

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Jails cannot break me

New Delhi: In his first remarks after being released from the Tihar Jail, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said he will continue to fight "anti-national" forces working to weaken the nation, and asserted the incarceration has only strengthened his resolve.

Hours after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the Delhi excise policy case, Kejriwal stepped out of the jail to a resounding welcome by his party leaders and supporters.

Addressing party work-

ers from the sunroof of a vehicle, Kejriwal raised slogans of 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Vande Mataram'.

"I want to thank people who prayed for my release. You have braved rain to come here and I am thankful to you. Every drop of my blood is dedicated in the service of my nation. In my entire life, I have faced difficulties but the God has always been with me," he said.

Kejriwal stressed that the jail time has strengthened his resolve. "They put me in jail to

break me but my resolve has only grown stronger. Jails cannot break me. I will continue my fight against anti-national forces," he said.

Hundreds of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers and senior party leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, were waiting outside the prison to welcome Kejriwal.

Drenched in rain, Mann, Sisodia raised slogans from atop a truck hailing Kejriwal. Slogans like "Jail ke

taale toot gaye, Kejriwal chhoot gaye", "Bhrashtachaar ka ek hi kaal, Kejriwal, Kejriwal" rent the air.

The AAP chief was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on June 26. He has challenged in the apex court the Delhi High Court's August 5 order that upheld his arrest in the corruption case.

On July 12, the apex court granted interim bail to Kejriwal in the money-laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise scam.

-PTI

CBI should dispel notion of being caged parrot: SC

New Delhi: Observing that Arvind Kejriwal's arrest by the CBI in the excise policy case was unjustified, Supreme Court judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan on Friday slammed the agency, and said it must dispel the notion of being a caged parrot.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan granted him bail in the case.

Writing a separate concurring judgement granting bail to the AAP supremo, Justice Bhuyan questioned the timing of Kejriwal's arrest by the CBI and said its aim was to frustrate the grant of bail to him in the Enforcement Directorate case.

Justice Surya Kant did not find any illegality in the CBI arrest.

"In a functional democracy governed by the rule of law, perception matters. Like Caesar's wife, an investigating agency must be above board. Not long ago, this court has castigated the CBI comparing it to a caged parrot. It is imperative that CBI dispels the no-

Notwithstanding the relaxation in bail conditions by the SC while releasing him in the CBI's corruption case in excise policy 'scam', Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal still cannot visit his office at the secretariat and sign any official file.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan retained only two bail conditions that he shall remain present before the trial court on each and every date of hearing, unless exempted and fully cooperate in expeditious conclusion of the trial. It decided to do away with the conditions that the CM cannot go to Delhi Secretariat or sign files.

However, the relief in the present case cannot be enforced as a bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna, on May 10, 2024 and July 12, 2024, had imposed these conditions and made clear that they can only be recalled or modified by a larger constitution bench. Kejriwal will have to seek modification of these restrictions by approaching the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to set up a larger bench.

tion of it being a caged parrot. Rather, the perception should be that of an uncaged parrot," he said.

Noting that CBI case was registered on August 17, 2022, Justice Bhuyan said till the arrest of the Kejriwal by the ED on March 21, the CBI did not feel the necessity to arrest Kejriwal though it had interrogated him about a year back -- on April 16, 2023.

"It is evident that CBI did not feel the need and necessity to arrest the appellant

BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "The Supreme Court has shown a mirror to 'kattar beimaan' (outright dishonest) Arvind Kejriwal while granting bail to him. He should immediately resign after this.

"The CBI is a premier investigating agency and it must not only be above board, but also be seen to be so. Every effort must be made to remove any perception that investigation was not carried out fairly and that the arrest was made in a high-handed and biased manner.

-Justice Ujjal Bhuyan

an arrest by the CBI was perhaps only to frustrate the bail granted to Kejriwal in the ED case, he added.

The top court judge said when Kejriwal has been granted bail under the more stringent provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, further detention by the CBI in respect of the same predicate offense has become wholly untenable.

-PTI

Gunmen kill 14 in Afghan Shiite area

Islamabad: Gunmen killed 14 people in a Shiite-majority area in central Afghanistan, the Taliban said on Friday, in one of the deadliest attacks in the country this year. Six other people were wounded in the assault.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility before the Taliban acknowledged the shootings, which took place on Thursday and targeted Hazara Shiite people as they travelled between the provinces of Ghor and Daikundi.

A machine gun was used in the assault, the IS group said. It gave a higher death toll than the Taliban.

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Ka-

naani as saying the group had targeted people welcoming Afghan Shiites who were returning from visiting shrines in Iraq. He called for immediate action to punish those behind the crime.

The IS group's affiliate in the country, a major rival to the Taliban, has challenged authorities' grip on domestic security by attacking schools, hospitals, mosques and Shiite areas in the past three years. The Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid strongly condemned Thursday's "barbaric action" and said authorities considered it their obligation to protect people and their property.

"We are also making serious efforts to search for the perpetrators and bring them

to justice," Mujahid added.

The UN mission in Afghanistan said the attack resulted in numerous deaths and injuries to members of the Shiite community. "We express our condolences to the families of those killed and call for an investigation to hold those responsible to account," the mission said on X.

Earlier this month, an IS suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden vest at a prosecutor's office in the capital Kabul. In May, a booby-trapped motorcycle exploded in northeastern Badakhshan province and killed police officers who were part of an anti-poppy cultivation campaign.

A UN-appointed rights expert for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, said he was alarmed by the spate of IS-claimed attacks. The "appalling killings" of Shiite Hazara bore the hallmarks of international crimes, said Bennett, whom the Taliban have barred from Afghanistan.



Devotees perform ritual before of elephants during the immersion of a Lord Ganesha idol at the end of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Ahmedabad on Friday.

Pic: PTI

No block on Western line tomorrow

Mumbai: The Western Railway has announced that there will be no block on its suburban section on Sunday in view of the Ganeshotsav. This decision has been taken to ensure smooth travel for the large number of devo-

tees and commuters during the festive period.

This will allow uninterrupted train services across the suburban lines, ensuring that devotees can travel conveniently to visit Ganesh pandals and participate in

festivities.

Western Railway has urged passengers to make the most of this arrangement while also advising them to check regular train schedules and updates for any changes.



Picture for representation

Port Blair renamed as Sri Vijaya Puram

New Delhi: Port Blair, the capital city of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has been renamed Sri Vijaya Puram, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Friday.

Shah said the decision was taken to free the nation from colonial imprints as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had an "unparalleled place" in the country's freedom struggle and history.

"Inspired by the vision of Prime Minister @narendramodi ji, to free the nation from the colonial imprints, today we have

decided to rename Port Blair as 'Sri Vijaya Puram'," Shah said on X.

While the earlier name had a colonial legacy, Sri Vijaya Puram symbolises the victory achieved in India's freedom struggle and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands' unique role in it, the home minister said.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have an "unparalleled place" in the freedom struggle and history, and the island territory that once served as the naval base of the Chola Empire is now poised to be the critical base for India's strategic and development aspira-

tions, he added.

"It is also the place that hosted the first unfurling of our Tiranga by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose ji and also the cellular jail in which Veer Savarkar ji and other freedom fighters struggled for an independent nation," Shah said.

Being a Union Territory, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands come under the direct administrative control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Andamans is world renowned for its pristine natural beauty, rich marine life, flora and fauna spread around 836 islands, islets



and rocks.

The islands present picturesque views with rich culture and heritage.

The archipelago, located in the east of the Indian mainland geographically,

floats in splendid isolation in the Bay of Bengal. Once a hill range extending from Myanmar to Indonesia, these picturesque undulating islands and islets are covered with dense rain-

fed, damp and evergreen forests and endless varieties of exotic flora and fauna.

Most of these islands (550) are in the Andaman Group, 28 of which are inhabited. The smaller Nicobars comprise some 22 main islands (10 inhabited). The Andaman and Nicobars are separated by the Ten Degree Channel, which is 150 kilometres wide, according to the Union Territory's tourism department.

The archipelago has been inhabited for several thousand years, at the very least.

Early archaeological evi-

dence goes back some 2,200 years. However, indications from genetic, cultural and linguistic isolation studies point to habitation going back 30,000 to 60,000 years, well into the Middle Palaeolithic, according to the tourism department.

In the Andaman Islands, the various Andamanese people maintained their separated existence through diversifying into distinct linguistic, cultural and territorial groups.

In the 1850s, the indigenous people of Andamans first came into contact with the outside world.

The local people are the

Great Andamanese, who collectively represent at least 10 distinct sub groups and languages; the Jarawa; the jungle (or Rutland Jarawa); the Onge; and the Sentinelese (the most isolated of all the groups).

The indigenous people of the Nicobars (unrelated to the Andamanese) have a similarly isolated and lengthy association with the islands.

There are two main groups: the Nicobarese, or Nicobari living throughout many of the islands; and the Shompen, restricted to the interior of Great Nicobar.

- PTI

BJP stages protest against Rahul over quota remarks

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Workers and leaders of Maharashtra BJP on Friday held state-wide protests against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on reservation during his visit to the US.

While Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule said it was necessary to stage a protest to tell people about Gandhi's mentality against reservation, Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat accused the saffron party of spreading fake news and doing "nautanki" (drama).

Gandhi, who is in the US, told students of Georgetown University that the Congress would think of scrapping reservations when "India is a fair place", which he said is not the case right now.

During a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, the Leader of Opposition alleged that democracy in India for the last ten years was broken, but now it is fighting back.

The BJP announced a state-wide protest over Gandhi's "anti-reservation" remarks.

In Mumbai, BJP city president Ashish Shelar, the party's OBC face MLC Pankaja Munde, and several MLAs staged a



demonstration.

Munde, during the protest, said reservation cannot be done away with until casteism disappears from the minds of the Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA). She further alleged that the MVA that was responsible for Marathas losing their reservation in the Supreme Court, but they had instead targeted the BJP for it.

"Power has always been with his (Gandhi's) family and party. There can be nothing more seditious than insulting one's country abroad," the BJP leader said.

Shelar sought to know the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP)'s stand on remarks made by Gandhi.

The BJP's Dahisar MLA Manisha Chowdhary claimed the Congress has been opposing reservations from the days of late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Ra-

Man booked for hoax call to police

Latur: Police have registered a case against a man for making a hoax call to police claiming that some drunk men were troubling the residents of an area near Udgir in Latur district, an officer said on Friday.

The man, Gondraj Kamble, dialled the police helpline '112' around 10 pm on Monday and told the personnel that five drunk persons were troubling the residents of Shivshakti Nagar and terrorising children by throwing stones, he said.

On receiving this information, a Udgir rural police's team rushed to the spot but failed to find any miscreant. After talking to some local residents, they realised that the caller had given false information to them, he said.

The police tried to call back on the number, but there was no response from the other end. The police informed their technical team, which helped track down the location of the caller. When the police team went there and interrogated him, he gave evasive answers but later confessed that he had cooked up a story to torment the police, the official added.

Following this, the police registered a case against him for providing false information and misusing the emergency helpline.

The police have warned against making hoax phone calls saying it is liable for punishment.



Devotees offer 1101 kg 'Ladu' to Lord Ganesh at a temple during Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Nagpur on Friday.

Pic:PTI

Sadiccha Sane Disappearing Case

Discharge plea of murder accused rejected

Mumbai: A court here has rejected the discharge plea of a lifeguard arrested for murdering a medical student, stating that the possibility of the accused destroying evidence cannot be ruled out.

Additional sessions judge S.D. Tawshirkar, in the order passed on September 10, rejected the plea of the accused, Mithu Singh, arrested in January last year for the murder of Sadiccha Sane, a third-year MBBS student.

Sane's body has not yet been found. Singh was arrested under sections 302 (murder) and 201 (destruction of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code.

According to police, Sane, a student of Sir JJ Hospital

and Grant Medical College, proceeded to appear for her exams by train on November 29, 2021, and was last seen at Bandra Bandstand, where she met Singh, a lifeguard, and took a selfie with him.

Singh's lawyer, Harshman Chavan, submitted that though the victim allegedly went missing on November 29, 2021, the initial FIR was registered on December 9, 2021 on the charges of kidnapping.

In January 2023, IPC sections 302 (murder) and 201 (disappearance of evidence) came to be added, the lawyer said. The accused was arrested on January 13, 2023 and has been behind bars, he said.

Chavan argued that there



is nothing against Singh to suggest that he has either sexually abused the victim or murdered her. Even the body has not been found, and therefore, the allegation of murder is without any basis, he said. Special public prosecutor Ashwini Raikar contended that the accused, being a lifeguard, used his skills and knowledge to dispose of the woman's body.

She submitted that the prosecution deserved a fair opportunity to prove the

case, and hence, the accused is not entitled to discharge.

The court noted that there was specific material with the prosecution to show that the victim was seen with the applicant before she went missing.

The initial conduct of the accused was not beyond suspicion, it said. It noted that Singh had smartly diverted the investigation by showing the calls he made to the victim the next day. "The applicant has admittedly worked at the beach as a lifeguard, and therefore, he knows the depth of water and nature of the sea near the shore. The possibility of his causing the disappearance of the victim's body and her belongings cannot be ruled out," the court observed.

CRIME WATCH

Man slashes female friend's neck

Mumbai: A 33-year-old man attacked his female friend with a knife before attempting to take his life after she stopped talking to him, officials have said. The alleged attempt to murder took place on Wednesday afternoon at Bhandup, an eastern suburb. Accused Dnyandeo Bhanghe slashed the throat of his female friend, injuring her seriously, an official said on Thursday. He then attempted to kill himself by slitting his throat with the same knife, the official said. Both were rushed to the hospital, where they are undergoing treatment, he said. On a complaint by the woman, police have booked Bhanghe for attempt to murder, the official said, adding that a probe is underway.

