> We're really happy that we converted this win into this semifinal (BWF World Championships) and getting a medal, but it's not stopping yet. There are matches coming tomorrow also.
> - Treesa Jolly

Sports Nation

BWF World Championships

Treesa-Gayatri duo stuns world No. 4, to enter semis

India assured of first medal in women's doubles in 15 years

New Delhi

INDIA'S women's doubles duo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand have staged an upset at the BWF World Championships after handing a shock loss to the world no. 4 Chinese pair of Ji Yifan and Zhang Shuxian to enter the semifinals, confirming a medal for the country.

The Indians, coming from game down, registered a 16-21, 21-15, 21-13 win over the Chinese to become the second-ever pair to win a BWF World Championships medal in women's doubles. In 2011, Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa won bronze, securing India's second-ever World Championships medal -- 28 years after the country's maiden medal in 1983 (Prakash Padukone's men's singles bronze).

The Indian duo looked vulnerable early on as Jia and Zhang raced to a 6-2 lead and kept their advantage through the opening game. Treesa and Gayatri gradually found their attacking rhythm, using their powerful smashes and sharper exchanges at the net to close the gap to 8-9.

The recovery, however, was not enough to prevent the Chinese to head into the breather with 11-8 advantage and eventually sealing the opening game 21-16.

The response in the second game was immediate. The Indians refused to allow their opponents the same control, matching them in the longer rallies while defending under pressure as they earned a slender 11-10 advantage at the interval.

From there, Treesa and Gayatri grew increasingly assertive. The Indians opened a 17-14 lead before closing out the game 21-15 to force a decider.

In the decider, after an even start at 4-4, Treesa found the breakthrough with a powerful smash, and the Indians suddenly surged. Treesa's attack continued to cause damage for the Chinese, and the Indians entered the interval with a commanding 11-5 lead.

After the change of sides, Jia and Zhang briefly attempted to revive their challenge, but the Indian earned three straight points to restore their momentum.

At 18-9, the Indians were within touching distance. A review after Zhang's shot was called out did little to alter the outcome, and two further errors from Chinese handed Treesa and Gayatri the decisive points.

Satwik-Chirag pair loses in quarters

NEW DELHI: Star Indian men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's dream of winning a third medal at the BWF World Championships ended with a straight-game loss to China's world No. 3 Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in the quarterfinal here on Friday.

The world No. 5 Indians, who have won bronze medals at the 2022 and 2025 editions, lacked the required sharpness and crashed to an 18-21 9-21 loss in just 36 minutes against Wang and Liang, the Paris Olympics silver medallists.

The Indians had lost nine times and won four against the Chinese world No. 3 pair.

U20 Wrestling Worlds

Kajal wins 2nd title in row; Tanu, Savita grab silver

BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA): Kajal Dhochak won her second consecutive U20 World title while Tanu Sharma and Savita settled for silver medals at the U20 Wrestling World Championship here.

Kajal, 18, won the 76kg title with a commanding 7-0 victory over China's Jingru Sun in the final. She had won the U20 World title in the 72kg last year.

Kajal is already graduating to the senior level, winning a gold medal at the Ranking Series event in Mongolia in June this year apart from winning a gold at the Budapest event in July. She also won the U20 Asian Championship in Pattaya.

In the 72kg category, Tanu put up a resilient fight in the gold medal match against Japan's Chisato Yoshida before losing 3-5.

In the 62kg division, Savita faced a formidable opponent in Japan's Sakura Onishi in the gold medal bout and lost by technical superiority (2-12).

Mansi Lather is in gold contention in 68kg event. She is up against China's Chenling Song in the final while Komal will fight it out with Spain Rosa Molina Rodriguez in the 59kg repechage round.

None of India's Greco Roman wrestler won a medal. The men's freestyle competition will begin later Friday and conclude on Sunday.

