

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2024



## NATION | 4

**Devendra Fadnavis claims Maharashtra received more than 50% of country's FDI**



## WORLD | 6

**Will tap Musk to lead govt efficiency panel if elected: Donald Trump**

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**Salman Khan confirms 2 of his ribs are broken at Big Boss programme**



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Katy Perry attends the premiere of *The Cut* at Princess of Wales Theatre during the Toronto International Film Festival on Thursday. — AP

## Woman raped on Ujjain street while bystanders film it

**Bhopal:** A woman was raped on a footpath in a busy area in broad daylight in Ujjain city in Madhya Pradesh even as some passersby took video of the incident without bothering to come to her rescue, police said on Friday. The shocking incident took place on Wednesday afternoon. But, it came to light on Thursday when the video of the incident surfaced on social media. According to the police, the victim, a rag picker, was forced to drink liquor by the accused, identified as Lokesh, and then allegedly raped by him. A case was registered in connection with the incident. **Full report on Page 4**

## PAC to probe allegations against Sebi chief Buch

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6**

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) may summon Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairperson Madhabi Buch to question her over the allegations of taking salary and sops from ICICI Bank while being the chief of India's top regulatory body.

Ms Buch is facing allegations of conflict of interest over the Sebi investigation into the Hindenburg Research claims against the Adani Group. On Friday the Congress levelled fresh charges against Sebi chief and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the issue.

The Congress claimed that Ms Buch received rental income from an entity affiliated with a company that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases.

"PAC will take a call. That agenda is there in the Parliamentary Bulletin," said PAC chairman K.C. Venugopal in response to allegations concerning Ms Buch. **More on Page 3**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the winners of National Teachers' Award in New Delhi on Friday. **Report on Page 3** — PTI

## Conserve water for future: PM says it's time to reduce, recycle

**Launches 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative in Guj**

**SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6**

Emphasising the need to adopt the mantra of "reduce, reuse, recharge and recycle" to secure the nation's future regarding water-related issues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that water and environment conservation is part of India's traditional consciousness.

Speaking after virtually launching the "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari" initiative at Surat, Gujarat, Mr Modi pointed out that India is home to only 4 per cent of the freshwater in the world.

**THE PM pointed out that around 80 per cent of the water in India is used for irrigation. Therefore, sustainable agriculture techniques like drip irrigation should be promoted**

"Though the country has several magnificent rivers, large geographical regions remain bereft of water and the water table is also receding at a fast pace," he said, highlighting that water scarcity combined with climate change has had a huge impact on the lives of people. The Prime Minister also

called for urgent action on water conservation. He emphasised the need to adopt the mantra of reduce, reuse, recharge, and recycle to secure the nation's future regarding water-related issues.

"Water can only be saved when its misuse ends, consumption is reduced, water is reused, water sources are recharged and contaminated water is recycled," he said. He also highlighted the importance of embracing innovative approaches and modern technologies in water conservation. The Prime Minister **Turn to Page 4**

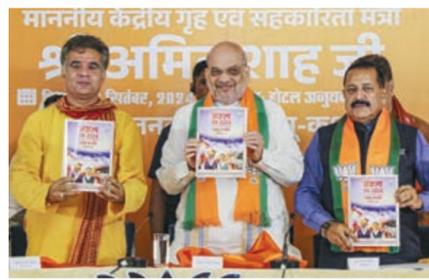
## 370 is history: HM Unveils BJP manifesto Can talk to J&K youth, but not with Pak: Shah

**YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, SEPT. 6**

Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday ridiculed the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Jammu and Kashmir's two main regional parties, over their promise to restore the erstwhile state's special status if voted to power in the upcoming Assembly elections. He said that Articles 370 and 35A are history now and the talk of restoring these into the Indian Constitution is a pipe dream. Mr Shah reiterated that the Centre is ready to talk to J&K youth but not with Pakistan.

Mr Shah sought an explanation from Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi if his Congress party, which has entered into a pre-poll alliance with the NC, endorses its manifesto "which promises the restoration of Article 370 and the release of stone pelters and other prisoners involved in propagating secessionism and unleashing terrorism in J&K".

While addressing a press conference in Jammu, Mr Shah said, "I



Union home minister Amit Shah, MoS Jitendra Singh and J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina during the release of party's election manifesto in Jammu on Friday. — PTI

**AMIT SHAH said: 'The abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A was a turning point in J&K's history and, as I said, they will never be reinstated'**

have gone through the NC manifesto. It states that the party will restore Article 370 in J&K. Let me tell you that Article 370 has been buried forever and it won't come back."

The Union home minister added: "Till 2019, J&K was plagued by separatism and terrorism. We also saw Hurriyat-backed governments in J&K prior to it. Post-August 2019, a new chapter of peace and prosperity was started here under the

leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

Mr Shah said: "I want to ask Mr Gandhi if he and his party want the revival of terrorism and separatism in J&K. Does he support the return of two flags and Articles 370 and 35A here? He won't answer. But I want to state here that Mr Gandhi is very much in support of the NC manifesto."

The Union home minister, who arrived in Jammu on a two-day visit, also unveiled the BJP's manifesto for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections in Jammu on Friday.

Mr Shah said that the **Turn to Page 4**

**THE ASIAN AGE** wishes its readers on the occasion of **Ganesh Chaturthi**  
As the offices of this newspaper will be closed today, there will be no edition on Sunday

## UK watchdog: Google anti-competitive in ads

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

## COUNTERPOINT



Our minister is urging people to 'save water'!

## WEATHER

**Max:** 30°C  
**Min:** 26°C  
**RH:** 85%  
**Rain:** 60%

**Forecast:** Thundershower

## ASTROGUIDE

**Krodhi:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Bhadrpada Shukla Chaviti till 5.35 pm  
**Star:** Chitta till 12.32 pm  
**Variyam:** 6.49 pm to 8.37 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 6.07 am to 7.45 am  
**Rahukalam:** 9 am to 10.30 am  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.35 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.03 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.24 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 8.44 PM**

## Modi to visit US on Sept. 22, UN address Sept. 26

**Interact with diaspora in NY**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6**

With the conclusion of the visits to Brunei and Singapore, the focus has now shifted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's forthcoming visit to the United States a fortnight from now, during which he is expected to attend the UN Summit of the Future on September 22-23 in New York. Mr Modi will also attend an Indian diaspora event on September 22 and address the UN General Assembly on September 26.

At the UN Summit of the Future, India, as a leading nation of the Global South (developing nations), is expected to articulate the concerns of predominantly Asia, Africa and Latin/South American nations.

India had just weeks ago organised the third Voice of Global South summit in virtual mode, where the developing world had articulated its concerns on issues such

**MORE THAN 24,000 Indian Americans have already signed up to attend the 'Modi & US: Progress Together' diaspora event**

as the need for food, fertiliser and fuel security, vaccines and medicines for all. The summit called on the developed nations to fulfil their global financial commitments to combat climate change.

According to reports, more than 24,000 Indian Americans have already signed up to attend the "Modi & US: Progress Together" diaspora event at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, an indoor arena, in Uniondale at Long Island in New York on September 22. The event is being organised by the Indo-American Community of the USA (IACU).

The visit also comes at a time when the US is heading into a keenly contested presidential election **Turn to Page 4**

## Cong appoints Mahesh Goud as president of Telangana unit

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6**

The Congress on Friday appointed B. Mahesh Kumar Goud as president of its Telangana unit, replacing A. Revanth Reddy. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge appointed Mr Goud as president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect, a statement issued by AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said.

The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing PCC president A. Revanth Reddy.

The appointment comes days after Congress president Mr Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a meeting with Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy and deputy CM Bhattu Vikramarka Mallu and discussed organisational changes in the state. **More on Page 3**

## Cong fields Hooda, Phogat in Haryana

**1st list of 31 candidates out Mewa Singh to take on CM Saini**

**ASHHAR KHAN and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6**

The Congress on Friday released its first list of candidates for the impending Haryana Assembly polls, fielding 31 candidates. Prominent figures include wrestler Vinesh Phogat and former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Hours after her induction into the party on Friday, the Congress fielded grappler Ms Phogat as its candidate from the Julana con-



AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal with wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia as they join the Congress Party in New Delhi on Friday. — G.N. JHA

stituency. This marks her debut in electoral politics. Mr Hooda has been field-

ed from his bastion the Garhi Sampla-Kiloli seat, while former Karnal

mayor and sitting MLA from the Sadhaura seat has been given a party ticket to contest the same seat again.

Badli MLA Kuldeep Vats will be contesting the polls to defend the seat he won in the 2019 Assembly polls.

The party also fielded MLA Rao Dan Singh from Mahendragarh Assembly. He was the party's Lok Sabha candidate from Bhiwani Mahendragarh constituency. Former minister and MLA Geeta Bhukkal will be **Turn to Page 4**

## Governor refers WB anti-rape bill to Prez for consideration

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, SEPT. 6**

West Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose has referred Aparajita Women Child (West Bengal Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2024, passed in the state Assembly a few days ago, to President Draupadi Murmu for "consideration" after getting the technical report from the Mamata Banerjee government.

The Raj Bhavan stated on X on Friday evening, "On receipt of mandatory technical report from the govt. of West Bengal, governor has referred the Aparajita Bill for consideration of the President of India. But the Raj Bhavan expressed its displeasure over the failure of the Assembly secretariat in providing the text of the debates and its translation as required under the rules."

The Raj Bhavan elaborated: "At the end of acrimonious debates, mutual accusations, political threats and ultimatum, the chief minister had threatened dharna outside of Raj Bhavan if the bill is not assented to by the Governor. The governor took umbrage at the intimidatory stance of the CM and admonished the government for their failure in observing legal and **Turn to Page 2**

## ED detains close aide of ex-hosp head Sandip Ghosh

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, SEPT. 6**

The ED on Friday raided the residences of former principal of Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh, his family members and aides. The ED also detained his confidant in the money laundering probe at the state-run healthcare institute.

On Friday morning, the Central agency launched the marathon raids, which continued for around seven hours at most locations. The addresses included the house of Dr Ghosh at Beliaghata in North Kolkata, his in-laws' house at Chandannagar in Hooghly, houses of Biplab Singha, who was arrested by the CBI, and Koushik Koley, who worked as an accountant at the firm of Biplab in Howrah.

Among other locations were Baidyabati, where an ED team raided the house of Kunal Roy, who worked in the health sector and had a good rapport with Dr Ghosh. **More on Page 4**



Actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh during a visit to the Siddhivinayak Temple on the eve of the "Ganesh Chaturthi" in Mumbai on Friday. — PTI

IN BRIEF

2 held for stealing ₹40L from employer

New Delhi: A 26-year-old driver and his brother were arrested for allegedly siphoning off ₹40 lakh off his employer from south Delhi's Malviya Nagar area, the police said on Friday. The two accused were nabbed from a train in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, when they were heading towards their native place along with a second hand racing bike that they were transporting in the same train, they said. The accused have been identified as Mani Bhusan and Shashi Bhusan (29), the natives of Bihar's Sitamarhi district, police said, adding that Shashi worked as a porter in a company. The police received information regarding theft of ₹40 lakh by a driver in Malviya Nagar area at around 9.20 pm on August 30. The complainant stated that his driver, who had been working with him for the last over two years, had absconded with ₹40 lakh cash and switched off his mobile, a senior police officer said. The complainant said that he had instructed his cashier to hand over the parcel containing cash to the accused in a parking area of Malviya Nagar.

Int'l travel, leisure expo organised

New Delhi: As many as seven state tourism boards and Union tourism ministry participated in an international travel and leisure expo held recently in Delhi. State tourism boards from Goa, Odisha, Punjab, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Telangana, and Meghalaya besides 500 exhibitors from across the globe participated in the BLTM-2024. The inaugural programme for the three-day event was attended by top dignitaries including Hul Seila, under secretary of state, ministry of tourism, Cambodia, Florian Sengstschmid, CEO, Azerbaijan tourism board, Krishantha Fernando, general manager, Sri Lanka convention bureau, Alexander Sitnikov, representative of the Russian ministry of economic development, R.K. Suman, regional director, North, India tourism and IAS officer Anjali Yadav, director, Jharkhand tourism besides others.

Fish vendor attacked in central Delhi

New Delhi: A fish vendor was critically injured after two other vendors allegedly attacked him with a butcher's knife at central Delhi's Patel Nagar, officials said on Friday. The incident happened on Thursday afternoon following an altercation between the victim, Amir (23), and the accused, Jitendra (40), over space of their shops in the fish market, the officials said. During the heated argument, Jitendra, along with another vendor named Sonu, allegedly attacked Amir with a butcher's knife, causing severe injury on his left wrist, the police said. Bystanders, who also informed the police about the incident, took Amir to the hospital where his treatment is still underway. The police said they have registered an FIR under relevant sections and arrested Jitendra.

INDIGO FLIGHT'S AC FAILS MIDAIR FOR AN HOUR

Passengers travelling on Delhi to Varanasi Indigo airline flight on Friday had a harrowing time as the air conditioning of the flight malfunctioned mid air and passengers had to sit through for over an hour without AC. Three women passengers were given oxygen support after their condition deteriorated. Over 200 passengers were on board the flight. Majority faced breathing issues and struggled to cope with heat in the cabin. Passengers claimed that the AC was off when they boarded the flight and were told by cabin crew it would be switched on after takeoff. While apologising for the incident, Indigo said the discomfort was due to fluctuations in cabin temperature, which were adjusted in response to passenger requests. "Our cabin crew promptly extended assistance to the affected passenger to address the situation," Indigo said.

