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A squirrel on the branch of saraca asoca, commonly known as the ashoka tree, in Nadia, West Bengal

Fire breaks out at warehouse in Palghar; tonnes of foodgrains destroyed

PALGHAR: A fire broke out in the warehouse of the Tribal Development Corporation in Maharashtra's Palghar district, destroying a large stock of foodgrains stored on the premises on Tuesday, an official said. There were no reports of injuries in the blaze that erupted in the early hours of the day, he said. Water tankers and local fire engines were pressed into service to fight the fire, said Vivekanand Kadam, chief of the disaster management cell of the Palghar district. He said the blaze was doused in two hours.

Foetus, vestigial organs found dumped in roadside garbage near Pune; FIR filed

PUNE: Police on Tuesday registered a case against unidentified persons after a foetus and vestigial organs that were part of biomedical waste, were found dumped in glass containers at Daund in Maharashtra's Pune district, officials said. Ten glass containers containing this biomedical waste were found dumped in the garbage by the roadside in Daund in the morning, they said. An offence was then registered against unidentified persons under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 89 (causing a miscarriage without the woman's consent), 90 (death caused by an act done with intent to cause miscarriage), 271 (negligently spreading a disease dangerous to life) and 272 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), he said.

Assam assembly passes bill to regulate coaching centres

GUWAHATI: The Assam assembly on Tuesday passed a bill to regulate private coaching centres, making it mandatory for registration of all such institutes and strict compliance with laid-down guidelines. During discussion on the proposed legislation, MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed was suspended from the House by Deputy Speaker Numol Momin for disrupting a minister's reply. Ahmed, who had been earlier suspended from the Congress, tried to intervene when Education Minister Ranaj Pegu was speaking, prompting the deputy speaker to suspend him for 10 minutes. Pegu, who had moved the proposed new law, said the objective behind it is to control commercialisation of coaching centres and ensure that guardians get justice.

Pakistani intruder arrested along LoC in J&K's Rajouri

JAMMU: A Pakistani intruder was arrested along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Tuesday, officials said. Mohd Yaqoob, a resident of Kotti in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), was challenged by the alert troops when he intruded into this side from across the border in Keri sector, the officials said. They said the intruder was taken into custody and was whisked away for questioning. No incriminating material was found in the possession of Yaqoob, the officials said, adding that he was found under the influence of drugs. Further investigation is on.

Delhi man wanted for murder, robbery arrested in Haryana

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has arrested a wanted criminal involved in murder, robbery and Arms Act violations near in Haryana, an official said on Tuesday. Sourav alias Gullan, 30, was wanted in at least four cases registered at Delhi's Mangolpuri Police Station and is also a proclaimed offender. A police team searched multiple locations before he was tracked down near Hodal in Haryana. During interrogation, he admitted to planning the murder of his associate, Sumit alias Bona, and had switched off his phone to evade tracking, the official said.

Panchayat secretary arrested for attacking SDM in Himachal

SHIMLA: The panchayat secretary of a village in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla district has been arrested for allegedly attacking the sub-divisional-magistrate (SDM) in his office, police said on Tuesday. The accused Narayan Singh is the panchayat secretary of Jakha gram panchayat in Dodra-Kwar sub-division. A case of assault on a public servant during discharge of duty section 132, voluntarily causing grievous hurt section 121 (2), intentional insult section 352 and criminal intimidation section 351 (2) of BNS have been registered against the accused who has been arrested, the police said. The accused entered the office of the Dodra-Kwar SDM when an official meeting was in progress and started abusing and threatening him.

6 held in connection with BJP leader Gulfam Singh Yadav's murder case

SAMBHAL (UP): Police on Tuesday arrested six persons in connection with the murder of BJP leader Gulfam Singh Yadav, who was allegedly killed with a lethal injection, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on March 10 when Gulfam Singh Yadav, 60, was at his village farm and three unidentified men arrived on a motorcycle and injected him with a poisonous substance, police said.

Columbia student protester in US since age 7 moves court to halt deportation

AFP, NEW YORK: Another Columbia University student claimed on Monday that the Donald Trump administration has targeted her for deportation over her pro-Palestinian views, accusing immigration officials in a lawsuit of employing the same tactics used on Mahmoud Khalil and other college activists.