Woman jumps into creek, saved

Thane: A 31-year-old woman was saved by locals after she jumped into a creek in her attempt to die by suicide in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Friday. The woman, a resident of the city's Khartan Road area, dove into the water body at Kalwa around 9 am, said Yasin Tadvi, chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation. After being alerted about the incident, firemen and civic rescuers rushed to the spot. By then, locals had pulled the woman to safety, he said. The reason behind her suicide attempt is still not known. The Kalwa police are talking to her, he added.

Man booked for rape

Thane: Police have registered a case against a man from Maharashtra's Jalgaon district for allegedly raping a woman from Navi Mumbai on the pretext of marriage, an official said on Friday. Accused Lalit Ramesh Bhosle (30), who works in Navi Mumbai, and the 24-year-old woman met last year in Pune while preparing for competitive examinations and got into a relationship. The woman told the police that Bhosle promised to marry her. He once raped her at a hotel in Navi Mumbai after offering her a spiked soft drink and filmed it, she claimed. The woman has also accused him of assaulting her, the official said, citing her complaint. Police said the family members of both were opposed to their relationship.



Devotees immerse an idol of Lord Ganesha in the Arabian Sea at Juhu Chowpati in Mumbai on Friday.

Pic: PTI

Toddler abducted by woman

Mumbai: A one-year-old girl was abducted from the pavement by an unidentified woman in south Mumbai, police said on Friday.

The incident took place in the early hours of Wednesday behind the Eros theatre where the child and her parents were asleep in the open, said an official.

Her mother woke up to find the girl missing, and alerted the husband. After a search in the area proved futile, they approached Marine Drive police station.

Houses for dabbawalas, cobblers: Fadnavis

Mumbai: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said 12,000 houses would be built for dabbawalas and members of the 'charmakar' (cobbler) community in three years under the PM Awas Yojana.

The deputy CM has signed a memorandum of understanding with developers for the housing project. As per a release from Fadnavis's office, this will be a project of the Maha-

rashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). A 30-acre plot will be provided by Priyanka Homes Realty, and Naman Builders will execute it on a no-profit-no-loss basis, it stated. The 500 sq ft homes will be available at Rs 25 lakh, the release said.

The dream of dabbawalas to own houses will be fulfilled, Fadnavis said in the statement.

Two persons held for murder

Palghar: Two persons have been arrested in connection with the murder of a petrol pump owner, who was found dead in his car in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Friday.

Based on a tip-off, the police on Wednesday arrested the accused, Mukesh Khubchandani and Anil Rajkumar, from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, where they had come to sell the valuables they had allegedly stolen from the victim, Ramchandra Gurukukhdas Kakrani, an official said.

Kakrani, who owned a pet-

rol pump, was found dead in his car on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway on August 25, said Datta Shinde, additional commissioner of police, MBVV.

He was reportedly abducted and strangled by his driver Khubchandani and two others and was robbed of cash, a diamond ring, and a watch, he said. The Naigaon police registered a case sections 140(2) (kidnapping or abducting for murder or ransom), 103(1) (murder), 309(2) (robbery), and 238 (causing disappearance of evidence or giving false information) of the

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

A probe revealed that Khubchandani allegedly killed the victim with the help of two accomplices, who hailed from a place near the Nepal border, the official said. A special team was dispatched to Siddharth Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, where the local police informed them that the accused had already escaped to Lumbini of Nepal, he said. As the accused couldn't sell the stolen valuables in the neighbouring country, two of them arrived in Gorakhpur and were nabbed.

Probe 'corruption' in scheme: Congress

Nagpur: Congress leader Atul Londhe on Friday alleged corruption in the state government's 'Anandacha Sidha' scheme.

Under the scheme, several segments of society are given a food kit comprising suji (semolina), chana dal (Bengal gram), sugar and one litre edible oil ahead of festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Diwali. Londhe said "70 to 80 per cent" of areas in Maharashtra had not been covered. The kit contained poor quality items.

Estranged wife booked for throwing acid

Latur: A case has been registered at Ahmedpur against a woman and four others for allegedly throwing acid at her estranged husband. While the incident took place on September 5, the case was registered two days ago, said an official.

As per complainant Govind Bhikane, he had a heated argument with his wife two weeks ago, following which he moved to Himpalner Chakur tehsil. On September 5, his sister-in-

law told him that his wife was at her place and was threatening to take poison if he did not return.

When he went to his sister-in-law's house, his wife and four others attacked him with chili powder, thrashed him, and then threw acid at him, he alleged. He lost consciousness and woke up next day at the Latur Government Hospital with his mobile phone and Rs 15,000 in cash missing.

Alarming surge in vector-borne diseases

By Swapnil R Mishra

Mumbai: Maharashtra has witnessed an alarming surge in water-borne diseases, with cases more than doubling compared to last year. Following this, the state health department has formed a committee to gauge the exact reason for this surge and measures that need to be taken to curb it.

As of August, the state reported a significant increase in the cases of water-borne diseases, including

Cholera, Jaundice, Gastroenteritis, and Diarrhea, resulting in 10 fatalities. Furthermore, there has been a substantial rise in vector-borne diseases, including Chikungunya, Dengue, and the Zika virus, with cases and deaths exceeding those reported last year.

A state-level meeting was chaired after the instruction of Maharashtra Health Minister Tanaji Sawant to discuss the various measures for the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

As of August, the state reported:

- 2,237 cases of Cholera, Jaundice, Gastroenteritis, and Diarrhoea, resulting in 10 deaths
- 53 outbreaks of waterborne diseases, up from 19 last year
- Additionally, there has been a surge in vector-borne diseases, including:
 - Chikungunya: 2,198 cases this year, a four-fold rise from 497 last year
 - Dengue: 9,257 cases and 17 deaths, up from 5,865 cases and five deaths last year
 - Zika virus: 128 cases, compared to 18 last year

The officials from 32 departments, including urban development, rural development, housing, water

supply and sanitation, medical education, education (secondary/higher secondary), women and child de-

velopment, veterinary, and food and drug, as well as the National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune, were present at the meeting.

Dr. Radhakishna Pawar, Joint Director of Health Services, revealed that a thorough orientation was provided to all departments, detailing the collaborative steps required to combat the prevailing infectious disease scenario in the state. "We analysed the current scenario of the state's epidemic status, the cause of outbreaks, and what

measures need to be implemented to control the rise of diseases. We also highlighted action plans to be followed across Maharashtra by all the health departments," he said.

Dr. Pawar said they will evaluate the current epidemic management system in the state to identify areas for improvement. Moreover, a comparative analysis with neighbouring states will be conducted, and they will require inter-state collaboration challenges to ensure a unified response.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The long fight has ended with the victory of truth. Kejriwal's bail reaffirmed the feeling that the conspiracy to vanquish someone through illegitimate means will never succeed in a democratic country."



-Sharad Pawar, President, NCP (SP)

Shinde competes with Uddhav to attract Muslim votes

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: While Shiv Sena (UBT) is being accused of leaving the Hindutva plank and wooing Muslim voters, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena too appears to be following the footsteps of UBT in Muslim appeasement. This was evident when party MLA from Byculla Yamini Jadhav organized a 'Burqa distribution' program in her constituency.

While the opposition criticized the ruling Shiv Sena accusing them of appeasement of the Muslims ahead of assembly polls, their alliance partner, the BJP, has sought to distance itself from the program stating that they don't agree with these kinds of programs. However, the real issue is what compels the Shiv Sena under CM Eknath Shinde to engage in such programs to appease minority voters. Last week the party had sponsored a Christian congregation in Navi Mumbai, while this week it is the burqa distribution program at Byculla that has led to the question.

When contacted Jadhav stated that, it was part of her pre-election campaign and that organizing this program doesn't mean that the party has diluted its Hindutva stand. This makes the question more pertinent as to what makes the party organize such



Yamini Jadhav held the programme at her personal level. It was not the party's programme. I have would not conducted such programme. The party president Eknath Shinde will take a decision on this matter.

-Manisha Kayande, Spokesperson, Shiv Sena

programs. The answer is easy. Voting pattern emerged during Lok Sabha elections earlier this year has changed some equations forcing the Shiv Sena to actively seek Muslim votes and the party work-

ers are not smart enough to think of any other ways to do so but distributing burqas.

Jadhav is sitting MLA from the constituency. She had nurtured the constituency well enough to be able to win the assembly election easily. She had been a corporator from the area and her husband had worked as chairperson of the BMC standing committee. This means she wields a good money power to be able to get necessary votes in the constituency. However, when she contested the Lok Sabha election as party candidate earlier this year, she not just lost it, but her own assembly constituency could not fetch her a lead over her competitor and Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Arvind Sawant during Lok Sabha election. Sawant got a lead of over 46,000 votes from the Byculla assembly constituency that Jadhav represents. Most of those

votes are from the minority community in the constituency which she now wants to woo back to her if she has to save her assembly seat if the forthcoming election.

Interestingly the BJP has reacted sharply and condemned the program. "BJP can't approve of such programs," city BJP chief Ashish Shelar said while reacting to the development. His reaction gels with the party's stand under which DCM Devendra Fadnis had objected to Nawab Malik being part of the NCP under Ajit Pawar. Owing to the BJP's party line, Pawar had to find a way out by roping in Nawab's daughter Sana into the party fold. Shinde too will have to devise some such smart program instead of Burqa distribution to be able to effectively reach out to Muslim voters ahead of assembly polls. Which seems to be a challenge for the party.

CREDAI-MCHI urges for GST overhaul

Mumbai: CREDAI-MCHI, the apex body representing the real estate industry in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), has called for a comprehensive review of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework affecting the real estate sector.

With over 14,000 dilapidated buildings and 70 lakh residents living in slums, Mumbai, faces significant housing challenges. Redevelopment is crucial for addressing these issues by creating additional housing stock and improving living conditions. However, CREDAI-MCHI has raised concerns over the GST imposed on these projects, arguing that it adversely affects both developers and homebuyers. The non-availability of Input Tax Credit (ITC) has increased costs for homebuyers and slowed demand in an already sluggish market.

CREDAI-MCHI also highlights other pressing issues, including GST on Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and the Rs 45 lakh limit for Affordable Housing benefits. Additionally, developers face costs for constructing both rehabilitation and sale buildings, paying GST at rates of 18 per cent or 12 per cent without ITC. Despite these costs, GST authorities have levied GST on the rehabilitation component of schemes, resulting in slum and dilapidated building occupants being required to pay GST on flats they already own. This levy is seen as anti-poor and contrary to the spirit of the GST regime, amounting to double taxation.

Sena points fingers at BJP

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena leaders point that the BJP too had a plan to woo Muslim voters. The plan, however, was junked after a strong opposition from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

According to a Shiv Sena leader, the Maharashtra BJP had decided to woo the Muslim community with programs like Modi Mitra after the Lok Sabha results, in which the community is believed to have overwhelmingly voted for INDIA alliance. However, at the eleventh hour the RSS stepped in and virtually forced the state unit of the saffron party to junk the whole idea.

A senior Shiv Sena leader, on a condition of anonymity said, in 2023, the BJP took up Modi Mitra, a mass nationwide outreach programme for the minorities. BJP leaders had made it clear that the party will reach out to the Muslims apprising them about the policies and plans of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government. Now the same party is strongly objecting to the distribution of the 'burkha' by the Shiv Sena legislator Yamini Jadhav in her Byculla Assembly constituency.

"This is a politics of convenience. When they do any such event it is called an outreach program. When we undertake something it will be termed as appeasement politics. I personally don't think that Yamini Jadhav has done anything wrong," the leader further stated.



The function of Burkha distribution took place on Thursday. Immediately after this event, the BJP chief Ashish Shelar strongly reacted and made his party's stand clear saying that 'we do not accept this'. He further said, "Although I am not fully aware of the event, the BJP does not agree with this kind of Burkha distribution program. The Sena should express their stand, the role of their party, and the needs of their constituency. But it is not acceptable for BJP to organise such a program".

The furious BJP is expected to take up the issue with the Shiv Sena chief leader and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to avoid further rift and give opportunity to the opposition to fire a salvo. Significantly, Shinde has not reacted on BJP's objection.

Prior to this the BJP had left no stone turned to take on Sena UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray for Muslim appeasement. The BJP leaders had often said that Uddhav Thackeray had changed his original stance and bolted the doors towards Hindutva. Nevertheless, the BJP was said to be seriously considering wooing the minority and has now made a about turn.

Man involved in multiple thefts held

By Correspondent

Thane: Police have arrested a man allegedly involved in multiple thefts in Mira Bhyandar, and recovered stolen items, including mobile phones, worth Rs 92,000 from him, officers said on Friday.

The accused has been identified as Abdul Rehman Tahir Badu, a resident of Nalasopara in neighbouring Palghar district, they said.

The personnel of Kashi-gaon police station in Mira Road made the arrest based on a complaint lodged by a resident.

The complainant said that in the morning of September 8, he found that his and his wife's mobile phones were missing from home. They suspected that a burglar entered their place as they found several household items lying scattered on the floor and the main door was left open, an official said.

The police registered a case under sections 305 (A) (theft), 331 (4) (house-trespass or housebreaking) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and launched an investigation.

Based on the CCTV footage and technical analysis of mobile data, the police tracked down the accused and nabbed him. They recovered the two mobile phones of the complainant along with his cash. In addition, 11 other stolen mobile phones of various brands, all collectively valued at Rs 92,000, were also recovered, he said.

Nearly 100 idols immersed in mobile facility

Thane: Nearly 100 idols have been immersed in 'mobile immersion' facilities set up by the Thane civic body since Ganesh festivities started on September 7, an official said on Friday.

Twenty-seven idols were immersed on the first day of immersions and 72 on the fifth day, taking the total to 99, Thane Municipal Corporation public relations officer Ravindra Manjekar told PTL.

"The mobile immersion facility comprises a van that goes from locality to locality for people to immerse idols. It is the brain-

child of TMC commissioner Saurabh Rao to reduce crowding at traditional immersion spots," he said.