AAP's ex-MLA Gautam joins Cong, claims bias against dalits, minorities

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Former Delhi government minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Friday quit the AAP and joined the Congress, alleging discrimination against the dalits and the minority leaders in the Arvind Kejriwal led party.

Minutes after announcing his resignation from the AAP and all posts held by him in the party, Mr Gautam joined the Congress at the AICC headquarters in the presence of general-secretary K.C. Venugopal, Delhi chief Devender Yadav and Congress' media department head Pawan Khara.

He has also resigned as AAP MLA from the reserved Seemapuri Assembly constituency. In his resignation letter addressed to AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal, Mr Gautam also criticised the party over appearing "very weak and helpless" before the BJP in raising issues like caste census, raising reservation limit above 50 percent, ensuring population based participation of the 'Bahujan Samaj' and def-



Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav greets former AAP leader Rajendra Pal Gautam who joined party on Friday in New Delhi.

ending secularism. "I have to say it with a heavy heart that it's impossible to imagine about works of social justice and social equality within AAP," he said in his resignation letter.

Mr Gautam said, as a soldier of Babasaheb Ambedkar, he was feeling

for sometime that he won't be able to achieve the first and last goal of his life which is social justice, while being in AAP. The AAP gives no special representation to the SC, ST, OBC and minority, Mr Gautam, who belongs to the dalit community said,

"Party (AAP) supports upper caste MLAs or ministers when they face any allegations but it immediately abandons muslims or dalits even if the allegations are false. The party in a way internally blacklists them and changes its behaviour in a way which is painful," he charged in his letter to Mr Kejriwal.

Welcoming Mr Gautam, Mr Venugopal said, "It's a proud moment for us as Mr Gautam joins the Congress party." The DPCC chief said, "Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra have given a new narrative to the country, and now the country is also accepting it with full might. Attracted by the Congress programs under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, he has decided to join."

Mr Gautam had joined the AAP in November 2014 and went on to become minister in the Kejriwal government holding various portfolios, including the social welfare. He had to resign from the minister's post amid a political storm over his alleged remarks against hindu deities in October 2022.

Self-defence trainer held Atishi orders probe

Girl sexually assaulted at school in Sultanpuri

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

An 11-year-old student of a government school was allegedly sexually assaulted in her classroom by a self-defence trainer on Friday in Sultanpuri area of outer Delhi, triggering protests, the police said. The police has arrested the accused, Satish (45), who was conducting self defence classes free of cost through an NGO, they said. He was not a regular teacher at the school.

Education minister Atishi has ordered an "immediate comprehensive and detailed inquiry" into the matter, said a statement from the Delhi government. "The most stringent and decisive actions will be taken based on the findings. The government remains firmly committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all students," it said. A senior police officer said the family members and their neighbours gath-

Minor's rape case: HC refuses bail to wife of suspended govt officer

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The high court on Friday refused to grant bail to the wife of suspended Delhi government officer Premoday Khakha, who allegedly raped a minor several times and impregnated her. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma dismissed the bail application of Seema Rani Khakha, saying the case "strikes at the

root of trust between two families" and the possibility of influencing witnesses cannot be ruled out at this stage.

Premoday Khakha has been accused of allegedly raping the daughter of a person known to him several times between November 2020 and January 2021. He is in judicial custody after being arrested in August 2023. On Friday at 12.12 pm, information was received regarding sexual harassment by school teacher, the police said. A case under sections 351 (criminal intimidation) of BNS and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act has been registered at Sultanpuri police station. Her counselling and medical examination is being conducted, the police said.

AAP's Amanatullah's ED custody extended by 3 days

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

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

Special judge Vishal Gogne passed the order on an application moved by the Central probe agency, which had sought Mr Khan's custody for 10 more days. The judge said that an investigation cannot be frozen to the desecration of the accused who may have joined the investigation on one occasion. He said the examination of the case diaries by the court suggested the possibility that the statements or materials collected from about 48 witnesses or other persons connected with the investigation and who are not part of the first prosecution complaint (ED's

equivalent to a chargesheet) may be required to be confronted with the accused.

"Consequently, the court finds the prayer for extension of custody of the ED over the accused to be justified by the outcomes of the investigation thus far," the judge said.

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

"However, the prayer for the grant of further custody for 10 days is excessive. Three days of further custodial investigation is presently found sufficient by the court," the judge said and directed the ED to produce Mr Khan before it on September 9.

Is there any restraint order on CM performing his duties from jail? SC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Supreme Court on Friday asked if there was any restraint order on Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for performing his duties from the jail and said it will examine the issue as files pertaining to remission of sentences of eligible convicts were getting delayed for want of his signature.

Remission is the cancellation or reduction of a part of the sentence of a prisoner. Under section 432 of the CrPC, state governments may remit the whole or part of the punishment to which a convict has been sentenced based on factors such as the prisoner's conduct, rehabilitation, health and time served in prison.

While hearing a plea filed by a convict alleging delay in remission of his

sentence, a bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih said: "Is there any restraint order on the chief minister performing his duties from jail? We want to examine this because this will affect hundreds of cases. So many files would be there as various orders are passed by the court concerning the chief minister. Whether there is any restraint on the chief minister signing such important files?"

Additional solicitor-general Aishwarya Bhati said she will take instructions on the issue and get back to the court.

The top court had in an earlier order directed the Delhi government to take a decision on the question of remission of the sentences of convicts within two months. The deadline was, however, extended by



Arvind Kejriwal

a month in July. Mr Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21 and the CBI on June 26 in connection with the excise policy "scam". Mr Kejriwal has been undergoing judicial custody since then.

An application by a convict for grant of remission is submitted to the jail superintendent, who forwards the same to the presiding judge of the convicting or confirming court along with the history ticket, copy of the judg-

ments, descriptive roll, and reports from the district magistrate and superintendent of police about the convict's conduct.

Inspector general of prisons, after his consideration, submits the proposal of remission to the state government with his recommendations. The state government then examines the proposal in accordance with its remission policy and the file is signed by the chief minister, if the same is accepted.

On July 12, the top court granted Me Kejriwal interim bail in the money laundering case.

According to legal experts, there is no bar either in the Constitution or in law on a jailed chief minister from continuing in office but running the government from a prison is "practically impossible".

Gov refers WB anti-rape bill to Prez for consideration

Continued From Page 1 constitutional proprieties.

The Raj Bhavan said: "Today the chief secretary called on the governor in the forenoon. The mandatory technical report was made available to the governor by the government in the afternoon. The governor has reserved the bill for consideration of the President of India. Now the West Bengal bill will join the lot of similar other bills pending with the President from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh."

According to the statement, the governor has pointed out the omissions and commissions in the hurriedly passed Aparajita Women Child (West Bengal Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2024. He warned the government, "Don't act in haste and repent at leisure."

The governor said that people cannot wait till the bill is implemented. They want justice and justice should be given to them within the framework of the existing law. "Government should act effectively. People should get justice. It is the government's duty to wipe the tears of the bereaved mother who lost her dear daughter. The governor pointed out the glaring defects and lapses in the bill and advised the government to do their homework instead of going in for knee jerk responses," the statement said.

HC asks Stephen's to grant admission to 7 students

Relieved students and their parents hail HC judgment, says justice finally delivered

New Delhi, Sept. 6: The Delhi high court on Friday directed St. Stephen's College to grant admission to seven students based on the allocation of seats by Delhi University.

The high court passed the verdict on two separate petitions by seven students.

"Since the university's calculation of seats has not been set aside... the respondent college is directed to grant admission to the petitioner students under the allocation policy as followed by the college in the last academic year itself so that they are able to attend their classes after fulfilling the other formalities as

required under the relevant rules," Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma said.

The seven students sought a direction to the college to provide them seats for the courses for which they have qualified.

The petitioners submitted that despite being allotted seats by the university in the college for the BA Economics (Hons) and the BA Programme courses, their admissions were not completed within the stipulated time.

Students and their parents involved in a prolonged legal battle said they were relieved after the high court's verdict.

"I feel absolutely elated after hearing the judgement; my happiness knows no bounds. The time and effort the judge put into our case was commendable. We are eternally grateful to her and to our parents, who stood by us every step of the way," said a visibly overjoyed Aleena Imran, one of the petitioners.

"I'm looking forward to becoming a Stephanian and finally starting this new chapter of my life. I'm determined to make a mark there," she added.

Her father, Col Adil Imran, called it a "landmark" judgement, saying it had lifted the children's

spirits and their burden of anxiety.

"I was overwhelmed with emotion as the judgement unfolded in court. The judge, who granted us this relief, is nothing short of a Messiah and a saviour to us. She could clearly see the pain on the children's faces when they appeared in court," he said.

"She delivered such a significant verdict, bringing an end to their worries. It has restored their smiles, and they are now excited to step into a new phase of life college."

While DU supported the petitions, they were opposed by the college.

Chamandep S. Milkhy, another parent whose ward was denied admission, said the verdict had reinforced his faith in the Indian judiciary. He, however, expressed concern about the potential discrimination the students could face once they join the college.

"This decision has strengthened my and my son's faith in the Indian judiciary. After all we went through, we had begun doubting our choice to study in India rather than abroad. I just hope these students won't face any discrimination in college because of this legal battle," he said. —PTI

Over 85% of Indian districts exposed to extreme climate events, finds study

New Delhi, Sept. 6: More than 85 per cent of the districts in India are exposed to extreme climate events such as floods, droughts and cyclones, according to a new study. The study by IPE Global and Esri India also found that 45 per cent of the districts were experiencing a "swapping" trend, where traditionally flood-prone areas were becoming drought-prone and vice versa.

Using a penta-decadal analysis, the study compiled a catalogue of extreme climate events during 50-year period from 1973 to 2023, employing spatial and temporal modelling.

The last decade alone saw a five-fold increase in these climate extremes, with a four-fold increase in extreme flood events, it said.

Districts in eastern India are more prone to



A man lifts his motorcycle after it got stuck in a pothole on a waterlogged road after rains in Gurgaon. —PTI

extreme flood events, followed closely by the country's northeastern and southern parts.

The study also shows a two-fold increase in drought events, especially agricultural and meteorological droughts, and a four-fold increase in cyclone events.

It found that more than 60 per cent of districts in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh,

catastrophic climate extremes that makes nine out of 10 Indians exposed to extreme climate events is a result of a 0.6°C temperature rise in the last century.

"Recent Kerala landslides triggered by incessant and erratic rainfall episodes, floods in Gujarat, the disappearance of Om Parvat's snow cover, and cities getting paralysed with sudden and abrupt downpours is a testament that climate is changing. Our analysis suggests that more than 1.47 billion Indians will be highly exposed to climate extremes by 2036," he said.

The study revealed that more than 45 per cent of districts were experiencing a swapping trend, ie, some flood-prone districts were becoming more susceptible to droughts and vice versa. —PTI

Traffic curbs in place near DDA ground in Burari for Ganesh puja

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Delhi police issued an advisory stating that the traffic restrictions will be put in place from Saturday around DDA Ground, Burari bypass during Ganapati Puja Mahotsav. According to the advisory, the 8th Ganapati Puja Mahotsav, including Katha Parvachan, will be

held at DDA Ground, Burari Bypass, Outer Ring Road from Saturday to September 17 from 8 am to 12 pm. A huge gathering is expected which may affect the traffic on surrounding roads, it said.

People who are going towards ISBT/railway stations/airports are advised to carefully plan their travel with sufficient time at hand, the advisory stated.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)	
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-1006	Dated: 06.09.2024
Name of work with its location	Telecom work in connection with construction of ROB in Lieu of LC No. 127 at Km 131.163 B/W Rampur Maniharan - Manani on DSA - SRE section.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 11,67,785.69/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 23,400/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading/ closing date & time- 01.10.2024 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
2796/24	

SHORT TAKES

Ready for any role given by Cong: Nath

**Bhopal:** Amid mounting speculations about the possibility of Congress leadership giving him an important responsibility in the AICC, veteran leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath on Friday said he was ready to take up any assignment given by the party, "either at the state or central level". "I am a disciplined worker of the party. I will take up any responsibility given to me by the party, either at the state or the central level", he told reporters here. "As it is, I am shuttling between Bhopal and Delhi now", he said. Mr Nath, however, has refused to reveal what transpired in the meeting between him and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Delhi on September 3. The meeting had given birth to speculations that he is under pressure by the central leadership to move out of state politics and shift to the Central politics.

Bail to ex-promoter of Bhushan Steel

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to Bhushan Steel's former promoter Neeraj Singhal in a money-laundering probe linked to a case of an alleged bank fraud of ₹46,000 crore. Granting the relief to Mr Singhal, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar noted that Mr Singhal has been in jail for 16 months, and the trial was not likely to be over soon. The apex court said, "A line has to be drawn somewhere in economic offences. You can't shake up the economy, shake up confidence of the market and shareholders. But if trial is never going to get over, we have to match that aspect of liberty." Additional solicitor-general S.V. Raju, appearing for the ED, opposed the bail application, saying a serious offence has been committed.