Hyderabad to host TPL season 8 from Dec 8-13

HYDERABAD: Tennis Premier League season 8 will be staged from December 8 to 13, 2026, at the LB Tennis Stadium in Hyderabad under the auspices of the All India Tennis Association and with the support of the Government of Telangana.

Eight franchise teams will compete in TPL's signature 25-point format, where every point matters, with the action live-streamed on JioHotstar, allowing fans across the country to follow the league as some of the world's top-ranked international players go head-to-head alongside India's leading tennis stars. The League will also see the presence of tennis icons Leander Paes and Sania Mirza, along with Bollywood personalities and team co-owners Rakul Preet Singh and Sonali Bendre Behl, who will be cheering on and supporting their respective teams.

For TPL, Hyderabad is more than just a new venue. It marks the league's move into new markets, expanding its audience and building a stronger national footprint for professional tennis, with the TPL App already connecting the league to more than 400 affiliated academies across the country.

Hyderabad, with its strong sporting culture and growing tennis community, will provide the backdrop for Season 8 at the LB Tennis Stadium, one of India's largest dedicated tennis venues.

The stadium will host six days of high-intensity action as eight franchise teams – GS Delhi Aces, Hyderabad Strikers, Lucknow Blazers, Gurgaon Grand Slammers, Gujarat Panthers, Rajasthan Rangers, Kolkata Thunder Blades and Mumbai Royals compete in TPL's exciting 25-point format.

Sharing his excitement on the announcement, Kunal Thakkur, Co-Founder, Tennis Premier League, said "Season 8 is a landmark chapter for TPL, not just because we're bringing world-class tennis to Hyderabad for the first time, but because it's the first season where fans will see our partnership with Kia India come alive.

Khelo India Scheme a gamechanger: Jwala Gutta

Hans News Service
Hyderabad

TWO-time Olympian (2012 London and 2016 Rio) and former world championships medallist Jwala Gutta has described the revamped Khelo India Scheme (KIS) as a "gamechanger" with the potential to transform sports in India.

Speaking to the media on Friday, Gutta said, "I am a government product myself and without its support I would not have achieved whatever I have as a player. In its new avatar, the Khelo India Scheme looks extremely promising. With its thrust on grassroots development and sustainability, parents will feel very secure to send their children to play a sport." She added, "The government has always been serious about boosting sports, but this will have a far-reaching impact and the reach will be enormous. I am happy to be associated with the scheme."

The 2026–31 scheme has an outlay of ₹29,054 crore, an eight-fold increase over the previous allocation, and aims to support 10 times more athletes. Its key focus areas include grassroots development, scientific talent identification, coaching, academies, infrastructure and sports technology.

S Hima Bindu, SAI deputy director, outlined the scheme's key pillars and its potential impact on Telangana. "The grassroots to Olympic excellence pathway has been well thought through. The scheme addresses gaps in the system and the formation of a coaches' board will help uplift the way a child plays sport. The academy structure will be bolstered and there are adequate funds to boost infrastructure and sports technology," she said.

Telangana already has 33 notified Khelo India Centres, supporting more than 601 athletes through Past Champion Athletes.

Jwala Gutta, former badminton world doubles champion and Olympian, Dr A Sonibala Devi, Vice-Chairperson & Managing Director of Sports Authority of Telangana, Vishnu Sudhakaran, Regional Director of Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru and S Hima Bindu Deputy Director, SAI during a media interaction on the revamped Khelo India Scheme in Hyderabad on Friday.
(Photo: Srinivas Setty)

Bikash selected for World Masters Athletics C'ships

Hyderabad

BIKASH Karar, Chairman of Athletic Coaching Academy, Hyderabad and a master athlete, has been selected to represent India at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Daegu, South Korea, from August 22 to September 3, 2026. Competing in the 50+ age group, he will participate in the 200m, 400m and 400m hurdles. Karar is trained by Prof. Rajesh Kumar, Senior Professor and Head, Department of Physical Education, Osmania University. He has previously represented India at Masters Championships in Finland, the US, France and Brazil.

