinese drones

Another bill would ban drones made by the Chinese company DJI, which dominates the global drone market, "an unacceptable risk to US national security" and cut its products from US communications networks over data security concerns.

DJI argues that users have to "opt in" to share data such as flight logs, photos and videos with the company. If users don't do so, the company said it won't have data to share with any government when compelled. It also has rejected allegations that it is a Chinese military company and has aided the persecution of members of ethnic Muslim minorities.

Adam Bry, co-founder and CEO of major US drone maker Skydio, told a congressional committee in June about losing business to China, where "the Chinese government has tried to control the drone industry, pouring resources into national champions and taking aim at competitors in the US and the West, tilting the playing field in China's favour."

Protecting intellectual property

A challenge is likely against an attempt to revive a Trump-era programme described as a way to stop Chinese efforts to steal intellectual property and spy on industry and research.

The bill would direct the Justice Department to curb spying by Beijing on US intellectual property and academic institutions and go after people engaged in theft of trade secrets, hacking and economic espionage.

The Trump-era programme, called the China Initiative, ended in 2022 after multiple unsuccessful prosecutions of researchers and concerns that it had prompted racial and ethnic profiling. Critics also say it chilled cooperation between the US and China in science and technology meant to benefit the greater good.

Restricting farm sales

Another bill, which says it will protect US farmland from foreign adversaries, has raised concerns about discrimination.

It would add the agriculture secretary to the US Committee on Foreign Investment, which reviews the national security implications of foreign transactions. The bill also flags as "reportable" land sales involving citizens from China, North Korea, Russia and Iran.

The National Agricultural Law Centre estimates 24 states ban or limit foreigners without residency and foreign businesses or governments from owning private farmland. The interest emerged after a Chinese billionaire bought more than 130,000 acres near a US Air Force base in Texas and another Chinese company sought to build a corn plant near an Air Force base in North Dakota.

-AP

India beat Japan in ACT

Hulunbuir (China): Sukhjeet Singh struck a brace as defending champions India thrashed Japan 5-1 in a league match to notch up their second consecutive win in the men's Hero Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Monday.

Sukhjeet scored in the second and 60th minutes while Abhishek (3rd), Sanjay (17th) and Uttam Singh (54th) were the other Indian goal getters.

Matsumoto Kazumasa pulled one back for Japan in the 41st minute.

Four-time champions India, who had beaten China 3-0 in their opening round-robin league match on Sunday, got two penalty corners as against five of Japan.

India were quick to get the lead with Sukhjeet scoring a brilliant field goal in the second minute of the match itself. It was Sanjay, hovering on the right side of the circle, lobbed in a cross that was swiftly deflected by Sukhjeet.

India extended the lead to 2-0 in the next minute with Abhishek dribbling past several Japanese defenders before rounding off the goalkeeper to score.

The onslaught continued in the second quarter with Sanjay converting a splendid penalty corner in the 17th minute. With 3-0 lead at half-time, India were in a comfortable position while Japan tried to shake off the early nerves and bounce back.

Japan, who finished third in the 2023 edition of the tournament, made



amends in their attack to fetch a PC in the 21st minute. But Japan's drag-flick was finely blocked by the Indian rushers, enabling their team to launch a quick counter attack.

Attacking from the right, Jugraj Singh got a nice turn and won a free hit. After a flurry of swift short passes, Indian forwards missed the goal-mouth by inches.

With one goal coming in the second quarter, India completely dominated with 67 per cent ball possession that led to 11 circle entries and three shots on goal.

Returning from the 10-minute half-time break, India looked to keep up the momentum. They played patiently, with discipline, to launch their first attack in the third quarter but Japan won the ball back.

Japan did well to build on a structured attack that eventually led to a field goal in the 41st minute by Kazumasa. India goalie Krishan Pathak could do little to stop Kazumasa from

“It was a complete team effort today and we stuck to basics. We produced good attack and ensured we were on target.”

-Abhishek

scoring.

Only minutes earlier, there was a brilliant opportunity for India but Vivek Sagar fell inches short of a fourth goal.

A fourth goal eventually came for India, thanks to good stick work by Jarmanpreet Singh who assisted Uttam Singh in converting a fine field goal.

Sukhjeet added another goal to his name in the 60th minute after a fine assist by Abhishek to end the match on a high.

-PTI



Mahala Smith, of Sabattus, Maine, scrambles for yardage during a women's football game at the Mud Bowl in North Conway, N.H. on Saturday.

Pic: AP/PTI

PNB, SAI, Canara Bank win

Pune: Punjab National Bank, Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Sports Authority of India, and Canara Bank notched up facile wins on the fifth day of the Hockey India Senior Men Inter-Department National Championship here on Monday. SAI edged past Central Secretariat 2-1 in a Pool A outing, while in Pool B, Canara Bank hammered Sports Authority of Gujarat - Hockey Team 6-0, thanks to Soimah Kuppanda's hat-trick.

In Pool D, CAGI went past Central Reserve Police Force.

National Aquatic meet

Nataraj, Aneesh among top swimmers

Mangaluru: Olympian Srihari Nataraj, freestyle specialist Aneesh Gowda and the promising Harshita Jayaram will be some of the frontline swimmers in action during the 77th Senior National Aquatic Championships, beginning here Tuesday.

The tournament, concluding on September 15, is crucial for Indian swimmers as the 'A' Qualification mark for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is up for grabs. Karnataka are the de-



Srihari Nataraj



Aneesh Gowda

fending champions in the event which will see participation of over 500 swimmers from 31 states.

Nataraj, who competed in the 100m backstroke in the recent Paris Olympics, said he was looking to give

his best in the meet. "I am looking forward to being in my best form and I will be vying for gold in all my events and make use of the home advantage," said Nataraj, a national record holder in 50m, 100m and

200m backstroke.

