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Sircilla weaver ends life by consuming acid

Rajanna-Sircilla: A 47-year-old weaver died by suicide by consuming acid in the district on Friday. The deceased was identified as Kudikyala Nagaraju. A resident of Rajivnagar, Nagaraju used to work on powerlooms to run the family. He was facing financial issues as there was no work for the last six months.

Moreover, Nagaraju had borrowed Rs 4 lakh from private money lenders for his treatment and other expenditures. Since there was no work, he was under severe mental pressure to clear debts besides running the family.

Balakrishna hails Revanth Reddy, says he cooperated for expanding Basavatrakam hospital services



GNS News Agency, June 22

At the 24th anniversary celebration of the Basavatrakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital in Hyderabad, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was praised by hospital chairman Nandamuri Balakrishna as a role model for all. Balakrishna highlighted how, when asked to cooperate in expanding the hospital services, CM Revanth Reddy immediately agreed.

In his speech, Nandamuri Balakrishna expressed his concern about the growing cancer epidemic and commended the visionary leadership of former CM NT Rama Rao in establishing the hospital. He noted that the hospital was built in an area previously filled with rocks and now provides excellent services to patients. Balakrishna also mentioned the contribution of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the development of the hospital. As an MLA in Andhra Pradesh, Balakrishna mentioned the development of the Hindupuram Government Hospital and the provision of corporate-style medicine to the people. He announced plans to open a Basavatrakam hospital in Andhra Pradesh, with land already allotted by CM Chandrababu. Balakrishna expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as chairman of such a prestigious institution. The event concluded with a pledge to continue fighting the battle against cancer and providing world-class healthcare to patients in need.

KCR bankrupted Singareni says Bandi Sanjay Kumar



GNS News Agency, June 22

Karimnagar : Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar questioned the State government does it have the courage to ask for a CBI inquiry into the corruption and irregularities going on in Singareni. He said that if the CBI conducts an investigation, it will be clear who is responsible for the plight of Singareni along with the former government officials. Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that there is no intention to privatise Singareni but the Congress and BRS parties are spreading false propaganda and creating confusion among the people. Speaking to the media here on Friday he said the Centre has only 49 percent share in Singareni. State's is 51 percent. He clarified that it is impossible for the Central government to privatise Singareni without the approval of the state government. The main reason for Singareni's plight was ex-CM KCR and BRS government. The KCR government has handed over Tadicharla to private individual. If KCR family did corruption in Singareni for their own gain, Congress is also following the same path.

BRS slams Telangana govt for letting down farmers' community

GNS News Agency, June 22

Hyderabad: Coming down heavily on the Congress government for letting down the farmers' community, which was nurtured so well during the BRS regime in the State, former Ministers Niranjan Reddy and Errabelli Dayakar Rao said farmers were facing an uncertain future in the State. The government was yet to implement the Vanakalam tranche of the agriculture investment support scheme. Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, Niranjan Reddy pointed out that the government was yet to finalize the modalities for implementation of Rythu Bharosa, despite the fact that Kharif operations were in full swing following pre-monsoon rains all over. The government had failed to disburse Rs 10,000 per acre of assistance in full for the Yasangi crops, not to mention the Rs 15,000 per acre of assistance promised under the Rythu Bharosa scheme.

Revanth Reddy praise Basavatrakam hospital, makes interesting comments on AP CM

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy praised the Basavatrakam hospital for its dedication to serving the people. Speaking at the anniversary of the hospital on Saturday, the chief minister highlighted the importance of selflessly serving the poor and commended the hospital for its efforts in providing healthcare services to those in need. During his speech at the event, CM Revanth Reddy expressed his admiration for the hospital's commitment to helping the less fortunate. Further speaking, he emphasized the need for Telangana state leaders and officials to work tirelessly to compete with other states in terms of development and made interesting comments on his counterpart chief minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu.

Bangladesh-India ties ever-growing at fast pace: Sheikh Hasina

GNS News Agency, June 22

New Delhi: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina underscored the robust and accelerating ties between Bangladesh and India following her meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday. The discussions focused on deepening collaborative engagement across various sectors between the two neighbouring nations. The visiting Bangladesh PM was addressing the media after a delegation-level talk with PM Modi. Prime Minister Hasina expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Modi for the invitation extended to her, marking her first bilateral visit abroad since Bangladesh's 12th Parliamentary Elections and the formation of the new government earlier this year. She highlighted India as a major neighbour, trusted friend, and crucial regional partner, emphasising the



enduring bond that originated during Bangladesh's War of Liberation in 1971. "I recall with gratitude the contribution of the government and the people of India to Bangladesh's independence. I pay deep homage to the brave fallen heroes of India who sacrificed their lives during our War of Liberation in 1971," said Prime Minister Hasina. The recent years have seen sustained high-level engagements between the two countries, with notable visits including the Honourable President and Prime Minister of India at-

tending significant celebrations in Bangladesh in 2021. Prime Minister Hasina herself visited India in September 2022 and participated in the G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023. During the current visit, both leaders engaged in productive discussions covering politics, security, trade, connectivity, water-sharing from common rivers, power and energy, as well as regional and multi-lateral cooperation. They reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate for mutual prosperity and progress. "As Dhaka and

Delhi have started new journeys, we charted the future course of action to ensure a smart Bangladesh by following Vision 2041 and Viksit Bharat by 2047," Prime Minister Hasina shared, indicating a forward-looking approach towards bilateral relations. Prime Minister Hasina's visit also includes meetings with the Honourable Vice President and President of India later in the day, which are expected to further bolster bilateral ties. "I believe all these meetings would give us more insights into enhancing our two countries' cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Bangladesh at his earliest convenience," Prime Minister Hasina also said. PM Modi and PM Hasina also held a bilateral meeting earlier in the day. Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina is on a two-day State visit to India from June 21 to 22.

BRS slams Pocharam for betraying party leadership



GNS News Agency, June 22

Hyderabad: Launching a blistering attack on the former BRS speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy for betraying the BRS party leadership, former MLAs A. Jeevan Reddy, Ganesh Bigala, Metuku Anand on Saturday demanded him to resign to the membership of the State Legislative Assembly and seek re-election as the Congress nominee from the Banskwa assembly constituency. Addressing a news conference at Telangana Bhavan, they said the political loyalties of Pocharam were always linked to the net benefits he was assured of by a political party.

The former Speaker had betrayed the TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu in the past. Now it was the turn of the BRS leadership. He will have no hesitation to ditch A Revanth Reddy tomorrow. He had deceived the BRS leadership. His shifting of loyalties was not intended to benefit the farming community. He did so only for the sake of his stone crushers. He had used Rs 7500 crores for his constituency development. The BRS was not short of leaders, they said. The exit of such leaders from the party will help make space for a new breed of young and genuine leaders, they asserted.

Ayyannapatru assumes charge as speaker, CM Naidu greets, terms him as firebrand

GNS News Agency, June 22

Andhra Pradesh assembly Protem speaker announces TDP MLA Ayyannapatru as the assembly speaker of the house and requested The leaders to accompany the latter to speaker chair. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan and minister Satyam Kumar Yadav accompanied Ayyannapatru to the chair and made him sit in the chair. Later, Ayyannapatru assumed the charge as the speaker of the AP Assembly.

After Ayyannapatru assumed charged as speaker, CM Nara Chandrababu Naidu has greeted the speaker Ch Ayyannapatru and explained his political background. He said Ayyannapatru elected to assembly seven times. CM said Ayyannapatru worked 16 years as minister. He termed the speaker as firebrand. Chandrababu Naidu said Ayyannapatru has attachment with Narsipatnam over 40 years and he always strived for development of North Andhra and fought for Godavari waters. He said Ayyannapatru faced many problems in his political career and bravely gone ahead. Further, Naidu has alleged that the last time the Assembly sessions were held in wicked and ugly manner with abusing language and ridiculing the MLAs. Chandrababu Naidu lamented that many comments were made against him and his family. He said even the Mike was not given to make his statement. He recalled why he made walk about from the assembly. Chandrababu Naidu said character assassination was made in the assembly and social media. He said first time he got tears in the eyes and decided to change assembly as respectable house. He thanked the people for electing as the CM and he wanted to born as the Telugu man if he gets rebirth.

Trinamool joins Opposition chorus against operation of three new criminal laws

GNS News Agency, June 22

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to pause the operation of the three criminal laws that replace the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act.

Her letter comes after a meeting with senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram, who also served as the Home Minister in the UPA government. Mr. Chidambaram, TMC leader Derek O'Brien and DMK's N.R. Elango were part of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and had given dissent notes to the reports on the three Bills.

This is the first sign of Opposition parties belonging to the INDIA bloc working together on crucial issues before the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha. A senior TMC leader said the presence of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha was a stumbling block to cooperation between the TMC and the Congress.

Congress gears up to raise NEET issue in Parliament

GNS News Agency, June 22

The Congress is likely to demand the cancellation of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2024, a senior leader said on June 21 as the principal Opposition party is all set to raise the issue in the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha that begins on June 24. As a separate discussion on the subject may not be possible in the short session of Parliament that will conclude on July 3, the party is likely to work out a joint strategy with INDIA partners to raise it during the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to a joint sitting of Parliament.

The party will also demand a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the alleged irregularities, including question paper leak, as well as a complete overhaul of the National Testing Agency (NTA) that conducts exams such as NEET. Many of these points emerged during Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's interaction with NEET aspirants on June 20. The senior leader cited above said that while the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu wants



NEET to be completely scrapped, several State governments such as Karnataka are opposed to NEET as the only gateway to join undergraduate medical courses. "Thousands of students appearing for NEET are on the streets with their families in the scorching heat and [Prime Minister] Narendra Modi is silently watching the spectacle. I assure them that in this struggle, from the streets to the Parliament, India is with you," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X on June 21. He also released a seven-minute video of his interaction with the NEET aspirants, in which many of them demanded a re-examination and a probe into the alleged irregularities. They also commented on the NTA's "incompetence" to

hold exams. In the video, Mr. Gandhi, addressing the 24 lakh NEET aspirants, said, "If government can't protect you, the Opposition will. This issue I will take up personally in Parliament." He added that two crore youth had suffered as papers of public exams got leaked 70 times in the past 10 years. On June 21, the Congress organised country-wide protests against the NEET and demanded that the 24 lakh students, who took the test, be given justice. In a post on X, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said question paper leaks had become a national problem under the BJP rule, which had "ruined the future" of crores of youth.

"In the last five years, papers of 43 recruitment exams have been leaked

in the country. Paper leak has become a national problem of our country under the BJP rule. India has the largest youth population. Instead of making these youth skilled and capable, the BJP government is making them weak," Ms. Vadra wrote. She said that crores of talented students prepare day and night for different exams and parents bear the burden of studies by sacrificing everything. "Children wait for years for a vacancy to come. When a vacancy comes, there is the cost of filling up the form, the cost of going for the exam, and finally the whole effort is wasted due to corruption. The BJP's corruption is weakening the country," she added. Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose said the paper leaks exposed the "governance deficit" of the Modi government. "Why are heads not rolling? Who is responsible for these paper leaks? Who is the Modi government protecting? What are the permanent solutions that the Modi government is advancing in order to sort out this problem of regular paper leaks?" Ms. Ghose asked.

