

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024



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19-year-old Gujarati girl Rhea Singha wins Miss Universe India crown



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WINDOWS



French actress Camille Lellouche during an event in Paris on Monday. — AFP

Mann reshuffles Cabinet; 5 MLAs join Punjab govt

Chandigarh: The Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab government on Monday inducted five MLAs as ministers as it carried out a Cabinet rejig. Governor Gulab Chand Kataria administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers during a swearing-in ceremony at the Raj Bhavan here. CM Bhagwant Mann, among other party leaders, was also present. Those sworn in as ministers included Hardeep Singh Mundian, Barinder Kumar Goyal, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, Dr Ravjot Singh and Mohinder Bhagat. They took oath in Punjab. Among the new inductees, three were from the Malwa region and two from the Doaba region. Full report on Page 3

First case of Clade 1b strain of Mpox in India

New Delhi: India has reported the first case of the Mpox strain, which led to the WHO declaring it a public health emergency, in a patient from Kerala who had tested positive last week. Clade 1b strain has been detected in a 38-year-old man from Malappuram district. Full report on Page 4

CBI grills TMC MLA in Kol rape-murder case

Kolkata: Trinamul Congress' Panihati legislator Nirmal Ghosh was interrogated for seven hours on Monday by the CBI sleuths probing the R.G. Kar hospital rape and murder case. His grilling comes after the CBI questioned Apurba Biswas of the forensic department. Full report on Page 4

COUNTERPOINT



Have you seen any iron rods or gas cylinders along the track on this route?

WEATHER

Max: 36°C
Min: 28°C
RH: 63%
Rain: NIL

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrpadaha Bahula Saptami till 12.43 pm
Star: Mrigasira till 9.58 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.20 am; 10.56 pm to 11.44 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.15 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.11 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.19 PM
MOONSET TODAY 12.02 AM

Modi again pushes for UNSC reform to fight global conflict 'India ready to share digital public infra with entire world' Humanity's success lies in joint strength, not on battlefield: PM

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

"The success of humanity lies in our collective strength and not on the battlefield," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said as he once again pushed for reforms in the United Nations Security Council. Speaking at the UN's Summit of the Future on Monday, the PM emphasised that for global peace and development, reforms in global institutions are important.

Mr Modi underlined that the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G-20 member under India's presidency at the New Delhi summit was an important step in this direction.

The statement comes days after US President Joe Biden supported India's aspiration to be in the big table of the UNSC as a permanent member. The Quad leaders, too, supported the need for reform in the UNSC to accommodate a few more countries and be more inclusive.

During his 4.47-minute



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during Summit of the Future on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Monday. — AFP

THE PM underlined that the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G-20 member under India's presidency at the New Delhi summit was an important step

address, the PM flagged terrorism and "new theatres of conflict" in areas such as cyber, maritime and space, saying global action on these issues must match global ambition. He underlined that

terrorism continues to be a serious threat to global peace and security. "On all these issues, I will stress that global action must match global ambition," he said.

The Prime Minister stressed that while discussing "global future", the highest priority should be accorded to a human-centric approach. "While prioritising sustainable development, we must also ensure human

Modi meets world leaders, top US CEOs in New York

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/NEW YORK, SEPT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas, Nepal PM K.P. Sharma Oli and Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session.

At his meeting with Mr Abbas, Mr Modi reiterated India's support for the Palestinian people.

Mr Modi also participated in a roundtable with the CEOs of some top American companies, including Google, Adobe and Accenture, where he emphasised India's growth prospects and discussed initiatives to foster bilateral collaborations across various sectors.

Mr Modi was in New York on the second leg of his three-day US visit. More on Page 4

Selja says won't leave Cong, will join Haryana campaign

Hits back at BJP | Shah claims 'insult' to Dalits

ASHHAR KHAN and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

At a time when the BJP was trying to exploit the reported differences between Haryana Dalit Congress leader Kumari Selja and her party, she came out into the open on Monday and asserted she was "not leaving the Congress" and "will die as a Congress worker".

However, earlier in the day, home minister Amit Shah hit out at the



Kumari Selja Congress, calling it an "anti-Dalit" party and said it "insulted" Dalit leaders like Kumari Selja and Ashok Tanwar. Mr Shah also lashed out at Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi for his remarks on reservations and asserted that "if there was anybody who can protect quotas, it was only Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

Asked about the BJP's recent overtures to her to join it amid reports that she was discontented over ticket distribution for the Haryana Assembly polls, the AICC general secretary said: "The BJP leaders should refrain from giving me advice. The

Laapataa Ladies India's entry for Oscars 2025

Chennai, Sept. 23: Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies* has been picked as India's official entry for Oscars 2025, the Film Federation of India announced here on Monday.

The Hindi film, a light-hearted satire on patriarchy, was chosen from a list of 29 films, including Bollywood hit *Animal*, Malayalam National Award winner *Aattam* and Cannes winner *All We Imagine As Light*.

The 13-member select committee headed by Assamese director Jahnur Barua "unanimously"



Filmmaker Kiran Rao during an interview in Mumbai on Monday. — PTI

decided on *Laapataa Ladies*, produced by Aamir Khan and Ms Rao, for reckoning in the best international film category at the Academy Awards.

Besides *Laapataa Ladies*, Hindi film *Srikanth*, Tamil movies

It is indeed a great privilege to be selected from among such amazing Indian films this year. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the selection panel.

— Kiran Rao
Filmmaker

Vaazhai and *Thangalaan* and Malayalam film *Ulozhukku* were among the top five in the 29-title list.

Laapataa Ladies, which was released in March to universal praise from the critics, is a heartwarming and empowering take on two brides in rural India in 2001 who accidentally get swapped during a train journey.

The film is backed by Ms Rao's Kindling Productions, Aamir Khan Productions, and Jio Studios. Ms Rao said she is "deeply honoured and delighted" that her film will represent India at the 97th Academy Awards.

— PTI
More on Page 11

Over 270 killed as Israel hits 300+ targets, steps up Lebanon conflict

Marjayoun (Lebanon), Sept. 23: Israeli strikes on Monday killed more than 270 Lebanese in the deadliest barrage since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war as the Israeli military warned residents in southern and eastern Lebanon to evacuate their homes ahead of a widening air campaign against Hezbollah.

Thousands of Lebanese fled the south, and the main highway out of the southern port city of Sidon was jammed with cars heading toward Beirut in the biggest exodus since

THE ISRAELI military announced that it hit some 300 targets, saying it was going after Hezbollah weapons sites. Some strikes hit in residential areas of towns in the south and the eastern Bekaa Valley

the 2006 fighting. More than 400 other people were wounded in the strikes.

The Israeli military announced that it hit some 300 targets Monday, saying it was going after Hezbollah weapons sites. Some strikes hit in resi-

dential areas of towns in the south and the eastern Bekaa Valley. One strike hit a wooded area as far away as Byblos in central Lebanon.

The military said it was expanding airstrikes to include areas of the Bekaa Valley, along Lebanon's border. Hezbollah has long had an established presence in the Bekaa Valley, which runs along the Lebanese-Syrian border, and it is where the group was founded with the help of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

— AP
More on Page 6



Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake at the Temple of the Tooth, a Buddhist temple, in Kandy. The country's first Leftist President was sworn in on Monday, vowing to restore public faith in politics but said he had no magic solution to the hardships suffered following an unprecedented economic crisis. Report on Page 6 — AFP

Dissanayake is sworn in, Modi congratulates him on victory

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/COLOMBO, SEPT. 23

Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Monday vowed to preserve democracy and do everything to clean up public life. The remarks by Mr Dissanayake, 56, came as he was sworn in as Sri Lanka's ninth President on Monday by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya at the Presidential Secretariat.

In his inaugural address, Mr Dissanayake thanked his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe for respecting the people's mandate and facilitating a peaceful transfer of power.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated Mr Dissanayake on his victory and said he looks forward to working closely with him to further strengthen the India-Sri Lanka multi-faceted cooperation. Responding to this, Mr Dissanayake said he shares Mr Modi's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties. Mr Modi was among the first few world leaders to congratulate Mr Dissanayake.

More on Page 4

Downloading child porn or watching it Pocco offence: SC

Apex court strikes down HC verdict | Bring in ordinance, Centre advised

RAKESH K. SINGH
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Monday held that downloading and watching child pornography constitute offences under the Pocco Act and the Information Technology Act.

Observing that "sexual exploitation of children is a pervasive and deeply rooted issue that has plagued societies worldwide and has been a matter of serious concern in India", the top court ruled that mere possession of such material, even if they are not disseminated further, will fall under the ambit of the penal provisions of these two laws.

The judgment came on a plea challenging a Madras high court order that ruled that mere downloading and watching child pornography was not an offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and IT Act.

Setting aside the Madras high court ruling, the apex court bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y.

THE JUDGMENT came on a plea challenging a Madras high court order that ruled that mere downloading and watching child pornography was not an offence under the Pocco and IT Act

Chandrachud and Justice J.B. Pardiwala said: "Parliament should seriously consider bringing about an amendment to the Pocco Act for the purpose of substituting the term 'child pornography' with 'child sexual exploitative and abuse material' (CSEAM) with a view to reflect more accurately on the reality of such offences. The Union of India, in the meantime, may consider bringing about the suggested amendment to Pocco by way of an ordinance."

The top court also directed the courts not to use the term "child pornography" and substitute it with CSEAM and laid down certain guidelines on child pornography and its legal consequences.

"We put the courts to notice the term 'child' in the Pocco Act. D.Y. More on Page 4

Atishi takes over as CM; Kejriwal's chair empty

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Delhi chief minister Atishi on Monday took charge as the city's eighth CM. After taking over, she sat on a white chair placed next to former CM Arvind Kejriwal's chair. She said his chair will remain unoccupied in the office.

Drawing a comparison from *Ramayan*, the chief minister said she would work as Bharat did by keeping his older brother Lord Ram's "khadaun" (wooden slippers) on Ayodhya's throne. "My situation is like that of Bharat, when Lord Shri Ram went into exile, and Bharat had to govern in his absence", said Atishi. "The Delhi CM's chair belongs to Arvind Kejriwal. I am confident in the elections to be held in February, the people of Delhi will again make him the CM," she said.

More on Page 2



Rescue team members help Roscosmos cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko to leave the capsule shortly after the landing of the Russian Soyuz MS-25 space capsule carrying the Nasa astronaut Tracy Dyson and the Roscosmos cosmonauts Oleg Kononenko and Nikolai Chub in Kazakh town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, on Monday. Report on Page 6 — AP

SHORT TAKES

After 12 days, Mpox patient discharged

New Delhi: An Mpox patient admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital here earlier this month has been discharged, the hospital officials confirmed. The 26-year-old patient, who had been admitted to the disaster ward dedicated to Mpox cases for almost 12 days, was discharged on Saturday. An official from the hospital confirmed "the only Mpox patient was discharged on September 21." The 26-year-old patient from Hisar, Haryana, was admitted to the hospital on September 8, with doctors confirming the diagnosis on September 9. The hospital has 20 isolation rooms, out of which 10 are for suspected cases and the remaining for confirmed Mpox patients. The Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital and the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital have five rooms each for suspected Mpox cases and five each for confirmed ones.

Police arrest 2 over 'digital arrest' fraud

New Delhi: Two people were arrested here for allegedly cheating people on the pretext of digital arrest by posing as crime branch officials, the police said on Monday. "Digital arrest" is a tactic where the accused pose as law enforcement agency officials, like CBI or customs officials, and threatens people of arrest by making video calls in the name of fake international parcels, they said. "The complainant was cheated of ₹4.95 lakh on the pretext of digital arrest. A case was registered and an investigation was taken up. The money trail was monitored and two persons were identified in the case as Rakesh Singh and Sachin Sangwan," deputy commissioner of police (southwest) Rohit Meena said.

'Tech enhances safety of people'

New Delhi: Atul Rai, founder of Staqu Technologies, emphasised the urgent need for improved safety measures amid increasing attacks on women. He highlighted that while many places have security cameras, they are often underutilised due to the lack of real-time monitoring. Staqu's audio-video technology, JARVIS, addresses this gap by transforming existing systems into intelligent security tools that can raise real-time alerts and respond to audio cues, such as someone calling for help. Already adopted by over 11 state police departments, JARVIS is making cities safer. In Uttar Pradesh, it has integrated the criminal records of over 900,000 offenders, enabling real-time detection of known criminals and significantly advancing crime prevention.

DELHI GETS ITS 1ST DRIVERLESS METRO TRAINSET

New Delhi: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Monday got the first metropolitan metro trainset integrated with driverless technology, as part of its maiden project outsourced to an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), an official statement said. DMRC managing director Vikas Kumar said, "Today is a historic occasion for the Delhi Metro family as we take another major step towards operationalising the Phase 4 corridors." The first set of trains for this new phase of expansion is being dispatched from Andhra Pradesh's Sri City, and we are looking forward to a new era of enhanced convenience and eco-friendly travel for our passengers, Kumar added. Under the 'Make in India' initiative, the metropolitan trains are being designed in India at Alstom's facility in Sri City and are integrated with Grade of Automation (GOA) 4 driverless technology, the statement said. The trainsets are designed to operate at a safe speed of up to 95 kmph and an operational speed of up to 85 kmph and will serve three lines of the Delhi Metro, including two extensions and the new Gold Line 10, covering 64.67 km in total, it added. This project, valued at 312 million euros, includes 15 years of maintenance, making it the first such outsourcing by the DMRC to an OEM, the statement said. — PTI

■ Sits next to Kejriwal's empty chair ■ 'Will work as Ram's Bharat' AAP leader Atishi takes over as 8th CM of Delhi

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Delhi chief minister Atishi on Monday took charge of the office as the eighth CM of the national capital. After assuming the office, she sat on a white chair which was placed next to former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's chair and said his chair would remain unoccupied in the office.

Drawing a comparison from the epic Ramayan, the chief minister said she would work the way Bharat did, by keeping his elder brother Lord Ram's 'khadaun' (wooden slippers) on Ayodhya's throne. "My situation is like that of Bharat—when Lord Shri Ram went into exile and Bharat had to govern in his absence," said CM Atishi.

"The chair of the chief minister of Delhi belongs to Arvind Kejriwal. I am confident that in the elections to be held in February after four



Delhi chief minister Atishi takes charge of the office in New Delhi Monday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

months, the people of Delhi will again make him the chief minister with their love and trust. Till then, this chair (Kejriwal's) will remain in this room, waiting for Arvind Kejriwal," affirmed CM Atishi.