SC grants freedom to 105-yr-old murder convict

New Delhi

A 105-year old murder convict will now be able to live as a free man after the Supreme Court on Friday, closed the case against him and waived the remaining period of his life sentence, taking into account his advanced age.

Born in 1920 in West Bengal's Malda district, Rasik Chandra Mondal was convicted in 1994 in the murder case and was in jail till November 29, 2024, when the top court granted him bail.

On Friday, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said that, having regard to the age of the petitioner, it was closing the case and waiving the remaining sentence, if any, in the matter.

Even if the life sentence is not over, he will not be taken back in custody, the CJI said and made the interim bail order of 2024 absolute and final.

"As an interim order, we direct that the petitioner, Rasik Chandra Mondal, will be released on interim bail/ parole during the pendency of the present writ petition, on terms and conditions to be fixed by the trial court," the court had said earlier. Mondal had age-related health issues, it had noted.

In 2018, the Calcutta high court dismissed Mondal's appeal challenging his conviction in the murder case. Later, he moved the apex court, which also dismissed his plea.

In 2020, Mondal, then 99 years old, moved a plea seeking premature release, citing his advanced age and age-related ailments. In May 2021, the apex court had issued notice to the West Bengal government in the matter.

22 Indians aboard two ships hijacked by pirates

New Delhi

TWO commercial vessels carrying a total of 22 Indian nationals have been hijacked by pirates in separate incidents off Yemen and Somalia, a senior shipping ministry official said on Friday. He said that according to the latest information, the Indian crew members are safe.

An Eritrea-flagged oil products tanker, M T Sibu 1, with 20 crew members -- 16 Indians, one Syrian national, one Sudanese national, one Iraqi national and one seafarer whose nationality is yet to be confirmed -- was hijacked by armed pirates in the Gulf of Aden, around 30 nautical miles off the coast of Yemen on August 20, the official told PTI.

"As reported by Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agency - S K S Krishi Marine Services (Opc) Private Limited, six armed pirates are presently onboard the vessel and have taken control of the vessel," he said.

He said the RPSL has been advised to submit the incident report and subsequent periodic updates through the e-Navik online marine casualty reporting system for examination and record.

Another Cameroon-flagged cargo ship, LUTUF, with six Indians among its 10 crew members was hijacked by pirates off Somalia's Puntland coast on August 17, the official said.

"The vessel is reported to have been boarded by eight pirates, armed with AK-47 type weapons and operating from two skiffs. "The crew initially mustered in the citadel. However, the pirates gained access and subsequently brought them to the bridge. The vessel is currently under pirate control. No injuries have been reported thus far," he said. (PTI)

Child killed in leopard attack in Rajasthan

JAIPUR: A three-year-old boy was killed after a leopard attacked him in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, forest officials said Friday.

Deputy Conservator of Forests of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve Manas Singh said the child, Dilkhush Bairwa, was playing in the courtyard of his house on Thursday when the leopard dragged him towards the forest.

Following the incident, the child's family members and villagers launched a search operation. A forest department team also joined the search after being alerted, the official said. The child was eventually found in an injured condition on a hill, Singh said. He was rushed to the district hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the official said.

The incident triggered anger among villagers, who later reached the Phalodi range office and staged a protest.

During the protest, a motorcycle kept at the range office was set on fire, officials said.

RSS chief to visit US, Canada, UK for centenary outreach

Visakhapatnam

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year global outreach programme, a senior Sangh functionary said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference after the three-day all India coordination meeting here, RSS Sah Sarkaryawah CR Mukunda said the foreign visit has three main objectives - presenting a factual and positive perspective on India, Hindu society and the RSS, conveying the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and increasing dialogue with mainstream society on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin.

"Bhagwat will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year global outreach programme," Mukunda said.

