



BSP supremo Mayawati during a meeting with party's senior office bearers and state presidents at the party office, in Lucknow



Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Admiral D K Joshi during a meeting with Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi



CPI (ML) Liberation General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya with party leaders during 'Badlo Bihar Mahajutan' rally at, in Patna



Relatives mourn near bodies of victims at a hospital after five people were killed following a collision between two bikes, in Agra district

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A squirrel visits 'palash' flower blossoms, in Nadia, West Bengal

Man dies in road accident in UP's Sultanpur
SULTANPUR: A 55-year-old man died after allegedly being hit by a pickup van in the Dhanpatganj area of this Uttar Pradesh district on Sunday, police said. Umakant, a resident of Bharasada village, had come to the market for work. He was standing on the roadside after parking his motorcycle when the speeding pickup van approaching from Haliapur hit him, Dhanpatganj SHO Ram Ashish Upadhyay said. The man was taken to the local community health centre with serious head injuries from where doctors referred him to the district hospital. He died on the way, he said. The pickup van driver fled the spot after the accident and efforts are underway to trace him. The body has been sent for post-mortem, the police said.

Two smugglers arrested with 405 rare turtles in UP's Mainpuri
MAINPURI: A joint team of the Uttar Pradesh Police and the forest department seized 405 rare Indian flapshell turtles from suspected wildlife smugglers, officials said on Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, a team from the Kanpur unit of the police's Special Task Force (STF), Mainpuri Forest Range, and the Wildlife Control Bureau, Gorakhpur, intercepted a car on the Usrahaar-Kishni Road on Saturday and arrested Bareilly natives Amit Yadav and Kuldeep Chaturvedi. Two other accused - Santosh and Roop Singh - managed to escape, the police said. Forest department sub-inspector Shivam Pathak told PTI that smuggling of rare turtles was rampant from the Mainpuri, Etawah and the Auraiya forest ranges. The smugglers transported the turtles to Udhm Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand, from where they were sent to China, he said.

Pastor booked for sexual harassment in Punjab
KAPURTHALA: A sexual harassment case has been registered against the pastor of a church in a village in Punjab's Jalandhar district, police said on Sunday. In the complaint, a woman alleged that she and her parents have been visiting the church since October 2017. The pastor took her mobile number and started sending messages. She claimed that she was afraid of him and could not reveal it to her parents. From 2022, the pastor allegedly made her sit alone in a cabin in the church on Sundays and allegedly hugged and touched her inappropriately, the complainant told the police. Police said a case has been registered under sections 354 A (sexual harassment), 354 D (stalking) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Arunachal conducts first artificial insemination
ITANAGAR: Arunachal Pradesh has successfully carried out its first artificial insemination using imported sex-sorted Holstein Friesian semen, officials said. The successful procedure was carried out on Friday by the state's Dairy Development Department at the Central Cattle Breeding Farm in Nirjuli, near here, where the first cow underwent insemination using the imported semen. The semen, sourced from internationally recognised dairy lines, promises to enhance the quality of local livestock, particularly through improved milk production and better breed standards. The department performed another round of artificial insemination on Saturday, utilising sex-sorted semen recently procured from Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala. The introduction of sex-sorted semen technology is poised to revolutionise breeding practices in Arunachal Pradesh, the officials said.

One held for duping man of Rs 73 lakh in Delhi
NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police has arrested a man wanted in a Rs 73 lakh cheating case, an official said on Sunday. The accused, Mohit, was apprehended from Uchana Mandi in Jind of Haryana, they said. The matter came to light after a complaint was filed by Ram Niwas on June 5, 2024, alleging that Mohit deceived him by promising to sell a non-existent plot in Singhu, Delhi, and fraudulently took Rs 73 lakh. Despite multiple efforts, he remained absconding. His location was traced in the Uchana Kalan area and he was apprehended. Mohit, a Sonipat native and graduate, previously worked as a property dealer but allegedly duped people.

Thane man, siblings held for abetting suicide of a 35-year-old woman
THANE: Police have arrested a man and his two siblings on charges of abetting the suicide of a woman with whom he had been in a relationship in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Sunday. The 35-year-old victim, who was unmarried and a resident of Mharal area in Titwala township here, was in love with the man, staying in Ulhasnagar area, for the last 15 years. The man used to frequently visit the victim's house. He had promised to marry her, but did not tie the knot with her giving some or the other reason. Both of them used to have frequent quarrels due to this, Kalyan taluka police station inspector Suresh Kadam said.