Ministry of Education forms committee led by K Radhakrishnan to enhance NTA examination process

The committee will be headed by former ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan. The panel will be ensuring transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations.

GNS News Agency, June 22

The Ministry of Education said on June 22 it has constituted a high-level committee of experts led by former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the National Testing Agency (NTA). The seven-member committee will make recommendations on reforms in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and the structure and functioning of the NTA, the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry said. It added that the committee will submit its report to the ministry within two months. Central University of Hyderabad Vice-Chancellor Professor B J Rao and former director of AIIMS Delhi Randeep Guleria are on the panel.



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Child labour

THE harrowing case of child labour that has come to light in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh is a wake-up call. As many as 58 minors, including 19 girls, were found working in appalling conditions at a liquor factory by a team of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) last week. Many had sustained terrible chemical burns. Now, 39 of those rescued have gone missing. The NCPCR chairperson says the case involves not just child labour, but also human trafficking. Questions are being raised about gross negligence and the collusion of corrupt officials. The regulatory bodies are under the scanner. Stringent action against the factory owners is a must. Any laxity will reinforce the perception that tackling child labour is low on the state's priority list, and that the rule of law can easily be subverted.

According to the International Labour Organisation, more than 16 crore children are working as child labourers globally, and the number is only going up. Cases of human trafficking have seen a rise since the Covid-19 pandemic. Vulnerable families were further pushed into poverty and a large number of children dropped out of school, exacerbating the risk. The data also points to an increasing number of children being subjected to abuse and violence. Child labour and trafficking are organised crime. The Raisen case is a reminder that efforts must be redoubled to rein in the perpetrators. Rehabilitation of the children remains an underserved aspect. Eradicating child labour should be a shared moral responsibility of civil society, businesses and governments alike. In India, 11 per cent of the workforce is said to be underage. Child labour laws have proven to be ineffective. Whatever the justification that is offered, the moral quotient is entirely absent from the social sanction to child labour in the country.

Couple's stock of coal burnt by fire in 2003, consumer commission asks insurance firm to pay them Rs 1.36 cr

GNS News Agency, June 22

The apex court in 2023, while setting aside the orders of the Chandigarh Consumer Commission and of National Commission, restored the complaints to the Chandigarh Commission for consideration of the matters on merits and in accordance with law. (File photo) The apex court in 2023, while setting aside the orders of the Chandigarh Consumer Commission and of National Commission, restored the complaints to the Chandigarh Commission for consideration of the matters on merits and in accordance with law. Two decades after a couple's stock of coal was reduced to ashes in a fire incident in 2003, the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has asked an insurance company to pay Rs 1.36 crore to a city-based couple. The commission also directed the insurance company to pay a compensation of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 35,000 as cost of litigation each to husband and wife for causing mental agony and harassment by rejecting their claim without any valid reason. The commission remarked, "This is a typical case where consumer/complainant is suffering for more than two decades and she being the sole proprietor has been unnecessarily put to mental agony and harassment. Due to abovesaid incident of fire, the complainant lost the entire wealth and her business has totally been ruined. However, salt has been added to her miseries by the opposite parties by putting her into this prolonged litigation." "One can very well imagine the plight of the complainant in such a situation. It is settled law that the Consumer Commission should award adequate compensation to compensate the consumers for the harassment, agony and loss faced by him/her," added the commission. Prem Vashisht and her husband, V K Vashisht, had approached the Chandigarh Consumer Commission in 2003, which dismissed their plea in 2004. They then approached the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi, filing the appeal, where again the order of Chandigarh Consumer Commission was upheld, in 2004 itself. The couple then not getting any benefit from the National Commission, approached the Supreme Court in 2007, filing an appeal against the National Commission order. The apex court in 2023, while setting aside the orders of the Chandigarh Consumer Commission and of National Commission, restored the complaints to the Chandigarh Commission for consideration of the matters on merits and in accordance with law.

As per the case, the complainant, Prem Vashisht, was running the business of selling coal in which she was self-employed and was carrying her livelihood for the last 25 years. In order to arrange sufficient financial resources for running the business of buying and selling coal, she approached the Punjab National Bank (PNB), which offered to finance the complainant to the extent of 75 per cent of the total working capital/cash credit limit and in order to protect its own interest, PNB had taken a fire policy from the New India Assurance Company Limited (Assurance Company) from time to time. The policy was valid from November 1, 2002 to October 31, 2003 for a total sum of insurance being Rs 1 crore of the stores and stocks relating to the business of the complainant were to remain comprehensively insured against all risks at full value. As per the complainant, a fire broke out on the premises/godown of the complainant on February 7, 2003 in which the entire stock of the godown was turned to ashes, and intimation of the same was sent to the insurance company as well as PNB. The insurance company then immediately deputed a surveyor. The claim of the complainant was, however, not settled till July 2003. The PNB issued a letter, dated July 10, 2003, to the assurance company for settlement of the claim of the complainant. However, the assurance company did not settle the claim and it vide its repudiation, dated August 20, 2003, informing the complainant that her claim was not payable as the loss had occurred due to spontaneous combustion, which was not covered under the fire policy issued to PNB to cover the risk to the stock/coal of the complainant. The PNB in reply supported the contention of the complainant that the rejection of the claim by the assurance company was on irrelevant grounds and was not valid and proper.

Ghaziabad businessman duped of Rs 28 lakh in share trading scam



GNS News Agency, June 22

The victim, Dinesh Kumar, 50, joined a WhatsApp group that shared tips and tricks for trading in the NSE and US stock exchange on April 3. Based on advice from an investor who invited him to join the WhatsApp group, he opened a trading account and invested money. For a while, he earned good returns but soon started losing money, said the police. Kumar, 50, a resident of Vasundhara, then approached police. "The man used to give NSE stock calls on the group, which looked very profitable. On May 5, he asked the group members people to join an international trading account, which, as per him, was registered on the SEBI website. He said he would give trading calls for NSE and US stocks for five weeks... I opened an account (using a) link on May 6, with an amount of Rs 30,000... and started trading," Kumar alleged in the FIR.

The complainant said he checked the authenticity of the platform by withdrawing money. "He (the man) then

(said) that he is creating another group, called 'Investment Alliance', for persons whose trading account had... more than Rs 10 lakh. I was (made a part of this) group. He (gave) trading calls (NSE stock calls) in the morning and US stock calls in the evening. The daily profit was more than 10 per cent," the FIR read. Kumar further said profit was being generated in the trading account and he deposited the amount in parts in various accounts.

"On May 20, (the man) told the group that his firm... will give an... IPO allocation in... the trading account to those trading with him. I also got some shares; it was listed on May 28 and a profit to the tune of 100% was generated by the IPO," Kumar said in his complaint. Kumar alleged that by the end of May, the man said he would launch another IPO in which people could apply and pay after the allotment. "My trading account balance at that time was more than Rs 1 crore. I was an allotted IPO more than my trading balance. When I expressed my inability to deposit more funds and asked to withdraw my amount, they did not let me do so. (they) asked me to deposit more money. The total amount deposited by me till that time was Rs 27.57 lakh," added Kumar. The police said a case under Indian Penal Code Section 420 (cheating) and Section 66D of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008, was registered at the Cyber Crime police station and an investigation was underway. "Such cases are increasingly rapidly. Fraudsters contact people through messages while they surf online for higher returns through trading. We have written to the banks regarding the account holders' details where the money was deposited. Further legal action is being taken," said an officer.

Water shortage to hit Lutyens' Delhi, underground reservoirs record 40% fall in supply



GNS News Agency, June 22

Water shortage will be experienced in many parts of New Delhi, including Lutyens' Delhi, which falls within the city's most prestigious areas, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) said on Monday. A 40 per cent reduction in water supply from the Tilak Marg and Bengali Market underground reservoirs will leave residents and businesses scrambling to adjust. This shortage will impact key locations such as Bengali Market, Ashoka Road, Harichand Marthur Lane, Copernicus Marg, Purana Qila

Road, Babar Road, Barakhamba, KG Marg, Windsor Palace, Firozshah Marg, Canning Lane and its surrounding area.

Due to the soaring temperature, Delhi has been reeling under acute water shortage for the past few days, the Delhi Jal Board has been flooded with complaints of residents running short of water supply. "As informed by Delhi Jal Board (DJB) that production of potable water from Wazirabad water plant is not running at full capacity due to the non-availability of raw water, hence water supply in command area of Tilak Marg UGR & Bengali market UGR will be made available once in a day and preferably in morning time," the NDMC said in its official statement. The consumers of the affected areas of can contact the control room for water tankers on phone numbers: 011 -2336 0683 and 011 -2374 3642. The council appealed to the NDMC residents to save water and use it judiciously. "Water is essential to life, but there is a limited amount the municipality has. This means that consumers must use our limited supply carefully. Water conservation is important to protect our resources and ensure that everyone has access to this vital natural resource," the NDMC said.

In Punjab, more and more women show eagerness to don khaki



GNS News Agency, June 22

The arrest of ex-serviceman Jasbir Singh, who allegedly duped two sisters of Rs 4.25 lakh on the pretext of getting them jobs with Punjab Police while impersonating a Vigilance Bureau officer, has put the spotlight on the eagerness of women in the state to don khaki.

Official records show 8,495 women are working with the 73,797-strong Punjab Police — from two DGP-rank officers, several ADGPs, DIGs, and SSPs down to head constables and constables. In all, the women personnel account for 11.5 per cent of the total strength of the state police. There are 22 women Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, 49 State Police Service officers, 193 inspectors, 468 sub-inspectors, 419 assistant sub-inspectors, 720 head constables and 6,622 constables in the Punjab Police, performing varied duties ranging from postings at police stations to tackle law and order issues, rubbing shoulders with their male counterparts. In November last year, in a first for the state, four all-women contingents went to perform election duties outside Punjab — Madhya

Pradesh and Rajasthan. The contingents, comprising 250 women constables of the Punjab Armed Police, and commanded by Assistant Inspector General, Olympian Avneet Kaur Sidhu, won accolades from the local police for performing the duties diligently. "There is nothing that male constables can do and women constables cannot. They are doing all duties from their posting at police stations to maintain law and order," said Punjab Special DGP (Law and order) Arpit Shukla. "The keenness of women to join the state police force could be gauged from the fact during recruitments, their applications are several times more than the advertised posts," Shukla added. While the Punjab Police count significantly on their women personnel deployed across the state for varied duties, the state police brass boasts of having two women IPS officers as DGPs and seven women IPS officers heading the districts as police chiefs. The two women DGP rank officers are Gurpreet Kaur Deo, who is the charge of the Community Affairs Division and Women Affairs, and Shashi Prabha Dwivedi, who is the Special DGP (Railways). Seven women IPS officers working as Senior Superintendents of Police (SSP) are Ashwini Gotyal (Batala), Vatsala Gupta (Kapurthala), Dr Simrat Kaur (Malerkotla), Ravjot Grewal (Fatehgarh Sahib), Amneet Kondal (Khanna), Saumya Mishra (Ferozpur) and Dr Pragya Jain (Fazilka). Another Punjab cadre woman IPS officer Kanwardeep Kaur is posted as the Chandigarh SSP. The ADGP rank women IPS officers in Punjab are V Neeraja (Cyber Crime), Vibhu Raj (looking after the work of DGP Investigation Lok Pal and Anita Punj (ADGP-cum-Director PPA, Phillaur). Of the eight police ranges, two are headed by women IPS officers — Jagadale Nilambari Vijay (DIG Ropar Range) and Dhanpreet Kaur (DIG Ludhiana Range).