Ms Atishi, after taking charge, said, "I will work for four months as the chief minister of Delhi like Bharat did by keeping Lord Ram's khadaun on the throne. Arvind Kejriwal has set an example of dig-

nity in politics by stepping down. The BJP left no stone unturned to tarnish his image. BJP filed false cases against him, arrested him, and kept him in jail for six months."

"Kejriwal was granted bail by the Supreme Court, which said his arrest was carried out with ill intentions. Had there been somebody else, they wouldn't have even thought for a moment and sat on the chief minister's chair, but he chose to resign," the

new chief minister said. Atishi has retained the 13 portfolios she held in the Kejriwal government, including those of education, revenue, finance, power and PWD. City environment minister Gopal Rai also took charge at the Delhi Secretariat. New entrant Mukesh Ahlawat, who was allotted the portfolios of labour, SC and ST, employment and land and building departments, also took charge on Monday. Environment minister Gopal Rai also took charge at the Delhi Secretariat. New entrant Mukesh Ahlawat, who was allotted the portfolios of labour, SC and ST, employment and land and building departments, also took charge at the Delhi Secretariat. Transport minister Kailash Gahlot will take charge of his portfolios also including Home, Law, Administrative Reforms and Information Technology, on Tuesday, officials said.

Pollution meet at PMO pushes for transition to EVs in NCR region

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

A high-level meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office on Monday stressed the urgent need to transition to electric vehicles and develop charging infrastructure in the NCR region to combat air pollution. Chairing the meeting of the task force, PK. Mishra, the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, called for strict and timely implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan — a set of anti-pollution measures enforced during winter — by all relevant agencies to manage air quality effectively, a statement said.

Mr Mishra instructed the chief secretaries of Punjab, Haryana and UP to enforce action plans to prevent stubble burning, ensure full utilization of crop residue management machines and support small industries in the economic use of paddy straw, it said.

He stressed the importance of shifting to electric vehicles and expanding EV charging infrastructure in NCR areas.

Mr Mishra also encouraged states to increase their e-bus fleets under the PM eBus Sewa Scheme, which aims to add 10,000 e-buses.



AAP leader and Delhi's deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia interacts with people during his "Padyatra" in Dwarka on Monday. — PTI

City BJP launches campaign to raise public issues in Assembly

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The BJP on Monday launched the "Janta Ka Mudda Assembly Mein" campaign for raising grievances and issues of the people in the upcoming two-day session of the Delhi Assembly, beginning from September 26. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva launching the campaign at Connaught Place said that party workers will distribute pamphlets and record complaints of people regarding the supply of polluted water, inflated

power bills, drainage and water logging among others.

"The BJP workers will go door to door across the city. The issues raised by people will be presented in the Delhi Assembly by party MLAs by asking questions from the AAP government," he said.

Several BJP leaders including Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta and other party MLAs were present on the occasion.

"Unfortunately, the previous Kejriwal government always denied

Question Hour but now on the strength of citizens complaint forms, we will raise the issues and stall the Assembly till the chief minister," Mr Gupta said.

Most people who filled out the forms at Connaught Place wanted BJP MLAs to raise the issues of "excessive electricity bills, dirty water, irregular social welfare pension, encroachments, unrestricted e-rickshaw numbers, lack of civic amenities like parks," during the campaign launch, said a Delhi BJP statement.

Grave insult to Constitution and CM post, say BJP, Cong

'AAP chief vanvas to be forever as Delhiites will banish him'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The Congress and the BJP on Monday attacked Delhi's new chief minister Atishi over her decision not to sit on the chair used by her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal, saying her gesture was a "grave insult" to the constitutional rules and the post of chief minister.

Ms Atishi, who took charge as the eighth chief minister of Delhi on Monday, said she would serve as Delhi's chief minister for four months like Ramayan's Bharat who ruled Ayodhya in the absence of his elder brother Lord Ram by placing his 'khadaun' (wooden slippers) on the throne.

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said that chief minister Atishi equating Mr Kejriwal, who is out on bail, to Lord Ram was the depth of sycophancy as her primary concern seems to be to whitewash the corruption of the former CM and not the welfare of the people.

He said that Mr Kejriwal's "vanvas" will be forever as the people of

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said her gesture was an "insult" to the Constitutional rules and the post of chief minister. "What she did was not ideal. Through her gesture, she has not only insulted the post of chief minister but also hurt the feelings of the people of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal needs to answer whether he will run the government through a remote-control," he said.

BJP's Northeast Delhi MP, Manoj Tiwari, alleged that the AAP has once again "insulted" the Constitution and proved that Ms Atishi is a "puppet chief minister."

"What is the meaning of an empty chair when there is a chief minister in the office? This act shows that she is a puppet CM and it is a grave insult to the Constitution. I am sure that the people of Delhi will take cognisance of it," Mr Tiwari said.

The new Cabinet headed by Atishi has a long list of pending projects, schemes and new initiatives to be launched over the next few months before Delhi goes to polls.

"I have a strong objection to this that a person who was in jail for a corruption case is being compared to Lord Ram. Atishi has crossed all limits and presented herself as a dummy chief minister," Yadav said.

The Congress leader said Atishi's move proved that people should not keep any hopes from her government, he added.

Hitting out at Ms Atishi,

Court extends Amanatullah Khan's custody till October 7

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

A Delhi court on Monday extended till October 7 the judicial custody of a Aam Aadmi Party MLA Amanatullah Khan in a money laundering case. Special judge Rakesh Syal passed the order after the accused was produced before the court on the expiry of his judicial custody granted earlier.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which had arrested Khan on September 2, told the court that if he is released, he might influence the witnesses and hamper the investigation.

The ED had arrested Khan under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after conducting a search at his residence in the Okhla area of Delhi.

The agency had told the court that some questions were put to Khan during the searches but he remained "evasive" and hence was arrested.



Amanatullah Khan

'Nation wants reply from BJP, RSS on 5 'burning' questions'

Sanjay Singh takes jibe after Kejriwal's queries

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Monday said there was "silence" within the BJP and the RSS on the questions asked by the party's chief and pressed for answers from RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

"The whole country wants answers from the BJP and the RSS on the five burning questions asked by Kejriwal," Mr Singh said. During a media briefing, he said AAP's national convener has asked only five questions to the head of RSS, an organisation which calls itself a 'patriot' and nationalist, and these questions are related to principles, integrity, and truth.

In his "Janta Ki Adalat" rally at Jantar Mantar on Sunday, Mr Kejriwal had asked if RSS agreed with the BJP's politics of targeting opposition parties and their governments using central agencies, and inducting leaders whom it called "corrupt" in the party.

The senior AAP leader continued, "Arvind Kejriwal is the only person in India who has given up the post of chief minister



Sanjay Singh

not once but twice, on grounds of integrity and principles, stating that he will fight for principles, honesty, and truth."

He further added that Mr Kejriwal first resigned as chief minister after a 49-day government. Today, no one wants to leave even the job of a peon. After coming out of jail, when the question of integrity and principles arose, he resigned from the post in two minutes, he said.

Delhi BJP retaliated by asking five questions to Mr Kejriwal, including why he "betrayed" anti-corruption movement leader Anna Hazare and the people over the corruption issue and "did not fulfill" the promises of bringing in the institution of Lokpal.

"After Mr Kejriwal answers the five questions asked by the BJP, we will also answer," said city BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor.

Sikh student thrashed, turban forcibly removed during clash

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

A Sikh student was thrashed and his turban forcibly removed by some students during a clash with another group at a college here, triggering criticism as the video went viral on social media. The incident occurred at Sri Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College under Delhi University on Saturday, days ahead of the DUSU elections scheduled for September 27.

The purported video of the incident shows a red-turbaned student being dragged, kicked and assaulted until his turban

fell to the ground during the scuffle. An FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the BNS, the police said.

Pavit Singh Gujral, a second-year student said that he was attacked during the nomination process for DUSU elections.

"They forcibly removed my turban, beat me and pulled my kesh (hair). I was attacked by the group and I am not feeling safe in the college. I feel that my life is at risk," Singh said in the FIR.

A senior police officer said that teams have been formed to nab the accused.

■ Student was missing since September 11 ■ Cops suspect suicide IAS aspirant's decomposed body found

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

The decomposed body of a civil services aspirant was found hanging from a tree in a forest area in north-west Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar area, the police said on Monday. The body of Deepak Kumar Meena, who hailed from Rajasthan's Dausa, was recovered from the forest area near a coaching institute library on September 20. He had been missing for several days, they said.

According to the police, CCTV footage collected from nearby stores showed Deepak Meena walking alone towards the

area with his bag on the day he went missing. "CCTV cameras have been checked and it is suspected to be a case of suicide. A probe is underway," he said.

Meena's father C.L. Meena told the police that his son arrived in Delhi in July to prepare for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

mains exam after qualifying the preliminaries.

He used to call home every evening. The family last spoke to him on September 10, Meena's father said.

When he did not call on September 11-13, C.L. Meena reached Delhi and began a search for his son. C.L. Meena also went to Meena's PG accommodation where his roommates told him that his son had not returned for two days. After this, he filed a complaint at Mukherjee Nagar police station.

During the searches, Meena's body was found in a forest area near the institute where he attended classes. It is suspected that he had gone to the forest area after class, the officer said.

Meena's bag was found hanging from the same tree.

However, no suicide note has been found yet, the police said, adding inquest proceedings have been initiated under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

The body of the deceased was taken to a hospital for a post-mortem examination, said the police. They added the autopsy report is pending.

The body was handed over to the family after post-mortem.

Rau's Study Circle's CEO & coordinator get bail till Dec. 7

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

A Delhi court on Monday granted till December 7 interim bail to Rau's IAS Study Circle CEO Abhishek Gupta and its coordinator Deshpal Singh in a case related to the death of three civil services aspirants in the centre's flooded basement.

The judge granted relief to the accused persons on a personal bond of ₹1 lakh each with two sureties of the like amount. Three civil service aspirants died after the centre's basement was flooded.

'Our Constitution best example of spirit of inclusive governance'

SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday said that India's Constitution is the strongest example of the spirit of inclusive governance which inspires and guides us to move forward taking everyone along on the path of development.

He was chairing the Plenary Session of the 10th Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association (CPA) India region conference in Parliament House Complex.

He emphasised the use of technology to improve the efficiency and functioning of legislatures.

Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh and presiding officers of state legislative bodies of the country participated in the session. The theme of the Plenary Session was "The Role of Legislative Bodies



Om Birla

in Attainment of Sustainable and Inclusive Development."

Emphasising the use of technology to improve the efficiency and functioning of legislatures, Mr Birla

urged that legislative bodies should discuss on various platforms and shape welfare schemes for the welfare of the last person of society through technology.

Stating that India's future lies in building a system in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people, he further noted that India can emerge as a model democratic nation through inclusive engagement and

the creation of a responsible system within the rapidly changing world.

Emphasising that the role of legislative institutions is most important in achieving the goal of sustainable development and inclusive governance, the Lok Sabha Speaker

observed that democratic institutions, by ensuring accountability and transparency of the executive, make governance more responsible and efficient.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
Tender Notice	
Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems)	
NIT No.	6-SEFILE-24002Tender
Name of Work and its location	Tender for "Provision for Integrated Annual Maintenance contract and Operation & maintenance services for IT infrastructure at Rail Coach Naveenikaran Karkhana Sonapat for 01 year as per scope of work."
Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 2876840/- including GST (Rs. Twenty Eight lakh Seventy Six Thousand Eight Hundred Forty only)
Earnest Money	Rs. 57500.00/-
Completion period of work	12 months of date of execution of work
Cost of Tender document on cash/bank post	NIL
Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 13:00 hrs on 15.10.2024 Opening of Tender at 13:00 hrs.
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No. 6-SEFILE-24002Tender Dated: 23.09.2024 2962/2024	
Serving Customers With A Smile	

SHORT TAKES

EC to review Maha readiness Sept. 26

Mumbai: As a precursor to the Maharashtra Assembly elections, officials of the Election Commission (EC) will be visiting Mumbai from Thursday to Saturday to take stock of preparations. The Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha polls are expected to be held after the Diwali festival around mid-November. The EC team, led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, will arrive in Mumbai on Thursday evening. They will first meet representatives of political parties on Friday. The Election Commission officials will later hold a meeting with Maharashtra's chief electoral officer S. Chockalingam, the state police nodal officer and Central forces, followed by a meeting with enforcement agencies. This would be followed by a briefing meeting with chief secretary Sujata Saunik, director general of police Rashmi Shukla and top IAS and IPS officers.

Maratha activist's health deteriorates

Mumbai: Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange's health deteriorated on Monday — the seventh day of his ongoing indefinite hunger strike — due to weakness as he struggled to speak. Former Rajya Sabha member Sambhaji Chhatrapati, who is trying to stitch an alliance with Jarange for the Assembly polls, said the government will be responsible if anything happens to the quota activist. Sambhaji Chhatrapati also criticised the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance of Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) for not taking a clear stand on the issue. Supporters of Mr. Jarange expressed concerns over his deteriorating health and urged the government to accept his demand over reservation at the earliest.

Cong should protest against Rahul: Bittu

Jaipur: Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu on Monday defended his remarks against the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, saying the Congress should protest against Mr Gandhi instead. Responding to Mr Gandhi's statements during his recent visit to the United States regarding reservations in India, Mr Bittu had said, "Rahul Gandhi himself goes to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib so many times. Who stops him? Therefore, this is not a matter of the party, it is above the party." Following this, the Congress party workers earlier on Monday staged a protest the CBI gate here against Mr Bittu's statement. Police detained them and left them at a different location. Former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot condemned the arrest of Rajasthan Congress workers protesting against the violent statement of Mr Bittu. — PTI

PRIVATE SECTOR IN DRIVER'S SEAT OF ECO: RAJNATH

Jaipur, Sept. 23: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said the role of the private sector is becoming increasingly prominent in nearly every area of the Indian economy and it is steering the nation's economic progress. Addressing the inauguration programme of a Sainik School at Shri Bhawani Niketan Public School here, he said Sainik schools are also being set up under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Sainik schools will give fresh impetus to efforts to give a new direction to society and instil values like discipline, patriotism and courage in their students, he said. Mr Singh said all Sainik schools established in the country till now were being run jointly by the Central and state governments, but the new schools are being established under the PPP model. "Whenever there is talk of public-private partnership, the word 'public' comes first. In any project, we look at the role of the government first. But the situation is changing now. "Therefore, moving away from the standard definition of PPP, I consider it to be Private-Public Partnership," he said. — PTI

BJP politics about spreading hate, says Rahul in Srinagar

Party dividing people of J&K, we'll make its 'project' a failure: LoP

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, SEPT. 23

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday accused the BJP of trying to cause divisions, offences and hostilities in Jammu and Kashmir by pitting one community against the other and one tribe against the other to win some votes. He vowed to defeat the saffron party's "project" by "spreading love and taking everyone along".