He said Bhagwat would participate in the Universal Oneness programme in New York and community leadership programmes in Toronto and London. The visit would also seek to address misconceptions and misinformation about India, Hindu society and the RSS prevalent in various parts of the world, Mukunda said.

The RSS chief would convey the message of global unity and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam given by India's sages and seers, he said. The outreach would also focus on dialogue with mainstream society in the three countries on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin living around the world, he added.

Rashtrapati Bhavan does U-turn on B'desh PM's visit

NEW DELHI: A fresh communique from the Rashtrapati Bhavan stated that the "press release issued on the subject 'No Change of Guard Ceremony this Saturday', which was issued on August 21, 2026, stands withdrawn." This came an hour after the President's house had announced the cancellation of the weekly ceremony for the full rehearsal of the welcome planned for the visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister. The withdrawn communique had read: "The Change of Guard Ceremony at the Forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan will not take place this Saturday (August 22, 2026) due to the full rehearsal for the ceremonial welcome of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh."

Musk pitches Starlink for rural India amidst stalled launch

New Delhi

EVEN as the Elon Musk owned Starlink tries to unlock a stalled launch in India, the satellite internet service provider has again made a pitch as a public-service solution with particular focus on rural India. "Starlink would help the least served in India, especially in rural areas," wrote Elon Musk, in a post on X, earlier today. Starlink awaits final regulatory clearance from the Indian government, which would allow it to flip the switch on commercial operations in India.

Musk has a point. The latest Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data points to a flat growth for mobile and broadband connections in rural regions. In June 2026, urban India added 4.36 million subscribers (0.55% growth), while rural India added just 0.62 million subscribers (0.11% growth).

Secondly, rural tele-density of 60.89% at the end of June, compares unfavourably to 153.43% in urban areas, indicating that roughly 40% of the rural population still lacks individual mobile or fixed-line connectivity.

13-YR-OLD BOY RESCUED FROM BONDED LABOUR

MUMBAI: A 13-year-old boy was rescued from alleged bonded labour at a farm in Maharashtra's Jalna district, officials have said. Following inputs received by the District Legal Services Authority and the Child Helpline 1098, a raid was conducted at Chincholi village of Bhokardan tehsil on Wednesday, they said. According to officials, the boy told the authorities that he had been working at the farm for around one-and-a-half years, performing agricultural tasks, grazing goats, feeding and watering cattle and cleaning cow dung. The boy was allegedly forced to work at the farm against a Rs 40,000 advance taken by his father from the farm owner.

Parents die trying to stop son from suicide

Mumbai

A couple and their 19-year-old son fell to their deaths from a hill while the parents attempted to stop the teenager from committing suicide in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district on Friday, police said.

The tragedy unfolded in the Tisgaon area under Waluj MIDC in the afternoon, an official said. According to the police, Kunal Chandgude (19) went up the hill around 10 am, allegedly intending to commit suicide following a dispute with his parents about wanting a mobile phone. The parents, Murlidhar (48) and Sangita Chandgude, residents of the Zalta Phata area of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, arrived there to stop him.

An official said police and villagers tried to convince Kunal not to jump, and the fire brigade was also called in, and they tried to place a net below. But the teen kept changing his position. Even as his father tried to console and convince him, Kunal jumped, and the father went after him, falling to his death. Horrified, the mother also jumped off the hill and died, the official said. The bodies were recovered by the police and were sent for further formalities, he added.

Nadda reviews country's H1N1 preparedness

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda on Friday reviewed the prevailing situation and preparedness for H1N1 Influenza in the country with particular focus on the national capital. Delhi Health Minister D Pankaj Kumar Singh was also present in the meeting. According to a release, the Union Health Minister reviewed the national surveillance and epidemiological situation, ILI and SARI trends, testing and laboratory surveillance, and preparedness of healthcare facilities to manage seasonal influenza cases. Nadda emphasised the need for continued vigilance, robust surveillance and proactive preparedness, with close monitoring of influenza trends.