BJP and Congress protest over Delhi water crisis: 'AAP sheltering water thieves and tanker mafia'

GNS News Agency, June 22

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress on Monday cornered the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi Government over the continuing water crisis in the Capital. While the BJP took to the streets for a citywide 'matka phod' demonstration, the Congress wrote to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena demanding action against government officials as well as political leaders for the unprecedented situation gripping the city.

"Arvind Kejriwal and his government are solely responsible for Delhiites not getting water today. By sheltering water thieves and the tanker mafia, AAP legislators have turned water into a business, regardless of whether the people of Delhi get any or not," Virendra Sachdeva alleged at Krishna Nagar which was one of the 52 locations where the BJP held protests at. "If water theft and leakage are stopped in Delhi, every resident will get sufficient water, but Aam Aadmi Party legislators have no sympathy for the people of Delhi; they only care about their hefty earnings," he added. Delhi Congress



president Devender Yadav wrote to L-G Saxena alleging that no action had been taken regarding the "significant water wastage" because of which taps across the city had run dry in extreme heat. "The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and Delhi Police have not taken any action against the guilty, as water theft from DJB pipes has become a regular feature in many parts of Delhi.

Army doctor saves life of critically ill passenger on flight to Chandigarh



GNS News Agency, June 22

An Army doctor posted at Command Hospital Western Command Chandimandir in Chandigarh helped save the life of a critically ill passenger while on an Indigo airlines that took off from Goa.

The incident took place on June 16 on the Chandigarh-bound 6E724 flight on which Maj Simrat Rajdeep Singh of Command Hospital, Chandimandir, was travelling. He resuscitated a 27-year-old critically ill patient and requested for an emergency landing at Mumbai. According to airline sources, a passenger suffered a medical emergency on-board the flight 6E 724 and his condition was deteriorating rapidly, so the crew immediately diverted the flight to Mumbai and provided urgent medical attention, including administering multiple injections and using an AED to prevent cardiac arrest. The crew also ensured that two doctors on-board, including Major Simrat Rajdeep Singh, were able to assist with the situation, while ensuring emergency medical staff were ready to meet the flight upon landing. The doctors on-board assessed the situation and advised that the passenger had small kidneys and end-stage chronic kidney disease, which was exacerbated by flying at high altitude. Emergency medical staff met the flight upon landing, and the passenger was deplaned in a wheelchair. The crew kept the captain informed at regular intervals.

Will only accept written submissions from home buyers to avoid tweaks in complaints: UP RERA



GNS News Agency, June 22

The Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UP RERA) has said it will only accept submissions in writing as home buyers change their sought relief after the final order causing "unnecessary delay in the disposal of complaints". Officials said the Authority has made a provision for the complainant to present their arguments in writing to strengthen their matter before issuing the final order according to the requested relief. "In many matters, the Authority found that after pronouncing the final order in the matters heard before the RERA bench, the complainants are changing their sought relief. Due to the lack of clarity in the requested relief by the complainant, a situation of doubt and confusion arises on the final order received from the bench and it causes unnecessary delay in the disposal of complaints," said an official. Sanjay Bhoosreddy, Chairman, UP RERA, said, "We have seen in many cases that the complainant deviates from his sought relief due to which the time and hard work of the Authority, as well as other stakeholders, get wasted. To further strengthen the judicial process, the Authority will now issue the final order based on the submission of the sought relief in writing from the complainant so that the complainant can get a satisfactory final order". Officials said UP RERA has prepared a standard format of written submission for the complainants to place a brief and precise description of the relief sought before the RERA bench. The complainant will have to present the complete property details, the agreement for sale, payments made to the promoter, their complaint, and the relief requested before the RERA bench in writing according to the format. RERA officials said there will be clarity in the relief sought by the complainant after this format. Under section 31 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, aggrieved buyers and real estate promoters or builders can file complaints before the Authority.

Restored stepwell rots in neglect

GNS News Agency, June 22

Hyderabad: Almost a year after a 19th century stepwell was unearthed in Gudimalkapur and authorities took up restoration initiatives, the heritage site has gone back to being ignored and neglected. The structure, located inside the Jham Singh Balaji Mahadev temple complex, now unfortunately resembles a dump yard dotted with plastic waste.

The stepwell, believed to be built in 1810, was discovered by chance when authorities were looking to develop the religious buildings around it. The structure was hidden under a layer of debris and was found with the help of locals and maps. Soon, a large-scale and meticulous effort to remove the construction waste and restore the structure was launched, which resulted in the removal of tonnes of debris from the well. Multiple shops in the surrounding area were also moved to facilitate this. Along with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, the National Institute of Urban Management was also involved with the project. "It is a tragedy and clearly a lack of understanding on our part. It is an important structure which marks the historic trade route. It also quenched the thirst of many and signifies the cultural exchange," says historian Anuradha Reddy.

Woman killed by son-in-law in Delhi's Shalimar Bagh over monetary dispute



GNS News Agency, June 22

A woman was shot dead allegedly by her son-in-law during an argument over money and issues between her daughter and the accused in Delhi's Shalimar Bagh area on Sunday. The police said the accused was arrested later on Sunday, and the woman succumbed to her injuries the following morning. According to the police, they received a PCR call at 1.45 pm on Sunday about a woman being shot at her home in Haidarpur. When they reached the spot, the police found blood spattered on the floor and a cartridge and learnt the woman,

Neetu, was admitted to the nearby Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

The police said that according to the family, Sumit, 28, the son-in-law of Neetu, 50, shot her and fled. The police reached the hospital where the victim was admitted, where the doctors stated that she was in critical condition. An attempt to murder case was registered against Sumit and a team was sent to Meerut in search of him. His phone was also put on surveillance. Sumit was nabbed when he was on his way towards Meerut on Sunday night, said the police. Investigations revealed that Sumit, a Meerut resident, worked as a cook at a restaurant in Delhi's Dakshinpur area. He got married to Neetu's daughter six years ago and has a six-month-old son with her. After marriage, there were regular arguments between Sumit and his wife. He had also lent Rs. 1.20 lakh to Neetu. Though she had returned some of it, Sumit and Neetu argued over the remaining amount and his relationship with her daughter. The police said after another argument on Sunday morning, Sumit went to Neetu's place and shot her. Neetu succumbed to her injuries at the hospital on Monday morning. Her body was sent to the Babu Jagjivan Ram Hospital, Jahangir Puri, for autopsy and was later handed over to the family.

'Punjab not jagir of AAP... a weakened Akali Dal will mean a weak Punjab'



GNS News Agency, June 22

Congress MP from Gurdaspur and former Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa believes that Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, the son of Indira Gandhi's assassin Beant Singh, won in the recently held Lok Sabha polls due to a "vacuum" created by a weak Akali Dal. In an interview with Navjeevan Gopal, Randhawa maintains that "as Congress cannot remain united without the Gandhi family, likewise Akali Dal cannot remain united without the Badal family", and that Congress, which won seven out of 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab, needs to work harder and instil a sense of confidence among its workers in the state.

What is your analysis of the Lok Sabha results for Congress in Punjab and your victory from Gurdaspur which had been considered a traditional seat of the BJP?

The Congress led in 38 Assembly segments as compared to the AAP which led in 33 segments. The Congress needs to really work harder. We will have to ponder over the vote share which was reduced to 26.3 per cent [from 40.12 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls]. We could have won 11 seats (as compared to seven which Congress won). We could not perform well in Malwa. We will have to focus on Malwa. This is unfortunate that a few party leaders are projecting themselves as chief ministerial faces after the results. We would have surely won Bathinda had Amrinder Singh Raja Warring been fielded from there. Vijay Inder Singla could have won from Anandpur Sahib had his candidature announcement wasn't delayed. He got less time (to campaign), but even then he gave a tough fight. As far as my victory is concerned, I won from Gurdaspur because every single worker of Congress put in their best efforts. Leave aside leaders, it was due to the support of party workers that I won. To strengthen the party, we will need to instil confidence among workers that the party will always stand by them. We will need to promote those who stood by the party during adverse times and not those who become a liability. Those who stand by the party through thick and thin are assets and need to be preserved. In this election, people have rejected the 'Aaya ram, gaya ram' culture. People don't like leaders who switch sides.

Is Dr Raj Kumar Chabbewal (who quit Congress and went on to win on AAP ticket from Hoshiarpur) an exception?

Congress did not work seriously there (in Hoshiarpur). Also, the party candidate was also new. Raj Kumar could have been defeated too. Just 44,000 votes (the margin of 44,111 votes by which Kumar won) are nothing in a parliamentary election. [Leader of the opposition] Partap Singh Bajwa and [Jalandhar MP and former CM] Charanjit Singh Channi recently visited Sunder Sham Arora (who had quit Congress to join BJP) triggering a buzz that he could be back in the Congress fold. Bajwa and Channi have though reportedly called it a

family meeting. What is your take? I will oppose re-entry of Arora and everyone who did not stand by the party during its tough times. And when it is called a family meeting, I want to say here that they should have visited the houses of district Congress president and block Congress president. They are also part of Congress family.

According to you, which political party will be Congress's main competitor in 2027 Punjab election?

Nothing could be said as of now. Things will be clearer after Akali Dal performance in by-election (in five Assembly constituencies). And I would like to point out that like Congress cannot remain united without Gandhi family, in Punjab Akali Dal cannot remain united without Badal family. Sukhbir (Badal) will have to introspect why Taksali Akalis felt ignored. A weakened Akali Dal will mean a weak Punjab. It is due to the vacuum created by a weak Akali Dal that Amritpal Singh and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa went on to win the election. The panthic vote which was angry with Shiromani Akali Dal voted for likes of Amritpal. Baptism, espousing the cause of (Sikh) community and bringing Sikh youth in Sikhi saroop were the responsibilities of Akali Dal which all Amritpal took away. Akali Dal will need to turn to its core agenda. What the (Akali Dal controlled) Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) was supposed to do is being done either by deras or likes of Amritpal. SGPC has been politicised. The vacuum could end only if SGPC is put back on the task of propagating the Sikh religion.