42 more firearms surrendered, 5 illegal bunkers destroyed in Manipur

PTI, IMPHAL: Forty-two more firearms and cartridges have been surrendered by the public in five districts of ethnic strife-torn Manipur, police said on Sunday. The firearms were surrendered in Imphal West and East, Churachandpur, Bishnupur and Tamenglong districts on Saturday, a police officer said. Five firearms, including two pistols, six grenades and over 75 cartridges were surrendered in Bishnupur district. Seventeen country-made guns, nine 'pompri' (locally made mortars), and cartridges were surrendered at Kaimai police station in Tamenglong district. At least 10 firearms and cartridges were surrendered at Yaingangkopki, Porompat, Churachandpur and Lamsang police stations, the police officer said. During search operations



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at Sairemkhul in Imphal West district, an INSAS LMG with one magazine loaded with 20 rounds of ammunition, one AK-56 rifle, three SLR rifles, one SMG 9mm carbine, one .303 rifle, one DBBL gun, four grenades without detonators, one Chinese hand grenade and other articles were also seized on Saturday. Security forces also dismantled two illegal bunkers at Mark Hill under Thingsat hill range in Kangpokpi district. Another three illegal bunkers were dismantled at Wakan hill range in the adjoining area in Kangpokpi and Imphal East districts on Saturday. Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla had on February 20 urged warring groups to voluntarily surrender

weapons robbed from security forces and other illegally held firearms within seven days. During the seven-day period, more than 300 firearms were surrendered by the public, primarily in the valley districts. Later, he extended the deadline for the surrender of looted and illegal firearms till 4 pm on March 6 following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time. More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. The Centre had imposed President's rule in the state on February 13 after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned. The state assembly, which has tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation.

Gangster held, 3 sophisticated weapons seized: Punjab Police

PTI, CHANDIGARH: Punjab Police on Sunday said it has arrested a gangster and seized from him three sophisticated weapons sourced from Pakistan. The accused was identified as Hardeep Singh alias Deepa, a resident of Ferozepur. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said police seized a 9 mm Glock pistol, a .30 mm Beretta pistol and a pump action gun, along with three magazines and 141 cartridges, from Hardeep Singh. Besides, 45 grams of heroin was also recovered from his possession, he said. Yadav said preliminary investigation revealed that these weapons were sourced from Pakistan through an unidentified foreign-based entity, intended for use in terror

and criminal activities in the state. He said the accused was to supply these weapons to the ground operatives of terror and criminal groups. The identity and role of the foreign entity, along with its broader network, are under comprehensive investigation. Efforts are on to identify other members involved in this module and track the origins of the smuggled weapons, he said. Assistant Inspector General, Ferozepur, Lakhbir Singh said police teams had received a reliable intel-input about the involvement of the accused in weapon and drug smuggling operations. The input also revealed that Hardeep Singh has recently retrieved a weapon consignment to supply it to the criminal elements.

Duplication of voter card numbers: EC to update system

PTI, NEW DELHI: Amid reports flagging issuance of identical voter card numbers to electors in two different states, the Election Commission on Sunday said it will rectify the issue and also update its technology-driven platform. The poll authority also asserted that duplicate numbers do not necessarily imply fake voters. It said while the elector photo identity card (EPIC) numbers of some of the voters "may be identical", the other details, including demographic details, assembly constituency and polling booth, are different. "Irrespective of the EPIC number, any elector can cast a vote only at their designated polling station in their respec-

tive constituency in their state or Union territory where they are enrolled in the electoral roll and nowhere else," the poll panel said. It explained that identical EPIC numbers or series were allotted to some electors from different states and Union territories due to a "decentralised and manual mechanism" being followed prior to shifting of the electoral roll database of all states to the ERONET (Electoral Roll Management) platform. This resulted in certain state chief electoral officers using the same EPIC alpha-numeric series and leaving a scope for the possibility of duplicate EPIC numbers being allotted to electors in different assembly constituencies in different states, the poll body said.