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a rally in Srinagar on Monday, ahead of the second phase of J&K Assembly elections.

"Wherever they go, they try to pit one community against the other, one religion against the other, one language against the other and one state against the other to divide the society. In J&K, they are trying to put the Gujjars and Paharis at loggerheads. But their project will meet with failure. We will make it a failure by taking everyone along and giving everyone his due right," he said while addressing the rallies of Congress-National Conference combine in Srinagar and the border town of Surankote.

Asserting INDIA bloc's strong belief in egalitarianism, he said, "We consider everyone equal, regardless of religion, race, gender, or region. We will move forward by taking everyone along."

Mr Gandhi said that it is not just J&K but other states and regions of the country as well where the

BJP and the RSS "spread hatred 24x7". "Wherever they go, they set one brother against the other. Be it J&K, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar or Manipur, all they do is to spread hatred. Their politics is about spreading hate," he alleged.

"The Congress leader said that he, however, strongly believes that hatred cannot be defeated by spreading hatred but by giving love, care, and support. "Therefore, it is a fight of ideology. On one side, you have the people who spread hatred and, on the other, the people who have opened 'Mohabbat ki Dukaan' in every nook and cranny of the country. That was the object of the Bharat Jodo Yatra," he said. He took pride in spreading love "being the history, culture and tradition of the J&K people".

He reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been wrecked psychologically. "The Narendra Modi with a '56-inch chest' is no more there. You see him from a distance, but I observe him very closely in Parliament. He is not the Narendra Modi of the past. The INDIA bloc has fragmented him psychologically. Whatever the Opposition wants, it gets it done. If they bring a bill (in Parliament) and we stand up against it, they fail to get it passed. Then they come up with a new bill," he said, adding, "We have achieved it through love and not meeting hatred with hatred".

"We had hoped they would restore the J&K statehood before the polls. We will build pressure on them (BJP-led government) to restore its statehood and if they don't do it, we will do it when we come to power," he said.

J&K polls about 'karma' and not 'dharma': NC chief, targets PM

Surankote, Sept. 23: NC chief Farooq Abdullah on Monday made a strong appeal to the people urging them to unite and support its alliance with the Congress in the ongoing J&K polls, which, he said, is not about "dharma (religion), rather "karma" (action).

The former J&K chief minister emphasised the fight against the "forces" spreading hatred across the country, which, he claimed, are trying to weaken the nation to stay in power.

Addressing a rally in Surankote, Mr Abdullah took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, criticising his remarks about the "mangalsutra", which, he said, were made to incite hatred among the masses.

Campaigning during the Lok Sabha polls, Mr Modi, while alluding to Muslims, had alleged that the Congress planned to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators", and "those who have more children" and would steal the "gold of mothers and sisters" if voted to power. — PTI



Chief minister Hemant Soren during the "Aapki Yojana, Aapki Sarkar, Aapke Dawar" programme at Torpa in Jharkhand's Khunti district.

Complete J'khand polls by Dec. 1st week: JMM to EC

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, SEPT. 23

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Monday urged the visiting Election Commission (EC) to conclude the poll procedure for the Assembly elections by the first week of December, so that the current government could complete its full term.

The ruling party (JMM) representatives MLA Sudivya Kumar and central spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya praised the party's stand before the EC team, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, which arrived at Ranchi earlier in the day to review the preparedness for the

Assembly polls due this year.

The election process for the fifth Jharkhand Assembly was completed on December 23, 2019, and the government was formed on December 29.

Therefore, if the elections for the sixth state Assembly is finished by the first week of December, the current state government will get the opportunity to complete its full term, the JMM informed the EC, as per the ruling party's statement today.

The party also urged the EC to bar leaders from making speeches in the name of religion or caste during campaigns.

The JMM leaders also informed the commission that the BJP leaders had been making speeches in

the name of religion and caste since August this year, which had created a situation of religious and cultural divide in the society. "It is your responsibility to ensure that communal polarisation does not take place, and people can vote freely without any fear," the party representatives told the Central poll body team.

In a two-day visit, the EC team will hold a series of meetings with political parties, enforcement agencies and government officials to conduct the Assembly polls in the tribal state.

In 2019, the elections to 81 Assembly seats were held in five phases between November 30 and December 20, and the results were declared on December 23.

Uddhav camp irked over 'snatching CM's post' for Patole comments

Cong, Sena-UBT tussle over CM continues

PRASAD PATIL MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

The tussle between the Congress and the Shiv Sena(UBT) over the Maharashtra chief minister's post continues to simmer even as the two parties are trying to iron out their differences over seat-sharing for the Assembly elections.

Several Congress leaders, particularly from the Vidarbha region, have insisted that party's state president Nana Patole will be the next CM.

However, the Shiv Sena(UBT) has raised objections over the tone of some of them, who spoke about "snatching away the CM's post" for Mr Patole.

In a party review meeting held in Nagpur, several Congress leaders backed Mr Patole. Congress MLA Vikas Thakre urged party workers to work hard to make Mr Patole the CM. He also said that if Mr Patole is not rewarded with the CM post after the Assembly polls, "we will

stand with Patole and, if necessary, fight for his rightful claim," the MLA said. A senior Congress leader and former state minister Nitin Raut echoed Mr Thakre. He said it has been 32 years since the last CM from the Vidarbha region after Vasantrao Naik and Sudhakarrao Naik. He expressed confidence that the Gandhi family would back Mr Patole's claim. Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe also said that Mr Patole was the

party's best bet for the CM's post.

Expressing displeasure over the Congress leaders' claims, Shiv Sena(UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said that Mr Patole's supporters will bring him in trouble by making bold claims. "We wanted Maha Vikas Aghadi to face the Assembly polls under the leadership of a chief ministerial candidate. Uddhav Thackeray has made his stand clear that if Congress gives a CM candidate, we will support him," he said.

Cabinet rejig: Mann govt inducts 5 MLAs as Punjab ministers

Chandigarh, Sept. 23: The Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab government on Monday inducted five MLAs as ministers, as it carried out a Cabinet rejig.

Punjab governor Gulab Chand Kataria administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers during a swearing-in ceremony at the Raj Bhavan here. Chief minister Bhagwant Mann, among other party leaders, was also present.

Those sworn in included Hardeep Singh Mundian, Barinder Kumar Goyal, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, Ravjot Singh and Mohinder Bhagat.

All of them are first-time legislators, who took oath in Punjab.

Among the new inductees, three are from the Malwa region and two from the Doaba.

Among the new ministers are two Dalits — Bhagat and Ravjot Singh. The Mann government also distributed portfolios to the new inductees. — PTI

Mr Mundian was allocated the important portfolios of revenue, rehabilitation and disaster management, water supply and sanitation, and housing and urban development, while Mr Goyal was given mines and geology, water resources, and conservation of land and water. Mr Sond got tourism and culture affairs, investment promotion, labour, hospitality, industry and commerce, and rural development and panchayats.

Mr Singh was given the portfolios of local government and parliamentary affairs, while Mr Bhagat was given defence services welfare, freedom fighters, and horticulture.

Mr Mann shed three portfolios of jail, industry and commerce, and housing and urban development. The jail portfolio has been given to transport minister Laljit Singh Bhullar, after rural development and panchayats were taken from him. — PTI

CM orders judicial probe in Bharatpur assault case

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 23

In a late evening development on Sunday, Odisha chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi ordered a judicial probe into the high-profile Bharatpur police assault case.

Justice Chitta Ranjan Dash of Odisha high court will probe into the case. The CM has requested the judicial probe body to submit its report to the Odisha government in 60 days. The CM also urged the court to monitor the ongoing Crime Branch probe into the case.

The CM's judicial probe came after he returned from a three-day trip to his home district Keonjhar and held a high-level meeting with two of his deputy CMs — Kanak Vardhan Singhdeo and Pravat Parida — and advocate-general Pitambar Acharya.

On the night of September 14, an Army Major and his fiancée were allegedly assaulted by cops of the Bharatpur

HC bars media from revealing names of Major & his fiancée

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 23

The Orissa high court has issued a directive prohibiting the publication of the names of the Army Major and his fiancée, who were allegedly assaulted by police personnel at Bharatpur police station in Bhubaneswar on the night of September 14.

The ban applies to all forms of media, including print, electronic, and social platforms.

The court's decision

came in the response to a public interest litigation (PIL) filed in connection with the incident. Taking suo motu cognisance of the case, the high court expressed concern over the allegations of police misconduct. Although the court refrained from intervening directly, it acknowledged the Odisha government's actions, including the suspension of five police officers involved in the incident and the initiation of a judicial inquiry.

on the charges of assaulting the cops and sent to jail. The matter turned into a political issue with the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress attacking the ruling Odisha BJP government, alleging the government was protecting the accused.

While the Army Major — Gurvanash Singh — was allegedly thrown into the police lockup, his fiancée was "framed"

"casteist parties". She invoked the legacy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, advising Dalit leaders to follow his principles. She accused the Congress and other casteist parties of exploiting Dalit leaders for political gain. BSP supreme Mayawati's comments through a series of posts on X, came as the BSP-INLD alliance aims to present itself as a pro-Dalit alternative in poll-bound Haryana.

BJP tried to break me, but in vain: Kejriwal

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Former Delhi chief minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Monday during a roadshow in poll-bound Haryana sharpened his attack on the BJP government at the Centre, alleging that they wanted to "break" him in jail, but got failed as "you can break anyone, but not Haryana's".

gathering during his roadshow at Dabwali in Sirsa district, the AAP national convener said, "They don't know that I am from Haryana. You can break anyone, but not Haryana's".

"The AAP chief said the BJP was scared of his honesty, and alleged that the party put him in jail in a "fake" case to "sully" his image.

"They wanted to break me, and they repeatedly asked me to join the BJP,

the party's candidate from the seat. "I am a diabetic, but they stopped my insulin. My kidney would have been damaged. We had to get directions from court to allow insulin to me," Mr Kejriwal claimed.

Meanwhile, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supreme Mayawati, in an attempt to accelerate poll campaign in the state, urged the Dalit leaders to "sever ties" with the Congress and other

Thane sex assault accused killed in crossfire with cops

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Akshay Shinde, accused of sexually assaulting two girls at a school in Badlapur town of Maharashtra's Thane district was on Monday shot dead by police after he allegedly snatched revolver of one of the policemen and fired at them. The incident took place at around 6.30pm.

The Thane crime branch took Shinde's custody from the Talaha prison based on the production warrant issued in connection with a fresh case filed by his wife.

After taking him out of the prison at around 5.30 pm, the crime branch team was taking Shinde for questioning. When they reached near the Mumbra bypass at around 6.30pm, Shinde allegedly snatched the gun of a constable and fired several rounds, injuring him. In retaliation, another officer shot at Shinde leaving him critically injured, the police said. He was taken to the hospital where he was declared dead.

During the incident, constable Nilesh More was injured. Confirming the incident, deputy chief min-

ister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Shinde opened fire on police personnel and in the air too. Police fired on him in self-defence."

Shinde was arrested last month for sexually assaulting two kindergarten girls at a school in Badlapur town of Maharashtra's Thane district. His arrest came after a massive protest by the people and opposition parties.

The crime branch took Shinde in custody in connection with a rape and assault case filed by his first wife, who had left him five days after their wedding.

The Opposition expressed suspicion if Shinde was killed in a fake encounter to cover the Badlapur case and protect other people involved in it. "The school's trustees have not been arrested yet in the Badlapur atrocities case. They are absconding. Why can't they be arrested yet? Is there an attempt to save the absconding accused or to wrap up the case by encountering the main accused in the case?" Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said.

Shinde's parents also questioned the police account.

पावरग्रिड POWERGRID

NOTICE

1. Approval under Regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations/1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations/2019 i) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block and ii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2024-29 tariff block for assets under Transmission system associated with Daripalli TPS in Eastern Region.

2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (i) Bihar State Power (Holding) Company Ltd, (ii) West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd, (iii) Grid Corporation of Orissa Ltd, (iv) Damodar Valley Corporation, (v) Power Department, Govt of Sikkim, Gangtok, (vi) Jharkhand Biji Viran Nigam Ltd, (vii) NTPC Ltd.

3. Tariff details:

a) 2019-24 Block				Rs. In lakhs			
Asset detail	DOC	Completion Cost as on 31.03.2024	Tariff Revised AFC based on truing up	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23/2023-24
Asset-I	26.04.2017	11418.05		1896.68	1837.28	1791.43	1763.30/1739.03

b) 2024-29 Block				Rs. In lakhs			
Asset detail	Completion Cost as on 31.03.2029	Tariff	AFC	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28/2028-29
Asset-I	11418.05	AFC	1677.91	1632.51	1588.05	1526.96	1491.86

4. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergridindia.com.