BJP has gained a lot in terms of vote share. How do you see that?

Farm agitation has been a big issue and there has been polarisation of Hindus by the BJP in Punjab. And this is unprecedented which did not happen even during terrorism. The good thing, however, is that it is a temporary phase. Congress will have to strengthen Hindu leadership. During terrorism, Hindu, Sikh and SC leaders worked in unison and there was nothing communal. This time, it is very dangerous. But, these two phases shall pass, one relating to Amritpal and the other one of Hindu polarisation, bringing back secular politics in the state.

The BJP has chosen Ravneet Bittu as Union Minister of State. What is your take on that?

was in the Congress cried foul saying that he was ignored and not considered as Punjab CM being a Hindu. Why is he quiet now? Bittu is now making statements on Bandi Singhs and I want to ask when he was in Opposition why he did not remember Bandi Singhs and gave any statement. If Bittu is sincere, before (former Punjab CM Beant Singh's assassin) Balwant Singh Rajoana, Bittu should take up the matter of release of eight to nine other Bandi Singhs like Devinderpal Singh Bhullar and others. Their release will require a one-line order from Centre government.

Since you have been elected as MP, what about your role in state politics?

I will remain associated with state politics being Gurdaspur MP. Apart from Gurdaspur, I will raise issues concerning entire Punjab as to why the state is being ignored. We will speak for Punjab more than three AAP MPs (from the state). I would also like to add here that ruling AAP in Punjab is in confrontation with Centre on the issue of non-release of RDF (rural development funds). In 2002 too, when Congress government was in Punjab, there was an issue of non-release of funds to the state and we had sat on a dharna outside PM's residence. Punjab is not 'jagir' of AAP. So far, the AAP government in Punjab has not called an all-party meeting. We will have to raise our voice jointly for Punjab.

DCs will be directly held accountable if public faces any inconvenience, warns CM Mann

GNS News Agency, June 22

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Monday said the deputy commissioners (DCs) will be directly held accountable for any sort of inconvenience and harassment faced by the general public in government offices irrespective of districts. Mann's remarks came during a review meeting with the field officers after the election results. He held a meeting with the DCs from all districts after taking a feedback from MLAs.

The MLAs had raised a hue and cry that they were "powerless" and the officials did not listen to them, affecting their works for the public. The chief minister directed the DCs to help the MLAs when they come with public works, but not succumb to any pressure if they forced the officials to bend any rules for any favours. "The CM gave a clear message to the DCs that they have to help the general public, but not to bend the rules. He has told the DCs to bring to his notice any pressure exerted by the MLAs for any favours. They have been told not to do any such work," said a source privy to the meeting. The CM is also learnt to have told the DCs that he had received reports of corruption from several offices. "Mann categorically said that the DCs have to check the corruption. It has to be their duty," the source added. Mann categorically said any laxity in governance will not be tolerated and that the deputy commissioners will be held accountable for any such lapse.

Meanwhile, the chief minister also informed about the state government's novel idea of setting up 'Mukhyamantri (CM) Sahayta Kendra' (chief minister help centre) in every district of the state, so that people could avail the benefits of government services through them. Mann said that a dedicated officer will be sitting at this window to receive the applications from the general public for getting their routine administrative works done. "If the work is of the district level, then it will be transferred to the concerned officer. If the work is of the ministry level, it will reach the CM office by evening. 'Mukhyamantri (CM) Dashboard' will be opened in the Chief Minister's office to resolve the issues. Work has to be completed within a week. One month roster will be issued in every district of Punjab and officials of DC office will visit villages twice a week to resolve pending issues. CM's dashboard will be equipped with artificial intelligence (AI)," Mann said. The dashboard will be continuously monitoring the entire activity, across the districts along with taking feedback from the general public regarding their applications and pending works. The chief minister said that it will ensure the execution of routine works of the general public in a time-bound and prompt manner. He said that the officers will be regularly monitoring this dashboard to ensure that people do not face any sort of inconvenience while get-



ting their routine administrative works done. The state government will also be roping in the latest technique of AI to check that the government officers sit in their offices and deliver services to the people. Likewise, Mann said, the involvement of MLAs and other public representatives will also be further enhanced in the functioning of the state government so that they can get the works of people executed by coordinating with the administration and the offices of the state government. This will be a revolutionary step as the government will be coming at doors of the people through Sarkar Tuhade Dwar scheme and ensure that the works of general public are given prime importance, Mann said. He said special counters in the form of reception and enquiry centres will be set up in the offices at the district administration, so that people could know the place from where their work can be done easily, thereby saving time and prompt completion of work.

Underscoring that it is the need of the hour to save the underground water for our coming generations, the chief minister said that the main aim is to check the depleting groundwater level by ensuring that farmers utilise the canal water optimally during the season. Mann said that his government has taken a revolutionary step in providing canal water to the farmers for irrigation purposes during the ongoing paddy season. The Punjab government will also be undertaking extensive tour to assess the flood preparations at grassroots level ahead of the rainy season ahead. The CM said on Tuesday his tour will be in and around the flood-prone areas of the Ghaggar River, so that a random check can be made to assess the preparations at ground level, adding more such visits will be made in the coming days. On the NEET exam controversy, Mann said that the exam has "ruined the career of lakhs of bright students who had burnt midnight oil to prepare for this exam". The chief minister said it is "shameful" that the central government had denied any leaking of the exam, but this malpractice has "bruised the psyche of the students". "It is highly condemnable and such practices should be checked with a heavy hand so that it acts as a deterrent in the future," the CM added.

Shimla reels under acute water crisis, BJP and Congress spar

GNS News Agency, June 22

Shimla is reeling under an acute water crisis despite the Shimla Jal Prabhandan Nigam Ltd (SJPNL) supplying water once every two days. People in the surrounding areas under the Shimla Municipal Corporation limit have complained about receiving water once every three to four days. A senior SJPNL officer said the city requires a daily water supply of 47 MLD to meet its needs during the summer, but the current supply is 30 MLD to 32 MLD from natural resources. Besides, thousands of tourists arrive in the hills to escape the scorching heat of the plains, exacerbating the situation. The worst-affected areas are Tutikandi, Kachighati, Kaithu, Comley Banks, Nabha Estate, Summer Hill, and IGMC Navbahar. Many public utility toilets have dried up and public drinking water tanks have been installed at different places. As the city struggles with the water crisis, political leaders are engaging in blame games. Senior BJP leader and former CM Jai Ram Thakur criticised CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led Congress government, holding it responsible for the water shortage in Shimla. In response, Congress Working president and chief parliamentary secretary Sanjay Awasthi criticised Thakur's statement. Awasthi said, "Every summer, a minor drinking water problem arises, and the state government provides water to the people at their doorsteps through tankers." He advised the BJP to speak cautiously about the drinking water problem to avoid creating an atmosphere of fear or panic. "During his (Jai Ram Thakur's) tenure as the chief minister, when there was a drinking water crisis in Shimla, he advised tourists not to come to the state, which severely impacted the tourism business."

SJPNL Additional General Manager (AGM) PP Sharma, said, "If the state, especially Shimla district, does not receive rainfall, the water crisis will worsen. Shimla used to get water from natural resources, which have been drying up daily due to the scorching heat. There is



also a rainfall in the state. We used to get 20 MLD from the Gumma water resource, which has decreased to merely 5-6 MLD. We are diverting 13 to 14 MLD from Chhaba to Gumma and have started supplying water to different areas through tankers." Sudershan Thakur from Kaithu said, "The authorities should explain why there is no water shortage in hotels, restaurants, and bars. From where they are getting the water supply? We are reeling under an acute water shortage."

Indeed, tourism is the backbone of our economy, but authorities should not compromise the interests of the common people. "Given the water supply, Shimla was divided into two divisions: Ridge and Sanjauli, each comprising three zones. The Ridge Division includes Lakkad Bazaar, Chotta Maidan, and the Central zone (Mall Road and Lower Bazaar areas), while New Shimla, Chotta Shimla, and Sanjauli zones fall under the Sanjauli division. MLA (Shimla) Harish Janartha held a review meeting with SJPNL officials on Saturday, urging them to do their best to resolve the water crisis. In 2018, Shimla experienced a severe water crisis, causing widespread agitation and chaos, which garnered nationwide attention. In January 2023, SJPNL increased water supply rates by 10 per cent.

Audit reveals medicine shortage in GMCH-32

GNS News Agency, June 22

A recent audit of the Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) in Sector 32, Chandigarh, has uncovered notable shortages in the availability of essential medicines in the year 2022-23. The audit highlighted that out of 272 essential medicines, 51 were not available, marking a 19% shortage. 'Vital' medicines showed a 12% unavailability, with 10 out of 81 medicines not in stock. 'Desirable' medicines were the most affected, with a 29% shortage, as two out of seven were unavailable. During the period covered by the audit, the charge of the Director-Principal of GMCH-32 was held by Dr Jasbinder Kaur, and the charge of the Drawing & Disbursing Officer was held by Anil Kumar Kamboj. The audit department said they notified the GMCH of these findings, but did not receive a "tenable" reply. A final reply is still awaited. The audit, conducted by an audit team headed by Pritam Kumar, and assisted by Prabhat Ranjan, AAO, under the supervision of Narinder Kumar Langoo, senior audit of-



ficer, took place from February 5, 2024, to March 15, 2024. The audit identified specific medicines that were out of stock, detailing the duration of their unavailability and eventual restocking dates:

Italian bike importer told to refund Rs 1.49L for selling 'defective' bike

GNS News Agency, June 22

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has asked an Italian motorcycle importer in Hyderabad to refund Rs 1.49 lakh to a Chandigarh woman for selling a 'defective' motorcycle. (File Photo) The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has asked an Italian motorcycle importer in Hyderabad to refund Rs 1.49 lakh to a Chandigarh woman for selling a 'defective' motorcycle.

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has asked an Italian motorcycle importer in Hyderabad to refund Rs 1.49 lakh to a Chandigarh woman for selling a 'defective' motorcycle. Rajinder Kaur of Chandigarh alleged that she had purchased a Benelli Keeway SR 250 Motor Cycle from Atharva Autospace (Benelli Motorcycle dealership) on July 10, 2023, for Rs 1,49,000, imported by Adishwar Auto Ride India Private in Hyderabad, and it was carrying warranty of two years.

Kaur alleged that after a few days of its purchase when the complainant along with her son was going to Ropar on the said motorcycle, suddenly a plastic carry bag touched the silencer and it caught fire. The complainant stopped the motorcycle and found that silencer of the motorcycle was turned red hot. The complainant took the motorcycle to dealership and its first free service was done. The complainant was assured that the problem will not repeat in future but did not issue job card regarding it. Kaur alleged that on August 9, 2023, when the complainant along with her husband was riding the

motorcycle in Sector 19, Chandigarh, its silencer got red hot and the complainant immediately stopped the motorcycle. She clicked photographs and took the motorcycle to dealership, which examined the motorcycle and prepared a technical diagnostic report and mentioned in report that the bike is overheating and the silencer is turning red hot at the speed of 40 kilometres and it failed to solve the problem. Kaur said that the motorcycle was retained by the dealership for repair, and she was informed by the dealership that the spare part is not available and the motorcycle cannot be repaired. The complainant said that she had no option but to take back the motorcycle and the same has been now lying unused at her residence since September 2023.