Yunseo Chung, a 21-year-old lawful permanent resident, said the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) moved to deport her after she was arrested on March 5 while protesting the Ivy League school's disciplinary actions against student protesters.

News reports at the time identified her as being among a group of protesters arrested after a sit-in at a library on the adjacent Barnard College campus.

Within days of her arrest, Chung said in the lawsuit, ICE officials signed an administrative arrest warrant and went to her parents' residence seeking to detain her. On March 10, Chung said, a federal law enforcement official told her law-



Student protesters gather inside their encampment on the Columbia University campus April 29 in New York.

yer that her lawful permanent resident status was being "revoked".

Three days later, Chung said, law enforcement agents executed search warrants at two Columbia-owned residences, including her dormitory, seeking travel and immigration records, and other documents.

Chung has lived in the US since emigrating from

South Korea with her parents at age 7, according to her lawsuit.

The Columbia junior is seeking a court order to block the Trump administration's efforts to deport non-citizens who participated in campus protests against Israel's military actions in Gaza.

She is asking a judge to prevent the administration

from detaining her, moving her out of New York City or removing her from the country while her lawsuit plays out.

ICE's shocking actions against Ms Chung form part of a larger pattern of attempted US government repression of constitutionally protected protest activity and other forms of speech," Chung's lawsuit, which was

filed in federal court in Manhattan, said.

Officials at the highest echelons of government, the lawsuit said, "are attempting to use immigration enforcement as a bludgeon to suppress speech that they dislike, including Ms Chung's speech". Messages seeking comment were left for ICE and the US Department of Homeland Security.

Chung's lawsuit cited the administration's efforts to deport five other students who've spoken out, including Khalil and Momodou Taal, of Cornell University, who received a notice last week to surrender to immigration authorities after he sued on March 15 to preempt deportation efforts.

Taal, 31, a PhD student in Africana studies, is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Gambia.

In a court filing, the justice department said Taal's student visa was revoked before he filed his lawsuit for his alleged involvement in disruptive protests that "disregarded" university policies and created a "hostile environment" for Jewish students.

King Charles, Queen Camilla postpone visit to Vatican

AFP, LONDON: The UK's King Charles III and Queen Camilla have postponed a planned state visit to the Vatican in early April following medical advice from the pope's doctors, Buckingham Palace said Tuesday.

"Medical advice has now suggested that Pope Francis would benefit from an extended period of rest and recuperation. Their Majesties send the pope their best wishes for his convalescence and look forward to visiting him in The Holy See, once he has recovered," a statement said.

The UK's head of state wrote to Francis when the 88-year-old pontiff was struck down with pneumonia in both lungs in February, amid fears he might not survive. Francis was discharged on Sunday following almost 40 days in Rome's Gemelli hospital.

Since then, he has celebrated mass within the Santa Marta guesthouse where he lives, as well as undergoing breathing and speech therapy to help his recovery, according to the Vatican.

Flammable devices found at Tesla dealership in Austin

AFP, AUSTIN: Austin police said they're investigating several incendiary devices found at a Tesla dealership on Monday on the city's north side, the latest in a series of events targeting the company owned by billionaire Elon Musk.

Austin police responding to a report of hazardous materials found the devices and called in the city's bomb squad, which took them into police custody without incident, the department said in an email to The Associated Press.

There were no reports of injuries or damage.

This is an open and ongoing investigation, and there is no further information available for release at this time, the department said.

Attacks on property carrying the logo of Elon

Musk's electric-car company are cropping up across the US and overseas, along with protests nationwide in response to the billionaire's work with the Donald Trump administration cutting federal funding and the workforce.

On Saturday, a man drove his car into protesters outside a Tesla dealership in Palm Beach County, Florida. No one was injured, and the man was arrested on an assault complaint.

In California, police said a counter-protester was arrested on Saturday after activating a stun gun during an anti-Musk demonstration outside a Tesla dealership near downtown Berkeley. Nobody was hurt. The 33-year-old man was awaiting charges on Monday.

Boko Haram fighters kill 20 Cameroonian troops: Sources

AFP, KANO: Boko Haram fighters disguised as herders killed at least 20 Cameroonian troops in a Tuesday morning raid on the Nigerian border town of Wolgo, local security sources and residents told AFP.

Cameroonian troops are commonly stationed across the border in Nigeria as part of anti-jihadist operations around Wolgo, which is near the volatile Lake Chad -- home to both Islamic State and Boko Haram fighters.