5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3 & 4th floor, Chandrakol Building, Janspeth, New Delhi - 110 001 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Gurugram Date: 23.09.2024

General Manager (Commercial)

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED

(A Government of India Enterprise)

Corp. Office: "Sudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana) Tel: 0124-2571700-719

Reg. Office: B-4, Cutub Institutional Area, Katwara Sarai, New Delhi-110 016. Tel: 011-26560112, 26560121

www.powergrid.in. CIN: L40101DL1989G03038121

A MAHARATNA PSU

SHORT TAKES

Rail staff held over Army train incident

Khandwa, MP: A railway staffer has been taken into custody for stealing 10 "harmless" detonators that went off on a track during the passing of a military special train in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Monday. Ten detonators, termed "harmless" by the Railways, went off on a track near Saghata between Nepanagar and Khandwa stations of the Bhusawal division on September 18. The explosion prompted the authorities to halt a military special train for two minutes. A track patrol duty staffer has been taken into custody in connection with the incident, the Railway Protection Force said. "We have registered a case against one Sabir on Sunday for stealing the detonators under section 3 (a) of the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act," inspector Sanjeev Kumar of Khandwa RPF said. Sabir is a mate, a rank higher than a gangman, who patrols tracks, he said. Only two or three government departments have these detonators, and they were not issued to accused officially, he said. — PTI

3 Naxals killed in C'garh encounter

Narayanpur: Three Naxalites, including a woman, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Monday, a senior police official said. The gunfight broke out at around 4 pm in the forest of Abhujmaad on the Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra inter-border when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-naxal operation, he said. Security personnel recovered the bodies of three Naxalites, including a woman, with a cache of weapons including an AK-47 rifle, from the spot, he said. A search operation is still underway in the area, he added. With the latest encounter, the toll of Naxalites gunned down by security forces in separate incidents in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region so far this year rose to 157, police said. — PTI

8 killed in lightning strike in C'garh dist

Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh: Eight persons, including some school children, were killed and one person was injured after being struck by lightning at a village in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district on Monday, police said. The incident took place at around 1.30 pm in Joratarai village under Somni police station area, they said. After being alerted, senior administration and police officials rushed to the spot. "As per preliminary information, eight persons, including some school children, died in the lightning strike. Besides, one person was reported to be injured and was hospitalised," Rajnandgaon superintendent of police Mohit Garg said. Further details are awaited, he added. Garg and the district collector were on way to the village. — PTI

PM meets Abbas, reiterates support for Palestinians

Modi discusses energy, tech, trade with Oli and Kuwait Crown Prince

AGE CORRESPONDENT, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas, Nepalese PM K.P. Sharma Oli and Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session. At his meeting with Mr Abbas, Mr Modi reiterated India's support for the Palestinian people.

The PM also participated in a roundtable with the CEOs of some top American companies, including Google, Adobe and Accenture, where he emphasised India's growth prospects and discussed initiatives to foster bilateral collaborations across various sectors.

"Met President Mahmoud Abbas in New York. Reiterated India's



PM Narendra Modi with Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas during a meeting in New York on Sunday. — PTI

support for the early restoration of peace and stability in the region. Exchanged views of further strengthening long-standing friendship with the people of Palestine," Mr Modi posted on X along with photographs of him with the Palestinian leader. "The talks with Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah were very productive. We discussed how to

add vigour to India-Kuwait ties in sectors like pharma, food processing, technology, energy and more," Mr Modi said.

"On his meeting with Mr Oli, Mr Modi said the talks focused on issues such as energy, technology and trade.

"Had a very good meeting with Prime Minister K.P. Oli in New York. The India-Nepal friendship is very robust and we look forward

to adding even more momentum to our ties," the PM said in a post on X.

"Deepening the warm and close friendship. PM @narendramodi met PM @kps Sharma of Nepal, on the sidelines of the UNGA today. The two leaders discussed matters of mutual interest to strengthen cooperation in all areas of age-old, multifaceted and expanding partnership," the ministry of external affairs posted on X.

Mr Oli is in the US on his maiden foreign visit to attend the 79th Session of the UNGA, breaking the tradition of visiting a neighbouring country first.

"Had a fruitful meeting with the Prime Minister of India Shri @narendramodi on the sidelines of #UNGA79. During the meeting, various matters of bilateral relations were discussed," the Nepalese PM said on X.

Nation reports first case of Mpox strain in Kerala patient

AGE CORRESPONDENT, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

India has reported the first case of the Mpox strain that led to the global health body WHO declaring it a public health emergency last month.

An official source said Clade 1b strain has been detected in a 38-year-old man from Kerala's Malappuram district who had recently returned from the United Arab Emirates.

The source said that the patient is stable, adding "this was the first case of the current strain that led to the World Health Organisation declaring Mpox a public health emergency last month for a second time".

The earlier case of Mpox that emerged in the national capital was a 26-year-old resident of Haryana's Hisar who has tested positive for the previous West African Clade 2 strain earlier this month. The patient was admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital in capital earlier this month has been discharged. The patient was admitted to the hospital on September 8, with doctors confirming the diagnosis on September 9.

Meanwhile, Kerala health minister Veena George has already appealed to the public, including those returning from abroad with any symptoms, to inform the health department and seek treatment at the earliest.



A farmer runs with his bulls during the bull ploughing competition in Kozhikode district on Monday. — PTI

Poaching drops by 86 per cent since 2016 From 600 in 1960s to 3K, fivefold growth in Assam rhino population

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, SEPT. 23

In what is said to be significant achievement of the state in conservation efforts of one-horn rhinoceros, Assam has recorded a five-time growth in population of endangered rhinos in the past six decades from 1960 to 2024.

Informing that the state currently has over 3,000 rhinos, the state government pointed out that it was approximately 600 in the 1960s. The Assam government released the data on the occasion of World Rhino Day on Sunday.

These rhinos are listed as "vulnerable" in the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list.

It is significant that out of the total rhino popula-

tion of India, 80 percent inhabits Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, 4 percent in Orang National Park, 3 percent in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and 1 percent in Manas National Park.

Apart from Assam, 9 percent of the country's total rhino population is found in Jaldapara National Park and 2 percent is in Gorumara National Park in West Bengal and 1 percent are roaming in Dudhwa National Park in UP.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attributed the growth in rhino population to various conservation initiatives of the government. "Rhinos are synonymous to the identity of Assam. They are our pride and the

crown jewel of our biodiversity. Ever since we assumed office, we have taken various initiatives to protect the prized species, expand its habitat and ensure its safety," said Mr Sarma in a social media post.

Pointing out the initiative of his government in the field of rhino conservation, the chief minister highlighted habitat expansion and restoration efforts in different areas as key steps. He said that 200.7 sq km has been added in Orang National Park and 195 sq km in Burachapori wildlife sanctuary. In addition, 12.8 sq km rhino habitat has been restored and freed from encroachment in Laokhowa-Burachapori complex, facilitating the return of rhinos.

Look forward to further boost ties: Modi greets Lankan Prez

AGE CORRESPONDENT, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated new Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake following his victory in the country's presidential election and said he looks forward to working closely with him to further strengthen the Indo-Lanka multifaceted cooperation. Responding to the congratulatory message, Mr Dissanayake said he shares Mr Modi's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties. Mr Modi was among the first few world leaders to congratulate Mr Dissanayake after his win.

The Congress and the CPI(M) also congratulated Mr Dissanayake on his

victory. "Congratulations @anuradissanayake on your victory in the Sri Lankan Presidential elections. Sri Lanka holds a special place in India's Neighbourhood First Policy and Vision SAGAR. I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our multifaceted cooperation for the benefit of our people and the entire region," Mr Modi wrote on X.

Earlier, the Indian high commissioner in Colombo Santosh Jha called on Mr Dissanayake. "India as Sri Lanka's civilisational twin is committed to further deepen ties for the prosperity of the people of our two countries," Mr Jha said.

The CPI(M) and the Congress also congratulated

the new Lankan President. The CPI(M) in a post congratulated the people of Sri Lanka for voting decisively after their massive struggle "Aragalaya".

The 2022 Sri Lankan protests, popularly called Aragalaya, were a series of mass protests against the country's government, triggered by an economic crisis.

The victory of a Left candidate for the first time in Sri Lanka's history is a historic occasion, it said.

The CPI(M) Politburo said in a statement that it was confident Mr Dissanayake would lead the country on the path of socio-economic development, progress and welfare, ensuring the rights of the minority.

Air safety top priority, says aviation minister

Pitches for robust fatigue mgmt system

AGE CORRESPONDENT, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

While saying human error led to about 80 per cent of aviation accidents and was a probable cause in 75 per cent of fatal accidents between 2016 and 2020, civil aviation minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu on Monday stressed safety must remain top priority and urged the stakeholders to prioritise continuous skilling, reskilling, and upskilling of their workforce.

"Over the past decade, of the 91 aircraft accidents investigated by AAIB, a significant number of the accidents can be attributed to non-adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) by cockpit crew, aircraft maintenance personnel, air traffic controllers, and other professionals involved in aircraft operations."

"I believe one of the major factors behind this

is inadequate training. The tragic Kozhikode incident in August 2020, also highlighted the critical need for addressing the human factors."

"I urge all stakeholders to prioritise continuous skilling, reskilling, and upskilling of their workforce. Safety must remain our top priority, and a well-prepared workforce is the backbone of that commitment," said the minister while speaking at the national seminar on human factors in aircraft accidents organised by the AAIB.

The minister also pitched for robust stress management and fatigue management programmes, including for pilots. There is a lack of formal programmes for aviation psychology and advanced psychological aspects need to be integrated into training programmes, Mr Naidu said.

Laddoo row: BJP neta moves SC for court-monitored probe

AGE CORRESPONDENT, NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

BJP leader Subramanian Swamy on Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged use of animal fat in making iconic Tirupati laddus.

The BJP leader urged the apex court to direct the Andhra Pradesh government to file a detailed report on the source and sampling of the ghee used for making the lad-

lus. Mr Swamy also requested the top court to issue an interim direction to obtain a detailed forensic report from the authorities concerned.

The plea said, "There ought to have been checks and balances internally to supervise and verify and check the quality or the lack of it, of the suppliers supplying various ingredients to the temple which go into the making of the Prasadam."

'Downloading child porn Pocso offence'

Continued from Page 1 pornography shall not be used in any judicial order or judgment, and instead the term 'child sexual exploitative and abuse material' (CSEAM) should be endorsed," the bench said.

The top court verdict came on a plea challenging the January 11 Madras high court order which had quashed the criminal proceedings against S. Harish, 28, charged with downloading pornographic content involving children on his mobile phone. Mr Harish was facing a criminal case under the Pocso Act, 2012 and IT Act, 2000.

The verdict said: "We have reached the conclusion that the high court committed an egregious error in passing the impugned judgment. We are left with no other option but to set aside the impugned judgment and order passed by the high court, and restore the criminal proceedings in Spl. S.C. No. 170 of 2023 to the court of Sessions Judge, Mahila Neethi Mandram (Fast Track Court), Tiruvallur District. We accordingly pass such order."

Underscoring that children were entitled to grow up in an environment that respects their dignity and

protects them from harm, the top court said: "Child sexual exploitative material is deeply degrading to the dignity of children. It reduces them to objects of sexual gratification, stripping them of their humanity and violating their fundamental rights."

CSEAM violates this right in the most "egregious manner possible" and the existence and circulation of CSEAM were affronts to the dignity of all children, not just the victims depicted in the material, the bench said.

The apex court said: "Given the severity and far-reaching consequences of child sexual exploitation, there is a clear legal and moral imperative to take strong action against those who produce, distribute and consume CSEAM. This includes not only criminal penalties for those involved in CSEAM but also preventative measures, such as education and awareness campaigns."

Justice Pardiwala, who wrote the 200-page verdict for the bench, said laws must be robust and strictly enforced to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that children are protected from further harm. The bench said the impact of CSEAM on its

victims was devastating and far-reaching, affecting their mental, emotional and social well-being.

"In our society, where social stigma and notions of honour and shame are deeply entrenched, the social repercussions for victims are particularly severe. Many victims face intense social stigmatisation and isolation, finding it difficult to form and maintain healthy relationships due to trust issues and trauma-related challenges," it said.

The top court said the stigma attached to being a victim of CSEAM can create significant barriers in social interactions, causing victims to withdraw and feel alienated from their communities.

"The continuous revictimisation through the sharing and viewing of these materials perpetuates the victims' suffering. Each instance of someone viewing or distributing the material represents a new violation, making it harder for victims to heal," reads the verdict.

The top court said this ongoing trauma can severely impact their self-esteem and self-worth, leading to long-term emotional and psychological damage and the impact extends to their education and employment opportunities.

The also suggested that implementing comprehensive sex education programmes that include information about legal and ethical ramifications of child pornography can help deter potential offenders.

"These programs should address common misconceptions and provide young people with a clear understanding of consent and the impact of exploitation," it said.

The top court suggested that schools can play a crucial role in early identification, intervention and implementing school-based programmes that educate students about healthy relationships, consent and appropriate behaviour and can help prevent problematic sexual behaviours (PSB).

"To give meaningful effect to the above suggestions and work out the necessary modalities, the Union of India may consider constituting an expert committee tasked with devising a comprehensive program or mechanism for health and sex education, as well as raising awareness about Pocso among children across the country from an early age, for ensuring a robust and well-informed approach to child protection, education, and sexual well-being," it said.

Won't leave Cong: Selja

Continued from Page 1

BJP is probably more concerned. There are many things that go around within the party. We had worked to ensure the party's victory earlier in Lok Sabha and later too... So that we strengthen the party on the ground, work for the people on the ground and taking that forward, we have to form a Congress government."

Sources said Ms Selja decided to bury her hatchet following a late-night meeting with Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge. Ms Selja, who is now expected to address an election rally for the Congress in Haryana on September 26, has reportedly been assured that her "grievances will be addressed".

She clarified that her fight was not for personal gain. "I wanted to contest from Uklana in the Assembly elections, but I didn't receive the ticket. However, that doesn't mean my existence in politics ends there. There will be more opportunities in the future", she remarked. The home minister, speaking at Tohana in Fatehabad district on Monday morning, branded the Congress an "anti-Dalit party" and pointed out that it had insulted "Dalit leaders like Ashok Tanwar or sister Kumari Selja". It may be recalled that recently Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar had invited Ms Selja to join the BJP amid reports that she was staying away from the cam-

aign for the Assembly polls

"The Congress Party is an anti-Dalit party. I want to remind (Bhupinder Singh) Hooda ji and Rahul Baba about the 2005 Gohana incident. Who was responsible for this? It was the Congress," said Mr Shah, as he also referred to the 2010 Mirchpur incident.

Under Congress rule, people were deprived of jobs in the reserved category with "not found for suitable" claims, he said. The Bharat Ratna was not given to Dr B.R. Ambedkar until the Congress went out of power, he further said.

The Union home minister further took on Mr Gandhi for his remarks made in the United States recently concerning the Sikh community and asked him to apologise. "The entire country feels pride on the Sikh Gurus. The tenth Sikh Guru (Gobind Singh) is respected in every home. In every home, school, there is a picture of the tenth Sikh Guru and Guru Nanak Dev... And Rahul Baba says Sikhs don't have freedom to wear turbans, 'kada' in India. He says Sikhs don't have permission to visit gurdwaras in the country. Rahul Baba, in which India do you live? Not just Sikh brothers, but we all also go and bow our heads before the Guru Granth Sahib," he said. "Why do you insult? From where have you learnt? And in America you say this... The Congress has always insulted everyone," Mr Shah added.

Requests to govt for aid went unanswered: Didi on DVC row

Kolkata, Sept. 23: West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Monday again accused the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) of aggravating the flood situation in the state, stating that she had contacted the Central "at least 10 times," both recently and previously, but had not yet received a response.