SC seeks Kochhars' reply on CBI plea

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from ICICI Bank's former MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar and her businessman husband Deepak Kochhar on a plea, filed against the Bombay high court order, declaring their arrest as "illegal". A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the couple and sought their replies on the appeal filed by the CBI. Additional solicitor-general S.V. Raju challenged the HC order, saying their arrest in the case was justified. Mr Raju informed the SC that Ms Kochhar remained on interim bail for a long time and spent only about two weeks in custody. On February 6, the HC had held as "illegal" their arrest, while confirming a January 2023 order of another bench granting the duo bail, days after their arrest in the case.

FORMER BJD MP SUJEET JOINS SAFFRON PARTY

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Former BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar on Friday joined the BJP at the party headquarters. Mr Kumar was expelled by the BJD earlier today for "anti-party activities", and he subsequently resigned from his Rajya Sabha membership. Joining the BJP in the presence of Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, national general-secretary Arun Singh, the party's Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar among others, Mr Kumar said he joined the saffron party as he was impressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's work and his vision of making India a developed country by 2047, and Odisha a developed state by 2036.



Sujeet Kumar

The BJP's media convener Anil Baluni was also present on the occasion. Mr Kumar thanked BJP chief J.P. Nadda, Union home minister Amit Shah and other leaders. Mr Kumar said for him, the country comes first and foremost. "Nation first has always been my philosophy. I lived abroad for many years and returned to India in 2011 to contribute to the development of my country," he said.

PM: Teachers helping youth prepare for 'Viksit Bharat'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said teachers are rendering a very important service to the nation, and the responsibility of preparing today's youth for "Viksit Bharat" rests in their hands.

PM Modi interacted with teachers that have been conferred the "National Teachers Awards" at his official residence in the national capital.

The awardees shared their experience with the PM, and talked about the techniques used by them to make learning more interesting. They also shared examples of social work being done by them, along with their regular teaching work.

Interacting with them, the PM commended their dedication to the craft of teaching and the remarkable zeal they have displayed over the years, which has been recognized through the awards.

Mr Modi discussed the impact of the "National Education Policy" (NEP) and spoke about the significance of attaining education in one's mother tongue. He suggested that the teachers could teach local folklore to students in different languages, so that the students can learn multiple languages, and also get exposure to the vibrant culture of India.

The PM said the teachers could take their students on educational tours, to explore India's diversity, which will back their learning process and help them know about their country in a holistic manner.



Defence minister Rajnath Singh offers prayers at Khatu Shyam temple in Lucknow on Friday. — PTI

J&K BJP manifesto offers ₹18,000 for elderly women

₹10K to farmers, ₹3K to students; 1K new medical seats

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, SEPT. 6

Union home minister Amit Shah unveiled the BJP's manifesto for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections in Jammu on Friday, calling it a crucial moment in the Union territory's history. He said that the BJP is the only political party which has the vision, proven track record, and an experienced and competent team to take it further on the path of peace, progress and prosperity.

The manifesto titled "Sankalp Patra" also promises to give ₹10,000 to the farmers of the state under Prime Minister's Kisan Samman Nidhi, reduce electricity rates for agricultural activities by half, ensure a fair and just recruitment process to address the unemployment issue, provide college students a travel allowance of ₹3,000 annually under the Pragati Shiksha Yojana and add 1,000 new seats in medical colleges to improve the education system. The Union minister said

PC's Sajad Lone will contest Handwara & Kupwara seats

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, SEPT. 6

Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (PC) chairman and former minister Sajad Gani Lone will fight the upcoming Assembly elections from his home constituency Handwara and neighbouring Kupwara. The party has decided to field Shia cleric-politician Imran

Reza Ansari from Pattan segment of the Baramulla district. In 2014 elections, Mr Lone had won the Handwara seat, whereas, Mr Ansari who was then in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) got elected from Pattan. Both served as ministers in the PDP-BJP government, the former from the BJP quota.

hold under the Maa Samman Yojana. Ujjwala beneficiaries will receive two free cylinders every year, it says, adding that, through the Atal Housing Scheme, land will be allotted free of cost to landless beneficiaries. Further the old age, widow, and disability pensions will be increased three times.

The BJP has pledged to further improve the infrastructure in J&K by completing all important road and rail tunnels.

As a social welfare endeavour, the BJP has promised to give ₹18,000 yearly to senior-most women in every house-

600 undergoing intensive training with SLRs in Jammu

Army trains villagers to counter terrorists

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

To counter terrorists in the Jammu region, which has witnessed a spate of terror incidents recently, the Indian Army is training village defence guards (VDGs) in the operation of automatic rifles as they are now being issued more deadly self-loading rifles (SLRs).

The VDGs were earlier armed with outdated .303 rifles, which were no match to the weapons carried by terrorists. However, the home min-

istry has now allowed automatic guns to be issued to the VDGs.

Some 600 individuals are currently undergoing intensive training in the operation of automatic rifles, squad post drills and minor tactics.

"The Indian Army, in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir police, has taken the initiative to enhance the security of local communities by training village defence guards (VDGs)," sources in the defence establishment said. This initiative, they added,

aims to equip these civilians with the skills necessary to protect their villages from terrorist threats, thereby bolstering the region's overall security framework.

This training is conducted at the unit level, in proximity to their respective villages, ensuring that the VDGs can quickly

apply their skills in real-world scenarios.

The training is meticulously structured, with each VDG unit receiving a minimum of three-day training programme.

The training efforts are being led by formations of the Indian Army, with additional support from instructors and training aids sourced from the Corps Battle School in Sarol.

This collaboration ensures that the VDGs receive instruction from highly skilled personnel.

Flood-hit Andhra, Telangana will get ₹3,448cr assistance

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Centre on Friday allocated immediate assistance of ₹3,448 crores for flood-hit Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to mitigate the impact of floods. It also deployed NDRF teams, helicopters and a Dornier aircraft for the ongoing relief and rescue operations.

Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who conducted an aerial survey of the affected areas earlier in the day, announced the ₹3,448-crore assistance from the state disaster relief fund, which also includes the Central government's share.

"No one needs to be disappointed, the government is working to provide immediate help," the minister said.

After providing the assistance, the government will think about making available fertilisers and seeds to farmers for the next crop, Mr Chouhan said in Hyderabad. He also assured the farming community that the Centre will provide appropriate compensation after the assessment of the crop damage. "We will ask the banks not to recover

loans from farmers in times of crisis," he added. The agriculture minister also assured the farming community that the Centre will provide appropriate compensation after the assessment of the crop damage. "We will ask the banks not to recover loans from farmers in times of crisis," he added.

As many as 26 teams of the NDRF and eight helicopters of the Indian Air Force (IAF), three helicopters and one Dornier aircraft of the Indian Navy have been mobilised in Andhra Pradesh, while seven NDRF teams and two IAF helicopters have been deployed in Telangana for rescue and relief activities, additional secretary in the home ministry Sanjeev Kumar Jindal said in a statement.

The NDRF teams, so far, have rescued 350 people and evacuated about 15,000 persons in Andhra Pradesh.

SC stays TN HC order asking YouTuber to close his channel

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Madras high court directive to YouTuber Felix Jerald to close down his channel "RedPix 24x7" as one of the bail conditions.

Mr Jerald had been arrested for hosting an "objectionable" interview of another YouTuber Savukku Shankar on his channel. In the interview, Mr Shankar made certain comments against Madras HC judges and women cops. The HC, which granted bail to both YouTubers, had asked Mr Jerald to close



Felix Jerald

down his channel as one of the bail conditions.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra issued a notice to the state government and stayed the particular direction on closure of the channel. The top court, however,

Amid row, PAC may summon Sebi chief

Panel to decide on appearance ■ Cong targets Modi

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) may summon Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairperson Madhabi Buch to question her over the allegations of payments made to her by ICICI Bank, her former employer, after she became the chief of India's top regulatory body.

Ms Buch is facing allegations of conflict of interest over the Sebi investigation into the Hindenburg Research claims against the Adani Group.

On Friday, the Congress levelled fresh charges against the Sebi chief and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the issue. The Congress claimed that Ms Buch received rental income from an entity affiliated with a company that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases.

"The Public Accounts Committee will take a



Madhabi Buch

call. That agenda is there in the parliamentary bulletin," PAC chairman K.C. Venugopal said in response to the allegations concerning Ms Buch.

The PAC, responsible for auditing the revenue and expenditure of the government, has selected 161 subjects for examination during its tenure, in addition to the pending matters before the committee before the previous year.

Among the subjects selected by the committee are the performance review of regulatory bodies established by Acts of Parliament, reforms in the banking and insurance sector, review of the implementation of

THE PAC has selected 161 subjects for examination during its tenure.

THE CONGRESS claimed that Ms Buch received rental income from an entity affiliated with a company that the capital markets regulator was investigating for various cases.

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

Mr Venugopal said the committee will decide on summoning Ms Buch.

The PAC will hold its next meeting on September 10 when representatives of the Jal Shakti ministry will brief the panel on the "performance audit on national rural drinking water programme (Jal Jeevan Mission)" based on a CAG report. Mr Venugopal, added this issue would be debated in the upcoming parliamentary session.

SC issues notice on 65% quota, no stay on Bihar HC order

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Centre and the state government on a plea of the Rashtriya Janata Dal against a Patna HC order setting aside the amended quota laws in Bihar that raised from 50 to 65 per cent quotas for dalits, tribals and backward classes.

Taking note of the submissions of RJD's counsel P. Wilson, who said that the plea needed to be decided, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "Issue notice and tag with the pending pleas."

While hearing similar pleas on July 29, the top court had refused to stay the high court order that set aside the amended reservation laws in Bihar. The bench, however, had agreed to hear the petitions of the Bihar government against the verdict.

The state government has challenged the HC

judgment before the SC. On June 20, the high court had declared that the amendments, passed unanimously by the state's bicameral legislature in November last year, were "ultra vires" of the Constitution, "bad in law" and "violative of the equality clause".

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A division bench of the high court had allowed a bunch of petitions challenging the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Bihar (in admission in educational institutions) Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023.

The apex court upheld the Madhya Pradesh high court order which dismissed the suit. The SC was hearing an appeal filed by one Jayant Vipat challenging an order of the HC which quashed his plea citing no merit in it. "This court is of the considered opinion that trial court has properly considered all alleged grounds which have been raised by appellants and no illegality or perversity has been committed by trial court," the HC had said.

For publicity: SC junks plea over BJP's use of lotus symbol

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The Supreme Court on Friday junks a plea seeking injunction against the BJP and restrain it from using "kamal" or lotus as the party symbol.

Observing that the plea has been filed for publicity, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna B. Varale said: "You want name and fame for yourself. Look at the plea, what is the kind of relief claimed by you? Dismissed."

The apex court upheld the Madhya Pradesh high court order which dismissed the suit.

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"This court is of the considered opinion that trial court has properly considered all alleged grounds which have been raised by appellants and no illegality or perversity has been committed by trial court," the HC had said.

Dog that attacked 3 killed in UP amid fear of wolf attack

Bahraich (UP), Sept. 6:

Amid fears of wolf attack, villagers in Mahsi area attacked and killed a dog after it allegedly attacked three villagers.

Divisional forest officer (DFO) Ajit Pratap Singh told reporters on Friday evening that forest workers reached the spot on Thursday around 9.30 pm after receiving news of an animal attack on Sangam Lal, son of local resident Maikoolal, in Majra Lodhanpurwa of village Yadavpur in Mahsi tehsil area.

The villagers said it was a wolf attack, but the forest workers did not find any footprints of the wolf, he said.

The DFO said on Friday morning again, information was received from

the same village that an animal had attacked Kriparam (65) and his grandson Satyam (four). After the attack, the villagers beat the animal to death with sticks thinking it to be a wolf.

When forest workers arrived, the dead animal turned out to be a dog. There were no footprints of the wolf in the village. Injured

Kriparam also said on seeing the dead dog that the same animal had attacked, he said, adding the injured are undergoing treatment.

Wolf attacks have been taking place on people in Mahsi tehsil area of Bahraich since March.

The attacks increased during the rainy season. — PTI

Mahesh Goud appointed new T'gana Cong chief

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY HYDERABAD, SEPT. 6

In a significant political development, the Congress high command on Friday appointed Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud, a leader from backward classes, as president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), to replace chief minister A. Revanth Reddy, who led the state unit from despair to victory during his three-year tenure.

The announcement was officially made by All India Congress Committee (AICC), marking the culmination of a two-month-long process to finalise the new leadership for the Telangana unit. Revanth Reddy's tenure had ended in July. Mr Goud is his close associate.

Reacting to his appointment, Mr Goud thanked the leadership and deep gratitude for placing their trust in him. "I will work on these great responsibilities entrusted by the



B.M.K. Goud

party, with sincerity and dedication, and I am committed to further strength-

ening the party," he stated.

Mr Goud's appointment comes as the Congress leadership seeks to balance caste and regional equations within the party and the government. Chief minister Revanth Reddy represents the Other Castes (OC) category, while deputy chief minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka belongs to the Scheduled Castes. With Mr Goud's appointment, the leadership has ensured representation for the BC community as

well at the helm of party affairs.

The decision to appoint 58-year old Goud — an MLC and TPCC working president since June 2021, — was influenced by his extensive experience and longstanding dedication to the Congress. A native of Rahatnagar in Bheemal mandal of Nizamabad district, Mr Goud starting as state general secretary of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) during his time at Giriraj College in Nizamabad.