The militants had disguised themselves as herders and traders in a nearby city and then infil-

trated Wolgo to attack its surrounding military positions, said two intelligence sources.

The sources were assisting troops in the long-running fight against the militants and requested anonymity to speak freely.

"The insurgents attacked the bases around 1:00 am and fighting continued for two hours before they subdued the troops and burnt the bases, after taking away heavy weapons," one of the sources said.

"Twenty Cameroonian troops were killed in the fighting and their bodies were transported across

GOLDEN HARVEST



A farmer harvests wheat crop, at Lal Gopalganj in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

Japanese court orders dissolution of Unification Church

PTI, TOKYO: The Unification Church in Japan was ordered dissolved by a court Tuesday after a government request spurred by the investigation into the 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The church said it was considering an immediate appeal of the Tokyo District Court's revocation of its legal status, which would take away its tax-exempt privilege and require liquidation of its assets.

The order followed a request by Japan's Education Ministry in 2023 to dissolve the influential South Korea-based sect.

Sudan aid groups say 54 killed in military airstrike in Darfur market

AP, CAIRO: Aid groups in Sudan said Tuesday at least 54 people were killed in a military airstrike on a local market in the country's western region. The strike on Monday on the village of Tora caused a huge fire, according to Adam Rejal, a spokesman for the General Coordination, a local group helping displaced people in Darfur.

Monday's strike was the latest deadly attack in a war that started in April 2023 when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF exploded into open warfare across the country.

Brig. Gen. Nabil Abdullah, a spokesman for the Sudanese military, said civilians had not been targeted, adding the allegations were "incorrect" and "are raised whenever our forces exercise their constitutional and legal right to deal with hostile targets."

The strike tore apart a large part of the weekly market in Tora, which is located 80 kilometres north of el-Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur province.

The Emergency Lawyers, a coalition of rights defenders tracking war violations across Sudan, said in a statement the strike hit "an area densely populated with civilians," which amounts to a "systematic war crime." It blamed the military for the strike and called for an independent investigation to "ensure that those responsible for these crimes are held accountable before interna-

tional courts." Support Darfur Victims, a local group that provides support to victims of the Darfur conflict, shared graphic video footage appearing to show burnt structures and charred bodies on the ground.

More than half of the dead were women, according to a list of casualties provided by Rejal. At least 23 people were wounded and seven were missing, the list showed.

Rejal said that the strike was "a crime against humanity and a clear violation of all international and humanitarian laws and conventions."

The city of el-Fasher is held by the Sudanese military despite near-daily strikes by the powerful rival paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF.

The war has wrecked the capital and other urban cities across the country. It has killed more than 28,000 people, forced millions to flee their homes and left some families eating grass in a desperate attempt to survive as famine sweeps parts of the country. Other estimates suggest a far higher death toll.

The fighting has been marked by atrocities including mass rape and ethnically motivated killings that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially in the western region of Darfur, according to the United Nations and international rights groups.

Chewing gum releases microplastics into mouth: researchers

AFP, PARIS: Chewing gum releases hundreds of tiny plastic pieces straight into people's mouths, researchers said on Tuesday, also warning of the pollution created by the rubber-based sweet.

The small study comes as researchers have increasingly been discovering small shards of plastic called microplastics throughout the world, from the tops of mountains to the bottom of the ocean -- and even in the air we breathe.

They have also been discovered microplastics riddled throughout human bodies - including inside our lungs, blood and brains - sparking fears about the



potential effect this could be having on health.

"I don't want to alarm people," Sanjay Mohanty, the lead researcher behind the new study, told AFP.

There is no evidence directly showing that microplastics are harmful to

human health, said Mohanty of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The new pilot study instead sought to illustrate yet another little-researched way that these mostly invisible plastic pieces enter our bodies --

chewing gum.

Lisa Lowe, a PhD student at UCLA, chewed seven pieces each of 10 brands of gum; Then the researchers ran a chemical analysis on her saliva.

They found that a gramme of gum (0.04 ounces) released an average of 100 microplastic fragments, though some shed more than 600. The average weight of a stick of gum is around 1.5 grammes.

People who chew around 180 pieces of gum a year could be ingesting roughly 30,000 microplastics, the researchers said.

This pales in comparison to the many other ways that humans ingest microplastics, Mohanty emphasised.