Ms Banerjee alleged that the government was trying to privatise the DVC and expressed concerns that the flood situ-

ation could worsen if the corporation released more water. She urged the Centre to allocate one-fourth of the funds provided to political parties during elections to address the Ganga Action Plan and tackle erosion in the Malda and adjoining districts.

"The Ganga Action Plan, flood control, and the DVC are under the central government, but they have not done anything. That is why this flood is happening," she told reporters. — PTI

PM pushes for UNSC reform

Continued from Page 1 welfare, food and health security. By lifting 250 million people out of poverty in India, we have demonstrated that sustainable development can be successful. And we are ready to share this experience with the entire Global South," Mr Modi said. He added that there is a need for balanced regulation for the safe and responsible use of technology. "The world needs digital governance, which ensures that national sovereignty and integrity are upheld. Digital public

infrastructure should be a bridge, not a barrier. For global good, India is ready to share its digital public infrastructure with the entire world," the PM said.

Concluding his address, Mr Modi said, "For India, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' is a commitment. This commitment is also reflected in our initiatives such as 'One Earth, One Health' and 'One Sun, One World, One Grid'. India will continue to work in thought, words and deeds to protect the rights of all humanity and for global prosperity."

THE ASIAN AGE

24 SEPTEMBER 2024

A Marxist takes charge of running Sri Lanka

Anura Kumara Disanayake's election as President of Sri Lanka is an event of the times in Sri Lanka where such public weariness from economic hardships had set in regarding the old order of entrenched leaders and scions of dynastic political families that conditions were screaming for change. Unusual as it sounds, the strong showing by a Marxist leader of the hardcore Sinhalese party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) reveals that people were fed up with leadership that had led to a crippling national economic crisis.

As the leader of the JVP had spewed anti-Tamil and anti-India venom in days when its supporters were involved in insurrections in 1971 and 1987 will be piloting the island, power might just bring in sobering responsibility as well as realisation that economic growth cannot be achieved without help from industry, trade and tourism. A pragmatic centrism in policies is what he is expected to start his administration with.

A promise from the newly elected president — he became the first winner after a second and third preferential vote count in Sri Lanka — to work closely with both a magnetic China and a friend-in-need India is suggestive of the

It is for overturning the established order of the entrenched wallowing in dynastic politics and outlandishly corrupt ways in which the rich were invariably favoured that Disanayake's victory will be considered historic.

fact that the country needs not only friends but also money. Having led in revolutionary mode during the end days of the Rajapaksa at the height of the economic crisis, Mr Disanayake may have advocated state intervention and closed-market economic policies.

It is debatable whether radical solutions will work in the modern world tending towards free markets and social justice and state welfarism to look after the disadvantaged. The president's immediate challenge will be to further facilitate conditions to sustain the economic recovery, which the pro-West, pro-India liberal President Ranil Wickremesinghe managed well enough in ending the days of strife when people were out on the streets of Colombo in mass protests named 'Aragalaya.'

It is for overturning the established order of the entrenched wallowing in dynastic politics and outlandishly corrupt ways in which the rich were invariably favoured that Disanayake's victory will be considered historic. While his background in radical, religion-based politics will remain a baggage that he must keep at bay, his performance as a president aware of the sensitivities of various religious and ethnic groups will be watched with interest.

Given the minuscule presence of the JVP in Parliament with three members in a house of 225, it stands to reason that the President would dissolve it quickly enough and have national polls conducted. Having vaulted from a 3 per cent vote share in the 2019 presidential polls, the JVP-led NPP alliance should expect to fare better. Since Sri Lankan ministers can only be named from among Parliament members, the president's priority is clear.

Having come to power as the harbinger of change, Mr Disanayake would be under pressure to punish the wrongdoers and the corrupt of previous governments like the Rajapaksa. What shape the foreign policy takes will be keenly watched, particularly in India whose envoy he received first on becoming president. What he does for his people, besides tinkering with taxation rates for the better off, will be of greater interest.

The Tamils, who constitute the largest minority, may have shown a greater preference for Sajith Premadasa and may have to walk the extra mile to mend fences if their demands for devolution of powers and a fair share of government spending on the north and the east are to get a fair hearing. It would probably depend on how much there is in the national kitty after having to service all the debts built up through Chinese infrastructure and India's loans.

Fact checking: No role for State

The Bombay High Court has exorcised the spectre of an agency in the form of a fact checking unit (FCU) lording over the publication of matters relating to the Union government in social media by striking down the amendment the Modi government introduced last year to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The rule had enabled the Union government to create an FCU and demand the social media platforms to remove matters it found 'fake, false and misleading' if they were to retain the protection as an intermediary. Any media platform could be made to face prosecution.

A 2-1 majority decision of the court found the amendment violative of Article 14 and Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantee equality and freedom of speech and expression, respectively, and found it to be against principles of natural justice. It also found the expressions "fake, false and misleading" in the Rules were "vague and hence wrong" in the absence of a definition.

The court's observation that the people have the right to information but not the right to truth, addresses the issue in the most comprehensive way a court has attempted yet. It underscores the democratic position that there cannot be a universal position on truth; many people will perceive it in many ways, as expounded in the Vedic statement that "truth is one, but the wise call it by many names". Attempts to mix the right to information and the right to truth and giving the responsibility to the government would in effect result in the denial of both.

No one, definitely not the government, should be allowed to judge everything citizens say, particularly about the government itself. Such a decision will be the sure recipe for doing away with basic democratic rights. If the government is so insistent that people get to know only facts about it, it should then set up a fact telling unit, instead of a fact checking unit, and leave it to the people to decide which side of the version they wanted to believe. There cannot be a state monopoly on facts in a democracy, and the Bombay high court has just reaffirmed it.

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Subhani



Non-military containment of China: Quad's game on



K.C. Singh

President Joe Biden of the United States hosted a farewell Quad summit in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, on September 21. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, also demitting office soon, set the trend by hosting the last summit in his hometown of Hiroshima. Will we see the next summit, which India will host in 2025, in Ahmedabad?

The joint statement, called the Wilmington Declaration, recapitulates progress on past decisions and notes fresh appraisal of regional and global issues. However, the focus remains on the Indo-Pacific. The declaration recalls it was Mr Biden who elevated the Quad meetings to the "leader-level format", four years ago. It calls the gathering as "four leading maritime democracies", today "more strategically aligned than ever".

Core elements like human rights, the rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity were spelt out. The role of regional fora like Asean, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Indian Ocean Rim Association was underscored.

Following introductory statements, multiple themes are tabulated and examined. These are: health security, including the Quad Cancer Moonshot, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, quality infrastructure, use of artificial intelligence in the next generation of agricultural development and sharing of biodata regarding non-humans amongst members. Climate change and clean energy also got attention. Two additional areas listed are cyber and space.

Although China is not named in the joint statement, most of the themes relate to the danger presented by China's rise and aggressive challenge to the global order. The Quad sen-

sibly concluded some years ago that to restrain China, military alliances alone are not the answer. In fact, India resisted the group assuming a military dimension. The Quad consensus is that to rival China's expanding influence in the Indo-Pacific region, the four-nation group must put on the table alternative models for the development of the islands and other nations in the Indo-Pacific. That is why the focus is on providing assistance in healthcare, developing infrastructure, etc, as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The healthcare initiative builds on great work done by the group during the Covid-19 pandemic to help dispense vaccines.

The new danger from Clade 1 mpox is mentioned. The Quad Cancer Moonshot aims to make available both preventive measures and treatment of cervical cancer in the region. India is providing \$10 million to the WHO's Global Initiative in Digital Health.

India, having done great work in establishing Digital Public Infrastructure, has the model handy for the less developed nations of the Global South. The Quad strategy is multi-fold and goes beyond it. One, the aim is to constrain Chinese coercion vis a vis its maritime neighbours. Hence the repetitive calls to enforce international law and defend the UN Charter. Two, effort is required to retain the technological edge over China by working together to develop critical and emerging technologies.

It was recognised that to develop sustainable infrastructure, it is important to impart training. That is why 1,300 Quality Infrastructure Fellowships have already been awarded under the Quad's leadership. Linked to this theme is a decision to ensure Cable Connectivity Resilience and the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership.

Although China is not named in the joint statement, most of the themes relate to the danger presented by China's rise and aggressive challenge to the global order.

India will be hosting a meeting to take this concept forward.

A good part of the joint statement is devoted to indirectly pointing the finger at China, as well as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). Hence the need to abide by the UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) is forcefully stated. It is not specifically mentioned that China has even been intruding into Japan's maritime zone and airspace, including recently by sending its aircraft-carrier there. This aggressiveness is even worse in the South China Sea, regarding Taiwan and the Philippines.

The Quad discussed the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, with spillover to Yemen, where the Houthis rebels are disrupting traffic through the Red Sea, and Lebanon. In the latter, a suspected Israeli intelligence operation has killed and injured thousands of Hezbollah members, associates and even family members. The joint statement's observation that the release of hostages would bring a sustainable ceasefire sounds unrealistic as the Israelis are unwilling to accept a permanent ceasefire till they have decapitated the Hamas leadership. In fact, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seem happy to await the US presidential election outcome, hoping that Donald Trump wins, providing them both more leeway.

The Modi-Biden bilateral meeting appeared more about conveying Indian gratitude for the host's role in advancing the relationship and reaffirming the existing multi-dimensional engagement than introducing any new ideas. The background briefing claimed "unprecedented levels of trust and collabora-

tion". Defence cooperation was correctly described as a "pillar". The India-US collaboration in semiconductor fabrication was presented as an example of effective technology-sharing. The Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) is a path for the two nations, as indeed the Quad as a whole, to ensure that leadership is retained in cutting-edge technologies in coming years. The real battle with China is in these areas.

That is why the United States was blocking China's easy access to high technology in recent years.

Ironically, as the Quad leaders met, the US is busy electing its next President, who may well be a disruptive element like Donald Trump. In a public speech he claimed that "Modi" was coming to see him. In the same breath he denounced India as a tariff exploiter. This creates a quandary as if Prime Minister Modi meets Mr Trump, perhaps in New York, without meeting Kamala Harris, it would be controversial, on the eve of the presidential election. If he does not, Mr Trump is known to nurse old snubs.

Similarly, the media enquired if the American side had raised the case of "Khalistani" leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. The subject was revived when a Sikh delegation was received at the White House and reassured that all US citizens would be protected against any attack from abroad. The Indian side refused to comment, but the issue continues to linger.

Finally, Mr Modi's Wilmington visit had two purposes. One, to thank Mr Biden for his support for closer engagement with India. Two, to keep the Quad's momentum going, hoping the American people elect a President committed to protecting the global order. He succeeded in his limited purpose. The Indian diaspora event was a morale booster after the Lok Sabha election setback. Mr Modi returns home to a full programme of electioneering in crucial state Assembly elections, in which his foreign sojourn is unlikely to figure.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

PUJA THREATS IN B'DESH

Several temples in Khulna and other provinces of Bangladesh have received anonymous letters threatening to not allow them to celebrate Durga Puja unless they pay a fee of five lakh takas each. The letters, delivered to the leaders of various Puja celebration committees, also said that failure to comply would result in severe consequences. Many of them are considering cancelling the Puja altogether, but isn't this rank injustice to the minority community? Durga Puja is the biggest festival celebrated by Hindu Bengalis.

Sumon Sanyal
Dhaka, Bangladesh

TOO MUCH WORK

THE ARTICLE "Burning Out Young" by Shweta Tripathi in your Sunday edition is timely and thought-provoking. It is true that work dominates every other aspect of human life, just like relationships and health. The experts are dead right that every organisation must prioritise the mental well-being of its employees. But they are only keen to improve their profit margins, mostly by pruning their employees. Ironically, they never even fill up the vacancies created due to the retirement of staffers. And usually, it is the most conscientious workers who get to bear the lion's share of the burden. It is high time that all companies ensure that its employees get to at least finish their work on time, and spend their evenings with their families.

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

INTREPID MOUSE

A SCANDINAVIAN Airlines flight got diverted after a passenger complained of a mouse in their meal. Upon landing, the plane underwent a thorough inspection to locate the mouse, which was found hidden inside a sandwich. The airline spokesperson explained that this rare occurrence highlights the need for stricter regulations regarding rodents on flights. He added that the airline will conduct a review with its suppliers. Passengers were understandably shaken by the discovery, but one brave individual took matters in his own hands. The passenger, who witnessed the whole scene unfold, shared his experience on Facebook: "Believe it or not, it was a rodent behind a sandwich. The unwitting passenger confused the crew and created chaos mid-air."

M.R. Jayanthi
Trichy, Tamil Nadu

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Aakar Patel



Here are two headlines from this month: One was "FATF's Thumbs-Up To India's Efforts To Tackle Terror Financing, Money Laundering: Why It Matters". Another was "FATF Flags Terror Financing Lacunae in Indian NGO Sector".

Let us see what these mean when put together. If one were to follow the news conscientiously nowadays, they'd find Indian authorities outlawing at least one non-governmental organisation every month. And the closure of these organisations at least finds a mention in the newspapers. There are many others, in fact the majority, that shut down in the darkness with no news of their demise. This is because under this government data on the closure of NGOs has been pulled down from official websites where these things were previously made public. Outrage and protest against the relentless shrinking of civic space by the Indian government has also been criminalised. Deliberate attempts are made to force civil society into submission every day.

But that is exactly what we need to be questioning right now, clearly and loudly. What makes it an especially opportune moment is that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has published India's mutual evaluation report (MER) after a gap of 14 years, calling out India for non-compliance with its standards in regulating the non-profit sector.

Now one may ask: what is the Financial Action Task Force and why is it important? FATF is an inter-governmental body with 40 members mandated

to tackle global money laundering, terrorist financing and countering the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It functions by setting international standards for countries and then regularly evaluating and ranking countries' anti-money laundering and countering of financing of terrorism regime against those standards. India is one of the FATF member states.

FATF is important because in 2023, civil society groups in India documented that the Indian government consistently exploited FATF's recommendations to either enact or tighten the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) — three laws that have become convenient tools of oppression at the hands of the Indian authorities against those who dare to speak up against the government.

Specifically, FATF operates through a peer-review system to mutually assess the full and effective implementation of its 40 recommendations on money laundering and nine special recommendations on terrorist funding by member states. In line with the mutual evaluation process, a country's compliance is examined by other FATF member states, resulting in the production of an in-depth assessment report with targeted recommendations to address shortcomings called a mutual evaluation report. The countries who fail to comply with the standards are put under increased monitoring and termed as "high risk juris-

dition", externally referred to as a "grey or black-list". In the past, countries like Turkey and Pakistan have been put on these lists.