AVIAN PARADISE



Painted storks at Keoladeo National Park, in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan

Union Minister Raksha Khadse's daughter, friends harassed in Jalgaon; seven named in FIR, one held

PTI, JALGAON: Union Minister Raksha Khadse on Sunday lodged a police complaint regarding the harassment of her daughter and some of her friends by a group of men at an event in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district, following which one person was arrested. The FIR was registered on the complaint of Khadse at Muktainagar police station in connection with an incident that occurred at Sant Mukta Yatra in Kothali village on Friday night. Seven persons have been named in the FIR, of which one, identified as Soham Mali, has been arrested, a Muktainagar police station official said in the evening. He added that teams have been formed the nab the

other accused. The seven have been charged with stalking and other offences under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, while Information Technology Act provisions have been invoked since they tried to take pictures and videos of the girls without permission, the official informed. The bodyguards accompanying the girls named the seven persons, the police official added. Talking to reporters earlier in the day, the Union minister and BJP leader said, "I was in Gujarat, so my daughter called me to ask for permission to go. I asked her to take a guard and two to three staff members along. My daughter and her friends were followed and pushed, and their photos and videos were taken. When my staff objected, the boys resorted to unruly behaviour, and a mob of 30 to 40 people gathered." Khadse said when she re-

turned home this morning, her daughter told her that the same group had misbehaved with her on February 24 at a public event. "It is unfortunate. If such things happen to an MP or Union minister's daughter, imagine what common people have to go through," she said. Khadse said some locals in Muktainagar told her that this group harassed girls on their way to school. "I have spoken to the chief minister and the deputy superintendent of police," she said, demanding that the culprits be arrested. He claimed that crimes against women have increased in Maharashtra, and criminals are not afraid of the police.

Uneasy calm on Jadavpur University campus day after violent protests

PTI, KOLKATA: An uneasy calm prevailed on Jadavpur University campus on Sunday after violent protests by Leftist students and heckling of West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu on the previous day. The windscreens of the minister's car was smashed by protesters and two of the agitators were injured, one of them seriously, when the tyre of one of the vehicles in his convoy grazed past them. A university official said a forensic team is expected to visit the campus during the day. A former student of the university, Md Sahil Ali, was arrested from a rented flat in Bijoygarh area in south-

ern part of city late on Saturday on the charge of vandalising the office of TMC's Shiksha Cell (academic wing) on the JU campus, a Kolkata Police officer said. Ali, who works in an IT firm, hails from Mohammed Bazar area in Birbhum district. The arson and rampage took place after two students were injured, one of them seriously, as tyres of one of the cars in the minister's convoy grazed past them. The university's officiating Vice Chancellor Bhaskar Gupta was allegedly verbally abused by a section of Leftist students when he visited one of the injured students, Indranuj Roy, at a nearby private medical college and hospital.

40% global population doesn't have access to education in language they understand: UNESCO

PTI, NEW DELHI: Forty per cent of the global population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) team. Despite countries' growing understanding of the role of home language, policy uptake remains limited. Implementation challenges include limited teacher capacity to use home languages, unavailability of materials in home languages and community opposition, it said. In some low- and middle-income countries, this figure rises to 90 per cent.

More than a quarter of a billion learners are affected, GEM officials said, recommending nations to implement multilingual education policies and practices with the goal of creating educational systems that benefit all learners. The team, which has come up with a report titled "Languages matter: Global guidance on multilingual education", noted that as migration increases, linguistic diversity is becoming a global reality and classrooms with learners from diverse language backgrounds are more common. Over 31 million displaced youth are

facing language barriers in education. The report was compiled on the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, celebrating a quarter-century of dedicated efforts to preserve and promote the use of mother tongues. The report comes at a time when India is in the process of implementing the new National Education Policy (NEP) that advocates multilingual education. The three-language policy in school education has drawn opposition from some states. "Today 40 per cent of

people globally lack access to education in the language they speak and understand fluently. In some low- and middle-income countries, this figure rises to 90 per cent. More than a quarter of a billion learners are affected," a senior GEM team member told PTI. "The first thing to note is that over the course of this decade, which has been marked by the pervasive influence of technology in young people's lives but also by the impact of COVID-19, learning levels have dropped sharply in both reading and mathematics. But the next thing to note

is that the impact has been disproportionate on learners who are disadvantaged due to linguistic reasons," the official added. According to the analysis by the team, the gap between the two groups increased on average between 2010 and 2022, from 12 to 18 percentage points in reading and from 10 to 15 percentage points in mathematics. This suggests that learners who do not speak the language of instruction at home, whether for historical reasons or due to migration and displacement, are at a bigger risk of leaning loss.

"Countries face diverse linguistic challenges in education, stemming from both historical and contemporary factors. In the first category, often as a legacy of colonialism, languages have been imposed on local populations that prevented their use for instruction and created educational disparities. "At the same time, large linguistic diversity in some countries presents challenges for education systems, as resources for implementing multilingual education programmes tend to be limited," the report said.