The dealership, Atharva Autospace, did not appear before the commission, and it was thus proceeded as ex-parte. The importer, Adishwar Auto Ride India, denied all the allegations made against them and prayed for the dismissal of the complaint. The commission on hearing the matter said that when the vehicle failed to run smoothly for even 900 kms within a period of 30 days of its purchase then, taking into account the 'TDR- Technical Diagnostic Report' dated August 9, 2023, issued by dealership, it can be concluded that the dealership and importer have sold a defective piece to the complainant. The commission added that the opposite parties have failed to place on record any document which could establish that the abovesaid motorcycle is defect-free and running smoothly, and thus ordered importer/manufacturer, Adishwar Auto Ride India in Hyderabad, to refund price of the motorcycle, which is Rs 1.49 lakh.

'Amethi will always be amanat of Gandhis, I'm only a custodian', says Kishori Lal Sharma



GNS News Agency, June 22

Kishori Lal Sharma, 62, who emerged as a giant slayer in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, was accorded a rousing welcome by the Congress workers on his visit to his hometown Ludhiana. Sharma has been with the Gandhi family through thick and thin for over four decades now. This time, he defeated BJP heavy-weight and ex-minister Smriti Irani by over 1.60 lakh votes from Amethi of Uttar Pradesh, the bastion of Gandhis. Stain PM Rajiv Gandhi was four-time MP from Amethi while Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi have represented the seat thrice and once, respectively.

From Ludhiana to Amethi, how has been this journey so far?

It is never easy to leave your home and work elsewhere but this journey with the Gandhi family has been fulfilling. I had left Ludhiana in 1983 when a training programme was started for young party workers by the Youth Congress. Then MLA from Ludhiana Satpal Parashar recommended my name. He even told me "bhaag ke mat aa jaana, badi badnaami hogi (Don't come back without completing the training, it would be humiliating)". We were given the duty to check the ground-level implementation of "20-point programme" which was started by the then PM Indira Gandhi. My first field assignment for the party was in Madhya Pradesh. Later, the workers who performed the best in this assignment were taken to Amethi by the then MP Rajiv Gandhi to work on the ground. My Amethi journey started in November 1983 and since then, I have been in love with its people.

Why did you never contest any election earlier despite being so close to the Gandhis?

Once I was being given a Congress ticket from Ludhiana but I was too young. Then Rajivji told me that I would work with him closely. Soon I realised that being an MP/MLA was not my thing. I felt the biggest blessing for me was this opportunity to serve and support the Gandhi family in whichever way possible. Thereafter, I never expressed any wish to contest any election. Even

after I got married in 1992, I continued working in Amethi as per the party's orders, and my family lived in Ludhiana.

You have closely seen the Gandhi family. What have been your political observations?

I met Indira Gandhi only twice, as she was assassinated soon after I reached Amethi in November 1983. But yes, I have seen Rajiv Gandhi very closely in all roles — MP, prime minister, and leader of the opposition. I had a long association with him from 1983 till his death. One similarity between Rajiv and Rahul is their respect for elders. I also feel that Rahul has been facing more challenges politically, compared to his father. During Rajiv's time, there were not many regional parties. Even if there were, they were not that strong. Congress was comfortably placed, especially in UP. But by the time Rahul took over, several regional parties emerged. Rahul is facing all of them. He is facing a lot more challenges. Even communalism is much more today. Both Rajiv and Rahul have been very hard working but yes, Rahul is facing way more challenges politically. I am just a small soldier of the party and no one to comment much but Priyanka Gandhi's quality is that she mingles with the people in no time.

Your poll fight with BJP's Smriti Irani saw saffron party leaders calling you 'chaprasi' (clerk) of the Gandhi family. Any comments?

My leader Rahul Gandhi has already answered them (BJP) well. People have answered them by making Congress victorious. The BJP actually never knew who I am. I was never an employee of the Congress party. I always had my own business in Ludhiana. They called me chaprasi as per their sanskaar (values). People of Amethi have already answered for me. As for Smriti Irani, she is a very intelligent woman. I have no more comments for her.

Why do you think the people of Amethi voted for you?

I think they missed the Gandhi family for five years (Rahul Gandhi lost to Irani in 2019). The Gandhi family told them that I was like their family so they should vote for me. I was always there with the people of Amethi during these 40 years. I was never a new name for them. The BJP did not know who I was, the people of Amethi knew. Amethi for me has been a political assignment that I was given by my adarsh (model) Rajiv Gandhi. Though I am elated to win from here, Amethi will always remain amanat of the Gandhi family and I will work as their custodian. In your home state Punjab, veteran Congressman and slain Punjab CM Beant Singh's grandson Ravneet Singh Bittu joined the BJP. I have worked very closely with the late Beant Singh ji. He was a great man who sacrificed his life for the people and for the peace of Punjab. Only Bittu knows what his compulsions were behind joining the BJP.

Chandni Chowk gets a new plan to make sure fire hydrants work

GNS News Agency, June 22

Delhi fire, delhi fire hydrant, Chandni Chowk fire hydrants, PWD new plan, Delhi Fire Services, Firefighting infrastructure, delhi Firefighting infrastructure, chandni chowk busy markets, indian express news The fire hydrants were used during last week's blaze. Ever since they were installed in Chandni Chowk during the redevelopment of a 1.3-km stretch, fire hydrants have been plagued by theft and vandalism. Firefighting in the densely populated area has always posed significant challenges for the Delhi Fire Services (DFS). The narrow alleys restrict the movement of larger fire tenders, necessitating the use of smaller fire-fighting vehicles with insufficient water-carrying capacity. The proximity of shops, many storing flammable goods, means that even a small fire can quickly escalate into a major accident, taking days to extinguish.

To address such issues, the Chandni Chowk redevelopment plan included the installation of fire hydrants. On the 1.3-km redeveloped stretch between Fatehpuri Masjid and Jain Mandir, a total of 71 fire hydrants were placed on both sides of the road. However, couplings in the hydrants, which are used to connect pipes and draw water, were being stolen, rendering the installations useless. Weak water pressure and lack of replenishment arrangement for the underground tank also emerged as issues. "While hydrants with a capacity of 6.25 lakh litres have been installed along the 1.3-km stretch, they have remained inoperative. This issue was evident when a fire on May 12 in Kinari Bazaar required 45 fire tenders to be rushed to the scene. After sending multiple letters to the Delhi government and the DFS, the fire hydrants were inspected, the issues were fixed and they were finally used during the recent fire at Marwari Katra's Anil Market," market association president Sanjay Bhargava said. The Delhi government's Public Works Department has now settled on a plan to ensure that fire-fighting measures are not hindered. "To solve this, the PWD team will now fix the couplings during a fire emergency and then remove them once the fire is doused," Bhargava said. The redeveloped stretch is home to many godowns and showrooms that lack fire-safety measures. For instance, a narrow stairway next to the market's HDFC bank branch



houses two floors where a cable TV network operates without any fire extinguishing equipment. Similarly, a nearby godown storing bridal couture also lacks fire safety measures. A bunch of shops function from basements, all of which do not have any fire safety equipment, traders operating the shops said. The idea for the ambitious re-plant of Chandni Chowk first emerged in 2004 but was finally completed in 2021. Even after the launch, the fire hydrants remained unused until the recent Marwari Market fire. Former DFS Chief, S K Dheri said, "Earlier, there was consistent water supply, the population was lesser, but eventually population increased and people started using the fire hydrants for personal use. So, underground tanks were created to replace these fire hydrants... now big buildings, malls, railway and Metro stations have tanks from where the water can be drawn." A K Sharma, former DFS Chief, however, said that arrangements to store water have been made in multi-storey buildings and Metro stations.

Won't work for Yadavs & Muslims, they didn't vote for me, says Bihar JD(U) MP

GNS News Agency, June 22

Claiming that Muslims and Yadavs did not vote for him in the Lok Sabha elections, Devesh Chandra Thakur, newly elected JD (U) MP from Sitamarhi in Bihar, said Monday that he would "not do any work for them". The remarks by Thakur, who just stepped down as chairperson of the Bihar Legislative Council, drew sharp criticism from not just the rival RJD but also from his own party's Banka MP who demanded an apology. Addressing a function in Sitamarhi, Thakur, who defeated RJD's Arjun Rai, a Yadav, in the Sitamarhi parliamentary constituency said Yadavs and Muslims did not vote for him in the elections. "Yadav aur Musalman hamare yahan aate hain to unka swagat hai. Chai piyayi, mithai khaiye. Lekin main aapka koi kaam nahi karunga (Yadavs and Muslims who come to me are welcome. They can have tea and sweets. But I will not do any work for them)," he said. Later, speaking to reporters, Thakur said, "I stand by what I said. I have been saying it for some time. I have been working for people for the last 25 years without any discrimina-

tion."

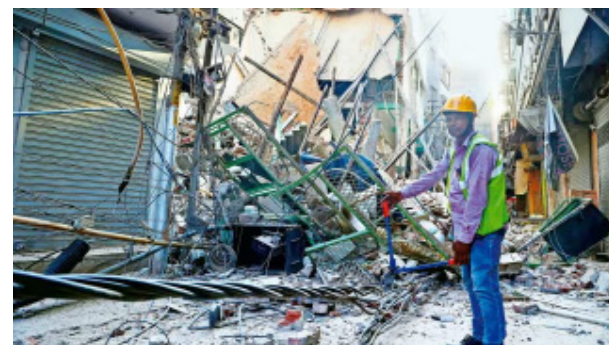
Asked why he singled out Yadavs and Muslims, he said, "I can do any work for the common public but I will do the personal work of these two communities." He did not offer any explanation on how he concluded that Yadavs and Muslims did not vote for him. Responding to Thakur's remarks, RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwari said, "We condemn the remarks of Thakur. His remarks are defamatory, casteist and anti-religion. It shows the feudalistic attitude of Thakur." JD (U) Banka MP Giridhari Yadav said, "I condemn the statement of Thakur and demand an immediate apology from him." BJP OBC Morcha national general secretary Nikhil Anand also came out with a strongly-worded statement, without mentioning Thakur by name. "Giving vent to frustration in a manner that smacks of caste prejudice is shameful and deplorable in politics. The BJP takes all social segments along. In Bihar, no political party can succeed if it tries to marginalise Yadavs, who are 14 per cent of the total population," Anand said.