Apart from these 99, till Friday, a total of 26,904 idols have been immersed across the city, TMC regional disaster management cell chief Yasin Tadv said.

These include 25,637 household idols and 175 'sarvajanic' (public) ones, the official said.

Ganesh festivities, which started on September 7, will culminate on September 17 on Anant Chaturdashi.



A 25-inch Lord Ganesh idol made by Mumbai resident Rintu Rathod using 20 kg of dark chocolate and 10 kg of white chocolate. The idol has been given 'Ardhanari' form in an attempt to highlight the recent incident of alleged rape and murder of Kolkata doctor.

Pic: PTL

Railway minister hops on local train, chats with commuters

Mumbai: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday travelled by a local train, the lifeline of lakhs of Mumbaikars, and chatted up with commuters.

Vaishnaw boarded the suburban train at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in south Mumbai at 2.34 pm and alighted at Bhandup station at 3.18 pm after his 27 km-long journey.

Railway officials said Vaishnaw, who was in the city for an awards ceremony,



boarded a second class coach of the Ambernath-bound slow local train and got down at Bhandup station.

Vaishnaw is also visiting a Ganesh mandal in the city

during the ongoing Ganesh festival, an official said.

Central Railway General Manager Dharam Veer Meena and other senior officials accompanied Vaishnaw during the train journey.

Vaishnaw had travelled by a local train between Thane and Diva stations on the Mumbai suburban rail network in February 2022 for inspection of two additional railway lines, and had eaten 'vada pav', a popular snack, at a roadside eatery during that visit, officials said.

Girl goes missing from house

Thane: An eight-year-old girl from Bhiwandi town in Maharashtra's Thane district went missing from outside her house, with the police suspecting that she was kidnapped by unidentified persons.

The incident took place in Shanti Nagar area of the town on September 11, the police said. "A 28-year-old woman lodged a complaint, stating that her minor step-daughter was playing outside their house when she went missing on Wednesday.

Complaint of gas leak

Thane: Residents in the vicinity of an industrial zone complained of eye irritation and breathing difficulties as a thick haze enveloped the area after a suspected gas leak from a factory in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Friday.

The situation is under control and there were no injuries or hospitalisations, said Yasin Tadv, Chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC).

Panic ensued after smog-like conditions prevailed in

the Morivali MIDC area of Ambernath town, on the outskirts of Mumbai, around 11 pm on Thursday, the official said.

After receiving complaints about a burning sensation in the eyes and breathlessness, local fire-fighters investigated the source of the haze, which was traced to a chemical company. They also advised people to stay indoors as a precaution. A phosphorus-based chemical at the factory caused a dense white smoke, which spread through the area.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Rahul Gandhi is a useless man. Whenever he goes to England or America, he talks against India. How can Rahul Gandhi get 99 seats and become the leader of the opposition if there is no democracy in the country?"

- Ramdas Athawale, Union MoS for Social Justice



Dharavi Redevelopment moves ahead with Bhoomi puja

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Amid glad tidings of the Ganpati festival, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project Pvt Ltd (DRPPL) performed the groundbreaking ceremony of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project at the RPF grounds in Matunga on Thursday morning.

The pooja, conducted in an area called Sector 6, marks the auspicious beginning of the construction of Railway's staff quarters and offices to be handed over to the government, as mandat-

ed in the Dharavi Redevelopment tender documents.

Thursday's ceremony assumes significance as this is for the first time in Dharavi's history that its redevelopment has moved beyond mere lip-service.

The state government-led door-to-door survey to determine eligible and ineligible residents is on with an idea to speed up the redevelopment and to ensure inclusive development.

The DRPPL, which is a joint venture between the state government and the Adani Group, has also



moved in the direction envisaged by the Maharashtra government, which is on a mission to make Mumbai a slum-free city by 2030.

A DRPPL source said that Thursday's ceremony was in keeping with the tender conditions and also the

first step in the group's commitment to create a modern Dharavi. "We are redeveloping one of the most densely populated clusters in the world. We have committed to provide Dharavikars with a 'key to key' exchange wherein ex-

isting residents have been guaranteed new homes within a stipulated time-frame and without shifting to temporary accommodation," the source said.

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project will put India on a global map when it comes to resettling townships. Residents will be given 350 sq ft modern homes with kitchen and toilet, and will have access to amenities such as top-class roads, hospitals, schools, open spaces, etc. These homes are 17 per cent extra than any other slum rehabilitation

project in Mumbai.

That all eligible, non-polluting industries and commercial establishments will be rehabilitated in Dharavi itself. "Better infrastructure will enable businesses to expand their enterprises, while skilling and upskilling centres will help people acquire new knowledge, learn, and increase their earning potential. Additionally, businesses will benefit from SGST reimbursement for five years, further supporting their growth and sustainability," a DRPPL source said.

Bio-economy reaches USD 151 bn

New Delhi: India's bioeconomy has experienced significant growth, reaching a valuation of USD 151 billion by the end of 2023, according to a new report, which said that the surge highlights the bioeconomy's critical role in national development, contributing 4.25 per cent to the country's GDP and positioning India among the top five global bioeconomies.



remains the largest contributor to India's bioeconomy, accounting for USD 72.6 billion or 48.09 per cent of the total market, the report said.

The report, prepared by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) and the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE), outlines transformative advances across biotechnology, agricultural innovation, healthcare, and biomanufacturing, driving the sector's expansion.

This sector includes bio-fuels, bioplastics, and enzymatic applications in industries such as textiles and detergents. Biofuels, in particular, have seen a sharp rise, with ethanol production capacity increasing to 13.8 billion litres in 2023, making India the world's third-largest producer of ethanol.

It was released during a session at the Global Bio-India Summit 2024.

The Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme, which promotes domestic ethanol production, has been central to reducing India's dependency on imported fuels and enhancing energy security, the report added. The Biopharma sector also saw impressive growth, contributing USD 53.8 billion or 35.65 per cent to the bioeconomy.

The report said that India's bioeconomy has experienced significant growth, reaching a valuation of USD 151 billion by the end of 2023.

India's vaccine manufacturing capacity continues to be a global leader, with companies like Serum Institute of India (SII) producing over 3 billion doses annually. Major breakthroughs, such as the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine and India's first quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, have highlighted India's prowess in vaccine production.

"This surge highlights the bioeconomy's critical role in national development, contributing 4.25 per cent to the country's GDP and positioning India among the top five global bioeconomies," it said.

The Bioindustrial sector

One of the major drivers of this growth has been the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) Policy, the report said, noting that the policy focuses on bio-based chemicals, precision biotherapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, and advanced research in marine and space technologies.

The Bioindustrial sector

The diagnostics and medical devices segment, which grew to USD 19.4 billion, has also played a crucial role in addressing healthcare challenges, particularly through advancements in early disease detection and personalized medicine, the report said.

In the Bioagri sector, which accounted for USD 12.44 billion (8.24 per cent), agricultural biotechnology continues to drive innovations in sustainable farming practices. Precision agriculture technologies, such as genetically modified crops and bio-based products like biopesticides, are being increasingly adopted to enhance agricultural productivity.

"Bt cotton remains a key example of how biotechnology is improving crop resilience and yields, contributing to sustainable agriculture growth in India," the report said.

India's bioservices sector, valued at USD 12.1 billion (8.02 per cent), has emerged as a critical support system for the bioeconomy, providing contract research, clinical trials, and biotech software services, the report said. "This segment grew by 30 per cent in 2023, reflecting India's expanding role as a global hub for research and development. The sector's growth is expected to continue, with increasing demand for outsourced research and specialised bioservices that help accelerate product commercialisation," the report added.

Looking ahead, the report said India's bioeconomy is expected to continue its robust expansion, targeting a valuation of USD 300 billion by 2030. -PTI

Puravankara to redevelop Breach Candy society

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Bengaluru-based Puravankara Ltd has acquired the redevelopment rights of a South Mumbai-based Miami apartment located at the uber-rich Breach Candy area, the company said in its corporate filing.

Spread a little over 2,000 sq m of land, this marks the developer's entry into South Mumbai market, where rates (as per market sources) are estimated in the range of Rs 1,25,000 and Rs 1,40,000 per sq. ft, the filing said.

Commenting on the strategic announcement, Ashish Puravankara, MD, Puravankara Limited, said, "Our entry into South Mumbai with the redevelopment of Miami Apartments at Breach Candy marks a significant milestone for Puravankara Ltd. This project showcases our commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury and reinforces our vision to create iconic living spaces in the most coveted locations. We are excited to bring our expertise to South Mumbai and redefine the standards of luxury living in this prestigious neighbourhood, while strengthening our presence in other markets." In November 2023, the company had acquired redevelopment rights for two societies in Lokhandwala, Andheri West with land admeasuring around 3 acres. These two societies apart, the company has now been selected as the preferred developer by a cluster of four societies.



Vintage cars on display at Auto Show, at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on Friday.

Pic:PTI

More than 35,000 MT rails, machinery received for bullet train

Ahmedabad: The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) on Friday said it has received more than 35,000 MT of rails and four sets of track construction machinery for the Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project.



The process of flash-butt welding of rails to form 200-meter-long panels has started on the viaduct as track construction is underway near Surat and Anand cities in Gujarat, the NHSRCL said in a release. The 508 km high-speed corridor is being constructed between Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

The bullet train project will have a J-Slab track system based on the Japanese Shinkansen track system. This is the first time the sys-

tem will be used in India, it said. The process of track installation is mechanised with cutting-edge machinery, specially designed and manufactured as per Japanese specifications, it was stated. As per the release, the NHSRCL has received more than 35,000 MT of rails and four sets of track construction machinery for the project.

The fleet of machines includes rail feeder cars, track slab laying and CAM-laying

have been procured till now, and the training for rail weld finishing and testing was completed, the NHSRCL said.

Precast track slabs are lifted onto the viaduct, loaded on specially designed wagons and moved to the track laying location. Using TSLC, which can handle five slabs at a time, track slabs are laid in position on the track bed, it said. Four TSLCs have been arranged for slab laying work so far, it said.

The panels are transported and spread over track beds using a rail feeder car and special wagons. These cars push the rail pair over the track bed, and a temporary track will be laid initially, it said. -PTI

IndiGo, SpiceJet worry about Delhi weather

New Delhi: IndiGo and SpiceJet on Friday evening said that flight schedules may get affected due to bad weather in the national capital while the Delhi airport saw diversion of one flight amid heavy rains.

On Friday, heavy rains lashed parts of Delhi on Friday afternoon and the weather department has predicted more showers.

An official in the know said one flight of AIX Connect coming from Bagdogra to Delhi was diverted

to Lucknow due to bad weather.

"It's pouring heavily in #Delhi, affecting flight schedules. If you're planning to jet off, please keep a tab on your flight status... and plan ahead, as roads leading to the airport may be waterlogged," IndiGo said in a post on X at 5.03 pm. In a post on X at 5.12 pm, SpiceJet said that due to bad weather in Delhi, all departures/arrivals and their consequential flights may get affected.



Container vessel MSC Claude Girardet reaches at Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (VISL) in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.

Pic:PTI

Mahua complains against Madhabi

Kolkata: TMC MP Mahua Moitra on Friday lodged a complaint with the Lokpal against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch alleging "quid pro quo arrangements which potentially threatens national interests".



"My LokPal complaint against Ms. Puri-Buch concerns national interests and the interest of the crores of investors, the matter needs to be investigated. US short-seller Hindenburg Research in August alleged that it suspects SEBI's unwillingness to act against the Adani Group

may be because of its head Madhabi Puri Buch had stakes in offshore funds linked to the conglomerate - an allegation slammed by the SEBI head as "baseless" while Adani Group said it never had any commercial relations with Buch. Hindenburg alleged that Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani, the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani, to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices. -PTI

Boeing factory workers on strike

Seattle: Aircraft assembly workers walked off the job early Friday at Boeing factories near Seattle and elsewhere after union members voted overwhelmingly to go on strike and reject a tentative contract that would have increased wages by 25 per cent over four years.

The strike started at 12:01 a.m. PDT, less than three hours after the local branch of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers announced 94.6 per cent of voting workers rejected

the proposed contract and 96 per cent approved the work stoppage, easily surpassing a two-thirds requirement.

The labour action involves 33,000 Boeing machinists, most of them in Washington state, and is expected to shut down production of the company's best-selling airline planes.

The strike will not affect commercial flights but represents another setback for the aerospace giant, whose reputation and finances have been



battered by manufacturing problems and multiple federal investigations this year.

The striking machinists assemble the 737 Max, Boeing's best-selling airliner, along with the 777, or "triple-seven" jet, and the 767 cargo plane at factories in Renton and

Everett, Washington. The walkout likely will not stop production of Boeing 787 Dreamliners, which are built by nonunion workers in South Carolina.

Outside the Renton factory, people stood with signs reading, "Historic contract my ass" and "Have you seen the damn housing prices?" Car horns honked and a boom box played songs such as Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" and Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do." -AP

Min export price on onion removed

New Delhi: The government on Friday scrapped a minimum price threshold that it had set previously for exports of onion as it looked to pass on the benefit of international glut to Indian farmers.

The government had previously fixed a USD 550 per tonne as the minimum export price (MEP), which essentially meant farmers could not sell their produce overseas at lower than this rate. -PTI

Buch, husband deny allegations

New Delhi: SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch on Friday denied a series of allegations of impropriety and conflict of interest levelled by the Congress, saying these are "incorrect, motivated and defamatory".



Buchs said the allegations are based on Income tax returns filed by them. They further said all the information have been fully disclosed and taxes have been duly paid.

"Our income tax returns clearly have been obtained by adopting

fraudulent means and illegally. This is a clear breach of not only our right to privacy (which is a fundamental right) but also a violation of the Income Tax Act," Buchs said in a statement.

The Congress has recently levelled multiple allegations against Sebi chief and her husband, al-

leging a conflict of interest, involving a consultancy firm related to them.