SHORT TAKES

2 jawans killed by lightning in C'garh

**Dantewada:** Two personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force were killed in a lightning strike at an anti-Naxalite training centre of the paramilitary force in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Friday, police said. The incident occurred around 3 pm when a training session was underway at the facility in the Barsoor police station area of the district, an official said. Constables Mahendra Kumar and S. Sahuat Alam, belonging to the CRPF's 11th battalion, were struck by lightning and severely injured, he said. The duo were shifted to Dantewada hospital in an ambulance, and after examination, doctors declared them dead, the official said. Kumar hailed from Prayagraj in UP, while Alam was from Sahibganj in Jharkhand, he said, adding that their families were informed about the tragedy. A jawan died in a similar incident of lightning strike in Bijapur district during an anti-Naxal operation on Thursday, police said. — PTI

'Prevent infiltration from Bangladesh'

**New Delhi:** The BSF on Friday asked its counterpart in Bangladesh, Border Guard Bangladesh to prevent citizens of the neighbouring country from illegally entering India after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina led government in August. Since August 12, the BSF and the BGB had 722 meetings at various levels, the border-guarding force said after the meeting of a special committee appointed by the Union home ministry, which was held in Kolkata on Thursday, the officials said. The two forces carried out 1,367 simultaneous coordinated patrolling (SCP) in vulnerable border patches, BSF said in a statement.

Modi to visit US on September 22

**Continued From Page 1**  
between vice-president Kamala Harris, who is the Democrat contender, and former President Donald Trump, who is the Republican challenger. US President Joe Biden has opted out of the presidential race due to his advanced age. Close ties between India and the US peaked in June last year when Mr Modi had visited the US on a bilateral visit, with both nations deciding on a "new chapter" of strengthening the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations. Since then, strains have surfaced in ties, particularly over issues such as India's continued proximity to Russia as well as the Gurdatt Singh Pannu case, which pertains to American allegations that two Indian nationals, including an Indian government employee, were involved in a failed plot to murder US citizen and pro-Khalistan extremist, last year on American soil. The US has also been needling India on the religious freedom and human rights fronts.

Cong fields Hooda, Phogat

**Continued From Page 1**  
contesting from the Jhajar reserved Assembly. The Congress fielded Mewa Singh against chief minister Nayab Singh Saini from the Ladwa seat and MLA Chiranjeev Rao will be contesting from Rewari. Haryana Congress Veterans Geeta Bhukkal, Aftab Ahmed and Mamman Khan have also been repeated by the party. On Friday, the Congress also inducted wrestler Bajrang Punia. The Olympian, along with Ms Phogat joined the Congress after meeting the party president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence. After joining the party, Ms Phogat said while the BJP was supporting Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the Congress supported the protesting wrestlers when they "were being dragged on the roads" in Delhi during their protest over sexual harassment by the then Wrestling Federation of India chief. "I thank the people of the country and the media...you supported me throughout my wrestling journey. I thank the Congress party. Tough times tell you about who is with you. When we were dragged on the roads, all parties except the BJP stood with us," she said. Echoing similar sentiments, Mr Punia said the Congress stood with them during their tough times. "The BJP IT cell is saying today that we just wanted to do politics... We had written to all women BJP MPs to stand with us, but they didn't come. We are paying the price for raising our voices for women, but now we know that the BJP stands with atrocities against women at Jantar Mantar and all other parties stand with us," he said. Soon after Mr Punia's induction into the party, Mr Kharge appointed him as the working chairman of the All India Kisan Congress. At the press conference, Congress general secretary K.C.

ED raids at houses of Ghosh, family and aides; 1 detained

Searches over financial irregularities last for 7 hours in most locations

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, SEPT. 6

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday raided the residences of former principal of Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital (RGKMCH) Sandip Ghosh, his family members and aides. The ED also detained his confidant in the money laundering probe at the state-run healthcare institute. On Friday morning, the Central agency launched the marathon raids, which continued for around seven hours at most locations. The addresses included the house of Dr Ghosh at Beliaghata in North Kolkata, his in-laws' house at Chandannagar in Hooghly, houses of Biplob Singha, who was arrested by the CBI, and Koushik

SC junks Ghosh's plea against HC order in misconduct case

**RAKESH K. SINGH**  
New Delhi, Sept. 6

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by former principal of Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh, challenging a Calcutta high court order that rejected his petition for being added as a party in a case of alleged financial irregularities at the institute during his tenure. Koley, who worked as an accountant at the firm of Biplab in Howrah. Among other locations were Baidyabati, where an ED team raided the house



Sandip Ghosh

A bench comprising CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J. B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "You were a principal of the college when the incident took place. As an accused, you have no locus standi to intervene in the PIL, where the Calcutta HC is monitoring the investigation."

of Kunal Roy, who worked in the health sector and had a good rapport with Dr Ghosh. At Subhasgram in South 24 Parganas, the Central

agency detained Prasun Chatterjee, a close aide of Dr Ghosh after raiding and searching his house. Prasun worked as a data entry operator at Calcutta National Medical College and Hospital, where Dr Ghosh was initially transferred by the state health department over dereliction of duty over the brutal rape and murder of an on-duty female doctor at RGKMCH on August 9. Later, Prasun was taken on a raid at Sangita Sandip Villa, the bungalow of Dr Ghosh in Canning of South 24 Parganas. Sangita is the name of Dr Ghosh's wife. Meanwhile, Sanjoy Roy, the civic volunteer of the Kolkata police, arrested in the rape and murder case, was remanded to 14-day jail custody by the SealDAH court.

Passersby shoots videos instead of helping Man gets woman drunk, rapes her on Ujjain road

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUHDHURY**  
BHOPAL, SEPT. 6

A woman was raped on a footpath in a busy area in broad daylight in Ujjain city in MP even as some passersby took video of the incident without bothering to come to her rescue, police said on Friday. The shocking incident took place on Wednesday afternoon. But, it came to light on Thursday night when the video of the incident surfaced on social media. As per police, the victim, a rag picker, was forced to drink liquor by the accused, identified as Lokesh, and then allegedly raped by him. As per Ujjain district superintendent of police, the victim was identified from the video and brought to the police station to record her statement. A case was registered in

connection with the incident, he said. "The accused promised to marry her and forced her to drink alcohol and then raped her on Wednesday. Some passersby shot the video of the incident instead of coming to the rescue of the woman", city superintendent of police Om Prakash Mishra said. The accused was arrested, he added. Incidentally, Ujjain is the home town of CM Mohan Yadav. Congress on Friday expressed serious concern over the fast deteriorating law and order situation in the state. State Congress president Jitu Patwari said that "Ujjain, the sacred city, is shamed by the incident". Congress veteran and former CM Kamal Nath said that the state has failed to arrest the growing incidents of violence against women. — PTI

Teacher held in Maha for raping 11-year-old girl

**Mumbai, Sept. 6:** A 30-year-old Arabic teacher has been arrested in Maharashtra's Beed city for allegedly raping an 11-year-old girl who attended his tuition, police said. The accused (name not disclosed to protect the victim's identity) taught Urdu and Arabic to children at his home, said inspector A.K. Mudiyaar of Pethbeed police station. He allegedly raped the girl many times after other students left and also subjected her to unnatural sex, official said. Crime came to light when the girl complained of stomach pain and the doctor realized that she had faced sexual assault. — PTI

Fadnavis: Maha got 50% of India's FDI

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA**  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 6

Maharashtra deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis on Friday claimed that Maharashtra has attracted the highest foreign direct investment (52.46 per cent of the entire FDI in India) in the first quarter of the current financial year 2024-2025. Citing the quarterly report from the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT), Mr. Fadnavis said that Maharashtra attracted ₹70,795 crore, which is 52.46 per cent of the country's total FDI. Reacting to the BJP leader's claim, Maharashtra Congress general secretary Sachin Sawant said that they have been consistently stating that if the Modi government doesn't pull Maharashtra's feet, the state would remain at the number one position forever. The Opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has been targeting



Devendra Fadnavis

the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra over the alleged shifting of mega projects from the state to neighboring Gujarat. Referring to the quarterly report from the DPIIT, the deputy chief minister said that Maharashtra attracted more than half of the country's FDI. "Maharashtra leads in FDI with a staggering 52.46 per cent of India's total investment! Maharashtra which is consecutively ranked No. 1 for last 2 years in FDI, now has secured maximum investment i.e 52.46% of India's total FDI in the 1st quarter of the financial year 2024-2025," he said in a post on his X handle.

Homes in Bageshwar develop cracks, people blame mining Another Joshimath in making in U'khand?

**Pithoragarh (U'khand), Sept. 6:** Cracks similar to those in Joshimath have appeared on the walls and ceilings of houses in more than two dozen villages of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, sending residents in a state of alarm. Locals attributed land subsidence, which had aggravated with time, to large-scale soapstone mining in the area and excavated ditches being left untreated by contractors, who often violated mining norms by blasting and using heavy machinery for digging. "Despite mining being

stopped in the area two years ago, we found at least seven to eight houses in Kanda village with cracks still appearing on the wall and ceilings," said district mining officer Jigyasa Bisht, who visited the village on September 3 along with a geologist and revenue officials. Around 1,000 people had to leave their homes in Joshimath, recently renamed Jyotirmath, in early 2023 when large cracks appeared on the walls and floors due to land subsidence. The administration's attention was drawn to the

latest threat when locals raised the issue during a janata darbar at the collectorate in Bageshwar. However, the NGT has not taken cognisance of any such incident in the district, Ms Bisht said. Cracks have also appeared in houses in more than 25 villages adjacent to the areas where mining is still going on in the district, the officer said. These are mostly villages whose residents had given a no-objection certificate for conducting mining operations. Of the total of 402 villages in the district, more

than 100 face the threat of gradual subsidence, local resident Ghanshyam Joshi said. Shikha Suyal, Bageshwar's district disaster management officer, said more than 131 families in 11 villages had been identified for rehabilitation as landslides were endangering their habitation. "More surveys of such villages are on the anvil," she said. Officials of the departments concerned visited the Kalika temple in Kapkot block after receiving complaints but found no violation of mining rules. — PTI

Reconsider elevation of 2 judges: SC to Himachal HC

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6

The process of judicial appointments to a superior court is not the prerogative of an individual, the Supreme Court said on Friday and directed the Himachal Pradesh high court collegium to reconsider "collectively" the elevation of two senior-most district and sessions judges, who were passed over for promotion to high court judgeship. A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Prashant Kumar Mishra delivered its verdict on a plea by two senior-most district and sessions judges serving in Himachal Pradesh — Chirag Bhanu Singh and Arvind Malhotra — who had alleged that their merit and seniority were not considered by the high court collegium in selection of names for high court judgeship. The top court said: "There was no collective consultation and deliberations by the members of the high court collegium...The decision of the chief justice of the high court, on the suitability of the two petitioners as conveyed in his letter dated March 6, 2024, appears to be an individual decision. The same therefore stands vitiated both procedurally and substantially." — PTI

India-Maldives to strengthen defence ties

**New Delhi, Sept. 6:** India and the Maldives on Friday held a fresh round of "productive" defence dialogue with a focus on the situation in the Indian Ocean and ways to expedite implementation of ongoing defence projects.

The defence dialogue in Delhi took place nearly a month after EAM S. Jaishankar paid a three-day visit to the Maldives, in the first high-level trip from New Delhi after the island nation's pro-China president Mohamed Muizzu assumed office. "The talks were productive which will advance shared interests of both the nations," the defence ministry said. — PTI

NCP MLA linked to Pune Porsche accident: Top cop

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA**  
MUMBAI, SEPT. 6

In a startling revelation, Pune police commissioner Amitesh Kumar on Friday said that Ajit Pawar-led NCP MLA Sunil Tingre had connection with the high-profile Porsche crash case in Pune. However, the CP did not disclose any details regarding Tingre's involvement in the case. In the Pune Porsche accident two software engineers were killed after a 17-year-old, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, hit a motorcycle on May 19. Controversy erupted after the juvenile justice board (JJB) granted bail to the boy and had asked him to

write an essay on road accidents. As per reports, the NCP MLA had visited Yervada Police Station, where the case was registered after the accident. The opposition parties had accused Mr. Tingre was of trying to influence the probe. However, he called the allegations baseless. Responding to a query, the Pune Police Commissioner confirmed that the police have interrogated Mr. Tingre in the Porsche car accident case after the arrest of

Agrawal family in June. "We recorded his statement as he was present in the Yervada police station after the accident on May 19," Mr. Kumar said. Without further elaborating Mr. Tingre's role in the case, the commissioner added that many people, who are directly and indirectly involved in the case, have been probed. The Pune police are reportedly probing the role of Mr. Tingre, who allegedly used his clout to alter the investigation. Dr. Ajay Taware, then head of the state-run Saseon hospital's forensic medicine department, was arrested for allegedly manipulating the blood samples of the minor accused.