Portion of mosque collapses in Old Delhi after crack in wall, no injuries

GNS News Agency, June 22

A mosque in the Churiwala area of Old Delhi partially collapsed on Monday, hours after a crack was noticed in the wall. According to officials of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the area had been vacated and barricaded after cracks developed. In videos of the collapse that emerged online, bystanders along with policemen were seen standing and pointing toward the building. In minutes, the building came crashing, emitting a plume of dust even as the people ran for cover. Around 1 pm, police received information that a wall of the mosque had developed a major crack. Police personnel were deployed to cordon the area. DCP (Central) Harsh Vardhan said, "Police staff were rushed to the spot and the mosque and three surrounding buildings were evacuated. MCD, BSES, and Disaster Management Authority were also informed." At 1.55 pm, the building partly collapsed, however, no one was injured due to the timely evacuation action taken by police, said the DCP.

Deputy Mayor Aaley Iqbal visited the site and said in a post on X (formerly Twitter), "Today, an accident occurred in the marble mosque of Chudiwala due to the weak foundation. Thank God there was no loss of life. The dangerous parts of the mosque will be repaired soon and debris will be removed. The mosque committee will renovate the mosque." The mosque collapsed due to its weak foundation. There is no case of road subsidence... No casualty took place at the site. Barricading was done



beforehand..." an MCD official told The Indian Express. AAP's Sita Ram Bazar councillor, Rafia Mahir, said, "We learnt the mosque started caving in at 11 am. We called BSES, MCD, Delhi Police to come and vacate the area; 5-6 multi-storey buildings near the mosque were vacated... we had gotten the area's sewer changed, work on which had been completed in January. No other construction activity has taken place in the lane since then." Meanwhile, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor alleged the incident was a result of the callousness of Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi and said he had written to her and the MCD Commissioner two weeks back, "demanding an immediate survey of dangerous buildings and remedial steps".

Ramvir Bidhuri requests BJP chief to relieve him of Delhi Assembly opposition leader post



GNS News Agency, June 22

BJP South Delhi MP-designate Ramvir Singh Bidhuri Monday announced he had requested party national president, J P Nadda, to relieve him of his current role as Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly to be able to take on his new role in the Lok Sabha. With his resignation from the post scheduled on Tuesday — which will bring down the number of opposition BJP MLAs in the Aam Aadmi Party-majority House to seven in the 70-member Assembly — the process to choose his replacement has begun gathering pace, as per BJP sources.

"The party will abide by the national leadership's choice for the post, which is likely to become clear by

Tuesday morning, and will be based on various factors ranging from the performance of BJP candidates in the recently-concluded Lok Sabha, 2022 MCD and even the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections," a senior Delhi BJP leader said. In a letter to Nadda on the matter, Ramvir Bidhuri, who represents the Badarpur Assembly constituency, stated that as per the rules, he needs to resign from either the Assembly or the Lok Sabha within 14 days and will step down from the post of MLA on June 18. Factors ranging from caste to community representation as well as seniority and which area the existing BJP MLAs in the Assembly have been elected from will also be considered, according to another BJP leader. "The trans-Yamuna or Northeast and East Lok Sabhas, for instance, not only have the most representation in the House with six BJP MLAs from Assembly constituencies falling under these Parliamentary segments, but also at the Centre with the recent elevation of East Delhi BJP MP Harsh Malhotra as Minister of State (MoS) for Road Transport and Highways as well as Corporate Affairs," the leader said. "From the point of view of seniority, Vishwas Nagar MLA O P Sharma, who also comes from the Brahmin community, is among the front-runners along with Karawal Nagar MLA Mohan Singh Bisht; Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta is the only representative who seems to check the right boxes of seniority, caste as well as experience with the post," a leader said.

At Wazirabad pond, alarm bells go off as water levels plummet further; Minister Atishi inspects site

GNS News Agency, June 22

A flock of migratory birds sit on the small islands that are now visible in the Wazirabad pond; a dog walks along it, seemingly emboldened by the shallow water in what is one of Delhi's most significant water reservoirs. On Monday, the water level at the pond fell to 668.30 feet, slightly higher than the record for five years set in June 2022. The dip in the levels at Wazirabad has been at the centre of a political battle as well as a persistent water crisis in Delhi over the past two weeks. A meeting between officers of the Haryana and Delhi governments is expected Tuesday, where the issue of supply from the neighbouring state will be discussed. "There is no water being released into the Wazirabad Barrage. The water level has gone so low that the bed of the pond is visible... Till the time Haryana does not release water into the Yamuna, water shortage will continue in Delhi," Water Minister Atishi, on a visit to assess the situation at the Wazirabad pond, said. The sources of raw water for the Wazirabad water treatment plant (WTP) to produce potable water include the Yamuna River stream and the Carrier Lined Channel or the Munak Canal.

In the first week of June, the water level at the Wazirabad barrage started falling from 671 feet to 669 feet, the second week saw a dip of another one foot and on Monday it came down to 668.30 feet. The optimum water level in the pond for production is 674.5 feet. The WTP has a capacity of 131 million gallons per day (MGD) of water but on Monday, production remained at 86.21 MGD.

The barrage receives water from Haryana which goes to three water treatment plants: Chandrawal, Okhla and Wazirabad. If water supply at the barrage is affected, the following areas mainly in Central Delhi are hit: Civil Lines, Karol Bagh, Rajinder Nagar, Greater Kailash and the Walled City. While speaking of the overall situation of the seven WTPs across Delhi, Atishi said, "Delhi's water treatment plants generally produce 1,005 MGD water but due to shortage of raw water it has fallen to 917 MGD. On one hand, less water is coming through the Munak Canal and on the other there is no water at all at Wazirabad." The Delhi Jal Board is now pumping recycled water from the plant back into the pond. When asked about leakages and the problem of non-revenue water (water that's unaccounted for), Atishi said, "These losses are negligible. The people of Delhi use water judiciously. There is no wastage of water. In case any leakages are observed, people report it immediately and DJB takes action. Patrolling by the police has also helped," she said.

She also hit out at the Haryana government for not installing flow meters at the Hathnikund Barrage as water is released to the Yamuna River for Delhi's supply from there. "It's not possible to measure how much water Haryana is releasing for Delhi. In such a situation, it is wrong for Haryana to claim it is sending a sufficient amount of water... Haryana does not have any real data for this," she said. The Delhi BJP, meanwhile, hit out at Atishi, alleging that the city is reeling under shortage because the pond has not been desilted in several years. "For over a decade, the Wazirabad WTP's pond and bar-



rage have not been cleaned. Today, 90% of it is filled with silt; the barrage cannot hold water," the party said in a statement.

TTD EO Syamala Rao promises to ensure quality and plug gaps

GNS News Agency, June 22

Hyderabad: Executive Officer (EO), Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), J Syamala Rao on Monday reviewed all the major departments including temple, reception, Annarasadam and engineering departments in the review meeting at Gokulam Rest House in Tirumala along with JEOs Goutami, Veerabrahmam, CVSO Narasimha Kishore and other senior TTD officers

The EO also inspected cottages in Mullakunta area, Laddu counters and interacted with the pilgrims to know about the facilities. He also checked the taste and quality of Annarasadam being served to the pilgrims at Matusri Tarigonda Vengamamba Annarasadam Complex (MTVAC) and interacted with pilgrims for their feedback. Speaking on the occasion, the EO said "Tirumala has got emotional bonding in the society and it is our primary duty to ensure quality food, sanitation and other facilities are available for pilgrims. During my observations in my maiden inspection yesterday, from the feedback I received from the pilgrims, we need to fill the gaps to reach their expectations", he maintained.

Later he instructed the JEO to prepare Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) besides establishing a Feedback Mechanism along with a Check List and Time Line for every department. The EO reviewed in length the various formats of Darshan, online quota release, seva tickets with respect to temple, modes of accommodation in Reception wing and also the Engineering works with the officials concerned. Senior Officers of TTD including CEO SVBC Shanmukh Kumar, FCAO Balaji, DLO Veeraju, CE Nageswara Rao and other Heads were present.

Four Indian intelligence officers asked to leave Australia in 2020: Report



GNS News Agency, June 22

A recent report by Australian national broadcaster ABC said four Indian intelligence officers allegedly attempted to get their hands on "sensitive defence technology and airport security protocols". The ABC report also said that "the net of spies" targeted Australian politicians and monitored the Australian-Indian community. At least four 'Indian intelligence officers' were asked to leave Australia in 2020, after they allegedly attempted to access "sensitive defence technology and airport security protocols", according to a recent investigation by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The four officers quietly left Australia and the issue didn't snowball bilaterally, according to the Australian national broadcaster.

The expulsion of the officers has placed India on par with nations like "Russia and China, which are notorious for violating protocols overseas", the ABC

commented. "They were targeting former and current politicians as well as the state police service. Crucially, they were also accused of monitoring the Australian Indian community," the ABC report noted. The report comes years after Mike Burgess, the chief of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in 2021, disclosed that the organisation had successfully disrupted a "nest of spies" in Australia. "Last year, for example, one of ASIO's investigations focused on a nest of spies, from a particular foreign intelligence service, that was operating in Australia. We confronted the foreign spies, and quietly and professionally removed them from Australia," said ASIO chief Mike Burgess in 2021. "We confronted the foreign spies, and quietly and professionally removed them," Burgess had said.

Earlier in April 2024, The Washington Post reported that two officers from the Research and Analysis Wing, India's foreign intelligence service, were expelled from Australia in 2020. Following that, the ABC reported that "a number" of Indian officials were being removed from Australia by the Scott Morrison government. Morrison was succeeded by Anthony Albanese as the Australian Prime Minister in May 2022. These reports also pointed to the alleged activities of Indian intelligence agencies in monitoring and intimidating members of the Indian diaspora. The Australian foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, then refused to confirm the 2020 incident, but he stressed "the importance of ensuring the resilience of our [Australian] democracy, including in the face of any suggestion of foreign interference".

'Secret Democrat plot' to swap out Joe Biden before 2024 election: Report

GNS News Agency, June 22

Speculation is mounting within the Democratic Party about the possibility of swapping out President Joe Biden as the party's candidate ahead of the November 5 presidential election. While some party insiders believe this move could work if orchestrated meticulously, others recognise its complexities and risks. According to a Democratic strategist quoted by DailyMail.com, only a quartet of influential figures - former President Barack Obama, former President Bill Clinton, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, possess the clout to force the 81-year-old president out. However, Biden, noted for his tenacity and the most recognised leader of the Democratic Party, could dig in his heels and continue running in the run-up to the election, which could potentially exacerbate party discontent. What is also complicating matters further is Biden's "complicated" relationship with Obama. Biden is believed to harbour lingering resentment towards Obama, who endorsed Hillary Clinton over him in the 2016 primaries and reportedly discouraged his 2020 run, according to the DailyMail.com report. In late May, Obama briefly appeared at a White House state dinner for the Kenyan president and his wife Michelle was not present. According to a Democratic source, Michelle Obama, who harbours no close personal feelings for the Bidens, flatly refused to accept the invitation, the report claimed.