The Congress had alleged that Dhaval Buch earned Rs 4.78 crore from Mahindra Group at a time when the regulator was investigating it for market infractions. According to the statement, Madhabi has never dealt with any file involving Agora Advisory, Agora Partners, the Mahindra Group, Pidilite, Dr Reddy's, Alvarez and Marsal, Sembcorp, Visu Leasing or ICICI Bank at any stage after her joining SEBI. -PTI

BSE SENSEX		TOP LOSERS		TOP GAINERS	
%	POINTS	%	POINTS	%	POINTS
-1.37	1852.05	+3.31	7597.00	+2.31	7597.00
-1.01	513.80	+2.17	1893.75	+1.66	1464.05
-0.88	401.25	+1.46	1217.70	+1.19	153.40
-0.75	12300.00	+1.09	1655.00	+0.80	1655.00
-0.73	3357.70	+0.61	992.10	+0.61	992.10
-0.73	1634.45	+0.32	790.55	+0.32	790.55
-0.68	1052.20	+0.25	1810.00	+0.25	1810.00
-0.47	2944.45	+0.19	2532.60	+0.19	2532.60
-0.45	2940.15				
-0.37	1830.20				

47 pc Gen Z prioritise work-life balance

New Delhi: Forty-seven per cent Gen Z professionals plan to leave their jobs within two years, while as many prioritise work-life balance when evaluating potential employers, according to a survey.

The report, titled "Gen Z at workplace", is based on a survey of over 5,350 Gen Z and 500 HR professionals, conducted by Unstop -- a talent engagement and hiring platform for students and graduates.

The report highlighted a significant concern among Gen Z professionals, with 51

per cent expressing fear of job loss at present. This anxiety extends to their career prospects, as 40 per cent worry about securing positions in their preferred fields upon entering the job market.

"Despite these reservations, Gen Z demonstrates a clear set of priorities when it comes to their careers. 77 per cent of the respondents prioritise the role or brand over commercials, with 43 pc specifically seeking hands-on experience and growth opportunities. This focus on professional devel-

opment is further emphasised by the fact that 72 pc of Gen Zs consider job satisfaction more important than salary," the report said. The study also revealed a disconnect between Gen Z's motivations and HR perceptions.

"While 78 pc of Gen Zs switch jobs for career growth, 71 pc of HR professionals assume it is primarily for better pay. In reality, only 25 pc of Gen Zs prioritise money as their main motivation while switching jobs. "Work-life balance is one

of the crucial factors to consider in any job for Gen Zs, with 47 pc of them citing this as a key element when evaluating potential employers. Their ideal work-day involves completing routine tasks efficiently, leaving room for skill-building and productivity without feeling overwhelmed," it said.

The report underscored Gen Z's ambition and desire for growth. Their top priority is a solid career path with room for promotions, accompanied by a vibrant, supportive culture. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Fiscal consolidation is underway and public debt levels are on a declining trajectory over the medium-term. Corporate performance has improved strongly, enabling deleveraging and strong growth in profitability."



- Shaktikanta Das, Governor, RBI

Conspiracy to attack agitating medics to defame govt: TMC

Kolkata: Senior Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh on Friday claimed that some opposition political forces have hatched a conspiracy to attack the protesting junior doctors to defame the Mamata Banerjee government and the ruling party of West Bengal.

The medics' sit-in outside Swasthya Bhavan, the state's health department headquarters, entered the fourth day on Friday. They are demanding removal of top officials of the department.

In a press conference, Ghosh, a former Rajya Sabha MP, played a purported audio clip in which two persons are heard planning to "attack the junior doctors on their return from (state secretariat) Nabanna on September 12 night".

The medics had gone to Nabanna on September 12 to hold talks with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to resolve the RG Kar impasse. The meeting, however, did not take place as the state government did not agree to live-streaming the talks as demanded by junior doctors. "The audio clip makes it clear that some people wanted to attack the junior doctors last night and they may be at the game again. We have asked the police and security forces to be on alert and ensure it doesn't happen. We hope to peacefully resolve the issue," the TMC leader said.

Ghosh asserted that the party has credible information that some Left and ultra-Left parties are conspiring to infiltrate into the ranks of the protestors and carry on the attack to defame the TMC and the Mamata Banerjee government.

Left conducts march to Police HQ

The CPI(M)-led Left Front on Friday conducted a protest march to Kolkata police headquarters to press for the resignation of police commissioner Vineet Goyal over alleged mishandling of the rape



Protesters climb makeshift barricades put up by the police during a protest in Kolkata on Friday. Pic: PTI

and murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar Hospital on August 9.

CPI(M) state secretary Mohammed Salim said that if stopped from moving near Lalbazar, they would organise a sit-in at the spot for 30 hours.

"From day one of the R.G. Kar incident, the Kolkata police commissioner has mishandled the probe for reasons best known to him and the state government. We want him to step down, or our protest will continue," he said.

Carrying posters and placards, the Left activists shouted slogans against the TMC government and demanded that Goyal be interrogated by the CBI, which is currently probing the RG Kar case. The protestors were stopped near the police headquarters, as steel barricades were put up to stop the activists from marching ahead.

BJP protests continue

The BJP on Friday continued its protests in parts of West Bengal, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

and Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal over the alleged mishandling of the RG Kar hospital incident. A party spokesperson said its leaders slammed the state government during their speeches at the sit-in venue in Esplanade area, while some women protesters drew sketches "with their blood" and held placards to demand justice for the young doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered at the hospital last month.

"We demand the immediate resignation of the chief minister for her failure to ensure safety of women at workplace, and attempting to cover up the incident," a protester said.

The BJP has been holding the sit-in since August 29.

Pro-TMC intellectuals voice concern

A forum of pro-TMC intellectuals on Friday expressed concern that the continued 'cease work' by junior doctors for over a month is affecting the healthcare sector in West Bengal.

Holding a press conference, members of 'Desh Bachao Gano Manch' (Save the Country platform) quoted the state health department figure that claimed 27 people have so far died for alleged lack of treatment at state hospitals during the agitation of the medics.

Family members of several deceased persons were present at the press meet. Junior doctors have been on 'cease work' since August 9 after the body of a post-graduate trainee, who was raped and murdered, was found in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The medics are demanding justice for the victim and stronger security measures at medical establishments.

While everyone in the state demands arrest of all those involved in the crime, the subsequent agitation should not lead to such situation where ordinary people would die in government hospitals for lack of treatment, the forum said in a statement.

Plea for repair tehkhana rejected

Varanasi (UP): A Varanasi court has rejected a petition filed by the Hindu side requesting to order the local district magistrate to repair the basement of Vyas ji located within the premises of Gyanvapi mosque complex here.

The Varanasi district magistrate is the local custodian of the complex.

The court of Civil Judge Senior Division Hitesh Agarwal upheld on Thursday the ongoing worship activities in the basement, and took into account objections raised by the Muslim side and a pending challenge before the Supreme Court.

The advocate of the Hindu side, Madan Mohan Yadav, stated that the "court's ruling was based on the Muslim side's opposition to repairs in the 'Vyas ji ka tehkhana' and the ongoing legal proceedings in the Supreme Court".

Despite the decision, the Hindu side plans to appeal to the district judge's court for permission to repair the basement, Yadav said.

Yadav said worship in Vyas ji's basement resumed on January 31 following the court's order, allowing devotees to view the installed idols. However, the Hindu side expressed concerns over the safety of the basement due to its old and weak roof and sought the intervention of the court for repair work. They argued that Muslim worshippers walking on the roof could pose a risk of collapse and demanded that the roof and pillars be repaired.

Celebrations at AAP office, party calls it 'loss for dictatorship'



New Delhi: Celebrations erupted outside the AAP headquarters here on Friday after the Supreme Court granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a corruption case lodged by the CBI in connection with the excise policy 'scam'.

Several AAP leaders and workers gathered outside the party headquarters and distributed sweets and burst crackers to celebrate the release of their party supremo.

Meanwhile, outside the chief minister's residence, Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, along with senior AAP leaders and workers, also distributed sweets as party supporters raised slogans like "Aa gaye bhai aa gaye, Kejriwal aa gaye" and "jail ke taale toot gaye, Kejriwal chooth gaye". Senior AAP leaders Manish Sisodia, Atishi, Sanjay Singh and his wife Anita were also present at the spot.

"BJP's plans have been foiled. They wanted to put opposition leaders behind the bars to stay in power," Sunita Kejriwal told reporters.

The bail order comes almost three and a half

months after the Delhi chief minister surrendered on June 2, ahead of the Lok Sabha poll results.

Several AAP workers were also seen dancing to the beats of 'dhol's' outside the AAP headquarters, where Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj also reached to join the celebrations. Cabinet minister Gopal Rai, who was also present at the occasion, called the event a "big victory for our party and a loss for dictatorship".

Sweets were also distributed outside senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia's residence. Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy linked money laundering case on March 21. During the Lok Sabha elections, he was granted interim bail by the top court in the case. The court gave him relief for 21 days to participate in the election campaigns. However, on June 26, he was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a separate excise policy case, while he was still in Tihar jail under judicial custody.

-PTI

Protests in Mandi over illegal mosque

Mandi/Shimla (HP): Police used water cannons on Friday to disperse protestors demanding the demolition of a portion of a mosque built on encroached government land in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi town.

The mosque management committee have been served a notice by the Mandi municipal corporation to remove the encroachment within 30 days. According to the notice, the mosque stands on 232 square metres of land while the approval granted was just for 45 square metres.

Raising slogans of "Jai Shi Ram", the protestors initially held a march in the Mandi market area and sat on a dharna at Serimanch.

Later, when they made attempts to proceed towards the mosque, police stopped them and used water cannons to bring the situation under control.

Security had been beefed up by the police in Mandi with the deployment of heavy force after Hindu outfits gave the call for the protest march.

On Thursday, members of the Muslim community had demolished an unauthorised portion of the mosque themselves.

The unauthorised construction was on a plot of land which belongs to the public works department. The department and the municipal corporation had earlier served notices on the mosque management committee in this connection.

"PWD officials had informed us that a wall of the mosque was in PWD land and we were served a notice. So we decided to demolish the wall," Iqbal Ali, a member of the mosque committee, said earlier.

Members of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal have demanded that all illegal structures belonging to the Muslim community be demolished, alongside encroachments on government land across the state.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu appealed to the people of the state to maintain peace and brotherhood.

-PTI



Protestors demanding the demolition of a mosque allegedly built on encroached land in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh on Friday. Pic: PTI

No 'heritage city' tag to Agra

New Delhi: The Supreme Court dismissed on Friday a plea seeking to declare Agra as a "heritage city" and said there is nothing to show that such a declaration would give the city any special advantage.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan dismissed the application filed in a 1984 PIL on the protection and preservation of the iconic Taj Mahal and its adjoining areas.

"Nothing has been placed on record to show that there will be any spe-

cial advantage to the city. Moreover, this court cannot grant any such declaration. Interlocutory application is dismissed," the bench ordered.

During the hearing, the bench asked the counsel what advantage the city would get if it was declared a heritage city and what were the provisions under law to give such a declaration.

The counsel said that Agra needed to be declared a heritage city as it has a history of over 1,000 years and several historic monu-

ments which need to be preserved.

"Declaring Agra as a heritage city would give a boost to tourism, help create employment and preserve the area," the counsel added.

Justice Oka observed that there was hardly anything smart despite declaring a city as a "smart city".

"Similarly, how does it help Agra city by declaring it a heritage city? Does Agra become cleaner by the declaration? If it does not help, then it will be an exercise in futility," the bench observed.

-PTI

Cong slams over restaurant owner's apology

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday launched a multi-pronged attack on the government over a video of a restaurant chain owner purportedly "apologising" to Finance Minister Nirmla Sitharaman for voicing concerns about GST, with Rahul Gandhi saying "fragile egos" only deliver humiliation.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hit out at Sitharaman, saying the "disgraceful humiliation" of the owner of Sree Annapoorna restaurant chain smacks of "arrogance of power" and the minister

"has been a repeat offender in such public interactions".

"The owner asked a genuine question about Modi government's flawed GST and was first met with a condescending laugh by the FM and later forced to apologise to her on camera," Kharge said.

In the controversial leaked video, Sri Annapoorna Restaurant owner Srinivasan could be heard saying to the Finance Minister that he was not affiliated to any party, before apologising.

Only a day ago, he had raised the issue of GST at an

event attended by Sitharaman in Coimbatore and had said, "The problem is that GST is applied differently to each item. For instance, there is no GST on bun. But if you apply cream on it, the GST becomes 18 per cent. Due to this, customers, especially families, ask for bun and cream separately saying they will apply the cream on the bun themselves to save money."

Sitharaman assured to consider it. Later, speaking to reporters she had said that he had raised an issue which ought to be considered by the GST council.

'Dead chameleon' in mid-day meal

Dumka (Jharkhand): At least 65 students of a government school were taken ill after consuming mid-day meal in Jharkhand's Dumka district on Friday, an official said.

A dead chameleon was allegedly found in the meal, he said. The incident took place at a middle school in Tongra area. The students, who started vomiting after eating the meal, were referred to the Masalia community health centre, and their condition is stated to be stable.

Railway urgently need more staff, says Chairman

New Delhi: There is an urgent requirement for additional manpower to maintain the railways' ever-increasing assets and safe train operations, Board Chairman Satish Kumar has said, urging the Finance Ministry to give the board the power to create non-gazetted posts in safety and essential categories.

In a letter to Manoj Govil, the Secretary (Expenditure) in the Finance Ministry, Kumar said the Railways has over the last few years wit-

nessed a significant increase in capital expenditure -- from Rs 1.48 lakh crores in 2019-20 to 2.62 lakh crores in 2023-24. "This capital expenditure is resulting in significant increase in assets for which adequate manpower is required for Reliable and Safe Train Operation," Kumar said. "These assets will further increase in coming years considering Railways target of Mission 3,000 MT (by 2030) from current level of 1,610 MT."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If this arrogant government would listen to the people they would understand that a simplified GST with a single tax rate would solve the problems of lakhs of businesses."



- Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition

Attack on Army officers: All six held

Indore: All six men who attacked two Army officers and allegedly raped their woman friend near Mhow in Madhya Pradesh have been arrested, a police official said on Friday.

Rohit Girwal (23), Sandeep Wariya (18) and Sachin Makwana (25) were held during the day from a forest patch near the site of crime, the official said. The trio was on the run and a reward of Rs 10,000 each had been announced for their arrests.

Three other accused,



Anil Baror (27) and Pawan Bansunia (23) and Ritesh Bhabhar (25), were held on Wednesday and Thursday.

The attack occurred near Jam Gate, a popular tourist spot some 30 kilometres from the Mhow military cantonment, on the intervening night of

September 10 and 11, as per police. Located on the Vinhyachal ranges, Jam Gate is surrounded by forests. In the rainy season, this place is frequented by tourists during the day, but as the night falls, it gets desolate.

As per police, the army officers, aged 23 and 24, un-

dergoing the Young Officers course at the Infantry School in Mhow cantonment town, had gone out for a picnic with their two women friends. "The four were listening to loud music. Hearing it in the deserted area late at night, six accused reached the spot and committed the crime," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Hitika Vasal told reporters.

One of the attackers threatened the victims with a pistol, while the others were carrying sticks, Vasal

said. The accused held one couple hostage while assaulting them and told the other couple that the hostages would be released only if they brought them Rs 10 lakh, she said.

Vasal said the police reached the spot as soon as the incident was reported, "but the accused fled on seeing the headlight of the police vehicle." On the allegation of rape mentioned in the FIR, the SP said the victim is in a state of shock and is not ready to give her statement.

-PTI

Eight drown in Gandhinagar

Ahmedabad: Eight persons drowned while bathing in the Meshwo river in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district on Friday evening, an official said.

The deceased were residents of Vasna Sogthi village in Dehgam taluka, said Sub Divisional Magistrate B.B. Modiya, adding the incident took place near the village. "We recovered eight bodies from the river," he said.

-PTI

Climate change triggered landslide throughout Earth

New Delhi: A landslide in Greenland, triggered by glacier melting due to climate change, caused an earthquake, vibrations from which reverberated throughout the planet for nine straight days and damaged infrastructure, according to a new study.

In September 2023, a 1.2 kilometre-high mountain peak in an East Greenland fjord -- a narrow inlet of sea between two steep cliffs -- collapsed, causing a tsunami about 200 metres tall. Researchers said the giant wave rocked back and forth across the fjord for nine days, which sent seismic shocks reverberating throughout Earth's crust, baffling scientists around the world.

While no one was hurt, the shocks destroyed infrastructure worth nearly USD 2,00,000 at an unoccupied research station on Ella Island in eastern Greenland, the international team, including researchers from the University College London, UK, said. According to them, the landslide was a result of the melting of glacier at the foot of the mountain, becoming thinner and unable to hold up the rock-face above it -- this was ultimately due to climate change.

"Our findings highlight how climate change is causing cascading, hazard-



The team, comprising 68 scientists from 41 research institutions, combined seismic recordings from around the world, field measurements, satellite imagery and computer simulations for their analysis.

ous feedbacks between the cryosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Science.

"When I first saw the seismic signal, I was completely baffled. Even though we know seismometers can record a variety of sources happening on Earth's surface, never before has such a long-lasting, globally travelling seismic wave, containing only a single frequency of oscillation, been recorded. This inspired me to co-lead a large team of scientists to figure out the puzzle," co-author Stephen Hicks, from the University College London, said.

For the study, the researchers used a mathe-

tical model and recreated the landslide, along with the uniquely narrow and bendy fjord, to understand how the sloshing of water could have continued on for nine straight days without dying down.

The simulations were eventually able to closely match the height of the real-world tsunami as well as the slow cycles of the long-lasting back-and-forth sloshing of water, they said.

By bringing together diverse datasets, the model predicted that the giant tsunami wave would have moved back and forth every 90 seconds, matching the recordings of vibrations travelling in the Earth's crust all around the globe, the researchers said. -PTI

Ig Nobels winners on pigeon study

Boston: A study that explores the feasibility of using pigeons to guide missiles and one that looks at the swimming abilities of dead fish were among the winners Thursday of this year's Ig Nobels, the prize for comical scientific achievement.

Held less than a month before the actual Nobel Prizes are announced, the 34th annual Ig Nobel prize ceremony at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was organized by the Annals of Improbable Research magazine's website to make people laugh and think. Along with handing out the awards, the audience makes and tosses paper airplanes.

"While some politicians were trying to make sensible things sound crazy, scientists discovered some crazy-sounding things that make a lot of sense," Marc Abrahams, master of ceremonies and editor of the magazine, said in an e-mail interview.

The winners, honored in 10 categories, also included scientists who showed a vine from Chile imitates the shapes of artificial plants nearby and another study that examined whether the hair on people's heads in the Northern Hemisphere swirled in the same direction as someone's hair in the Southern Hemisphere. Other winners include a group of scientists who showed that fake medicine that causes side effects can be more effective than fake medicine that doesn't cause side effects and one showing that some mammals are cable of breathing through their anus.

-AP

WASTE TO BEST

Sources of generation and types of waste



By
Dr. Sanjay Joshi

Friends, so far, we have learned the basics of waste generated in our houses in general. However, our house is not the only source where all types of waste are generated. There are many other sources of generation of waste related to various human activities occurring at different types of government and non-government or private establishments.

Commercial Waste Commercial waste refers to waste from commerce or commercial enterprises. With the advancement of modern cities, industries, and automobiles, commercial enterprises routinely generate large amounts of waste. This includes food, disposable medical products, textiles, and more. Garbage and waste from restaurants, hotels, markets, or offices are all commercial waste. Industrial waste and household waste are not included in this category. Paper, food, plastic, glass, tissue, and even toxins are examples of commercial waste. The roadside shop owners in most of the cities and towns in India discard their leftover packaging material comprising mostly plastics and cardboard boxes in front of their shops every night before they close their shops. Next morning, you can see heaps of this 'dry' waste in front of every shop along the roads or by-lanes. Schools and colleges are also the generators of commercial waste.

Agricultural Waste

Agricultural waste refers to waste generated due to agricultural activities such as horticulture, raising, maintaining and managing livestock, growing and harvesting the crops and vegetables etc. It includes crop residues like paddy stubble, dried stems and straws as post-harvest residues of variety of crops such as wheat, jowar, bajara, soyabean etc., bagasse from sugarcane, weeds and cattle waste. Leftover residues of synthetic pesticides are the most harmful component of agricultural waste. It not only kills harmful organisms but also kills helpful microorganisms: Pesticides contaminate soil and water and enter our food chain. Similarly, leftover residues of synthetic fertilizers applied to the crops to ensure better yield also become waste after their application.



Industrial Waste

The waste from manufacturing and processing industries such as chemical plants, cement factories, power plants, textile industries, food processing industries, and petroleum industries is known as Industrial Waste. Industrial waste is generally produced in the form of solids, liquids, or gases. But when we talk about industrial waste, it is usually solid. Sources of industrial waste are power plants, metal processing industries, cement factories, steel manufacturing industries, leather product units, food packaging, chemicals, transportation equipment, resins, plastics, and paper.

Even water treatment plants produce industrial waste. It also includes harmful chemicals, plastics, demolition materials, fly ash from thermal power plants, packaging and other hazardous materials. Industrial sludge contains toxic compounds such as heavy metals that are harmful to the environment.



Mining waste

Waste is generated at several stages of the mining process and throughout the life of a mine, from exploration (drilling) to mine closure. Several types of waste are generated in a mine. This includes a variety of materials like tailings, mining water, waste rock, sludge, geosynthetics etc.

(The writer is an environment specialist. Views personal)



Residents transport drinking water from Humaita to the Paraizinho community, along the dry Madeira River, a tributary of the Amazon River during the dry season in Amazonas state in Brazil. Pic: AP/PTI

Delhi zoo to focus on four species

New Delhi: The Delhi Zoo is focusing on the breeding of four species of animals and implementing measures such as hormonal testing, along with closely monitoring their daily routine and diet.

Many animals at the National Zoological Park have not produced offsprings in recent years, prompting a concerted effort to address the issue, a zoo official said.

A zoo official told PTI, "We are currently monitoring four species in the zoo that are either not reproducing or are no longer able to reproduce. The Indian wild dog, lion, wolf, and baboon are among these species," he said.

"We are closely monitoring their health and providing them with a nutritious diet. We are also consulting gynaecologists and conducting hormonal tests to assess the animals' reproductive health," the zoo official added. The zoo's efforts are currently centred on these specific species, with ongoing monitoring of the wild dog, lion, and wolf populations.

"We are observing their behaviour and health meticulously to ensure a successful breeding programme," the official said.



Rescue workers search for the missing after a flash flood buries a hamlet in mud and debris in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi in Lao Cai province, Vietnam on Thursday. Pic: AP/PTI

Vietnam typhoon toll rises to 233

Hanoi: The death toll in the aftermath of a typhoon in northern Lao Cai province that was swept away in a deluge of water, mud and debris from mountains on Tuesday. Another 39 people are still missing.

State-run broadcaster VTV said emergency crews have now recovered 48

bodies from the area of Lang Nu, a small village in northern Lao Cai province that was swept away in a deluge of water, mud and debris from mountains on Tuesday. Another 39 people are still missing.

Across Vietnam, 103 people are still listed as missing and more than 800

have been injured.

Yagi was the strongest typhoon to hit the Southeast Asian country in decades. It made landfall Saturday with winds of up to 149 kph (92 mph). Though it had weakened by Sunday, downpours continued and rivers remain dangerously high.

-AP

Two surface to air missiles tested

Balasure (Odisha): India on Friday successfully test-fired the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VLSR-SAM) for the second consecutive day from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur on the

Odisha coast, defence sources said.

A statement from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) confirmed that both tests on September 12 and 13 were successful.

"In both the tests, the

missile successfully intercepted a high-speed low altitude aerial target mimicking sea skimming aerial target," the statement said.

For safety reasons, the Balasure district administration temporarily relocated 3,100 residents from

six villages within 2.5 km radius of ITR Launch Pad 3.

A revenue official said these precautions were taken in consultation with the ITR authorities at Chandipur.

-PTI

Moon had recent volcanic activity, samples confirm

By Lionel Wilson

Lancaster (UK): Volcanoes were erupting on the Moon as recently as 120 million years ago, evidence collected by a Chinese spacecraft suggests. Until the last few years, scientists had thought volcanic activity ended on the Moon around 2 billion years ago.

The findings, published in Science, come from analysis of lunar rock and soil delivered to Earth by China's Chang'e 5 spacecraft in 2020. While these results are difficult to reconcile with the accepted history of lunar volcanism, it's possible some areas of the Moon's interior were more enriched in radioactive elements that generate the heat that drives volcanic activity.

The region where Chang'e 5 landed, called Oceanus Procellarum, may be one such area where rocks were enriched in these heat-producing elements. Volcanism is a major way in which all rocky planetary bodies lose their heat. The rocky bodies in our Solar System are Earth, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter's satellite Io, and Earth's satellite, the Moon.

All available evidence suggests that Venus is currently volcanically active. On Mars, we can date the ages of formation of large lava flows by counting the numbers of impact craters on these flows. This crater-counting technique relies on the fact that craters form randomly and uniformly across planetary surfaces, so highly cratered terrains are considered older. The re-



sults suggest that Mars, which is half the size of Earth, is volcanically active every few million years.

This is expected, because larger bodies conserve heat better than smaller

ones. On this basis Mercury, which is a third of Earth's size, and our Moon, a quarter the size of Earth, should have been volcanically dead for about 2 billion years.

The same should be true of Io, which is similar in size to our Moon. However, tidal forces generated by gravitational interactions with Jupiter give Io an additional, strong heat source. Io is very volcanically active as a result.

The Moon's dark areas Most eruptions on the Moon took place near the edges of giant depressions formed early in the Moon's history by asteroid impacts. Lava flooded the interiors of these basins to form the dark areas on the Moon's near side. These areas are called maria (singular mare), the Latin for seas, because the flat sheets of lava were mistaken for expanses of water by early observers.

Analyses of the composition and age of samples returned from these mare areas by the six Apollo missions and

three Soviet robotic probes were consistent with the belief there had been no geologically recent volcanic activity on the Moon.

This understanding persisted until very high-resolution images of the lunar surface from the US Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter mission became available following the mission's launch in 2009. Counts of the numbers of very small impact craters revealed a lack of craters in some volcanic areas with unusual surface textures, named irregular mare patches (IMPs).

The simplest explanation for this was that these IMPs were young, typically about 100 million years old. This is 20 times younger than the 2 billion-year youngest age that had been expected.

US reaffirms support for permanent UNSC seats for India, Japan, Germany

By Yoshita Singh

New York: The US has reaffirmed its "longstanding support" for India, Japan and Germany to sit as permanent members in the United Nations Security Council, as it announced new proposals on reform of the powerful UN body.

Just days before world leaders gather in New York for the landmark Summit of the Future and UN General Assembly high-level week, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield announced on Thursday that Washington supports creating two permanent seats for Africa on the Council in addition to non-permanent membership for African countries.

She also announced at the Council on Foreign Relations at a talk on 'Future of Multilateralism and UN Reform' that the US supports creating a new elected seat on the Security Council for Small Island Developing States and supports engaging in text-based negotiations.

In response to a question during the interaction about what this means for Washington's longstanding support for permanent seats for India, Germany, and Japan, she said, "On the G4, we have expressed our support for Japan and Germany and India. We have not explicitly expressed support for Brazil."

Earlier, a senior administration official, briefing reporters

on the US announcements, stressed that Washington was "not backing away at all" from its support to India, Japan and Germany for a permanent seat.