Ultras hurl bomb at Manipur ex-CM's house; 1 dead, 5 hurt

**Imphal, Sept. 6:** An elderly man was killed and five others were injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a residential area of Moirang in Bishnupur district on Friday afternoon, officials said. The rocket which fell on the compound of former chief

Mairembam Koireng's residence seemed to be an improvised one. It is the second rocket that was fired in the district on Friday. "The elderly man was preparing for some religious rituals in the compound when the bomb exploded. He died on the spot," the official said. — PTI

Conserve water for future: PM

**Continued From Page 1**

pointed out that around 80 per cent of the water in India is used for irrigation. Therefore, sustainable agriculture techniques like drip irrigation should be promoted. Mr Modi stated that the government is continuously promoting techniques like drip irrigation in the direction of sustainable agriculture. Speaking about campaigns like "Per drop more crop", he said that it is helping conserve water while also increasing farmers' incomes in water-scarce regions. The PM talked about the government's support for the cultivation of crops such as pulses, oilseeds and millets that require less water. Furthering the discussion on state-level efforts, the Prime Minister encouraged states to adopt and accelerate water conservation practices. Acknowledging that some states provide incentives to farmers for growing alternative crops that consume less water, he urged all states to come together and work in mission mode to drive these efforts forward. "We must promote traditional knowledge, like creating ponds near fields and recharge wells, alongside new technologies," Mr Modi said. The PM mentioned that the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative was kicking off from Gujarat and has witnessed many successful efforts towards ensuring accessibility and availability of water to the last of the citizens. Reminiscing about the situation in Saurashtra two-and-a-half decades ago, Mr Modi said that

the previous governments lacked the vision of water conservation. He said that he resolved to overcome this grave crisis and ensured the completion and commission of Sardar Sarovar Dam, pending for decades. "Sauni Yojna was also started by drawing water from areas of excess and discharging it to areas facing shortages," he said and expressed happiness that the results of the efforts made in Gujarat are today visible to the world. "Water conservation is not just a matter of policies but also social commitment," he said, highlighting the importance of a conscious citizen, public participation and people's movement. Mr Modi further pointed out that even though water-related projects worth thousands of crores have been initiated in the past, the results are only apparent in the past 10 years. "Our government has worked with a 'whole of society and whole of government approach'," he remarked. Throwing light on the work done in the past 10 years, the Prime Minister said that silos were broken on issues related to water for the first time and the ministry of jal shakti was created to fulfil the commitment of the whole of the government approach. Mr Modi touched upon his government's resolve to provide tap water supply to every home through the Jal Jeevan Mission. He informed the audience that, as against 3-crore water connections in the past, nearly 15-crore houses in rural India now receive piped water.

The PM credited the Jal-Jeevan Mission for clean tap water reaching more than 75 per cent of the households in the country and lauded the local "jal samitis" for their contributions to the Jal-Jeevan Mission. He said that women are doing wonderful work in jal samitis all over the country, just like the women who did wonders in the jal samitis of Gujarat. "At least 50 per cent of the participation in this is of village women," he said. Highlighting how Jalshakti Abhiyan has become a national mission today, the Prime Minister said that be it renovation of traditional water sources or construction of new structures, individuals from all walks of life, ranging from stakeholders to civil society to panchayats, are involved in it. Explaining the strength of public participation, Mr Modi underlined that the work on Amrit Sarovar started in every district during the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and has resulted in construction of more than 60,000 Amrit Sarovars in the country today. "Similarly, the Atal Bhujal Yojana also involved the responsibility of villagers in managing water resources for recharging groundwater. Further, the 'Catch the Rain' campaign, started in 2021, has a large number of stakeholders involved today," he said. Speaking of the "Namami Gange" initiative, Mr Modi underlined that it had become an emotional resolution for citizens and people are giving up old traditions and irrelevant customs to ensure the cleanliness of rivers.

No talks with Pak: Shah

**Continued From Page 1**

responsibility. As most political parties fighting the Assembly elections have promised to work towards the restoration of statehood to J&K, Mr. Shah asked, "Why to demand something that has already been accepted?" When asked if the government will talk with Pakistan to seek complete cessation of hostilities in J&K, the Union home minister said, "We have said it before and I want to reiterate that talks and terror cannot go together. We will talk to the youth of Kashmir, not Pakistan, until and unless it (Pakistan) stops terrorism." Mr Shah also ruled out the possibility of resuming the cross-LoC trade, saying, "It sets a base for terrorism. So, there is no question of trade with Pakistan till terrorism is there." Asked if post-elections the BJP will cobble up an alliance with any other political party or group to form a government in J&K, Mr Shah said that the saffron party will keep the option open, but certainly there is no possibility of entering into an alliance with the Abdullahs (NC), the Muftis (PDP) or the Gandhis (Congress). He, however, quickly added, "One thing is sure...that there won't be a NC, PDP, Congress government in J&K."

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THE ASIAN AGE

7 SEPTEMBER 2024

# Elevation of Singapore ties testament to shared values

The elevation of India-Singapore relationship to comprehensive strategic partnership status reflects the strong economic and people-to-people ties that the countries have enjoyed for close to 60 years now. A trip to Singapore — for Prime Minister Narendra Modi this was a fifth — is usually more like a business visit to share the warmth of enduring ties.

The boost to a higher-level partnership with Singapore reflects India's rising economic heft and place in world affairs today. Adding a new dimension to Mr Modi's eastward trip was a visit to oil-rich Brunei, a first by an Indian PM, which may give impetus to collaborative efforts in the crucial semiconductor sector, which is going to define how the world is going to move forward in several breakthrough technology areas.

A congruence of Singaporean and Indian views on most topics, particularly on growth and development, has been a feature of the special relationship that makes ties with Singapore the warmest as well as the least contentious, even if the situation in Myanmar, marked by most recent violence, had to be discussed to take in current developments.

Singapore has never let its closeness to China come in the way of a stable view of the aspirations of growth and development that it shares with India. So much so, this partnership between like-minded countries with strategic neutrality as a defining feature of their foreign relations shines as a beacon in an otherwise fractured world of clashing views and perspectives, particularly through the prism that shows China as a global powerhouse and a force to be reckoned with.

The maturity of the relationship is also reflected in the joint statement mentioning not only the need to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea while pursuing peaceful resolution of issues but also Quad's recognition of Singapore's importance in the Indo-Pacific and the four nations accepting that there is no need not to disturb the island's centrality in regional affairs.

The free movement of professionals of the new economy between the two countries and their contribution to knowledge sharing has been a highlight of the cooperation. Singapore is being practical in acknowledging that semiconductors, Indian payment systems in the digital age that have helped change the way money can flow to facilitate seamless trade, healthcare and tourism are topics of special interest.

India's presence in Quad may not have taken off fully in terms of strategic cooperation, but a lot of good work has taken place in knowledge sharing in technology, cybersecurity and maritime infrastructure development. Singapore is likely to benefit from this, too, with India in a position to help with its enhanced maritime domain awareness and the capacity to detect and respond to any strange events in the Indo-Pacific.

The Indian diaspora, with a distinct leavening of Tamils who have lived there for close to 200 years in the multicultural milieu, has been recognised as a contributor to Singapore's growth and the opening of a Thiruvalluvar cultural centre is testament to this. No doubt the Tamils and south Indians who comprise a majority of the 6.5 lakh people of Indian origin resident in Singapore will be part of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Singapore that is coming up in 2025.

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# Blame game on collapsed statue

The politics in Maharashtra has always revolved around the public sentiments attached to legendary Maratha warrior king Shivaji, who has become synonymous with Marathi pride. It was not a surprise that the collapse of Shivaji's statue at Rajkot fort in Sindhadurg district snowballed into a major political conspiracy in no time, particularly when the Assembly elections are due.

The Opposition — Congress, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) — have called it an insult to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. They have alleged corruption in award of the contract for the statue. Rahul Gandhi insisted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apology is his acceptance of guilt.

On the other hand, the government has accused the Opposition of engaging in politics over the unfortunate incident.

Amidst the blame game, certain key questions have remained unanswered. Who was responsible for monitoring the construction of the statue and who was responsible for its maintenance?

After the statue collapsed, the authorities claimed that it was due to poor quality of materials used for it. The police have arrested sculptor Jaydeep Apte and structural consultant Chetan Patil.

However, the Navy, state PWD and the district collector, who were involved in the process, have only passed the buck to one another. The Navy has claimed that its role was limited till it handed over the statue to the state PWD in April this year. The PWD claimed the statue was the responsibility of the district collector, who has denied his involvement in any stage.

A week before the statue collapsed, the state PWD had written to the Navy about the rusted nuts and bolts used in the statue and asked to take necessary steps. Since the Navy had already handed over the statue, the PWD should have been the one taking "necessary steps". We don't know if the Navy took cognisance of the said letter and how.

Interestingly, sculptor Apte, who is being squarely blamed for the incident, had claimed seven months ago that he was given only a quarter of the time required to complete the project and was not paid a single rupee for his work. Even if this is true, he cannot escape responsibility. But putting the entire onus on the 22-year-old sculptor's shoulders will be a further mockery of the great king revered for his sense of justice.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings



"When all compassion Goes out of fashion The sceptics have their way When every loving notion Is subject to commotion The cynics win the day But Bachchoo, even so The faithful will still know That white and black are merely dark Or cleaned up shades of grey".

— From *Sweeter Kavita*, by Bachchoo

# UK should check social media use to spread hatred, instigate violence

This week a flimsy dingy carrying an overload of wretched asylum seekers trying to get to British shores across the English Channel sank, killing 12 people — including several children.

This is a recurring tragedy. These asylum seekers are, most of them at least, fleeing persecution from countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and a hundred others.

They pay criminal gangs thousands of pounds to get them to Turkey, Europe and then to Britain. The Tory and now the Labour government say the solution is to target and eliminate these gangs. Easier said than done. The gangs operate from the countries where the asylum seekers originate, through subsidiaries in Europe and to flunkies in France who are their low-level members and are entrusted with cramming perhaps 90 people onto

a dingy meant to hold 30 or 40 and setting them loose at night to sink or swim if the boat collapses.

The French authorities, whom the UK governments subsidise for the operations of crackdown on the people-smuggling gangs, have publicly stated that they blame Britain's lax employment laws, which facilitate cheap immigrant labour, which lure these asylum-seekers.

Those who survive the crossings are picked up by Britain's Royal Navy or the Coast Guard and lead a suspended life for months and even years while their claims to asylum are being assessed by what has been proved to be a slow and woefully under-manned department of the home office.

Accommodating the asylum-seekers during this process is seen by the rabble-rousers as an unnecessary drain on the exchequer and hence the British taxpayer.

In July this year three very young children were brutally murdered in a dance class in Stockport when a young man, with some acquaintance with this Taylor-Swift-themed dance class, entered with a sword and attacked the children and the adults who then confronted him.

His identity, under British law which forbids under-age criminals being named, was kept from the media. Rabble-rousers, people opposed to immigrants of any sort and others who have long felt and asserted that "Muslim" immigrants are responsible for horrible crimes, got in the act and onto the social media.

These included far-right politicians such as the leader of the Reform Party, Nigel Farage, who said on TV that the police were keeping the identity of the murderer under wraps because he was perhaps a Muslim immigrant.

I have to be clear here. Mr Farage did not say this explicitly. He merely said that we were not being told the whole truth. And yet in my estimation I think the people who vote for and follow the policies of Mr Farage and Reform would take the implication that the murderer was a Muslim asylum-seeker. The rabble-rousing worked. Riots followed in perhaps 20 cities of the UK from July 30 to August 5. Hundreds of rioters attempted to set fire to mosques and buildings where asylum seekers were housed and attacked the police who were on duty to preserve the peace.

The Labour government was not going to stand by and Sir Keir Starmer and home secretary Yvette Cooper swiftly deployed the police in force to stop this thuggery.

You may recall, gentle reader, that the fellow Elon Musk used his X platform to ridiculously assert that Britain was on the "brink of civil war".

Hundreds of arrests were made, some for throwing bricks at the police, others for trying to set fire to buildings housing asylum seekers, others for urging attacks on Muslims and mosques.

Some of the offences are ridiculous. Babara Barker, 52, from Manchester, pleaded not guilty to a charge of violent disorder for buying eggs which

were then used by the protestors to throw during a riot.

Some are more serious: Lucy Connolly, the wife of a Tory councillor, posted this message on Musk's social platform X: "Mass deportation now, set fire to all the \*\*\*\*\* hotels full of the bastards for all I care... If that makes me racist, so be it."

I think, gentle reader, the post makes Lucy more than just a racist.

Provocative arsonist? "Intellectually-challenged" moron? The political F-word?

Another offender called for the burning of mosques with the worshippers inside.

The latest statistic says that 800 people have been charged with offences arising from the riots. Some of these didn't offend physically by setting fire to bins and attempting to push them through the doors of asylum-seekers' residences. They were provocateurs from the safety of their premises, using social platforms — provocateurs of the hapless; malevolent shepherds goading grubby sheep.

The government has taken note of it and now seeks to find a way to prevent the use of the social media to spread hatred and provoke attacks such as we saw in early August. No doubt some right-wing cry-babies (and I can name names — the *Spectator* and *Telegraph* columnists?) will characterise it as an attack on free speech.

It isn't. Expressing hatred should be allowed. Instigating violence against Muslims, Jews, immigrants or even Zoroastrians, shouldn't.



# Does anyone give a damn for rape victims in India?



Shobhaa's Take

Take a look at the statistics: In 2022, around 32,000 rape cases were reported to the police across India. But on top of that, over 13,000 cases were pending from previous years, adding up to 45,000 cases that the cops were supposed to handle.