Swimming Federation of India Secretary General Monal Chokshi said: "I am confident the Indian swimmers will make use of the International facility and take advantage to surpass the previous year's performance."

The first day will see competitions in 400m freestyle, 200m breast stroke, Nataraj's pet event 100m backstroke, 50m butterfly and 4x100m medley relay.

-PTI

Lanka's 4th test victory in England

London: Sri Lanka earned their only fourth Test victory on English soil after an unbeaten century by opener Pathum Nissanka helped the visitors secure an eight-wicket win in the third and final match of the series against England at The Oval here on Monday.

England won the series 2-1 but missed out on a second clean sweep of its international summer, having defeated the West Indies 3-0 in July. Starting Day 4 on 94-1 and requiring 125 more runs to win, the Sri Lankans needed barely two hours to complete the job in clinical fashion. The platform was built on Sunday when they skittled England for 156 in just 34 overs and were given a victory target of 219.

Nissanka underpinned the chase with his second test hundred, reaching three figures in 107 balls and finishing 127 not out as Sri Lanka got to 219 in 40.3 overs.

-AP

For Vaishali, GCL opportunity to learn from Anand

London: Set to make her debut in the Global Chess League alongside the great Viswanathan Anand, Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali says doing well in the star-studded event is not the only target on her mind when she lands in the British Capital next month.

Taking a ride on the London Eye also figures quite high on the agenda.

The 23-year-old Grandmaster was among the top picks at the league's player draft held in August. The event's second edition will be held here from October 3 to 12 at Friends House.

Speaking about playing alongside five-time world champion Anand for Ganges Grandmasters and against her brother R Praggnanandhaa's team, Alpine SG Pipers, Vaishali said, "This will be a very special event for me to play alongside Vishy sir in the same team."

"It is a wonderful oppor-



tunity for me. My brother Prag is on Magnus Carlen's team, which is great as well. Of course, we won't compete against each other, but our teams are different."

Anand has had a huge role to play in mentoring both Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali.

In the tournament, each team will play a total of 10 matches in a double round-robin format, with the winner of each match being decided in a best-of-six board scoring system. Vaishali described it as an interesting and unique

format

"To have many strong players in one team, we get to discuss a lot about the game and share ideas. It will definitely help players improve individually," she added.

Away from the game, Vaishali has already planned her off-the-board adventures in the city.

"The last time I visited London was five years ago. Back then, I missed going to the London Eye ride, so it's the best opportunity for me to visit this time," she signed off.

-PTI

Pakistan athletes get Indian visas

Lahore: A 12-member Pakistan contingent on Monday left for Chennai to take part in the South Asian Athletics Federation Junior Championships after getting visas from the Indian High Commission.

An official confirmed that the athletes and officials had left for Chennai after visas were approved on Saturday.

"The contingent has left via the Wagah border from where they will go to Amritsar and fly to Chennai where the South Asian Junior Athletics Championship is being held," the official said.

The SAAF Junior Championships will be held in Chennai from September 11 to 13.

-PTI

India-Australia rivalry more intense

New Delhi: India beating Australia in the last two Test series in the latter's backyard has made the rivalry between the two teams more intense, feels senior batter Usman Khawaja ahead of the five-match battle beginning November 22.

India had beaten Australia on their last two tours of Australia (2018-19 and 2020-21) with an identical 2-1 margin.

In fact, India have won all the last four series of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, taking into account their home wins in 2016-17 and 2022-23 -- both also 2-1 results in a four-match contest.

"And particularly since India's beaten Australia in Australia the last two times they've come out of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. It just means a little bit more," he told Star Sports.

The 37-year-old left-handed opener said that the



rivalry between the two teams is huge.

"We're world number one, world number two teams really over the last two years. We were there at the last World Test Championship together. The rivalry has always been huge," said Khawaja who has 5451 runs from 71 Tests after making debut in 2011.

"I take it as a sign of respect and I know it that Indians love beating Australia in any sort of form of cricket. And the tradition that Australia has had over

“For Indians it's always been the case to beat Australia. And more recently, you know, since the rise of India and IPL and everything else that happened, it's the same way with Australia against India.”

-Usman Khawaja

so many years as being one of the dominating teams in world cricket has staked that reputation."

The first Test begins in Perth on November 22 while fifth and the last will be played in Sydney from January 3.

-PTI

India tops table in championship

New Delhi: India won 21 medals, including seven gold, to top the tally at the second World Deaf Shooting Championships in Hanover, Germany, the NRAI said on Monday.

India also won seven silver and as many bronze medals in the tournament which concluded on Sunday.

Ukraine finished second with seven gold, five silver and six bronze and hosts Germany were third with two gold, one silver and one bronze medal, according to a release from National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

On the final day of competitions, Mahit Sandhu clinched the gold medal in women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P).



Abhinav Deshwal secured gold in the men's 25m standard pistol event while Chetan Hanmant Sapkal secured bronze in the same event.

The Indian team of 13 shooters participated in 15 out of the 16 events at the championships which had 70 participants from 16 countries.

Pistol shooter Deshwal won five medals -- one gold and four silver -- to return home with the most number

of individual medals. Sandhu won four medals -- three gold and one silver -- in the rifle events.

Dhanush Srikanth won two gold medals in 10m air rifle individual and mixed events. Anuya Prasad (women's 10m air pistol) and Shourya Saini (men's 50m 3P) won the other gold medals for the Indian team.

The Indians also went on to break multiple deaf world records and championship records in the event. -PTI



Jannik Sinner of Italy returns a shot to Taylor Fritz of the United States during the men's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York on Sunday. Sinner won the tournament.

Pic: AP/PTI