"No, not at all. We are not backing away at all from the positions that we've staked out publicly. We still firmly support permanent seats for Japan and India. The President has affirmed a reformed Council should also include permanent representation for Latin America and the Caribbean, and other countries we've long supported, in addition to Japan and India. That also, as you stated, does include Germany."

The senior administration official added that what the US is not putting forward today is a specific vision for the precise



number of seats on a reformed Security Council.

"As I said, the announcement we're making today helps to put some meat around the bones of our vision for a reformed Security Council, but there are many questions that will need to be addressed between and

"India has the largest population in the world, and we really, really strongly support their being on the Council. And I think there are just no grounds for denying India that, but there will be people who will be opposed to various countries for various reasons. And that's all going to be part of our negotiation moving forward."

-Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Ambassador to the UN

The G4 nations, comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, are four countries which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.

among Member States and that ultimately will be fodder for the text-based negotiations that we are calling to start in the context of the IG process," the official said referring to the Inter-Governmental Negotiations

on UNSC reform. The official, however, reiterated that the US does not support expanding the veto to new permanent members.

India has been at the forefront of years-long efforts call-

ing for reform of the Security Council, saying the 15-nation Council, founded in 1945, is not fit for purpose in the 21st Century and does not reflect contemporary geo-political realities. **-PTI**

Trump rules out another debate with Harris

Her campaign announces \$47M haul in hours afterward

Washington: Donald Trump on Thursday ruled out another presidential debate against Kamala Harris as her campaign announced a massive fundraising haul in the hours after the two candidates met on stage.

Trump, the Republican nominee, posted on Truth Social that "THERE WILL BE NO THIRD DEBATE!" following Tuesday's debate against Harris and his June debate against President Joe Biden. In rejecting another debate, the former president suggested that a "prizefighter" who loses a bout is always the one to call for a rematch.

A day earlier, he had said, "I just don't know," to the question of whether he would meet Harris for another debate. Some Republicans, including the No. 2 GOP Senator John Thune, have urged Trump to debate against Harris again.

While he could still change his mind, his announcement means that Tuesday's meeting will likely be the only time voters will see the two debate each other before the November election. More than 67 million people watched the Trump-Harris debate.

Harris, the Democratic nominee, said during a rally in North Carolina on



\$47 million	Amount of donations raised by Kamala Harris' campaign
600,000	No of donors who donated for Harris

This historic, 24-hour haul reflects a strong and growing coalition of Americans united behind Vice President Harris' candidacy that knows the stakes this November, and are doing their part to defeat Donald Trump this November.

-Jen O'Malley Dillon, Chair, Campaign for Kamala Harris

Thursday she believes that she and the former president "owe it to voters" to debate again.

The Tuesday debate was the first time that Trump and Harris had met, and

the vice president largely controlled the tenor, goading Trump into agitated responses that contained exaggerations and mis-truths. It came two months after Trump's debate against Biden, whose unsteady performance and

meandering answers led him to end his reelection bid and endorse Harris as his replacement on the ticket.

Trump raised doubts earlier in the campaign as to whether he would debate Harris at all. **-AP**

Russia expels six British diplomats

Moscow: Russia's Federal Security Service on Friday accused six British diplomats of spying and said a decision has been made to withdraw their accreditation.

Russian state TV quoted an official from the security service known as the FSB as saying that they will be expelled. The expulsions come as Prime Minister Keir Starmer visits Washington for talks with President Joe Biden that will include Ukraine's request to use Western-supplied weapons against targets inside Russia.

Starmer said on his way to the US that Britain does not "seek any conflict with Russia".

Tech companies to remove nude pics from AI products

Washington: Several leading artificial intelligence companies pledged Thursday to remove nude images from the data sources they use to train their AI products, and committed to other safeguards to curb the spread of harmful sexual deepfake imagery.

In a deal brokered by the Biden administration, tech companies Adobe, Anthropic, Cohere, Microsoft and OpenAI said they would voluntarily commit to removing nude images from AI training datasets "when appropriate and depending on the purpose of the model."

The White House announcement was part of a broader campaign against image-based sexual abuse of children as well as the

creation of intimate AI deepfake images of adults without their consent.

Such images have "skyrocketed, disproportionately targeting women, children, and LGBTQ+ people, and emerging as one of the fastest growing harmful uses of AI to date," said a statement from the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy.

In a separate pledge Thursday, another group of companies — among them Bumble, Discord, Match Group, Meta, Microsoft and TikTok — announced a set of voluntary principles to prevent image-based sexual abuse. The announcements were tied to the 30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. **-AP**

Adani rejects Hindenburg charge

New Delhi: US based short seller Hindenburg Research claimed that Swiss authorities have frozen more than USD 310 million in funds across multiple Swiss bank accounts as part of money laundering allegations into Adani Group, a charge the conglomerate vehemently denied.

In a post on X, Hindenburg cited "newly released Swiss criminal records reported by Swiss media outlet" to state that "Swiss authorities have frozen more than \$310 million in funds across multiple Swiss bank accounts as part of a money laundering and securities forgery investigation into Adani, dating back as early as 2021."

"Prosecutors detailed how an Adani frontman invested in opaque BVI/Mauritius & Bermuda funds that almost exclusively owned Adani stocks," it said citing the report.

Adani group rejected the allegations as baseless saying it had no involvement in any Swiss court proceedings.

"We unequivocally re-

ject and deny the baseless allegations presented. The Adani Group has no involvement in any Swiss court proceedings, nor have any of our company accounts been subject to sequestration by any authority," it said.

It went on to state that "even in the alleged order, the Swiss court has neither mentioned our group companies, nor have we received any requests for clarification or information from any such authority or regulatory body. We reiterate that our overseas holding structure is transparent, fully disclosed, and compliant with all relevant laws."

The allegations, it said, "are clearly preposterous, irrational, and absurd. We have no hesitation in stating that this is yet another orchestrated and egregious attempt by the same cohorts acting in unison to inflict irreversible damage on our group's reputation and market value."

"The Adani Group remains steadfastly committed to transparency and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements," it added. **-PTI**



NSA Ajit Doval with Secretary of Security Council of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu during a bilateral meeting, on the sidelines of the BRICS NSAs meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Pic: PTI

Wang, Doval agree to improve ties

By K.J.M. Varma

Beijing: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval have agreed to work together to create conditions for the improvement of bilateral relations during their meeting in Russia, the Foreign Ministry here said on Friday.

During their talks on the sidelines of a meeting in St Petersburg of the BRICS high-ranking officials responsible for security mat-

ters, Wang and Doval discussed the progress made in the recent consultations on border issues, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a press release. Both Doval and Wang are the Special Representatives for the India-China border talks mechanism.

Both parties expressed the belief that the stability of the China-India relations is in the fundamental and long-term interests of the two peoples and conducive to regional peace and

development.

China and India agreed to implement the consensus reached by the heads of the two countries, enhance mutual understanding and trust, maintain continuous communication, and create conditions for boosting bilateral ties, it said. Wang is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. He expressed the hope that the two sides will properly handle their differences in a pragmatic approach.

N Korea discloses uranium enrichment facility

Seoul: North Korea offered a rare glimpse into a secretive facility to produce weapons-grade uranium as state media reported Friday that leader Kim Jong Un visited the area and called for stronger efforts to "exponentially" increase the number of his nuclear weapons.

It's unclear if the site is at the North's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, but it's the North's first public disclosure of a uranium-enrichment facility since it showed one at Yongbyon to visiting American scholars in 2010.

While the latest unveiling is likely an attempt to apply more pressure on the U.S. and its allies, the images North Korea's media released of the area could provide outsiders with a valuable source of information for estimating the amount of nuclear ingredients that North Korea has produced.

During a visit to the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the production base of weapon-grade nuclear materials, Kim expressed "great satisfaction repeatedly over the wonderful technical force of

the nuclear power field" held by North Korea, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

KCNA said that Kim went around the control room of the uranium enrichment base and a construction site that would expand its capacity for producing nuclear weapons. North Korean state media photos showed Kim being briefed by scientists while walking along long lines of tall gray tubes, but KCNA didn't say when Kim visited the facilities and where they are located. **-AP**

Pakistani convicted of murdering Indian

London: A 25-year-old man of Pakistani heritage has been convicted of murdering an Indian restaurant manager with a stolen car while the victim was cycling back home in southeast England on Valentine's Day this year.

Vignesh Pattabhiraman, 36, was killed by Shazeb Khalid with a "stolen Range Rover" while he cycling back from his workplace -- an Indian restaurant 'Vel' -- in Reading.

Loose electrical cable caused Baltimore bridge collapse

Baltimore: Investigators working to pinpoint the cause of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse discovered a loose cable that could have caused electrical issues on the Dali, the massive cargo ship that lost power and disastrously veered off course before striking the bridge. The ship had most of the Indian crew.

When disconnected, the problematic cable triggered an electrical blackout on

the ship similar to what happened as it approached the bridge on March 26, according to new documents released Wednesday by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The documents don't include any analysis or conclusions, which will be released later in the board's final report. A spokesperson for the board declined to comment as the investigation is ongoing. **-AP**

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In 1984 there was a hijacking. I was a very young officer. I was part of the team which was dealing with it. And then I discovered, my father was on the flight. The flight ended up in Dubai. It's a long story, but fortunately, nobody got killed."

- S. Jaishankar, Minister, External Affairs



Pope ends Asia trip with same message at start

He insists on interfaith tolerance to heal troubled world

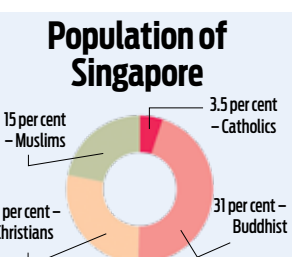
Singapore: Pope Francis wrapped up his visit to Singapore on Friday by praising its tradition of interfaith harmony, closing out his four-nation trip through Asia with the same message of tolerance that he delivered at the start.

Francis presided over a gathering of young people from some of the religious traditions that are present in Singapore, where mosques, Buddhist temples

and Christian churches stand side-by-side among the city-state's iconic skyscrapers. In a sign he was enjoying

himself, Francis ditched his speech and urged the youths to take risks, even if it means making mistakes. But he came back to the

topic at hand make his main point about the need for people of different faiths to engage in constructive dialogue rather



than insist on the righteousness of their particular beliefs. "All religions are a path

to arrive at God," he said. "They are like different languages to arrive there. But God is God for all." **-AP**

EDITORIAL

Infrastructure Illusion

Mumbai, India's bustling financial capital, has long been synonymous with traffic congestion and torturous commutes. Despite an array of infrastructure projects that promise to ease the city's chronic congestion, the plight of its daily commuters remains largely unchanged. The city's congested roads, overcrowded trains, and perpetually delayed buses are a daily ordeal for millions. While the Coastal Road and the Mumbai Metro offer glimmers of hope, they have not yet transformed the commute. The blame lies partly with the patchwork approach to urban planning and partly with the government's lagging pace in addressing the core issues that plague Mumbai's transport system.

The city's broader public transport system remains fragmented, with inadequate integration between buses, trains, metros, and other modes of transport. The failure to establish a unified ticketing system and synchronize schedules leaves commuters with a disjointed web of options. Furthermore, the city's streets are plagued by illegal parking, encroachments, and poorly maintained roads, all of which exacerbate congestion. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), notorious for its inefficiencies and corruption scandals, has yet to fully address these fundamental issues. Without stringent enforcement of traffic regulations and a commitment to maintaining road infrastructure, the benefits of new projects risk being undermined.

For Mumbai to truly emerge from its traffic nightmare, the government must adopt a more holistic and forward-looking approach. This means accelerating the completion of all planned Metro lines and ensuring they are seamlessly integrated with other transport modes. Expanding pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, such as wider sidewalks, dedicated cycling lanes, and safe pedestrian crossings, could also alleviate pressure on the roads. Additionally, congestion pricing — a strategy successfully employed in global cities like London and Singapore — could discourage unnecessary vehicle use in the most congested areas during peak hours if properly implemented with necessary manpower.

Finally, environmental sustainability must be a core consideration in all future projects. Mumbai's susceptibility to flooding and other climate-related challenges makes it imperative that new infrastructure is designed with resilience in mind. Green spaces, adequate drainage systems and adherence to environmental norms will not only improve traffic flow but also enhance the city's overall liveability.

Mumbai's recent infrastructure surge offers hope, but without a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of its congestion, the city's traffic woes will persist. The state government must move beyond short-term fixes and work towards a cohesive, integrated transport system that serves all Mumbaikars. Only then can the city truly fulfil its potential as India's gateway to the world, with a transport network that is efficient, sustainable and worthy of its status as a global metropolis. Until then, the daily grind of gridlock will remain a stark reminder of the work that still hangs fire.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

The Indus Waters Treaty: A Rare Constant in a Tumultuous Relationship



By
Dr. Manisha Shrimali

In a region fraught with historical enmities and enduring tensions, the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) stands out as a rare beacon of cooperation between India and Pakistan. Signed on September 19, 1960, the treaty has weathered more than six decades of wars, conflicts, and cross-border skirmishes, maintaining a crucial role in fostering a fragile peace between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. As the agreement marks its 64th anniversary, its significance in shaping Indo-Pakistan relations remains as vital as ever.

The roots of the treaty lie in the chaotic aftermath of the partition of British India in 1947, which not only split territories but also divided the vast and interconnected Indus River basin. Comprising six rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—the basin was critical to the agriculture-de-

pendent economies of both nations. The partition turned what had once been a shared resource into a potential flashpoint for conflict, as disputes over water rights quickly escalated amid broader tensions between the newly formed countries.

In addition to grappling with territorial disputes like those over Kashmir and Hyderabad, and the challenges of managing a massive exchange of refugees, both India and Pakistan faced the daunting task of redefining the management of shared resources in the context of their newfound sovereignty. For India, which rejected the two-nation theory that underpinned Pakistan's creation, the management of these shared resources was a complex issue of national interest, while for Pakistan, securing water from the upper riparian state became a matter of survival.