And chew on this: in seven out of 10 cases, rapists escape punishment. How come? Simply because we don't have a sufficient number of prisons to accommodate the staggering number of rapists running around, assaulting defenceless women. Rapists are like India's stray dogs: impossible to count or control. Seen as a menace to society and a threat to the vulnerable who they pounce on, they run wild and roam free. The statistics for unreported rapes are beyond computation. Experts say culprits get away with the crime because our overburdened police lack the time needed for a thorough investigation. The conviction rate in rape cases is a dismal 27.4 per cent. Shocked? I am not. The ugly truth is that rape does not count as a "serious" crime in our twisted society. Nobody really cares, no one bothers. Rape happens, we shrug. And move on to the next story.

Rape remains just another four-letter word. Didi has suddenly woken up to rape's seriousness. There has been a huge *hungama* over the stringent anti-rape bill that was unanimously passed by the West Bengal Assembly recently, which proposed the death penalty for rapists, no less. No half measures. *Seedha maut*. The Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill 2024 wants to alter sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The bill

also recommends imprisonment of three-five years for disclosing the victim's identity. The West Bengal chief minister's critics accused her of milking the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital tragedy to score political brownie points and hog headlines. It is a clumsy, misplaced attempt to demonstrate good intentions, after messing up big time. Unfortunately for Didi, the latest stunt has backfired and comes off as a loud, theatrical act that has raised more questions on the rape-murder scandal, without addressing the issues themselves. Is anything likely to change anytime soon? Will the passing of the bill transform the lives of women by ensuring their safety? Certainly not! This is an eyewash, and hogwash, that hasn't fooled anyone. So long as there is police apathy and appalling conditions at the workplace remain, the bill will be a piece of worthless paper. A footnote, best ignored.

It may be worth researching why women in the Northeast are relatively better off, with a lower rate of sexual crimes than the national average. Are they more valued in society? Better respected? Is the mindset of men from the Northeast significantly different from that of their counterparts in Delhi? Why is Delhi stuck with such a vile reputation? How come Delhi "leads" with one nasty incident per 700 women — the country's highest? If India's capital can "boast" about this "achievement", is there any wonder why the rest of the country damns the "rape culture" there and families are reluctant to allow their daughters to seek employment in such a dangerous city? But Mumbai, with all its swag, is not much better, despite the perception of it being the safest metropolis in

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India. It is anything but! Millions of female Mumbaikars risk assault on a daily basis as they rush to work, looking over their shoulders constantly. Most cop stations are frightfully under-manned and the *hawaladars* on duty barely look up when a woman walks in to file a rape complaint. She is treated like a nuisance who is wasting their precious time and keeping them away from more important cases.

With all the noise surrounding the Kolkata rape and murder case, the selective outrage also underlines the class discrimination faced by other rape victims, like the two dalit teens who were found hanging from a tree in UP's Farrukhabad district. Officials claimed swabs were sent for testing "to rule out rape", after the family protested. Since when has the "swab test" become the definitive test to establish rape?

I am scratching my head to find some cheerful news worth sharing as we herald the forthcoming festive season. I am stumped! I can't get over the absurdity of all the stories surrounding the 35-foot steel statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj that toppled over at Rajkot Fort in Malvan. The impressive statue of the warrior king was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December 2023 during the Navy Day celebrations. Nine months later, the gigantic statue fell off its pedestal during high winds. And all hell broke loose as rival political parties started the blame game. Meanwhile, the terrified sculptor disappeared! I am feeling really bad for 39-year-old Jaydeep

Apte, whose track record has been pretty impressive so far. In 2019, Apte was commissioned by the UK-based Sikh Soldier organisation to sculpt a bronze bust of a Sikh soldier which was unveiled in West Yorkshire.

It's crazy that seven police teams were unable to find Apte for 10 days! Come on... he is not a gangster or some underworld don. Hard to believe the ex-alumnus of the J.J. School of Art successfully eluded the cops like a seasoned, hardened criminal. Now comes the good news: the absconding sculptor has finally been nabbed after he surrendered to the police outside his own home. Ridiculous, or what? Perhaps, as the poor fellow said in an earlier interview, he wasn't given sufficient time to work on the statue. Most importantly, what exactly is his culpability? Isn't he as guilty or as innocent as corrupt road contractors whose slipshod work at an inflated cost leads to so many fatal accidents. Nobody arrests them, so why go after the sculptor? Clearly, the politics of the statue are more important than fair play. There is talk that Apte is a close friend of Shrikant, chief minister Eknath Shinde's son. Is that why seven police teams failed to locate him? Meanwhile, the Malvan police filed an FIR against Apte and Chetan Patil, the structural engineer, under several sections, including "attempt to murder". Huh???

For now, I am cheering myself up as Mumbai gets ready to welcome its much-adored Bappa over the weekend. It's modak time as hundreds of pandals gear up for ten days of energetic celebrations. The Assembly elections in Maharashtra are around the corner, with Uddhav Thackeray actively pitching himself as the next chief minister. Get ready for fireworks, folks. And do watch out — the biggest rocket is in Sharad Pawar's hands.

Instagram handle @ShobhaaDe; Twitter handle @DeShobhaa

LETTERS

KUKIS ARE RIGHT!

Do the Kukis have a point? Even as they are persecuted by the Meitei-headed Manipur state government which has the tacit backing of the Centre, they have demanded a Union Territory all of their own and, refused, retaliated with drone attacks. But a UT would give them much-needed attention by way of administration of resources. As a people, they can then make progress. Which they have been craving for a while. The catch is, its creation would leave Manipur with no border with any other Indian UT or state. Dilemma?

Samiul Quadri  
Bikaner

NOT 'SINGAPORE'!

ENOUGH OF THIS TALK about making making many "Singapore" in India. Those Indians who travel to Singapore are impressed with all the order, discipline and efficiency of the country, but not many would want to permanently reside there. Even though life is hard in India with inefficiency and endemic corruption there is much to appreciate about the beauty of our democracy and way of life. We are basically a chaotic and noisy people and the rules and regulations of a Singapore would drive us up the wall. Would we be okay with a completely ban on crackers or religious processions in public? All these things must be considered before we try and blindly emulate the entire Singapore model.

Anthony Henriques  
Mumbai

YOGI ON THE BALL

FOOTBALL IS A SPORT that has long been given short shrift in India. After the maiden Kolkata Derby between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal held at Lucknow's KD Singh Babu Stadium on Monday, UP CM Yogi Adityanath announced plans to build 18 football stadiums across the 18 commissariats in the state. The move will do more good for society than building temples. Nelson Mandela had once said that sports has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.

Sankar Paul  
Chakdaha, West Bengal



SHORT TAKES

**PILGRIMS FLOCK TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA FOR POPE'S VISIT**

Port Moresby, Sept. 6: Over mountains, by air, and by sea, pilgrims have flocked to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea's capital where Pope Francis landed late Friday on a landmark visit. The 87-year-old pontiff will spend four days and three nights in one of the Pacific's poorest and most troubled nations, addressing politicians and bishops, meeting street children, and travelling to the remote jungle outpost of Vanimo. He will hold mass for tens of thousands of faithful in the capital.

**PETROL CAN SAVES SOLOMON ISLANDS CASTAWAY**

Sydney, Sept. 6: A shipwrecked Solomon Islander has survived a "full day and night" adrift in the South Pacific by clutching onto an emptied petrol can, police said Friday. The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force said the 25-year-old and another man were travelling from the capital Honiara when they "experienced rough seas and as a result their boat sank". In dire straits, the man emptied a petrol can and used it as a float, surviving for a "full day and night at sea".

**FATHER CHARGED ALONG WITH SON IN SCHOOL SHOOTING**

Washington, Sept. 6: A 14-year-old boy was charged with shooting four people dead at a US high school, while his father was charged with manslaughter, authorities said Thursday, after the country's latest outburst of gun violence. The teen faces four felony murder counts after allegedly killing two fellow pupils, also aged 14, as well as two teachers at Apalachee High School in the southern state of Georgia on Wednesday. Nine people — most of them children — were wounded in the attack. Authorities have said they are recovering.

**SWEDEN DETAINS PERSON SUSPECTED OF TERRORISM**

Copenhagen, Sept. 6: Swedish police on Wednesday detained a person suspected of a terrorism related crime, a national prosecutor said on Friday. "We are now working unconditionally and intensively on the investigation," senior prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist said in a statement. The suspected crime took place in August, Ljungqvist told TV4 News without elaborating.

**LONDON AIRPORTS SEE HUNDREDS OF FLIGHT DELAYS**

London, Sept. 6: Hundreds of flights at London's busiest airports were hit by delays and cancellations on Friday as rain lashed the city and fog lowered visibility. About 20 per cent of the flights at London Heathrow, Europe's biggest hub, were delayed and about 3 per cent of takeoffs and landings canceled, according to flight tracking firm FlightAware. About 25 per cent of out-bound services at London City airport were delayed, while Gatwick saw nearly one-third of its arrivals postponed. British Airways was hit hardest with more than 230 delays and 56 cancellations.

**JAPAN'S ONLY YOUNG IMPERIAL HEIR TURNS 18**

Tokyo, Sept. 6: Japan got a new highly eligible bachelor on Friday as Prince Hisahito, the imperial family's last hope for long-term survival unless the rules are changed to allow female succession, turned 18. Although his formal coming-of-age ceremony has been pushed back to at least 2025 so he can finish school, according to the Imperial Household Agency, they released a video of him strolling in woods, saying he is "extremely interested" in natural history. "I hope to learn more through each and every experience, absorbing various aspects and growing through them," the prince was quoted as saying.

**1st ballots out in Harris vs Trump battle for Prez**

North Carolina likely to distribute around 1,30,000 voting slips

Washington, Sept. 6: The first ballots for the US election were slated to go out to voters Friday, two months ahead of what looks set to be a photo finish between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. The closely fought battleground state of North Carolina was expected to distribute around 1,30,000 absentee voting slips, with a presidential debate — the next likely campaign inflection point — set for next week. Early in-person voting will start as soon as September 20 in some states.

North Carolina is among a handful of swing states that Harris and Trump have been crisscrossing as they embark on the most intense phase of a White House race expected to be decided by razor-thin margins. Harris' entry into the contest six weeks ago turbocharged enthusiasm among Democrats, who had been despondent about President Joe Biden's chances of stopping Republican Trump from re-entering the White House.

"In just a short time, Vice President Harris' candidacy has galvanised a history-making, broad, and diverse coalition — with the type of enthusiasm, energy, and grit that wins close elections," said campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez. "As we enter the final stretch of this election, we're making sure every hard-earned dollar goes to winning over the voters who will decide this election."

Harris' ascent to the top of the ticket has tilted the races for the White House, Senate and House of Representatives in the direction of Democrats, though all three fights remain close. While Trump has seen the leads he built over Biden evaporate, his campaign still sees several possible paths to victory



The crowd listens to Democratic vice-presidential nominee Minnesota Governor Tim Walz speak during a campaign rally at the Highmark Amphitheatre. — AFP

**HARRIS' \$404 MN GIVES ADVANTAGE OVER RIVAL TRUMP**

Washington, Sept. 6: Kamala Harris' presidential campaign and the Democratic Party raised \$361 million in August, leaving her with a clear cash advantage over Republican rival Donald Trump with two months to go before Election Day, the campaign said on Friday. It said the August haul left Harris with \$404 million in cash on hand at the beginning of September. Trump's campaign team said on Wednesday that it and the Republican Party raised \$130 million in August, leaving \$295 million cash on hand at the end of the month.

The two candidates will spend more than \$1 billion in this campaign, according to regulatory filings. Trump and Harris are using the money to run advertisements and build get-out-the-vote operations in the closely contested states that will decide the election. The fundraising totals, which are reported to U.S. election regulators, are closely watched for signs of momentum ahead of the tightly contested November 5 election.

The totals do not include the money raised by outside groups supporting each candidate. A key test for both candidates will come at their televised debate on Tuesday, the first since President Joe Biden dropped out of the race and endorsed Harris as his successor. — Reuters

**US RECOVERS \$1.3 BN FROM WEALTHY TAXPAYERS**

The US government said that it has recovered \$1.3 billion from wealthy taxpayers since late 2023, as part of efforts to ensure that high-income individuals are paying taxes owed. Between 2010 and 2018, the audit rate for millionaires fell by 80 per cent, according to excerpts from a speech that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is due to deliver in Texas.

**TRUMP TO APPEAL 1ST COURT LOSS TO CARROLL**

Donald Trump's lawyers will ask a federal appeals court to overturn a \$5 million jury verdict finding him liable for sexually assaulting and defaming the writer E. Jean Carroll, who accused Trump of raping her nearly three decades ago.

**HUNTER BIDEN PLEADS GUILTY IN TAX EVASION CASE**

US Prez Joe Biden's son, Hunter, pleaded guilty to all nine tax charges he faced. Before he entered the pleas in a Los Angeles court, US district Judge Mark Scarsi told him he could face up to 15 years in prison along with a \$1 million fine.

and believes it has more support on key election issues like the economy, immigration and crime. Trump's aides argue that Harris' "honeymoon" with voters has overstated support that is beginning to erode as her policy views come into focus. — AFP

**KENYA SCHOOL DORM FIRE KILLS 17 CHILDREN**

Endarasha, Sept. 6: At least 17 young children were killed in a fire that ripped through their primary school dormitory in central Kenya overnight, with initial reports Friday indicating it was overcrowded. The blaze in Hillside Endarasha Academy in Nyeri county broke out at around midnight, police said, engulfing rooms where more than 150 children were sleeping.