After a series of delays, India's mutual evaluation process started in November 2023 and ended in June 2024. On the conclusion of the evaluation process, FATF published its summary findings. On one hand, FATF lauded India for its "high level of technical compliance" with FATF's other standards. This is what the first headline we began with refers to. On the other hand, and this is about the second headline, it called on the country to ensure that the measures it has put in place to prevent the non-profit sector from being abused for terrorist financing are implemented in line with a risk-based approach mentioned in FATF's Recommendation 8.

So, what does this mean? FATF Recommendation 8 requires that laws and regulations to combat money laundering and terrorism financing target only those non-profit organisations (NPOs) that a country has identified — through a careful, targeted "risk-based" analysis — as vulnerable to terrorism financing abuse, and fall under the FATF definition of NPO. It also recommends that corrective measures must be focused and proportionate to avoid disrupting the legitimate activities of NPOs. However, in complete defiance of Recommendation 8, the Indian authorities have not only passed laws that are severely overbroad in nature but continue to exploit them against civil society organisations and human rights defenders for

carrying on their legitimate human rights work.

With a mere 2.2 per cent cases registered under India's anti-terror law resulting in conviction between 2016 and 2019 and at least 83 per cent of the cases pending before the court by the end of 2022, FATF also called on India to address the delays in concluding prosecutions under UAPA. It recommended the same for prosecutions under the PMLA, which has seen only 31 cases completing trial in the past nine years, indicating a clear lack of efficiency. These recommendations, however, did not find a mention in the press release issued by India's finance ministry that self-congratulated the country for an "outstanding outcome" in FATF's review. The convenient cherry-picking of recommendations by the Indian government is also evident from its continuous cancellation of the FCRA licences of NGOs even after the review and misuse of UAPA and PMLA to shut down critical voices.

India will again be reviewed after three years. In this time, the government needs to ensure that it is reaching out to the non-profit sector and conducting an adequate risk assessment to put in place measures that are focused and proportionate and not overbroad and vague like FCRA. It also needs to put an end to politically motivated prosecutions under India's anti-terror and money laundering laws. True governance doesn't lie in discrediting dissent.

The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar_patel

Why FATF is key to India's security: Govt must heed its advice over NGOs



SHORT TAKES

MIGRANT BOAT SINKS OFF GREECE, 4 DEAD

Athens, Sept. 23: Greece has recovered the bodies of four migrants after their boat sank on Monday off the Greek island of Samos, its Coast Guard said. At least 30 migrants were believed to be initially on board the vessel that foundered off the rocky shores of Agios Isidoros in the northwestern part of the Aegean island, according to officials.

Five migrants had been rescued so far, among them a pregnant woman and a minor, who were taken to hospital for medical checks, another official told Reuters.

UK CHANNEL MIGRANT ARRIVAL TOPS 25K IN '24

London, Sept. 23: The number of migrants arriving in Britain by crossing the Channel in small boats has topped 25,000 since the start of the year. The figures come as the new Labour government struggles to reduce the cross-Channel arrivals.

Some 717 migrants crossed the Channel from northern France on Sunday, taking the cumulative number of arrivals so far in 2024 to 25,052. A similar number, 707, also made the crossing on Saturday. The total represents a four per cent rise on the equivalent figure at this point last year.

GERMANY RAIDS SITES OVER CHILD SEX ABUSE

Berlin, Sept. 23: German police in the central Hesse region said Monday they had raided dozens of properties in a crackdown against sex abuse of minors and child pornography.

Police and prosecutors identified a total of 48 suspects, all men aged between 15 and 68, in last week's sweeping raids in Frankfurt and smaller cities and towns.

Seven men were suspected of sexual abuse of minors. Meanwhile the rest were being investigated over the alleged purchase, possession or dissemination of pornography involving minors.

SCHOLZ'S PARTY BEATS FAR-RIGHT IN ELECTION

Potsdam, Sept. 23: The Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz won an election in the eastern German state of Brandenburg on Sunday, gaining a narrow edge over a growing far-right party, according to the vote count. The vote took place three weeks after the far right made gains in two other states in eastern Germany.

According to final results published on Sunday evening by the state electoral administration, the Social Democrats won 30.9 per cent of the votes in the election to the Parliament of Brandenburg, the state that surrounds Berlin.

CHINA SUPPORTS RESOURCES RECYCLING GROUP

Beijing, Sept. 23: China's state planner said on Monday it supports the establishment of a national resources recycling group as part of its efforts to improve recycling in various industries. Industry sources have previously said China was planning to set up a state-run company specialising in recycling across sectors including steel, base metals, plastics and chemicals.

The National Development and Reform Commission did not provide a timeline or other details on how the recycling group would work during a Monday media briefing.

EGYPTIAN SHIP OFFLOADS ARMS TO SOMALIA

Mogadishu, Sept. 23: An Egyptian warship has delivered a second major cache of weaponry to Somalia, including anti-aircraft guns and artillery, port and military officials said on Monday, in a move likely to stoke further friction between the two countries and Ethiopia.

Ties between Egypt and Somalia have grown this year over their shared mistrust of Ethiopia, prompting Cairo to send several panelloads of arms to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, after the two countries signed a joint security pact in August.

21 kids among 274 killed in Israeli strikes: Lebanon

Israeli military says it struck around 800 Hezbollah targets

Beirut, Sept. 23: Lebanese health minister Firass Abiad said the death toll in Israeli strikes on Monday rose to 274, including 21 children, the bloodiest daily toll in nearly a year of cross-border clashes.

The dead included 39 women while 1,024 people were wounded in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, the country's health minister said during a press conference.

The Israeli military said it had struck around 800 Hezbollah targets on Monday as part of the deadliest strikes on Lebanon since fighting started last October.

"Since this morning, the IDF (military) has conducted proactive and extensive aerial strikes against Hezbollah terrorist targets in Lebanon," a statement said, adding that the strikes hit "approximately 800 Hezbollah terror targets in southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa area situated deep inside the Lebanese territory".

China has urged its citizens in Israel to leave "as soon as possible", as tensions between Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah escalate. "Currently, the situation along the Israel-Lebanon border is extremely tense, with frequent military conflicts," China's embassy in Israel said in a statement issued on Sunday.

"The security situation in Israel remains severe, complex, and unpredictable," the embassy statement added. The embassy urged Chinese citizens in Israel to "return home or relocate to safer areas as soon as possible".

Monday's attack toll stood at "274 dead, including 21 children and 39 women



Cars stuck in traffic as they flee the southern villages amid Israeli airstrikes, in Lebanon, on Monday.

— that's who we know about until now", Abiad told reporters, adding "thousands of families from the targeted areas have been displaced".

The dead also included two rescuers, with 16 other emergency workers wounded, he said, adding that "two ambulances, a fire truck and a medical centre were targeted".

The attacks wounded 1,024 people who were treated in 27 hospitals, Abiad said. About 5,000 people had been wounded "in less than a week" of Israeli attacks, he said, after Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies exploded and an Israeli strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

That number accounts for about half of the wounded toll of "10,000 to 11,000" in 2006, when Israel and Hezbollah last went to war. — Agencies

Taiwan widens probe into device explosion

Taipei, Sept. 23: Taiwan investigators on Monday questioned two more employees of a tech firm as part of a probe into the delivery of exploding communications devices to Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Questions abound over where the devices came from and how they were supplied to the militant group after hundreds of pagers and two-way radios detonated across Lebanon last week, killing at least 39 people and wounding nearly 3,000.

The New York Times reported that Israel had inserted explosive material into a shipment of pagers from Taiwan's Gold Apollo, citing US and other

anonymous officials. Taiwanese investigators initially searched four locations and questioned two people including Gold Apollo's head Hsu Ching-kung, who has denied producing the devices.

On Monday, the prosecutors' office said they had questioned two more company employees. "Today, it also directed the National Security division... to interview former or current employees of (Gold Apollo) as witnesses," said the prosecutors' office in Taipei's Shilin district where it is based.

"The two helped clarify the case, and the whole case is under intensive investigation," the prosecutors' office said. — AFP

Moscow, Kyiv cross swords in sea dispute court battle

The Hague, Sept. 23: Ukraine accused Russia at an international court on Monday of flouting sea law by trying to keep the Kerch Strait between Russia and Crimea under its sole control.

Kyiv began proceedings at the Hague-based inter-governmental Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 after Moscow began building the 19 km (12 mile) Crimea Bridge link to the peninsula it seized from Ukraine two years previously. The bridge is crucial for the supply of fuel, food and other products to Crimea, where the port of Sevastopol is the historic home base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, and became a major supply route for troops after Moscow's invasion in 2022.

Kyiv, which wants the bridge demolished and has targeted it with attacks, says Russia built it low to keep international ships out while allowing smaller Russian ones through the strait connecting the Sea of Azov and Black Sea. "Russia wants to take the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait for itself," Ukraine's representative Anton Korotyevych told arbitrators at the hearings.

Russia dismissed Ukraine's case as groundless, hopeless. Its representative Gennady Kuzmin denied any Russian interference. — Reuters



The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy signs a shell during his visit to the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

KREMLIN SAYS IT WILL STUDY ZELENSKY PLAN

Moscow, Sept. 23: The Kremlin said on Monday it would study what Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has billed as his "victory plan" to end the war with Russia as and when official information on it was released.

Zelenskyy is due to present the plan to US President Joe Biden this week and his potential successor, Kamala Harris or Donald Trump, during a trip to the United States which will see him address the UN General Assembly on Tuesday. — Reuters

JAPAN PROTESTS RUSSIA AIRSPACE 'VIOLATION'

Tokyo, Sept. 23: Japan lodged a "very serious protest" with Moscow after a Russian patrol plane entered its airspace three times, the defence minister said on Monday, calling it the first confirmed incursion since 2019.

The military responded by scrambling fighter jets and issuing radio and flare warnings, Minoru Kihara told reporters. "We confirmed today that a Russian Il-38 patrol aircraft has violated our airspace over our territorial waters." — AFP



Muhammad Asim Malik

PAKISTAN PICKS NEW CHIEF OF SPY AGENCY ISI

Islamabad, Sept. 23: Pakistan has picked Lieutenant-General Muhammad Asim Malik as the new director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), its top spy agency, according to a security source and a local TV channel, the first change in the key post since 2021.

The Pakistani military's public relations department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The reported move comes as the political role of the agency faces intense scrutiny. One former ISI chief has been arrested for supporting the political cause of jailed former PM Imran Khan, who, in turn, alleges that the agency, under current chief Naveed Anjum, is being used against him. — Reuters

AFRICA HAS 30K MPOX CASES IN '24, SAYS W.H.O.

London, Sept. 23: Nearly 30,000 suspected mpox cases have been reported in Africa so far this year, most of them in Democratic Republic of Congo where tests have run out, the World Health Organisation said on Monday.

More than 800 people died of suspected mpox across the continent in that time, the United Nations health body said in its report.

Congo's central African neighbour Burundi has also been hit by a growing outbreak, the world body added. Mpox can spread through close contact. Usually mild, it is fatal in rare cases. It typically causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions on the body. — Reuters

Dissanayake takes oath of office; PM quits
No magic solution to crisis, says Lanka Prez

Colombo, Sept. 23: Sri Lanka's first leftist president was sworn in to office Monday and vowed to restore public faith in politics, but said he had no magic solution to the hardships suffered following an unprecedented economic crisis.

Self-avowed Marxist Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the People's Liberation Front (JVP) took his oath at the colonial-era Presidential Secretariat in Colombo after trouncing his nearest rivals.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena resigned shortly before the ceremony, clearing the way for Dissanayake to appoint his own Cabinet.

The previously fringe politician, whose party led two failed uprisings that left tens of thousands dead, saw a surge of support after the 2022 economic meltdown immiserated millions of Sri Lankans.

Dissanayake, 55, was sworn in by chief justice Jayantha Jayasuriya in a televised ceremony attended by diplomats, lawmakers, Buddhists, other clergy and the military.

"I am not a conjuror, I am not a magician, I am a common citizen," he said after taking his oath. "I have strengths and limitations, things I know and things I don't... my responsibility is to be part of a collective effort to end this crisis." — AFP



Sri Lanka's Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya administers oath of office of President to Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo on Monday.

Xi pledges more BRI investment

Beijing, Sept. 23: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday congratulated his newly-elected Sri Lankan counterpart Anura Kumara Dissanayake, pledging more high-quality cooperation through BRI, amid speculation that his Marxist background may lead to stronger ties with Beijing and a delicate balancing act between China and India.

In his congratulatory message to 56-year-old Dissanayake, Xi said that he prizes the development of China-Sri Lanka ties, and stands ready to work with the Lankan leader to

carry forward the traditional friendship and enhance political mutual trust.

Xi, 71, also pledged to work with Dissanayake to facilitate more fruitful high-quality Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation and make steady and long-term progress in the China-Sri Lanka strategic cooperative partnership. The BRI is a multi-billion-dollar initiative launched by Xi when he came to power in 2013. But, it has raised concerns over China's diplomacy of extending huge loans to smaller countries for infra projects. — PTI

Iran walls off Af border part

Tehran, Sept. 23: Iran's military has built a wall along more than 10 km (6 miles) of its eastern border with Afghanistan, the main entry point for immigrants, local media reported on Monday.

"More than 10 km of walls have been built on the border and another 50 km are ready to be walled off," JSNA news agency said, citing General Nozar Nemati, deputy commander of army ground forces. Iran shares a more than 900-km (560-mile) border with Afghanistan, and the Islamic republic hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world.

This comprises mostly well-integrated Afghans who arrived over the past 40 years after fleeing conflict in their home country. The flow of Afghan immigrants has increased since the Taliban took over in August 2021 after US forces withdrew.

The authorities have recently increased pressure on "illegal" refugees, regularly announcing expulsions through the eastern border. "By blocking the border, we want to control the country's entries and exits" and "better increase the security of border areas", Nemati said.

In September, interior minister Eskandar Momeni said Iran will employ other methods that include barbed wire and water-filled ditches in addition to the wall to block the border. — AFP



Yoko Kamikawa

JAPAN, CHINA FMs TO MEET OVER STABBING

Tokyo, Sept. 23: Japanese foreign minister Yoko Kamikawa said on Monday she will meet her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during a visit to New York to discuss a schoolboy's fatal stabbing.