The negotiations over the Indus River system unfolded against the larger backdrop of Cold War politics. While India pursued a policy of Non-Alignment - eschewing formal alliances with either the American or Soviet blocs - it was nevertheless deeply aware of the geopolitical realities of the era. Non-Alignment for India meant actively opposing colonialism, imperialism, and racism, while striving to carve out an independent path that did not succumb to the pressures of superpower rivalry.

After nearly a decade of negotiations facilitated by the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty was finally signed by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Pakistani President Ayub Khan, and W.A.B. Iliff, the World Bank's Vice President.



The treaty divided the waters of the Indus basin: the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej) were allocated to India, while the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) were designated for Pakistan. To mitigate potential future conflicts, India agreed to provide financial compensation for the development of irrigation systems in Pakistan, demonstrating a rare moment of goodwill in an otherwise adversarial relationship. Agriculture being the backbone for both these economies, the Indus River basin was vital for both the economies of the newly-born nations.

The IWT is widely regarded as one of the most successful water-sharing agreements in history. Its resilience lies in its clear guidelines and the establishment of the Permanent Indus Commission, which oversees the treaty's implementation and provides a platform for dialogue and dispute resolution. This institutional framework

has allowed India and Pakistan to manage their shared water resources without letting disputes escalate into larger conflicts, a remarkable achievement given the broader volatility of their bilateral relations.

For Pakistan, the western rivers are a lifeline, supporting its largely agrarian economy and ensuring food security. The treaty guarantees Pakistan a steady supply of water, which is crucial for its economic stability. For India, control over the eastern rivers has been instrumental in the agricultural development of Punjab, contributing significantly to the country's Green Revolution. The economic benefits derived from the treaty have, in turn, reinforced its importance for both nations, making it a rare constant in their otherwise fraught relationship.

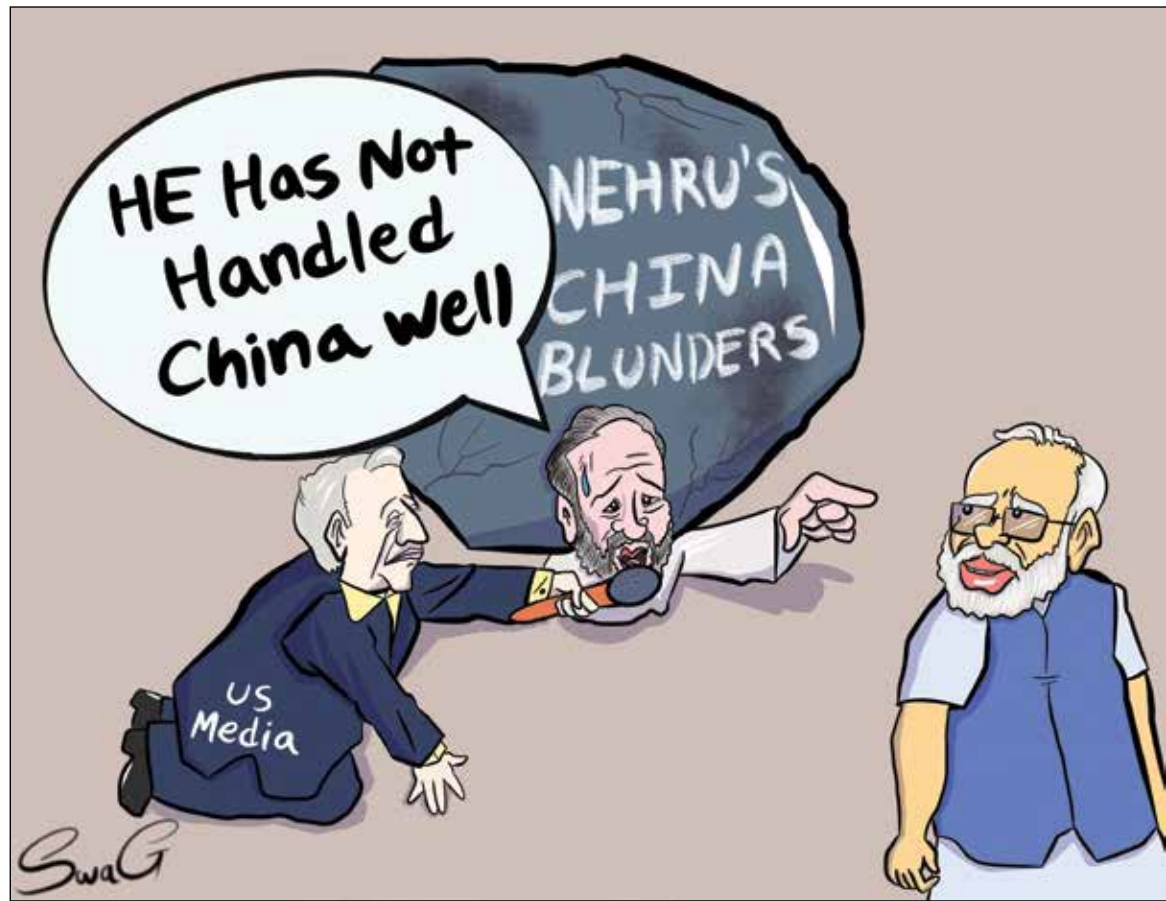
Despite its success, the IWT faces growing challenges. Climate change, rapid population growth, and increasing demand for water are putting immense

pressure on the Indus River system. Both India and Pakistan are grappling with water scarcity, and the treaty's provisions are increasingly being tested by these evolving dynamics. Political rhetoric around the treaty has also intensified in recent years, with some in India calling for a re-evaluation of the agreement in response to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. In Pakistan, concerns about India's construction of dams on the western rivers have fueled fears of reduced water flow, leading to calls for international mediation.

The future of the IWT may therefore depend on the ability of both countries to manage these challenges collaboratively with its legacy of resilience and cooperation, offering a path forward in a complex and often volatile relationship.

(The writer is an educationalist based in Mumbai. Views personal.)

SATTIRE WITH SWAG



Biden, Starmer set to meet over Ukraine's weapons restrictions

Ukraine's push to ease restrictions on the use of weapons from the US and Britain will be discussed on Friday in White House talks between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Ukraine wants approval to use some weapons to strike deeper into Russia and there are signs Biden might shift US policy in response. Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that Ukraine's use of long-range weapons would put NATO at war with Moscow.

While the issue is expected to be at the top of the agenda for the meeting, it appeared unlikely that Biden and Starmer would announce any policy changes at this time, according to two US officials familiar with

planning for the talks. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the private deliberations.

During this week's visit to Kyiv by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, Ukrainian officials renewed their pleas to use Western-provided long-range missiles against targets deeper inside Russia.

Blinken said he had "no doubt" that Biden and Starmer would discuss the matter, noting the US has adapted and "will adjust as necessary" as Russia's battlefield strategy has changed.

Blinken spoke similarly in May, shortly before the US allowed Ukraine to use American-provided weapons just inside Russian terri-

tory. The permitted distance has been largely limited to cross-border targets deemed a direct threat, out of concerns about further escalating the conflict.

Biden has hinted that a change could be afoot. In an exchange with reporters this week about whether he was ready to ease weapons restrictions on Ukraine, he responded, "We're working that out now."

Putin said Thursday that allowing long-range strikes "would mean that NATO countries, the United States, and European countries are at war with Russia. ... If this is so, then, bearing in mind the change in the very essence of this conflict, we will make appropriate decisions based on the threats that will be created for us."

STATES WATCH

Shimla's Tranquillity at a Crossroads

For the past few days, a controversy over the Sanjauli mosque has ignited communal tensions that threaten to unsettle the peaceful state of Himachal Pradesh.

The conflict reached a boiling point on September 11, 2024, when hundreds of protesters, led by Hindu groups, gathered in Shimla's Dhalli area, demonstrating against what they alleged to be illegal constructions at the Sanjauli mosque.

The protests quickly escalated, with clashes breaking out between the demonstrators and police. Visuals from the scene showed protesters, including women, chanting slogans against the mosque, while others attempted to breach police barricades, prompting the authorities to respond with water cannons and mild force to restore order.

The dispute over the Sanjauli mosque is not merely about unauthorized construction but reflects deeper historical and communal fault lines in a state that prides itself on its peaceful coexistence. The mosque, which has served as a place of worship for local Muslims for decades, stands at the heart of a community that has traditionally maintained a low profile in the state. However, the rise of commu-



nal tensions and the politicization of local disputes have amplified divisions that have otherwise remained dormant.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh, which has a Muslim population of less than 3%, has largely been insulated from the communal strife seen in other parts of India. Yet, as identity politics have gained traction nationwide, local issues have increasingly become battlegrounds for larger ideological struggles.

The Sanjauli mosque controversy is not occurring in isolation but is part of a larger narrative involving the Waqf Board, which manages properties dedicated to charitable and religious purposes for the Muslim community across India. The Waqf Board has often found itself embroiled in controversies over the management and alleged misuse of its properties, which are supposed to serve public and communal interests.

The Waqf Board has faced in-

creased scrutiny and legal challenges, with accusations of mismanagement, encroachments, and unauthorized constructions. In some states, there have been allegations of the Board allowing unauthorized developments or failing to protect its properties from illegal activities. This backdrop has contributed to a growing mistrust among other communities, who perceive the Board's actions as overreach or neglect of due legal processes.

In the Sanjauli case, the Board has in fact asserted ownership of the mosque and maintains that the dispute is centered on the mosque's further development, rather than the legality of its existing structure. The Shimla Municipal Corporation Commissioner's court is currently hearing the case, with the next session scheduled for October 5.

Earlier this week, a Muslim welfare committee, which includes the Imam of the mosque, members of the Waqf Board, and the mosque management committee, took a step to ease the growing discord. In a bid to uphold communal harmony, the committee urged the Shimla Municipal Commissioner to seal the unauthorised portions of the mosque and offered to demolish them in accordance with a court order. Members of the Dev Bhoomi Sangarh Committee, which led the protests, have cautiously welcomed the Muslim community's gesture.

Shimla's Superintendent of Police, Sanjeev Kumar, has assured that all necessary precautions are being taken to maintain peace, even as stakeholders have pledged to conduct peaceful protests. However, the situation remains volatile, with potential for further escalation if not handled with care.

The Sanjauli mosque row highlights the delicate balancing act required in managing communal disputes, particularly in regions unaccustomed to such conflicts.



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KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer (right) and Foreign Secretary David Lammy work on the plane as they fly to Washington DC, for talks with President Joe Biden on resolving the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza on Thursday.
- 2 People enjoy during rains, at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Friday.
- 3 College students perform as part of the Onam festival celebrations at their college premises in Chennai on Friday.
- 4 Devotees participate in a Ganesh idols immersion procession in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday.
- 5 Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign event in Charlotte, N.C. on Thursday.



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All Pictures PTI, AP

Wine will continue to make inroads into tier-2, tier-3 cities

From aiming for the coveted 'corner office' in the corporate world to sipping wines for a career, Sonal Holland, India's first ever Master of Wine talks to The Perfect Voice Deputy Editor Aditi Pai about what prompted her to make the shift from balance sheets to Bordeaux and Burgundy. Excerpts...

You are India's first Master of Wine, an achievement that becomes even more spectacular because India isn't really a wine drinking country. And what prompted you to go beyond being a wine consumer and study wines?

I ventured into the world of wine quite late in my life. About 17 years ago, I was working as Director of Sales at a NASDAQ-listed Fortune 500 company, but I felt that my work wasn't doing justice to my skill set. Looking to give my career a new direction, I chanced upon the nascent wine market in India, with no qualified wine experts to drive its growth. I saw a huge opportunity for growth and success, for wine and wine professionals. I knew that this industry would flourish in India and there would be a need for qualified wine experts.

Taking a futuristic stance, I decided to study wine, but since there were no world-class wine institutes in India back then, I enrolled at the WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust) School in London to complete the early stages of my education. This in-

cluded the institute's flagship course-Diploma in Wines and Spirits.

Was the Master of Wine title always your target?

Absolutely, I was very clear from the start that I must build my wine career over solid credentials. Since the Master of Wine is the most coveted global wine title, I knew it would uniquely position me as an unparalleled authority on wine in India, thus creating opportunities that would expedite my professional growth in this budding industry.

MW has a very low pass rate. What were the main challenges you encountered along the way?

The MW exam has a pass rate of four per cent; it is indeed one of the toughest exams in the world. It took me six years to achieve the title and the journey was certainly not an easy one. India was still a nascent wine market when I enrolled at the Institute of Masters of Wine (IMW), so I had no mentors to guide me and there were barely any wine-tasting opportunities available. So, to complete my education, I had to stay away from my home and family. Being apart from my two-year-old daughter for my studies was the hardest part of this journey. Thankfully, I had an extremely supportive husband and family, who held the fort in my absence. I couldn't have achieved this title without their support. It goes on to prove that women can overcome any challenge if they have a great support system.

Corporate India to Indian Wine, how was the shift?

I strongly believe that no amount of



Sonal Holland

experience and knowledge ever goes to waste. So while the wine industry has a different work culture, my experience as a corporate professional has certainly helped me build my career in wine. It has bestowed me with the virtue of professionalism which helps me excel at my job.

You've often said that you were inspired by British wine writer and critic Jancis Robinson. What about her work inspired you the most?

Jancis has been a beacon of inspiration throughout my career in wine. Her vast body of work opened my eyes to all the opportunities that were possible in the wine sector. It is amazing how she continues to evolve and innovate, remaining a leading voice in

the wine community, and providing guidance to everyone from Masters of Wine to budding wine enthusiasts.

Recently, I invited Jancis to India to experience the country's fast-evolving wine culture. Her enthusiasm to learn more about the Indian trade and consumers again reminded me that learning should never stop; it's the only way to keep growing and stay relevant for a long time in the wine industry.