Police said the average age of the victims was around nine. The school, which caters to some 800 children, is located in a semi-rural area around 170 kilometres (100 miles) north of the capital Nairobi. "The bodies recovered at the scene were burnt beyond recognition," national police spokesperson Resila Onyango said. "More bodies are likely to be recovered once (the) scene is fully processed," she added. She said several children had been taken to a nearby hospital with injuries. Many families were left waiting anxiously at the school gates to be reunited with their children. — AFP

**SECOND MAJOR BLACKOUT HITS KENYA IN A WEEK**

Nairobi, Sept. 6: Kenya suffered its second major blackout in a week on Friday, although electricity was restored to 70 per cent of customers by late afternoon, national distributor Kenya Power and the energy minister said. The power cut was caused when a transmission line tripped at a substation, followed by a second trip on the Ethiopia-Kenya high voltage transmission line, energy minister Opiyo Wandayi said in a statement. "The loss of 488MW, accounting for 27.3 per cent of the total generation, resulted in cascade failure and a partial collapse of the grid," Wandayi said. — Reuters

**Super Typhoon Yagi makes landfall in China's Hainan**

Hong Kong, Beijing, Sept. 6: Asia's strongest storm this year, Super Typhoon Yagi, landed in China's Hainan on Friday, bringing violent gales and heavy rain that triggered widespread power outages, paralysing the tourist island province known as "China's Hawaii". Packing maximum sustained winds of 234 km per hour (145 mph) near its centre, Yagi registers as the world's second-most powerful tropical cyclone in 2024 so far, after the Category 5 Atlantic hurricane Beryl, and the most severe in the Pacific basin this year.



Coconut trees hit by Typhoon Yagi along a road in Haikou, south China's Hainan Province on Friday. — AP

After more than doubling in strength since killing 16 people in the northern Philippines earlier this week, Yagi slammed into the city of Wenchang in Hainan on Friday afternoon. A little more than an hour after Yagi's arrival, Hainan saw power outages that affected 830,000 households in the province, the official news agency Xinhua said. The provincial power supply department had put together a 7,000-member emergency team that would embark on repairs as soon as conditions permitted, Xinhua added. By Friday night, power to 260,000 households had been restored. Ahead of Yagi's arrival, the island known for its sandy beaches and glitzy hotels had cancelled flights and ferries, shuttered businesses, and told its population of more than 10 million to refrain from going out. The typhoon had already shut schools, businesses and transport links in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong province as well as airports in Vietnam, which it is predicted to hit, along with Laos, over the weekend. On Friday night, Yagi crossed Qiongzhou Strait north of Hainan and made its second landfall in Guangdong with winds still exceeding 200 kph. In Guangdong, more than 574,500 people had been evacuated from areas at risk by noon, more than two-thirds of them from the city of Zhanjiang. In the financial hub of Hong Kong, the stock exchange was shuttered while schools remained closed. Hong Kong's airport authority said operations had largely returned to normal after 50 flights were cancelled on Thursday, and the city of over 7 million people also lowered its typhoon warning by a notch after midday, as Yagi moved west towards Vietnam. The world's longest sea crossing, the main bridge linking Hong Kong with Macau and Zhuhai in Guangdong, also reopened on Friday afternoon after being shut since Thursday. — Reuters

China has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine," Stoltenberg told reporters in Oslo. "China is the one that enables production of many of the weapons that Russia uses." Stoltenberg warned that Beijing's continuous fuelling of the war in Ukraine could adversely impact its interests and reputation. "I call on China to stop supporting Russia's illegal war," he said. China has previously described similar statements made by Nato as "malicious" and biased. Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky made a fresh appeal on Friday for more weapons to counter the threat from advancing Russian forces in the east of the country and Moscow's devastating missile strikes. He pressed his nation's case to allies meeting at the US Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where Washington unveiled a new \$250 million in military aid for Ukraine. "We need more weapons to drive Russian forces off our land," said Zelensky, who also met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. — Agencies

**Durov: Telegram to tackle content moderation issues**



London, Sept. 6: Telegram boss Pavel Durov said on Friday that the messaging app would tackle criticism of its content moderation and remove some features that had been abused for illegal activity. Durov, who was last week placed under formal investigation in France in connection with the use of Telegram for crimes including fraud, money laundering and sharing images of child sex abuse, announced the move in a message to his 12.2 million subscribers on the platform. "While 99.999 per cent of Telegram users have nothing to do with crime, the 0.001 per cent involved in illicit activities create a bad image for the entire platform, putting the interests of our almost billion users at risk," the Russian-born tech entrepreneur wrote. "That's why this year we are committed to turn moderation on Telegram from an area of criticism into one of praise," he added. Durov did not spell out in detail how Telegram would achieve that. But he said it had already disabled new media uploads to a standalone blogging tool "which seems to have been misused by anonymous actors". It had also removed a little-used People Nearby feature which "had issues with bots and scammers" and would instead showcase legitimate, verified business in the vicinity of users. — Reuters

**US-Turkish citizen killed in Israel firing during stir**

Ramallah, West Bank, Sept. 6: A dual US-Turkish citizen taking part in a protest against settlement expansion in the Israeli-occupied West Bank died of her wounds on Friday after being shot in the head by Israeli troops, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported. Both the US state department and Turkey's foreign ministry confirmed the death of Aysenur Ezgi Eygi. The Turkish ministry said she was killed by Israeli soldiers and described the incident as a "murder carried out by the Netanyahu government".



A man sits in front of a damaged building following an Israeli military raid in the Jenin refugee camp, in the occupied West Bank on Friday. — AFP

The Israeli military said it was looking into "reports of that a foreign national was killed as a result of shots fired in the area. The details of the incident and the circumstances in which she was hit are under review". US state department spokesperson Matthew Miller said: "We are aware of an American citizen, Aysenur Eygi, today in the West Bank. We offer our deepest condolences to her family and loved ones. We are urgently gathering more information about the circumstances of her death." — Reuters

**Israel pulls out of Jenin after 10 days**

Jenin, Palestinian Territories, Sept. 6: The Israeli army withdrew from the city of Jenin and its refugee camp on Friday after a 10-day operation that left 36 dead across the occupied West Bank, witnesses said. After days of destructive incursions by soldiers backed by armoured vehicles and bulldozers, residents who had earlier fled began returning to their homes in the camp, a bastion of Palestinian armed groups fighting against Israel, AFP journalists said. On August 28, the army launched a military operation in several cities and towns of the northern West Bank, including Jenin. It said in a statement on Friday that Israeli forces "have been conducting counterterrorism activity in the area of Jenin", without confirming a withdrawal. "Israeli security forces are continuing to act in order to achieve the objectives of the counterterrorism operation," the statement said. — Reuters

**Nato chief urges China to stop backing Russia's war**

Oslo, Sept. 6: Nato secretary general Jens Stoltenberg on Friday called on China to stop supporting Russia's war in Ukraine and said Beijing's assistance has been a significant factor in the continuation of the war. "China has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine," Stoltenberg told reporters in Oslo. "China is the one that enables production of many of the weapons that Russia uses." Stoltenberg warned that Beijing's continuous fuelling of the war in Ukraine could adversely impact its interests and reputation. "I call on China to stop supporting Russia's illegal war," he said. China has previously described similar statements made by Nato as "malicious" and biased. Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky made a fresh appeal on Friday for more weapons to counter the threat from advancing Russian forces in the east of the country and Moscow's devastating missile strikes. He pressed his nation's case to allies meeting at the US Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where Washington unveiled a new \$250 million in military aid for Ukraine. "We need more weapons to drive Russian forces off our land," said Zelensky, who also met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. — Agencies



Ukraines President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz shake hands as they meet for bilateral talks. — AFP

**BIDEN TO SIGN \$250 MILLION IN UKRAINE AID**

Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Sept. 6: United States President Joe Biden will approve an additional \$250 million in security assistance for Ukraine, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced at the start of talks on Friday in Germany. "It will surge in more capabilities to meet Ukraine's evolving requirements. And we'll deliver them at the speed of war," the U.S. Defense Secretary said. The announcement comes at a high-risk moment for Ukrainian forces, who are advancing into Russia's Kursk region even as Russian forces are threatening the eastern Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk. — Reuters

**World's 2nd tallest tower in Malaysia spurs row**

Kuala Lumpur, Sept. 6: A quarter-century after the Petronas Twin Towers became the world's tallest buildings and reshaped Kuala Lumpur's skyline, Malaysia's capital is continuing to add new skyscrapers despite growing doubts over the level of demand for property. Kuala Lumpur already has more supertall buildings than all but seven cities, and recently it's added another — the 678.9-meter (2,227-foot) Merdeka 118, which will fully open to the public later this year. A long spire helped it edge out the Shanghai Tower to become the second-tallest building in the world after Dubai's Burj Khalifa. With a population of about two million in a city where many offices and homes sit empty, there are growing questions about the proliferation of skyscrapers in the Malaysian capital. But such construction is likely to continue, driven by a preference by many investors to chase returns in real estate, and developers and political leaders seeking to project national strength through building tall. "If the money rules, this is what happens," said Mustafa Kamal Zulkarnain, an architect who focuses on resilient cities. "We're building as if nobody's checking on the demand." However, in a speech last month, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim urged more focus on affordable housing, as well as shops and small restaurants. "There are already many skyscrapers," he said. "If the private sector wants to build them, please do. But the government does not make this a priority anymore." The boom started in the 1980s, fueled by former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's big infrastructure projects meant to both drive rapid economic growth and outshine the West. When the Petronas Twin Towers were completed in 1996 under his watch, barely eclipsing Chicago's Sears Tower, it was the first time in over a century that the world's tallest building was not in the US. — Bloomberg

Kuala Lumpur already has more super tall buildings than all but 7 cities

**TOP 5 CITIES WITH MOST SKYSCRAPERS**

Hong Kong	7.6	558
Shenzhen	12.4	415
New York	8.8	318
Dubai	3.5	263
Guangzhou	16.1	194



The KLCC Park at the foot of the Petronas Towers, which were the world's tallest buildings a quarter-century ago. — Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

### Indians shine in Rapid chess

**Waskaduwa, Sri Lanka:** Indian chess players delivered an impressive performance at the Commonwealth Rapid Chess Championship, securing three podium finishes. Grandmaster Mitra Guha claimed the gold medal with 6.5 points, while G. M. Panneerselvam Iniyar took silver with six points. G. M. Laxman Rajaram secured the bronze with 5.5 points. Out of the 14 Indian participants, all finished within the top 30. Notable rankings among Indian men included Shaam Nikhil P (5th with 4 points), Sayantan Das (8th with 4.5 points), and Hari Madhavan NB (9th with 4 points). Other top finishes included Adireddy Arjun (11th with 4 points), Arul Prakash N (19th with 3.5 points). Among the Indian women, FIDE Master Kalyani Sirin achieved a joint-ninth place with four points. She was followed by Mary Ann Gomes (12th with 4 points), Sakshi Chitlange and Sagar Tejaswini (joint-16th with 4 points), and Arushi Kotwal (20th with 3.5 points). — *PTI*

### Tanisha-Dhruv are out of Taipei

**Taipei:** India's Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila bowed out of the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament after a hard-fought loss in the mixed doubles quarterfinals here on Friday. The Indian duo lost 20-22, 12-21 to Thailand's fourth-seeded pair Pakkapon Teeraratsakul and Phataimas Muenwong in a match lasting just over half an hour. Tanisha and Dhruv, ranked 97th in the world, started strong, leading 6-3 and later held a 19-16 advantage in the first game. However, their Thai opponents, ranked 28th globally, mounted a comeback with a four-point burst to earn a game point. The Indian pair saved one point but ultimately lost the opening game after their rivals secured two more crucial points. In the second game, Pakkapon and Phataimas took control, establishing an 11-6 lead at the mid-game break and then maintained their momentum to seal the match, ending India's campaign in the tournament. — *PTI*

### Oz coach sacked for Korean cheer

**Sydney:** Swimming Australia on Friday sacked a member of its Olympic coaching staff, saying he caused serious reputational damage by supporting a rival South Korean athlete racing against his countrymen. Coach Michael Palfrey caused a stir when he said he hoped Kim Woo-min — who he coached at one point — would win the men's 400 metres freestyle instead of two Australians. Head coach Rohan Taylor said Palfrey's actions were "un-Australian", but the team did not sack him at the time because it would be too disruptive. "Swimming Australia has terminated Michael Palfrey's employment due to a breach of his employment agreement," governing body Swimming Australia said on Friday. "Palfrey was found to have breached his employment contract by bringing himself into disrepute and causing serious damage to his and Swimming Australia's reputation, and adversely affecting Swimming Australia's interests." Palfrey worked with Australian swimmers Zac Incerti, Abbey Connor and Alex Perkins. — *AFP*

### Dravid signs a deal with Royals

**New Delhi:** India's Rahul Dravid has been named head coach of Indian Premier League team Rajasthan Royals, the franchise said on Friday, weeks after he quit as national coach following the T20 World Cup triumph. It will be 51-year-old Dravid's second stint with the Royals, where he was captain before moving to a mentor role in 2014. Dravid has been appointed head coach "on a multi-year contract," the Royals said in a statement. Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara has been Rajasthan's director of cricket since 2021 and will stay on with the franchise to work with Dravid, who spent five years with the Royals from 2011 to 2015. "His exceptional coaching capabilities are evident with the transformation he's driven in Indian cricket," Jake Lush McCrum, chief executive officer of the Royal Sports Group, said in the statement. Dravid coached the Indian team to the T20 World Cup title earlier this year. — *AFP*

# HIGH PRAWIN

## Kumar bends backwards, India jump to 14th on table

**Paris, Sept. 6:** India's Praveen Kumar dazzled with a record-breaking performance in the men's high jump T64 event, adding a Paralympic gold to his Tokyo Games silver here on Friday. The 21-year-old from Noida, who was born with a short leg, smashed the Asian record with a best jump of 2.08 metres in the six-men field to finish on top of the podium. USA's Derek Loddicent claimed the silver with a jump of 2.06m while Uzbekistan's Temurbek Giyazov, who notched a personal best 2.03m, finished third. India jumped to the 14th spot in the pecking order after Praveen's win. The country has so far won six gold, nine silver and 11 bronze medals to achieve its best-ever haul at a single edition of the Paralympic Games. India surpassed its Tokyo Games gold medal tally after Praveen's triumph in the men's high jump T64 event. At the Tokyo Paralympics, India had won five gold, six silver, and eight bronze medals.