The Obamas have intentionally maintained a distance from the White House since Biden, the oldest US president, was elected in 2020, knowing that their public appearances would trigger a sense of nostalgia among the people when they once liked their nominees. However, Obama was present at a recent Democratic fundraiser at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, along with Biden. The 81-year-old president, who has faced criticism over his advancing age and his decision to run for a second term, appeared to freeze up on stage.

At the event, Biden seemed to lock eyes with the crowd, standing still like a statue for about 10 seconds until Obama, still smiling and waving, swooped in, taking his hand and gracefully guiding him offstage. The incident came days after he appeared to wander away from other world leaders during the G7 Summit in Italy last week. Meanwhile, in a strategic move, the Democratic Party has opted for an online nomination with a virtual roll call to formally select Biden as their nominee ahead of the DNC convention in Chicago in mid-August, the DailyMail.com reported. This virtual framework could also facilitate a more controlled process should the party decide to pivot and nominate a replacement candidate. If a swap was to be executed, the new nominee would likely



be introduced and endorsed by high-ranking Democrats in a public event. Notably, Vice President Kamala Harris is reportedly not the preferred replacement, according to sources, adding another layer of complexity to the situation. A successful transfer of power would require Harris's endorsement, a difficult ask, given her political ambitions. And Harris, according to the US Constitution, will become president only if Biden dies, a consultant said.

Ultimately, any move to replace Biden carries immense risk. The new candidate would face significant pressure, with their political career hanging in the balance should they lose to Republican candidate and former Donald Trump. The situation remains fluid, and party insiders are anxiously weighing their options as the 2024 election looms ever closer. Responding to the news report, a spokesperson for Pelosi reiterated her support for Biden on Monday. "Speaker Pelosi has full confidence in President Biden," the spokesperson told DailyMail.com. Polling guru Nate Silver said dropping out Biden would be a "big risk". "But there's some threshold below which continuing to run is a bigger risk. Are we there yet? I don't know. But it's more than fair to ask," he said.

However, Silver acknowledged that voters were concerned about Biden's age and the president's average approval rating reached a new low of 37.4 per cent. "This is an extremely understandable concern, (as) Biden looks/acts his age and is a huge outlier to ask for the job until 86 (years old)," Silver added. On the other hand, former advisor to Bill Clinton and polling expert Mark Penn said Biden's first of two debates with Trump on June 27 will be the latter's final chance to woo voters that he is fit for office. "They have deliberately thrown down the gauntlet for an early debate and I think that's going to be the point at which Americans judge: is he ready for another term or not," Penn said.

US midwife pleads guilty to destroying 2,600 Covid vaccines, issuing fake cards

GNS News Agency, June 22

Kathleen Breault, 66, of Cambridge, admitted in a New York court that she destroyed over 2,600 Covid-19 vaccines and issued fake vaccination record cards while working from 2021 to 2022. Serious AESI, including stroke and Guillain-Barre syndrome, were reported in 1% of participants. Kathleen Breault, 66, agreed to repay more than \$37,000 (approx Rs 30.90 lakh) in restitution for the destroyed Covid-19 vaccines. (Representative image) An upstate New York midwife pleaded guilty on Monday to federal fraud charges for her role in giving out thousands of Covid-19 immunisation cards to people who never received the vaccine, prosecutors said.

Kathleen Breault, 66, of Cambridge, admitted in Brooklyn federal court that she destroyed more than 2,600 coronavirus vaccines and issued a corresponding number of fraudulent vaccination record cards while working at Sage-Femme Midwifery from 2021 to 2022. The Albany facility was an authorised site for Covid-19 vaccine administration at a time when many government agencies and private companies were requiring their workers to be immunised against the virus. US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York Breon Peace's office said Breault and her co-conspirators also made over 2,600 false entries into a state database that tracked Covid-19 vaccine distribution.

Among those who were issued the fraudulent immunisation records were minors ineligible at the time to be vaccinated, as well as Canadian citizens who were not present in the country when they were purportedly vaccinated, according to prosecutors. Breault agreed to repay more than \$37,000 (approx Rs 30.90 lakh) in restitution for the destroyed vaccines and faces a maximum



Kathleen Breault, 66, of Cambridge, admitted in a New York court that she destroyed over 2,600 Covid-19 vaccines and issued fake vaccination record cards while working from 2021 to 2022.

of five years in prison at her sentencing, Peace's office said. Breault's lawyer said Monday that his client acted out of a "sense of profound concern" about the impact of the vaccination requirements. "She believes that her actions were justified by moral necessity though she knows that she violated the law by defrauding the government," Michael Sussman said in an emailed statement.

US student stole \$51,000 in luxury items from roommate whose father has Putin ties



GNS News Agency, June 22

A New York University student, 18, allegedly stole \$51,000 worth of luxury items, including a \$23,000 ruby ring, clothes, handbags and other jewellery items from her roommate and then attempted to sell them online. The New York Post reported, citing court documents. Aurora Agapov has filed a lawsuit against her roommate Kaitlyn Fung for concocting a "scheme" to steal the former's jewellery and high-end designer clothing and handbags and sell the same through consignment retailer called 'The RealReal'. Among the items that Kaitlyn Fung stole include those from luxury fashion brands such as Chanel, Gucci and Bvlgari. Originally from London, Aurora Agapov is the daughter of Andre Agapov, the CEO and President of Rusoro Mining, which runs and acquires gold mining and mineral properties. He allegedly has ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, The New York Post reported.

An Arts major, Aurora Agapov - whose father reportedly has a net worth of nearly \$75 million - and Kaitlyn Fung had been "quite good friends" before the alleged incident came to light. Aurora sensed something was fishy last month when she realised some of her belongings were missing as she completed her freshman year. The New York Post reported, citing a Manhattan Supreme Court lawsuit. The Russian mining-magnate's daughter became suspicious after finding a receipt in her roommate's pocketbook from 'The RealReal' that listed Aurora Agapov's missing items, according to court papers. "My heart dropped," Aurora Agapov, 19, was quoted as saying by The New York Post, reminiscing how her and Kaitlyn Fung - a first-year Political Science



major - relationship "got better towards the second semester".

Upon realising her roommate might be ripping her off, Aurora Agapov asked Kaitlyn Fung to spend the night somewhere else and moved her own belongings out of their dorm at New York University. Agapov couldn't sleep that night, telling The New York Post that the items her roommate stole meant a lot to her as they were gifts from her mother. The lawsuit alleges that Kaitlyn Fung had sold a \$13,000 Bvlgari necklace for \$2,485, and a Chanel Strauss bracelet worth \$2,000 for \$175. Other items listed for sale but not yet purchased included a Solange Azagury ruby ring valued at \$23,765, a Celine Nanno tote bag worth \$3,300, and a Chanel purse worth \$4,000, according to the lawsuit. The New York post report added. The Londoner alleged that her 18-year-old roommate also stole her Celine and Gucci handbags, but the lawsuit mentions these items were returned to her. Kaitlyn Fung was arrested on May 2 this year on third-degree grand larceny but was later released, with a criminal case against her pending. Aurora Agapov, through the lawsuit, is seeking \$51,000 in damages and the return of her unsold possessions. When Aurora Agapov went to the brick and mortar outpost of The Real Real to get her belongings back, a worker told her that Kaitlyn Fung's mother had come to them days before to collect the items, the Londoner said in court papers. In a statement to the New York Post, the Real Real said they need consignors to confirm if they have the right to sell the items and that they are not stolen. The luxury resale platform added that they "act fast" by removing items from the site and starting a probe if any information of theft is received.

US reporter's espionage trial in Russia to be held behind closed doors

GNS News Agency, June 22

Russia's espionage trial of detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who denies charges of collecting secrets for the US CIA, will be held behind closed doors. The first American journalist to be detained on spy charges in Russia since the Cold War more than three decades ago, Gershkovich has denied the charges. Russia's espionage trial of detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who denies charges of collecting secrets for the US CIA, will be held behind closed doors, the trial court said on Monday. Gershkovich, 32, was detained by the Federal Security Service on March 29, 2023, in a steak house in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, 1,400 km (900 miles) east of Moscow, on charges of espionage that carried up to 20 years in prison.

The first American journalist to be detained on spy charges in Russia since the Cold War more than three decades ago, Gershkovich has denied the charges. The Journal says Gershkovich was doing his job and denies he is a spy. The FSB, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB, said Gershkovich was trying to collect secrets about Uralvagonzavod, a Russian defence enterprise that is one of the world's biggest battle tank producers, for the CIA. "The process will take place behind closed doors," the Sverdlovsk Regional Court in Yekaterinburg said. "According to the investigation authorities, the American journalist of The Wall Street Journal, Gershkovich, on the instructions of the CIA, in March 2023, collected secret information in the Sverdlovsk region about the activities of the defence enterprise JSC NPK Uralvagonzavod for the production and repair of military equipment." The first hearing is scheduled for June 26, the court said. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters the U.S. was concerned that the trial was to be held behind closed doors. "We have a concern about that. We are going to attempt to attend the trial - don't know if that will be possible," he said. The White House has called the charges "ridiculous" and President Joe Biden has said Gershkovich's detention is "totally illegal". Russia said Gershkovich was caught "red-handed". President Vladimir Putin has said there has been contact with Washington about potentially swapping Gershkovich but that such negotiations should be held away from the media.

The Journal said Gershkovich was on a reporting assignment when detained and that his fate illustrates the threats journalists face trying to report on the front lines of major global stories. It has demanded his release. "This latest development means a sham trial is imminent. We expect that all parties will work to bring Evan home now. Time is of the essence," the Journal said. "The Russian regime's smearing of Evan is repugnant and based on calculated and transparent lies. Journalism is not a crime, and Evan's case is an assault on the free press." Gershkovich's arrest illustrated how far relations between Russia and the West have deteriorated over the Ukraine war since hopes of friendship were raised after the Cold War ended with the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. There are now almost no U.S. reporters in Russia. U.S. diplomats say that Gershkovich was not a spy and was detained by Russia's FSB to build up a store of arrested U.S. citizens who could later be swapped for Russians detained in the West. Among the detained Americans is Paul Whelan, an ex-Marine arrested in Moscow in 2018 and sentenced to 16 years in prison on spying charges in 2020. Putin suggested in February that Gershkovich could be swapped for Vadim Krasikov, con-



victed of the 2019 murder of a Chechen dissident in Berlin, although he did not mention Krasikov by name. Putin said in March he had agreed the idea of potentially swapping Alexei Navalny a few days before the opposition leader died in unexplained circumstances at a Russian prison on Feb. 16. A fluent Russian-speaker born to Soviet émigrés and raised in New Jersey, Gershkovich moved to Moscow in late 2017 to join the English-language Moscow Times, and subsequently worked for the French news agency Agence France-Presse. It was unclear whether Gershkovich, on his reporting trip to the Urals, was planning to report on Uralvagonzavod, based in Nizhny Tagil. The enterprise sits at the heart of the Urals region, where Russia conducts some of its most secret weapons production and research. It is part of Rostec, Russia's vast defence corporation run by Putin ally Sergei Chemezov.