After the attack last week in the Chinese city of Shenzhen, PM Fumio Kishida demanded an explanation and urged China to ensure the safety of Japanese citizens. "The recent incident in Shenzhen, where a child at a Japanese school was attacked and killed, was tragic," Kamikawa told reporters. — AFP

Trump ahead in Arizona, Georgia, N. Carolina: NYT

Washington, Sept. 23: Republican Donald Trump leads among likely voters in the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina, outpacing US Vice-President Kamala Harris six weeks before the Nov. 5 presidential election, a New York Times/Siena College poll showed on Monday.

Trump bested his Democratic rival 50% to 45% in Arizona last week, 49% to 45% in Georgia and 49% to 47% in North Carolina, according to the poll, echoing other recent polls showing a close contest.



Donald Trump

The three states are among seven critical swing states that are likely to

decide the 2024 presidential contest between Trump, a convicted felon, and Harris, a former prosecutor who would be the first woman US president.

Trump, who was president from 2017 to 2021, is seeking the White House again after losing to Joe Biden in 2020, an outcome he continues to falsely blame on voter fraud. The 78-year-old former president faces federal and state criminal charges over efforts to overturn the election results. — Reuters

SPACE | SOJOURN

SpaceX CEO says uncrewed flights to decide crewed mission timeline

Five uncrewed Starships to Mars, says Musk

California, Sept. 23: SpaceX plans to launch about five uncrewed Starship missions to Mars in two years, CEO Elon Musk said on Sunday in a post on social media platform X.

Earlier this month, Musk had said that the first Starships to Mars would launch in two years "when the next Earth-Mars transfer window opens".

The CEO on Sunday said that the first crewed mission timeline will depend upon the success of the uncrewed flights. If the uncrewed missions land

safely, crewed missions will be launched in four years. However, in case of challenges, crewed missions will be postponed by another two years, he said.

Musk, known for providing changing timelines on Starship's readiness, said earlier this year that the first uncrewed starship to land on Mars would be within five years, with the first people landing on Mars within seven years.

In June, a Starship rocket survived a fiery, hyper-sonic return from space and achieved a breakth-

rough landing demonstration in the Indian Ocean, completing a full test mission around the globe on the rocket's fourth try.

Musk is counting on Starship to fulfill his goal of producing a large, multi-purpose next-generation spacecraft capable of sending people and cargo to the moon later this decade, and ultimately flying to Mars. NASA this year delayed Artemis 3 mission and its first crewed moon landing in half a century using SpaceX's Starship, to September 2026. — Reuters

Capsule with 3 back to Earth from ISS

Moscow, Sept. 23: A Soyuz capsule carrying two Russians and one American from the International Space Station landed on Monday in Kazakhstan, ending a record-breaking stay for the Russian pair.

The capsule landed on the Kazakh steppe about 3 1/2 hours after undocking

from the International Space Station in an apparently trouble-free descent. Oleg Kononenko and Nikolai Chub returned after 374 days aboard the space station, the longest continuous stay there.

Also in the capsule was American Tracy Dyson, who was in the space station for six months. — AP



Russian Soyuz capsule descends in Kazakhstan, on Monday.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	84,928.61	0.45
Nifty 50	25,939.05	0.57
S&P 500*	5,718.32	0.28
Dollar (₹)	83.54	0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	111.02	0.07
Euro (₹)	92.79	0.05
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	74,326.286	0.39
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.12	-0.50
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.768	0.007
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	3.768	0.04

*As of 8:30 PM IST

NTPC Green IPO launch likely in November

NTPC Green Energy, a subsidiary of state-owned power giant NTPC, is likely to bring its initial public offering (IPO) to raise ₹10,000 crore in the first week of November. Last week, NTPC Green Energy had filed preliminary papers with Sebi to raise ₹10,000 crore via IPO. The initial share-sale is entirely a fresh issuance of equity shares with no offer-for-sale component, according to the draft red herring prospectus.



myTVS to add 10,000 electric vehicles to fleet

Digital automotive aftermarket platform myTVS on Monday said it will invest ₹150 crore for acquisition of 10,000 electric two-wheelers to its fleet by March next year for its new venture mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) offered to last-mile EV operators. The company, part of the TVS Mobility Group, has partnered with MoEVing, an EV-based logistics firm to start MaaS to provide end-to-end vehicle management solutions.

Aster DM plans to invest ₹220 cr in Hyderabad

Aster DM Healthcare will invest about ₹220 crore to set up a new healthcare facility in Hyderabad. The 300-bed facility will cater to the unique healthcare needs of children and women of all ages, the healthcare provider said in a statement. The hospital will offer specialised services in obstetrics, comprehensive gynaecological care and complete neonatal and paediatric care, it added.

NBCC arm bags contract worth ₹1,261 crore

State-owned NBCC's arm HSCC has bagged a ₹1,261 crore contract to establish AIIMS hospital in Darbhanga, Bihar. NBCC informed that HSCC (India), its wholly-owned subsidiary, has recently been awarded establishment work of AIIMS, Darbhanga from the union health ministry. The value of the contract is ₹1,261 crore, it added. NBCC is mainly into project management consultancy and real estate business.

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Many novice traders burn cash in F&O deals

Sebi said aggregate losses exceed ₹1.8 lakh crore over 3 years

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

A new study conducted by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) paints a grim picture of young Indians from smaller cities and towns with less than ₹5 lakh annual income getting into equity futures and options (F&O) trading for quick returns on investments. However, most individual traders incur losses while proprietary traders and foreign portfolio investors have been booking heavy profits, the study said.

"93 per cent or over 9 out of 10 of individual traders incurred losses in equity F&O between FY22 and FY24; aggregate losses exceed ₹1.8 lakh crore over 3 years," Sebi said. In contrast to individual traders, proprietary traders and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) as a class booked gross trading profits of ₹33,000 crore and ₹28,000 crore, respectively, in FY24 (before accounting for transaction costs).

Against this, individuals and others incurred a loss of over ₹61,000 cr in FY24 (before accounting for transaction costs).

This study follows up on a report published by Sebi in January 2023, which

TOUGH GAME

Individuals and others incurred a loss of over **₹61,000 cr** in FY24.

ON AVERAGE, individual traders spent **₹26,000 per person** on F&O transaction costs in FY24.



PROPRIETARY traders, FPIs book gross trading profits of ₹33,000 cr, ₹28,000 cr respectively.

APPROXIMATELY 4 lakh traders, faced an average loss of ₹28 lakh per person inclusive of transaction costs.

found that 89 per cent of individual equity F&O traders lost money in FY22.

"With increased participation of individual investors in equity and equity derivatives markets, the current study was undertaken to analyse profit and loss patterns for individual traders in F&O during the three years FY22 to FY24, and for all the categories of investors in F&O during the single year FY24.

"93 per cent of over 1 crore individual F&O traders incurred average losses of around ₹2 lakh per trader (inclusive of transaction costs) during 3 years from FY22 to FY24.

Top 3.5 per cent per cent of loss-makers, approximately 4 lakh traders, faced an average loss of ₹28 lakh per person inclu-

sive of transaction costs during the above period.

Only 1 per cent of individual traders managed to earn profits exceeding ₹1 lakh, after adjusting for transaction costs.

Most of the profits were generated by larger entities that used trading algorithms, with 97 per cent of FPI profits and 96 per cent of proprietary trader profits coming from algorithmic trading.

On an average, individual traders spent ₹26,000 per person on F&O transaction costs in FY24. Over the three-year period from FY22 to FY24, individuals collectively spent about ₹50,000 crore on transaction costs, with 51 per cent of these costs being brokerage fees and 20 per cent being exchange fees.

Oil refiners cancel 1 lakh MT palm oil imports on price rise

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 23

Edible oil refiners cancelled around 1 lakh metric tonnes of palm oil imports after the spurt in Malaysian prices over the increased import duty made shipments non-profitable. Prices of some of the edible oils spurted in the futures market on Monday, raising concerns about elevated prices during the festive season.

Around 10 refiners have cancelled the purchase contracts with overseas sellers after Malaysian palm oil prices jumped 9 per cent in past four days.

Further, the government on Sept. 13 had increased the duty on crude palm, soyabean and sunflower oil to 20 per cent from nil and that on refined palm, soyabean and sunflower

COSTLY AFFAIR

EDIBLE OIL counters in the Indian futures market saw spurt in prices.

CHANGES in any edible oil impacts the prices of other edible oils.

IN THE CASE of a shortage, govt can make use of buffer stock.

AROUND 10 refiners cancels purchase contracts after palm oil prices rise.

SOYBEAN oil prices have already moved up 30% in a month.



oils to 32.5 per cent from 12.5 per cent.

"The duty hike had already made imports costlier," said Sandeep Bajoria, past president of Solvent Extractors Association of India.

Following the development, edible oil counters in the Indian futures market saw a spurt in prices.

"Soybean oil prices have moved up 30 per cent in a month. Development in any edible oil impacts the prices of other edible oils as the market tends to substitute it with other oils," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities. In the case of a shortage, the government can make use of buffer stock.

Two-wheeler loans witness double-digit growth

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI, SEPT. 23

Two-wheeler loans was the only segment which had a double-digit growth in volume and the value originated.

Lenders tightened the supply of credit on credit cards, consumer durable loans and personal loans in June quarter, said TransUnion CIBIL Credit Market Indicator (CMI) report.

Retail loan originations (new accounts opened)

growth among consumption-led credit products moderated in the quarter ending June 2024, including personal loans.

Home loan origination growth dropped further from -4 per cent in June 2023 to -9 per cent in June 2024.

Loan Against Property growth fell from 13 per cent to 2 per cent over the same period. Auto loans saw a sharp decline with growth falling from 10 per cent in 2023 to 2 per cent in 2024. Two-wheeler loans



managed to grow in double digits to 13 per cent in June from 17 per cent in

PM Modi's visit to US: Google, Nvidia to up presence in India

New York, Sept. 23: Technology giants Google and Nvidia will enhance their engagement in India with more focus on leveraging AI technology in the country, top officials of companies said on Monday after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Nvidia chief executive officer Jensen Huang said the Prime Minister has always been keen on learning about artificial intelligence, its potential and opportunities for India.

"I have enjoyed so many meetings with the Prime Minister. He's such an incredible student, and every time I see him, he wants to learn about technology, AI, the potential and opportunity for India,



the impact on India, society and industry," he said. "Artificial intelligence (AI) is also a new industry. I'm looking forward to partnering with India in a very deep way to make that possible. We have many partnerships with India," Huang said.

Nvidia has partnered with Yotta Data Services which plans to scale up its GPU stable to 32,768 units by the end of 2025.

Google chief executive officer Sundar Pichai said

the Prime Minister has been focused on transforming India with his Digital India vision and pushed the company to make in India and design in India.

"He challenged us to think about applications in healthcare, education, agriculture, and he's also thinking about the infrastructure of India, be it data centres, power, energy and investing to make sure India can transition. We are robustly investing in AI in India, and we look forward to doing more," Pichai said.

He said that the PM has asked Google to do more in the field of AI and wants to make sure AI is there to benefit the people of India. —PTI

Jobs in services rises steepest since Aug. 22

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

With a slowdown in business activity of both the manufacturing and services sector, the headline composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) has pulled down the expansion of India's private sector economy in September.

The index in the combined output in both the sectors was above the neutral 50-mark that separates contraction from expansion for the 38th straight month, a private survey showed on Monday.

As per the survey by HSBC Flash India, composite output index - that measures the month-on-month change in the combined output of India's manufacturing and service sectors - dipped to 59.3 in September from 60.7 in August.

"The services PMI business activity index stood at 58.9 compared to 60.9 in August, while manufacturing PMI output index was 60.0 compared to 60.3 in August," the survey noted.

Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC, said that the flash composite PMI in India rose at a slightly slower pace in September, marking the slowest growth observed in 2024.

"Both the manufacturing and service sectors exhibited similar trends during the month. Nevertheless, the pace of growth remained well above the long-term average," Bhandari said.



● BOTH THE manufacturing and service sectors exhibited similar trends during the month. Nevertheless, the pace of growth remained well above the long-term average.

"Growth in new orders moderated by a touch in September, but hiring levels rose at a faster pace, supported by improving business confidence. The rise in employment in the service sector was the steepest since August 2022, as companies responded to robust growth in new orders. On the price front, input cost inflation rose at a slightly quicker pace in September," he added.

Expansion in total business activity generally reflected increasing new orders, which continued to rise sharply. The pace of input cost inflation remained muted. "Marginally faster increases were seen across manufacturing and services. Firms generally linked this to higher prices for raw materials and electricity," it said.

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OIL AUCTION SEES PARTICIPATION OF FOUR BIDDERS

New Delhi, Sept. 23:

India's biggest oil and gas bid round attracted four bidders that included state-owned ONGC and OIL and private sector Vedanta, with most blocks getting just two bids, according to the directorate general of hydrocarbons (DGH).

The OALP-IX bid round, where 28 blocks or areas spread over 1.36 lakh square kilometre were offered for finding and producing oil and gas, for first time saw Reliance Industries - BP combine bidding together with ONGC for one block in Gujarat.

The DGH released the names of the bidders for the 28 blocks offered under the open acreage licensing policy (OALP-IX) round, bids for which closed on September 21.

ONGC bid for 14 blocks alone and with partners such as state-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) and Indian Oil Corporation for four other blocks. After considering its bid with Reliance-bp, ONGC in all bids for 19 out of the 28 blocks on offer.

Vedanta bid for all the 28 blocks on offer while Sun Petrochemicals bid for seven areas. —PTI



AI TO SPUR JOBS, END REPETITIVE TASKS: DELOITTE

New Delhi, Sept. 23: The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) will most certainly lead to the creation of new roles and jobs in the economy, although some of the current functions involving repetitive and commoditised tasks may be impacted, according to Deloitte South Asia chief executive officer Romal Shetty.

In fact, more new jobs will be created than in the past given the transformative impact of AI, Shetty said and emphasised that human intervention and interface would still be key to optimising the full benefits of emerging technologies.

Shetty said that AI could affect jobs that are repetitive and commoditised but will yield more opportunities for companies and workers. "AI as a huge opportunity rather than an absolute challenge," he added.

A case in point could be air traffic control operations for drones, amid the increasing use of unmanned aerial vehicles in different applications. "Also, with EVs coming in, the tire sound is significant. So they're looking at chemical composition of tire using GenAI to say can 18 months of R&D be done in nine months now, and things like that," Shetty said. —PTI

SOCIAL | INFRA

Huge demand for residential properties at right locations and attractive prices

No slowdown in Indian realty, asserts Credai

Sydney, Sept. 23: Housing demand in the Indian real estate market continues to be strong with no signs of slowdown and there is a need to boost supply to meet the requirements, according to realtors' apex body Credai.