Your views on the Indian wine industry and your forecast for the wines in India over the next five years? Any wine styles or varieties that you think will be the future?

India is one of the most promising wine markets in the world, with scope for domestic and international wines of every style and at every price point. Wine will continue to make inroads into tier-2 and tier-3 cities over the next five years, bringing wine culture to a newer and wider base of consumers. However, the industry needs to instil confidence among these new consumers, so that they can purchase wines that suit their taste and keep returning to them.

It is with this intent that we launched the India Wines and Spirits Award- which provides a comprehensive list of the best Indian and international in-market wines to consumers. This blind-tasting competition adheres to global standards and is judged by some of the best palates in the country.

Alcohol consumption is often inspired by trends - gin and tonic, innovative cocktails etc. how can wine stay relevant or popular in a whiskey and beer drinking country that's driven by trends

Wine is the fastest-growing alcoholic beverage in India, growing steadily at a 14 per cent rate for the past five years, and its consumption will continue to grow. The reason is that wine is perceived to be healthy, is seen as a symbol of success and sophistication, and is socially the most acceptable drink in India. No other alcoholic beverage enjoys this trinity of appeal and it will help wine stay relevant among consumers in a whiskey and beer-drinking country.

FOOD MATTERS

No Confusion: Know Your Food Label



By
Dr. Rizwan Pinjari

It becomes essential to pay attention to food labels when we are concerned and alert about what we consume. In pursuit of health, wellness, and proper nutrition, we should be selective with our food choices, especially when it comes to packed or processed food. Claims made on these products must be verified against scientific and regulatory standards, which are easily available on various platforms. However, most buyers only check brand names and expiry dates, while very few take note of reports in the media that highlight product claims.

While the claims made by packaged food brands may require some effort to research, other critical details are easy to access. The best part is that you do not need to go out of your way to find them—they are right on the packaging itself. Yes, it's the food labels that require your attention. Information such as the nutritional content, sugar, fat, and sodium levels is crucial for making informed choices.

So, let us break down what you must look out for on the labels of any packaged foods:

Ingredients: The list provides information about the ingredients used in the manufacturing of the product. They are typically listed in descending order by weight. Understanding this hierarchy helps the consumer identify the primary components of the product and make better-informed choices.

Additives: This section lists the chemicals that are added to enhance the shelf life, appearance, texture, and taste of the

product. These additives can include colourants, preservatives, sweeteners, flavours, and flavour enhancers, among others. In many cases, information about allergens is also provided, which is important for individuals with allergies.

Serving Size and Calorie Content: These details are closely related. Serving size indicates the recommended portion of the product, beyond which there may be health risks such as obesity or heart problems. Calorie content refers to the amount of energy provided by consuming that specific portion. Both serving size and calorie content can vary from product to product and should be monitored based on individual factors such as age, gender, lifestyle, and overall health conditions.

Nutrient Content: This refers to claims made about the product's nutritional value, such as low fat, high fibre, or rich in proteins. These claims can vary from one product to another and between different manufacturers, often influenced by technological advancements in food production. However, such claims can sometimes be misleading, so it is important to verify them carefully to ensure they align with your health needs and dietary goals.

Macronutrients: This section covers key nutrients such as carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. It provides important details about both healthy and unhealthy components, including saturated and unsaturated fats, as well as sugar content.

Added Sugars and Salts: This refers to the extra amounts of sugar and salt added during processing for purposes like enhancing taste or preserving the product. Consuming these in excess can lead to various health risks, so it's crucial not to overlook this information when making food choices.

(The writer is a food processing expert. Views personal.)

Wine is the fastest-growing alcoholic beverage in India, growing steadily at a 14 per cent rate for the past five years, and its consumption will continue to grow. The reason is that wine is perceived to be healthy, is seen as a symbol of success and sophistication, and is socially the most acceptable drink in India.





Paris Paralympics bronze medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu being welcomed upon his arrival at Chennai Airport on Friday.

Pic: PTI

Nadal withdraws from Laver Cup

Berlin: Rafael Nadal withdrew Thursday from next week's Laver Cup in Berlin, leaving it unclear when the Spanish great will play again.

The Laver Cup — the tournament where Roger Federer retired in 2022 after teaming up with Nadal in doubles — would have been Nadal's first event since the Paris Olympics and potentially one of his last ever.

"I'm really disappointed to share that I won't be able to compete at the Laver Cup in Berlin next week," the 38-year-old Nadal said.

"This is a team competition and to really support Team Europe, I need to do what's best for them and at this moment there are other players who can help the team deliver the win."

The 22-time Grand Slam champion didn't address his current fitness after a spate of injuries in recent years, or when he might play again.

Nadal withdrew last month from the U.S. Open, meaning he missed three of the four Grand Slam tournaments in 2024. He last played in reaching the men's dou-

bles quarterfinals at the Olympics, where he also lost in the second round of singles to Novak Djokovic.

The Laver Cup, to be held from Sept. 20-22, is an indoor hard-court men's competition pitting Team Europe against Team World in a format reminiscent of golf's Ryder Cup. No replacement for Nadal was immediately announced.



-AP

Davis Cup India to open with Balaji

Stockholm: For the second consecutive Davis Cup tie, India are relying on doubles specialist N Sriram Balaji to do the singles duty with captain Rohit Rajpal on Friday deciding to play him on the opening day of the World Group I contest against Sweden along with Ramkumar Ramanathan.

Balaji, who competed in singles in Pakistan early this year on grass court, will open the indoor tie with a match against Swedish number one player Elias Ymer (ranked 238) on Saturday.

India number one Ramkumar (ranked 332) will take on Leo Borg (ranked 603), the son of legendary Swede Bjorn Borg in the second singles.

They have not played against each other before on the ATP Tour.

Ramkumar and Balaji will also play the doubles on Sunday against Filip Bergevi and Andre Goransson and the reverse singles. However, the doubles lineup could change if the score is 1-1 at the end of day one.

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal made himself unavailable for the tie due to a back issue while the next best option Sasikumar Mukund was not considered for selection.

Captain Rajpal said Niki Poonacha, the other singles option, was fit but the team management wanted Balaji to play as part of strategy.

Both Balaji and Ramkumar served big and like to charge the net more often and this is exactly what the captain wants them to do on Saturday — play shorter points.

Af-NZ Test abandoned



By Aparajita Upadhyay

Greater Noida: The one-off Test between Afghanistan and New Zealand was called off on Friday without a ball being bowled, marking only the eighth time in Test cricket history that such a situation has occurred.

The first two days of the game were cancelled because of a wet outfield, raising significant concerns about the preparedness of the Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex. The remaining three days were then washed out due to persistent rain.

An inspection was held on Friday morning but with puddles of water still present on the uncovered sections of the outfield, it was a foregone conclusion that the match would be abandoned without even the toss taking place.

"It is still raining in Greater Noida and due to frequent rains, the 5th and final day of the Afghanistan vs New Zealand Test has been called off by the match officials," the Afghanistan Cricket Board said in a statement.

Only seven matches in the history of Test cricket have been abandoned without a ball being bowled dating back to 1890. The last

Many firsts

- It was the first test match between Afghanistan and New Zealand
- It was the first test match in Greater Noida
- It is the first test match abandoned in India
- It is the first test match abandoned in last 26 years

time it happened was almost 26 years ago, in 1998.

Incidentally, it was a match involving the Kiwis. They were scheduled to play India in Dunedin, New Zealand.

However, it is the first time such an occurrence has taken place in an Indian venue.

There had been incessant rain here for the past two weeks and the lack of facilities, like proper ground covers to spread across the 30-yard circle, sub-par drainage, lack of trained ground staff and inadequate super-soppers, caused maximum damage.

Despite bright sunshine on the first two days, no play was possible as the umpires cited "players safety" as a concern.

-PTI

Footballer convicted of sexual assault

Madrid: Spanish soccer player Hugo Mallo has been convicted of sexual assault for inappropriately touching a mascot before a La Liga game in 2019, court officials said on Thursday.

The former Celta Vigo player was found to have inappropriately touched the breasts of the woman who was wearing Espanyol's parakeet costume while players lined up to salute each other before kickoff.

A judge fined Mallo 6,000 euros (\$6,600) and ordered him to pay 1,000 euros (\$1,100) in damages to the victim.

The 33-year-old Mallo reiterated his innocence and said he planned to appeal the sentencing. Mallo posted a video of the incident on Instagram.

"I continue to categorically deny the facts attributed to me in the ruling,"



he said. "I acknowledged that while turning around after the greetings that my hand could have touched the waist of the parakeet, but I absolutely denied that it touched the parakeet's breasts."

The case was initially dismissed but that decision was overturned on appeal. At the time, Mallo posted a statement on Instagram calling for "respect" and pointing out that neither Celta nor Espanyol found evidence of wrongdoing.

Mallo will also have to pay for the legal costs of the proceedings.

-AP

Eduhji advises to keep cool

Mumbai: The Indian women's team, including skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, needs to maintain composure under high-pressure situations to end its long-standing ICC trophy drought at the next month's T20 World Cup, said former captain Diana Eduhji on Friday.

India came close to winning the women's T20 World Cup in 2020 but fell short against six-time champions Australia in the final. Alysa Healy's explosive innings of 75 off 39 balls played a pivotal role in Australia's 85-run romp at Melbourne.

"Australia is a very professional side. They have the spirit to play hard. We as a team need to get it into our mind that we have to play to win and they have to play out of their skins," Eduhji, who was present at the ICC T20 World Cup Trophy Tour event, told PTI videos.

Pakistan, on the other hand, have been resilient in the campaign. Playing un-

Hulunbuir (China): A semifinal berth already secured, unbeaten India will look to continue the winning run and supremacy over arch-rivals Pakistan in their last and most-awaited round-robin match of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy here on Saturday.

With four wins out of as many games, defending champions India are leading the points table, followed closely by Pakistan.

Starting the tournament as clear favourites, Paris Olympics bronze-medallists India haven't disappointed so far, beating hosts China 3-0, Japan 5-1, trouncing Malaysia 8-1 before registering a 3-1 victory against Korea in their last match.

Pakistan, on the other hand, have been resilient in the campaign. Playing un-

India look to continue supremacy over Pakistan



der the guidance of legendary forward Tahir Zaman, the Ammad Butt-led side has improved with every passing game.

Pakistan drew 2-2 against Malaysia and Korea, before beating Japan and China 2-1 and 5-1 respectively to climb to the second spot.

Going by recent results, India enjoy an upper-hand over Pakistan.

In their last meeting at

the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, India thrashed Pakistan 10-2. A few months before that, the Indians beat Pakistan 4-0 when the ACT was held in Chennai.

At the Asia Cup in Jakarta in 2022, a relatively young Indian side held Pakistan to a 1-1 draw while at the 2021 ACT in Dhaka, India beat Pakistan 4-3 to clinch the bronze medal.

India captain Harman-

preet Singh, regarded as one of the best drag-flickers in the world, is continuing his good form from Paris, and is excited to resume the rivalry against Pakistan.

"I have been playing with some of the players in the Pakistan team since my junior days and we share a special bond with them. They are like my brothers. Of course, on the field, we will go about the match like we would against any other opponent and make sure we keep our emotions in check," he said.

"In world hockey, the rivalry the two teams share is unparalleled and I am sure fans across the globe will be waiting for an India-Pakistan match."

Though India enjoys an edge over Pakistan, Harmanpreet is least bothered about past results.

-PTI

Team India begins cricket practice

Chennai: It is back to business for Rohit Sharma's side following its much-deserved month-long break, as the team began its preparations in right earnest under new coach Gautam Gambhir here on Friday, for the upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh.

With the first Test against Bangladesh scheduled here from September 19, the entire squad, including Rohit and batting stalwart Virat Kohli, assembled at the MA Chidambaram Stadium with new bowling coach, South African great Morne Morkel, and assistant coach Abhishek Nayar also in attendance.

Earlier, India skipper Rohit arrived in Chennai on Thursday, while Virat flew in directly from London for the opening Test.

I was taunted by villagers for playing judo despite losing vision

By Philem Dipak Singh

New Delhi: Visually impaired but extremely positive, history-making Indian Paralympic medallist Kapil Parmar faced constant taunts from his fellow villagers when he started para-judo eight years ago, but it only strengthened his resolve to do something significant in life.

The 24-year-old Parmar became India's first Paralympic medallist in judo when he won a bronze in men's 60kg (J1) in Paris Games on September 4.

"When I decided to start para-judo in 2017, some people of my village taunted me how I would play the sport as I can't see but you always move ahead because of these taunts only," Par-



Kapil Parmar

mar told PTI in an interview.

"You have to take these (taunts) in a positive way, to convert their taunts into a challenge and prove them wrong. Now, after my achievements, they support

me and say that I was right in choosing para-sport.

"If you have sympathisers and supporters, there will be haters also. Life is like that. In a way I feel haters had made me move ahead in life."

The J1 class in para judo is for athletes who suffer from no to very low visual activity. Athletes in this category wear red circles to indicate that they may need guided support before, during and after a contest.

Son of a taxi driver, Parmar's eye-sight deteriorated progressively after he was electrocuted as a nine-year-old while trying to fetch water from a water pump in the fields of his village near Sehore in Madhya Pradesh.

He was discovered in an

unconscious state by a fellow villager and was hospitalised in Bhopal. He spent six months in coma before making a slow and painful recovery.

"When I came out of coma and recovered, the doctor said I should do some activity so that I gain weight. I don't know how my weight increased. I never thought I would win a Paralympics medal one day."

The limited financial means of his family meant that Parmar had to run a tea stall with one of his four brothers to support himself at one stage of his life. Initially, he had to ask for financial help from other people to take part in tournaments.

-PTI



Apex Council Member of the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Milind Narvekar during the ICC women's T20 World Cup trophy tour ahead of the championship at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Friday.

Pic: PTI