Praveen won the country its sixth gold medal after clearing 2.08m. Owing to start from 1.89m, Kumar aced seven jumps in his first attempt to put himself in pole position to grab the coveted gold medal.

The bar was then raised to 2.10m, with both Kumar and Loddicent fighting for the top spot on the podium but failed to clear the mark.

This was also the 2023 world championship bronze medallist's personal best performance.

T64 is for athletes with movement moderately affected in one lower leg or the absence of one or both legs below the knee. While T44, under which Praveen is categorised, is for athletes with movement affected at a low or moderate degree in one lower leg. His impairment, which is congenital, affects the bones that connect his hip to his left leg.

Kumar's odyssey toward becoming a para-athlete was marked by considerable trials. He often grappled with profound feelings of inadequacy in comparison to his peers as a child. He started playing sports to counter these insecurities and found a passion for volleyball. His life changed when he took part in a high jump event at an able-bodied athletics competition.

This experience exposed him to the vast opportunities available for athletes with disabilities. — *PTI*



Praveen Kumar in action during the men's high jump T64 event at the Paralympic Games in Paris on Friday.

### SIMRAN MAKES SEMIFINALS OF ZOOM SPRINT

**Paris, Sept. 6:** Indian track and field athlete Simran Sharma topped her heat and entered the semifinals of the women's 200 metres T12 event at the Paralympics on Friday. Simran, who is the reigning world champion, topped her heat with a timing of 25.41s to make the semifinals.

As per rule, the winner of each heat qualify to final 'A'. The three fastest runners in each semifinal qualify to Final 'A'.

The T12 classification in the Paralympics is for athletes with visual impairments. Simran was born prematurely and spent the next 10 weeks in an incubator where it was discovered that she is visually impaired. Coached by her husband Gajendra Singh, who works for the Army Service Corps, she trains at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

On Thursday, Simran missed out on a medal, finishing fourth in the Women's 100mT12 final. Simran clocked 12.31 seconds in the four-player final after being hampered by a slow start. — *PTI*

MEDALS TABLE				
COUNTRY	G	S	B	T
1. China	74	57	39	170
2. Great Britain	39	31	20	90
3. USA	27	34	18	79
4. Netherlands	22	12	8	42
5. France	17	24	23	64
6. Italy	17	11	29	57
7. Ukraine	16	21	27	64
8. Brazil	15	18	30	63
9. Australia	14	12	19	45
10. Japan	10	8	13	31
14. India	6	9	11	26

### Harvinder, Preeti will carry the flag

**Paris, Sept. 6:** Gold medal-winning archer Harvinder Singh and sprinter Preeti Pal, who made history by becoming the first-ever Indian woman to win two medals at the Paralympics, will be the country's flag bearers during the closing ceremony of the Paris Games on Sunday.

Harvinder, 33, who had also scripted history by becoming the first Indian archer to clinch a gold at the Paralympics to add to the bronze he won in Tokyo in 2021, said carrying the country's flag dur-

ing the closing ceremony was the highest honour he could have dreamed of. "Winning gold for India has been a dream come true, and now leading our nation as a flag-bearer at the closing ceremony is the highest honour I could imagine," said Harvinder, who has impairment in both legs since he was a toddler. Preeti, 23, has clinched bronze medals in women's T35 100m and 200m competitions with personal best timings of 14.21 and 30.01 seconds respectively. — *PTI*

### GAGAN LAUDS PERFORMANCE OF PARA TEAM

**New Delhi, Sept. 6:** London Games bronze medallist shooter and India's Chef de Mission at the Paris Olympics, Gagan Narang on Friday heaped praise on the country's para athletes for their performance in the ongoing Paralympics.

The Indian Paralympic contingent has already bagged a record 25 medals in this edition of the quadrennial showpiece with 5 gold, 9 silver and 11 bronze and is currently placed at the 14th position in the medal tally.

When asked about his analysis of the Paris Olympic Games, the former shooter said he hasn't done it yet. "I haven't done my analysis of the Paris Olympics yet, everybody has spoken about it. But the most important thing right now is that in the Paralympics we are performing well, we are on the 16th position today. A fantastic effort by our Paralympians. They surpassed the Tokyo medal tally, looking forward for more medals," Narang said on the sidelines of a function at the Press Club of India. — *PTI*

## Chopra qualifies for big league finals

**New Delhi, Sept. 6:** India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world. The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his

two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday.

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

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

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

The Indian finished second in the Lausanne

Diamond Leg, bested by Peters, who threw 90.61 metres. In Paris Olympics, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had taken the gold with a monster throw of 92.97m.

"First goal, go to the doctor and make my groin 100 per cent fit and also I will be technically better and try to throw far again," he had said last month about his plans for this year and the coming one.

Chopra had won the

Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlech in the winner-takes-all finale in Eugene, USA, last year.

Each Diamond League season finale champion is awarded a prestigious "Diamond Trophy", \$30,000 prize money and a wild card for the World Athletics Championships. The DL finale will mark the end of Chopra's season. — *PTI*

### DUCKETT LEADS ENGLISH CHARGE AGAINST LANKA

**London, Sept. 6:** Ben Duckett's typically quick-fire fifty guided an England side chasing a series whitewash against Sri Lanka to 76 for 1 before bad light forced an early lunch break on the first day of the third Test at the Oval on Friday. Duckett was 51 not out and stand-in captain Ollie Pope, desperate for a return to form, was unbeaten on 14 when the umpires took the teams off the field with 15 overs bowled.

England, who already have an unassailable 2-0 series lead after routing the West Indies 3-0 earlier this season, are bidding for their first home Test

campaign clean sweep since 2004, when Michael Vaughan oversaw seven wins from seven.

Sri Lanka captain Dhananajaya de Silva won the toss under gloomy skies and, with a green-tinted pitch also promising to aid his four-man pace attack, unsurprisingly opted to field first.

Duckett was lucky when an inside-edge off Asitha Fernando missed the stumps. But he clipped left-armers Vishwa Fernando off his pads for four. — *AFP*

**Brief scores:** England 76/1 in 15 overs (Ben Duckett batting 51, Ollie Pope batting 14; Lahiru Kumara 1/24) vs Sri Lanka.

## Centurion Musheer, Saini give India 'B' upperhand

**Bengaluru, Sept. 6:** Navdeep Saini reminded of his presence among the fringe pacers with a quality new ball spell that helped India 'B' to keep India 'A' in check at 134 for 2 in the first innings, after the second day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Friday.

India 'B' needed their bowlers to carry on the excellent effort of Musheer Khan (181, 373b, 16x4, 5x6) that powered 'B' to 321 in their first innings.

K. L. Rahul (23, 80 balls) and Riyan Parag (27, 49 balls) are at the crease at stumps, with India 'A' in arrears by 187 runs.

### DULEEP TROPHY

#### BRIEF SCORES

■ India 'B' 321 in 116 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 30, Musheer Khan 181, Navdeep Saini 56; Akash Deep 4/60) vs India 'A' 134/2 in 35 overs (Mayank Agarwal 36). ■ India 'D' 164 and 206/8 in 49 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 56, Shreyas Iyer 54, Ricky Bhui 44; Manav Suthar 5/30) vs India 'C' 169 in 62.2 overs (Baba Indrajith 72, Abhishek Porel 34; Harshit Rana 4/33).

Saini, who is out of favour since the 2021 away series against Australia, showed some spark to eke out the wickets of India 'A' skipper Shubman Gill (25)

and his opening partner Mayank Agarwal (36).

#### FIFTIES FROM PADIKKAL, IYER POWER INDIA 'D'

Meanwhile in Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh), fluent fifties from skipper Shreyas Iyer and Devdutt Padikkal saw India 'D' stretch their lead to 202 runs against India 'C' on the second day.

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

## US | OPEN

# Sabalenka sets up final with Jessica

**New York, Sept. 6:** Jessica Pegula scripted an astonishing comeback to defeat Karolina Muchova and reach her first Grand Slam final at the US Open on Thursday where she will take on big-hitting Aryna Sabalenka for the title.

World number six Pegula of the United States battled back from a set and a break down to record a gutsy 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over her 52nd-ranked opponent from the Czech Republic.

Double Australian Open champion and world number two Sabalenka reached her second successive US Open final by seeing off another American, Emma Navarro 6-3, 7-6 (7/2).

"I thought I was lucky to still be in it. She made me look like a beginner, she was destroying me and I was about to burst into tears but it all came down to small moments. I don't know how I turned that around," admitted Pegula.

Pegula has now won 15 of 16 matches on the US summer hard court swing which saw a title in Toronto and defeat in the Cincinnati final to Sabalenka.

Pegula, playing in her first Grand Slam semifinal after six painful quarterfinal defeats, looked down and out at one stage on Thursday.

The 30-year-old lost the first set in just 28 minutes and was quickly 2-0 down in the second and had to save break point to avoid slipping 3-0 down.

That was the cue for many spectators to leave the Arthur Ashe Stadium not wanting to witness a second American defeat in quick succession.

However, Pegula dug deep to spark an incredible recovery during a

### THE RESULTS

■ **Women's singles semifinals:** Jessica Pegula (USA x6) bt Karolina Muchov (CZE) 1-6, 6-4, 6-2; Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Emma Navarro (USA x13) 6-3, 7-6 (7/2).

■ **Mixed doubles final:** Sara Errani/ Andrea Vavassori (Italy x3) bt Taylor Townsend/ Donald Young (USA) 7-6(7/0), 7-5.

rollercoaster conclusion to a thrilling semi-final as she raced away with eight of the last 10 games.

Muchova's 40th unforced error of the contest sealed her fate.

### TOO LATE TO CHEER FOR ME, ARYNA TO FANS

Earlier, Sabalenka went through to the final by seeing off Navarro as well as a partisan home crowd.

Navarro, playing in her first semifinal at the majors, went down fighting when she clawed her way back from 3-5 down in the second set to take her chances in a tiebreak.

Sabalenka sent down 34 winners to the 13 of the 23-year-old American.

"Guys, now you're cheering for me. Wow. It's a bit too late," Sabalenka told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

Navarro, who had lost in the first round on her two previous appearances at the US Open, admitted that the occasion may have caught her on the hop.

Sabalenka, runner-up to Coco Gauff of the US in New York last year, called on her raw power to secure the first set, nullifying Navarro's smart use of the angles. Although an early break was cancelled out, the 26-year-old edged ahead again in the sixth game. — *AFP*



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus plays a shot during the US Open women's singles semifinal against Emma Navarro of the United States at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. — *AFP*

## UEFA | NATIONS LEAGUE

# Ronaldo scores his 900th goal

**Paris, Sept. 6:** Spain were held to a goalless draw by Serbia in the UEFA Nations League on Thursday in their first game since winning Euro 2024, while Cristiano Ronaldo reached another milestone by scoring his 900th career goal as Portugal beat Croatia.

Eight of Spain's starting line-up in their Euro 2024 final victory over England almost two months ago were on the field at kick-off against Serbia in Belgrade.

Among them was Lamine Yamal, with the Barcelona prodigy just one of the Spain players to be denied by home goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic.

In Lisbon, Ronaldo's 900th career goal proved to be the winner as 2019 Nations League champi-

ons Portugal edged Croatia 2-1 in Group A1.

Ronaldo, 39, put behind him a disappointing Euro 2024 in which he failed to score as he turned in a Nuno Mendes cross in the 34th minute at the Estadio da Luz to reach the landmark.

He appeared emotional as he celebrated the goal, his 131st in a Portugal shirt. Half of his goals were scored for Real Madrid, with the remainder spread across his spells at Sporting Lisbon, Manchester United and current club Al-Nassr.

### POLAND BEAT SCOTLAND

Portugal next host Scotland, who lost 2-3 to Poland at Hampden Park, with the visitors grabbing the victory thanks to a 97th-minute Nicola Zalewski penalty. — *AFP*

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