The association said that housing sales in any particular quarter could fall due to lesser number of launches, but consumer demand that has surged post Covid remains intact.

Confederation of real estate developers' associations of India (CREDAI) is holding a conference 'Credai Natcon' here during Sept. 23-26

When asked about estimated fall in sales during the current quarter, Credai national chairman Manoj Gaur said the new launches have been lower in the September quarter.

"There is no inventory. There is a huge demand for residential properties from good developers at right locations and attractive prices," Gaur said.

He was replying to a query about PropEquity latest data which estimates 18 per cent fall in sales across nine major cities to 1.04 lakh units during July-Sept. period. Irfan Razack, chairman and managing director of

Prestige Group and past president of Credai, said, "Demand is there. There is no inventory."

The demand is "ever-green" in Indian housing market, he added.

Citing the example of his company, Razack said the sale bookings of Prestige Estates projects fell in April-June quarter due to lesser number of launches.

He stressed on the need to streamline and fasten the process of approval for real estate projects.

Gaur further said the projects launched by reputed developers are completely sold out within few days.

Razack expressed concern over a sharp rise in housing prices in some micro markets and said the annual appreciation should be modest.

Credai national president Boman Irani emphasised on the

need to have provision of GST input credit in real estate sector.

Irani also pressed for change in the definition of affordable housing, which was capped at ₹45 lakh in 2017. "There has been a significant rise in real estate prices and therefore there is a need to revise this cap," he added.

Irani noted that there has been a lot of improve-

ment in the infrastructure in India but said there is a need for further improvement to reach global standards.

Asked about the affordable housing segment, Razack suggested the government should provide land at subsidised rates to develop "mass housing".

"Land prices have gone up sharply. Construction cost is under our control. Labour rates too have risen," Razack said, while explaining the difficulties faced by realty firms in the development of affordable housing projects. —PTI

● THERE HAS been a lot of improvement in the infrastructure in India but said there is a need for further improvement to reach global standards.

— BOMAN IRANI, Credai national president.



SHORT TAKES

India tighten grip on WTC top spot

Dubai: A dominant India tightened their grip on the top spot in the World Test Championship table with a 280-run victory over Bangladesh, while Sri Lanka saw off New Zealand in Galle to help their move towards a potential spot in the final at Lord's next year. The two results have led to shifts in the race for the two final spots, with Sri Lanka leapfrogging their current opponents into third spot. India's win in Chennai and the 12 WTC points reasserts their status at the top of the table, moving to a percentage of 71.67%, extending their lead on Australia in second (62.50%). Bangladesh, who had jumped to the fourth position following an exceptional 2-0 win against Pakistan, drop to sixth place (point percentage of 39.29%) behind Sri Lanka and England after the defeat. — PTI

Parakh's ton leads India U-19 to win

Puducherry: Opener Sahil Parakh made an aggressive unbeaten hundred as India Under-19 brushed aside Australia by nine wickets here on Monday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match youth ODIs. Parakh's hundred (109 not out, 75b, 14x4, 5x6) helped India achieve the target of 177 in just 22 overs. India had beaten Australia in the first match by seven wickets on Saturday. After the early departure of Rudra Patel (10), Parakh, a 19-year from Mumbai, stitched a fine partnership of 153 with Abhigyan Kundu (53 not out, 50b, 9x4) to take their side home easily. Earlier, Karnataka medium pacer Samarth Nagaraj (2/34), Kerala leg-spinner Mohammed Enaan (2/30) and off-spinner Kiran Chormale (2/29) shared six wickets among them to restrict the Aussies to 176 all out in 49.3 overs. Several Australian batters got starts before perishing cheaply to the persistent Indian bowlers. The inconsequential third match will be played here on Thursday. — PTI

Brief scores: Australia U-19 176 in 49.3 overs (Addison Sheriff 39, Christian Howe 28, Samarth Nagaraj 2/34, Mohammed Enaan 2/30, Kiran Chormale 2/29) lost to India U-19 177/1 in 22 overs (Sahil Parakh 109 n.o., Abhigyan Kundu 53 n.o.).

Three Indians in doubles final

New Delhi: India's Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, Vijay Sundar Prashanth and Yuki Bhambri reached the men's doubles finals in two different ATP 250 meets in China on Monday. At the Hangzhou Open, the unseeded Indian pair of Jeevan and Vijay staged a remarkable comeback to upset the third-seeded duo of Ariel Behar (Uruguay) and Robert Galloway (USA).

They overcame a first-set drubbing to win 0-6, 6-2, 10-4 in a gripping one-hour and 11-minute contest. Jeevan and Vijay will next meet the unseeded German team of Constantin Frantzen and Hendrik Jebens, who advanced to the final after receiving a walkover from Rinky Hijikata (Australia) and Mackenzie McDonald (USA).

Meanwhile at the Chengdu Open, the third seeded Indo-French pair Yuki and Albano Olivetti edged out Ivan Dodig of Croatia and Rafael Matos of Brazil 6-3, 7-6 in a fiercely-contested match. — PTI

Marseille's late strike stuns Lyon

Lyon, France: Marseille came from behind to beat Lyon 3-2 away from home after being reduced to 10 men early in the match on Sunday courtesy of a 95th-minute winner by Jonathan Rowe. The result sent Roberto De Zerbi's resurgent side second in Ligue 1, level on 13 points with Paris Saint-Germain but with an inferior goal difference. Ex-Marseille defender Duje Caleta-Car opened the scoring for Lyon in a chaotic 'Olympico' derby, marked by late goals and an early red card. Pol Lirola levelled for Marseille, before Ulisses Garcia sent them ahead with under 10 minutes remaining. — AFP

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SAY CHESS!!!



Members of the Indian men's and women's teams are jubilant as they pose with their trophies and medals at the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary, on Sunday.

Gukesh & Co. stress on team spirit after Olympiad heroics

New Delhi, Sept. 23: A dream come true, a nice feeling. The maiden Chess Olympiad gold meant different things for the members of the five-strong Indian men's team, spearheaded stupendously by the youngest ever challenger to the world title — D. Gukesh.

The 18-year-old issued a statement of sorts ahead of his eagerly-anticipated world championship clash in November against Ding Liren of China by registering one of the best ever individual performances in the just-concluded 45th Olympiad. "I am just super happy right now," Gukesh said after winning his final round game against giant-killer Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia on Sunday.

It was a sensational display by the teenager on the top board for India as he notched up nine points out of his 10 games conceding just a couple of draws besides eight victories. This phenomenal performance helped the team clinch gold as India scored a dominating 21 points out of a possible 22, winning 10 and drawing just one match against last Olympiad winners Uzbekistan.

"It was a very nice experience for me personally and for the team...this was basically a dream (come true)," Gukesh

IT STARTED AS EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY, WHICH LATER BECAME PASSION FOR GUKESH

Chennai, Sept. 23: It all started as an extra-curricular activity in school, which later became a life-long passion for D. Gukesh and led to him becoming one of the best chess exponents in the world.

Gukesh's childhood coach, V. Bhaskar, who spotted his talent at the Velammal Vidyalaya when he was just seven years old, said he saw in him the hunger to excel at a very tender age. "We started when he (Gukesh) was in class 1 at Velammal Vidyalaya. He used to come for extracurricular activities. I saw a spark in him at the age of seven and asked him to come for personal training, and we worked for many years," said Bhaskar about the third-youngest GM in history of



D. Gukesh

said in the final press conference of the Olympiad. The women too won gold and both the teams were seen jumping in joy at the podium. Another key contributor to the men's success was Arjun

and I was very happy that he became the third youngest Grandmaster in the world. I felt so happy when he won the Candidates in Toronto and earned the right to challenge world champion Ding later this year in Singapore."

DOUBLE JOY FOR RAMESH BABU

There was double joy for Ramesh Babu, the father of R. Praggnanandhaa and R. Vaishali, as both his children won gold in the most prestigious biennial team chess event in the world. "We are very proud (of Praggnanandhaa). My daughter Vaishali's team also won the gold medal, so we're happy about that as well," said Ramesh Babu. — PTI

Erigaisi, who scored 10 points playing all the 11 games in the event. He has now elevated himself to number three in live world rankings behind Magnus Carlsen of Norway and American Hikaru Nakamura.

With a rating of 2,797 currently, Arjun is just three points shy of the magical 2,800 mark and totally five behind Nakamura. Carlsen, on 2,830, is still some distance away. Humble as he is, Erigaisi

quickly pointed out that it did not matter too much.

"It's a nice feeling but there are about 10-15 players with similar strength, so I don't want to care too much about being number three or number four," he said.

On why he played on board three despite being the highest rated player in the Indian team at the start of the Olympiad, Erigaisi said it was part of strategy. "We thought Gukesh would do well on board one and I would do good on board three, because it worked out well, obviously no regrets," he said.

While both Gukesh and Erigaisi won an individual gold for their best performances on board one and three respectively, one player who missed out on personal glory by a whisker was Vidit Gujrathi who scored 7.5 points from his 10 games but could only finish fourth in performance rating on board four.

R. Praggnanandhaa's performance might not have been up to his own lofty expectations but he played the perfect anchor especially till the ninth game giving the much-needed stability to the team. His lone loss against American Wesley So was followed by a final round victory that speaks volumes about the strong character the young man possess. — PTI

HARIKA GLAD TO WIN GOLD AFTER 20 YRS

New Delhi Sept. 23: Veteran D. Harika had to endure a long wait to realise her dream of winning the prestigious Chess Olympiad title but she was finally glad to have achieved it even though she was not satisfied with her performance in the event in Budapest.

For the women's team, Harika, 33, was at her technical best, striking on the top board, while the 18-year-old Divya Deshmukh outclassed Govhar Beydullayeva to confirm her individual gold medal on the third board.

"Definitely for me it is much more emotional than these people (teammates), I have been playing for 20 years to see the gold medal and finally I am glad we saw it," Harika said.

"I am extremely happy and proud of the girls, youngsters came up in the team and they did extremely well."

"May be my performance is not satisfactory but the team gold made me forget everything, I am glad that we managed to come back strongly after the setback," she added.

Divya, who won the World Junior Girls' chess championship in Gandhinagar recently, turned out to be the mainstay for the Indian women's team that bagged the historic gold medal. — PTI

Stones salvages point for Man City

Manchester, Sept. 23: John Stones' 98th-minute equaliser salvaged a 2-2 draw for Manchester City against 10-man Arsenal in a bad-tempered clash between the two favourites for the Premier League title on Sunday.

Arsenal played the entire second half a man down after Leandro Trossard was sent off but were seconds away from inflicting City's first home defeat since November 2022. "We have that belief we can win any game and never stop fighting," said Stones.

A draw was enough for City to retake top spot, two points clear of Arsenal in fourth.

Erling Haaland's 100th City goal had given Pep Guardiola's men the perfect start. Arsenal turned the game around thanks to Riccardo Calafiori's wonder strike and another set-piece header from Gabriel Magalhaes.

The Gunners lost Trossard for a second booking just before half-time.

However, Mikel Arteta's men produced a stunning rearguard action to hold out until the final seconds when Stones bundled in after Arsenal failed to clear a corner. "It is a miracle we played



Manchester City's John Stones (right) scores against Arsenal during their English Premier League match at the Etihad stadium in Manchester on Sunday. — AP

56 minutes at the Etihad with 10 men (and didn't lose). It is unbelievable what we have done," said Arteta.

"They have made another big step today as a team and individuals."

The powder keg for an explosive encounter was lit within the first few seconds when Kai Havertz charged into Rodri to leave the Spaniard needing treatment.

HAALAND'S 100

Haaland had not even managed a single shot on target in the two league meetings between the sides last season as Arsenal kept two clean sheets against the champions. But the Norwegian is in unstoppable form and took just nine minutes to score his 10th goal of the season and bring up his century in 105 games for City. — AFP

BARCA ROUT VILLARREAL IN THRILLER

Vila-real (Spain), Sept. 23: Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha struck twice each as Barcelona romped to a 5-1 win at Villarreal on Sunday in a wild match to maintain their perfect start to La Liga.

The leaders' sixth straight league triumph was marred by a potentially serious knee injury to goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who was taken off on a stretcher.

"I think it will be a huge injury, when he laid down on the field... you can see it directly," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick told DAZN.

Lewandowski netted Barcelona's first two goals and later missed a penalty in a thoroughly entertaining battle on Spain's east coast at Villarreal's Estadio de la Ceramica. Ayoze Perez pulled his team back into the game shortly before half-time and the hosts had two goals disallowed, with Pablo Torre and Raphinha's strikes cementing Barcelona's victory. — AFP

Jayasuriya grabs 5 in Lanka's win

Galle (Sri Lanka), Sept. 23: Prabath Jayasuriya took five wickets to steer Sri Lanka to a 63-run victory Monday against New Zealand on the final morning of the first Test in Galle.

Set a target of 275 to win, the Black Caps were bowled out for 211 less than 15 minutes after play resumed, with Rachin Ravindra top-scoring on 92.

"When you come to Galle, all that you need to do is to stick to the basics," said man-of-the-match Jayasuriya.

"The wicket provides plenty of assistance and you just need to bowl with discipline. Your consistency is the key and there was a lot of help from the rest of the spinners as well."

Ravindra had finished on Sunday waging a lone battle on a sharply turning pitch in Galle, where the tourists had lost all four of their previous Test encounters.

His knock was the highest score by a New Zealander at the ground, eclipsing Ross Taylor's 89 in 2019.

But the slender path to victory he had opened

BRIEF SCORES

Sri Lanka 305 & 309 beat New Zealand 340 & 211 (Rachin Ravindra 92, Prabath Jayasuriya 5/68, Ramesh Mendis 3/83).

was snapped shut when Jayasuriya trapped him lbw while trying to defend on the back foot.

The decision was upheld despite Ravindra's review, and he departed having added just one run to his overnight total.

Jayasuriya, who took nine wickets across the match and finished the second innings five for 68, brought the match to an end when he bowled rookie pacer William O'Rourke for a duck.

"Disappointed we didn't get enough lead in the first innings," New Zealand skipper Tim Southee said.

"We had the game in the hand, but we threw it away"

O'Rourke, 23, had impressed for New Zealand with eight wickets, including his second five-wicket haul from just three Test appearances in the first innings. — AFP