Nine dead as heavy rains trigger floods, landslides in Southern China

Beijing: Southern China was reeling on Tuesday from heavy rains that triggered landslides killing at least nine people, knocking out power for entire villages and burying crops. Meanwhile, northern parts of the country are battling drought, as the country faces two extremes of severe weather. Four people were killed and two others were missing in Wuping county in the coastal province of Fujian due to landslides caused by torrential rain. Severe downpours started on Sunday afternoon, with authorities measuring 372.4 millimetres (14.7 inches) of rainfall over a 24-hour period. At least 378 houses collapsed in the county, and 880 hectares (2,175 acres) of crops were damaged, amounting to economic losses of at least 415 million yuan (\$57.2 million) in Wuping, authorities said, according to the official Xinhua news agency. In the southern Guangdong province, bordering Hong Kong, landslides triggered by severe flooding killed at least five people in the city of Meizhou. Fifteen others were missing, according to local media reports. More than 1,30,000 households in Meizhou experienced power outages, with some neighbouring towns and villages out of contact as of Monday. Three helicopters and more than 200 teams of rescuers were searching for survivors and delivering aid to the affected areas, according to local authorities. More than 11,000 people were moved after the Hanjiang River in south China's Pearl River basin flooded, drowning crop fields and inundating homes.

Will Japan call an end to deflation? How this could help the country



Japan is considering calling an end to deflation in the wake of rising prices, Kyodo news reported, a move that turn a new page for the world's fourth-largest economy after decades of economic stagnation scarred a generation of workers and investors. The weekend report, citing sources with knowledge of the matter, highlights growing market bets that the Bank of Japan will soon exit its ultra-easy policy settings.

However, it wasn't clear from the Kyodo report if the government would officially declare an end to deflation. In the last few years the government has maintained that Japan was no longer in deflation, but it has stopped short of declaring a complete victory over falling prices.

A formal declaration would draw a line under nearly two decades of falling prices and economic stagnation that followed the collapse of its "bubble era" boom that stretched from 1986 to 1991. Last week, the Tokyo Nikkei benchmark soared past the record high set during heady

days of the bubble economy over three decades ago. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told a news conference that Japan has not reached the stage yet where it can call a complete end of deflation, shrugging off the Kyodo report. With inflation having exceeded the BOJ's 2% target for well over a year, many market players expect the central bank to exit negative interest rates in coming months in what would be a landmark move away from years of ultra-loose monetary policy.

"It may suggest that the government and the BOJ may be coordinating with each other to let the markets factor in the prospects for declaring an end to deflation in future and terminating negative interest rates," said Atsushi Takeda, chief economist at Itochu Economic Research Institute, referring to the planned government announcement. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida or cabinet ministers may make the announcement at a government panel meeting, news conference or in a monthly economic report rather than at a formal venue like the cabinet meeting, Kyodo reported.

The government will make a decision after determining whether annual labour-management wage talks due March 13 will turn out strong enough to offset price hikes and also consider the outlook on price trends, Kyodo reported.

The government acknowledged that Japan's economy was in gradual deflation for the first time in 2001, with the nation struggling for much of the period since then to break a vicious cycle of lower corporate profits, tepid wages and weak private consumption. The government would scrutinise a broad range of indicators, such as consumer prices, unit labour costs, output gap and GDP deflator, Kyodo said, citing the sources.

AI advisory not applicable to startups? Minister clarifies after 'bad move' row

Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeesh Chandrasekhar said that the government advisory which directed AI platforms to seek permission before launching an AI product does not apply to startups. On social media platform X (formerly Twitter), the minister said, "Recent advisory of @GoI_MeitiY needs to be understood. Advisory is aimed at the Significant platforms and permission seeking from Meiti is only for large platforms and will not apply to startups."

"Process of seeking permission, labelling & consent based disclosure to user about untested platforms is insurance policy to platforms who can otherwise be sued by consumers. Safety & Trust of India's Internet is a shared and common goal for Govt, users and Platforms (sic)," he continued.

This comes after government issued an advisory following Google's Gemini controversy to platforms that push AI-generated content stating that it should be labelled or embedded with an identifier to determine the creator of any misinformation. Platforms will also need to submit an action taken-cum-status report to the ministry within 15 days, it added.

Responding to the advisory, Perplexity AI's CEO Aravind Srinivas said that it is a "bad move" while Aba-



cus AI's CEO Bindu Reddy said, "If you know the Indian government, you know this will be a huge drag! All forms will need to be completed in triplicate and there will be a dozen hoops to jump through! This is how monopolies thrive, countries decay and consumers suffer!" Kissan AI's Pratik Desai reflected, "I was such a fool thinking I will work bringing GenAI to Indian Agriculture from SF. We were training multimodal low cost pest and disease model, and so excited about it. This is terrible and demotivating after working 4yrs full time bringing AI to this domain in India."

Alarm bells as heatwave pushes up peak demand, Power Ministry asks utilities to be on high alert



Over the last one month, the northern region has been witnessing a record demand due to the prevailing heat conditions.

Alarm bells as heatwave pushes up peak demand, Power Ministry asks utilities to be on high alert. The current crisis situation also brings back into focus some of the lingering structural issues. Amidst a sweltering heatwave and an expected surge in agricultural load by end-June, a key body of power engineers employed across state and central utilities, on Monday flagged the possibility of a grid outage in Punjab that could have a cascading impact on the country's grid, and also warned that an imminent surge in demand "may lead to an unmanageable power situation". Over the last one month, the northern region has been witnessing a record demand due to the prevailing heat conditions. On Monday, it touched the highest-ever peak demand of 89 giga watt (1 GW is 1,000 mega watts), which was successfully met. But such high demand has led to power supply cuts in Lucknow and Meerut, and also impacted passenger services in Delhi international airport Monday afternoon after a "significant voltage spike in the grid, reportedly due to the tripping of a 765KV line".

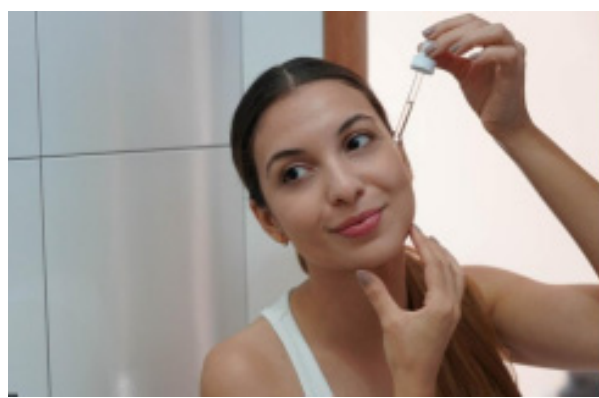
While a surge in domestic consumption load in the country's northern parts are behind the shortages, the Ministry of Power spokesperson told The Indian Express, "All utilities have been advised to maintain a state of high alert and minimise forced outage of equipment." To meet demand, the Northern Region is also importing 25-30 per cent of its power requirement from the neighbouring regions, the spokesperson said.

The current crisis situation also brings back into focus some of the lingering structural issues. A growing demand-supply mismatch in India's power market, triggered by a slowdown in the pace of new capacity addition of coal-fired power plants coupled with the lack of effective storage options for renewable power has kept the country's grid managers on their toes over the last

three summers. With soaring temperatures leading to a surge in power demand, the failure to augment base load capacity is progressively exposing the structural issues posed by the variability of renewable energy. With renewables, electricity is generated only when the sun shines or when the wind blows, which is not always in sync with the demand cycle. As renewables grow to become a big chunk of the installed generation capacity, till the time that viable storage options are developed, the grid has no option but to fall back on thermal or nuclear for base load capacity. Consequently, stepping up thermal, especially coal, and nuclear generation, is the only way forward till the issue of intermittency in RE (renewable energy) generation is solved.

Since March 2020, the country has added about 11,990 MW of thermal power, while renewables capacity addition has been well over 56,000 MW. Peak shortages, which happen during certain hours of the day when loads increase, surged from 1.39 GW in 2018-19 to 8.65 GW in 2022-23, the year after demand crashed during the previous two years due to Covid-19. In 2023-24, it dropped to 3.34 GW due to a cooler than expected summer caused by unseasonal rainfall. While till April end, there has not been any peak demand shortage, data for May-June is not available. This year, with peak demand remaining at around 250 GW amid sustained heat waves pushing up air conditioning load, the country's grid managers are struggling to keep the grid balanced. Tripping of grid infrastructure at different locations across the country most likely due to increased drawal has further aggravated the situation. In its letter to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the AIPEF chairman Shailendra Dubey, said, "While the situation of power availability and supply is becoming serious day by day, neither the government of India nor any state government has initiated steps to control the power demand. If the situation continues, there are fair chances of grid disturbance." Grid disturbances occur when one or more power system elements trip due to mismatch in demand and supply. Usually, grid disturbances lead to localised power outages but can also have a cascading effect on the entire grid. The power ministry has taken several measures to ensure grid stability, including instructing imported coal-based thermal plants to operate at full capacity until October 15 and maintaining adequate coal stock. It also instructed idling gas-based thermal plants to remain operational until June-end and allowed the sale of surplus power produced from "linkage coal" in the market, and said states can tie up power with other states having surplus capacity via PUSHP (Portal for Utilisation of Surplus Power). According to a retired official in the power ministry, it may not be possible for renewable power to plug the gap for declining thermal generation till the time viable storage options are developed. "The concept of renewables achieving grid-parity is proving to be a farce. If the cost of standby thermal power is taken into account, renewable power is now almost twice its cost on paper," said the retired official, who was closely associated with the capacity addition plan.

Experience irritation, dryness after retinol use? 5 mistakes to avoid when incorporating it in your routine



renewed skin. "Sunscreen creates a protective barrier to filter out the sun's harmful UV rays that can undo retinol's rejuvenating overnight work," he added. He advises consistent use of at least SPF 30 to allow the retinol to work optimally over time to reduce fine lines and wrinkles.

When it comes to retinol, less is often more. "Start with a pea-sized amount for the entire face to prevent irritation and build tolerance gradually," Dr Mahajan cautions. Additionally, he points out that when first starting out with retinol, it is best to use a low concentration around 0.25 to 0.5 percent and apply it only 2-3 nights per week. "As the skin adjusts over a few weeks, gradually increase frequency to every other night, then eventually every night if tolerated." According to Dr Mahajan, the maximum recommended nightly use concentration is up to 1 percent. "Exceeding this does not provide additional benefits; however, it does increase the risk of redness, peeling, dryness, and sensitivity."

Retinol should not be used on damp skin, said Dr Mahajan, as it can amplify its intensity, leaving the skin sensitive and vulnerable. "When applied to damp skin, excess moisture causes enhanced penetration, leading the retinol to be absorbed deeper and faster. This disrupts the skin barrier and leads to negative side effects," he added. For optimal use, Dr Mahajan suggests cleansing the face and waiting until it is completely dry before applying a pea-sized amount of retinol. "Using it on dry skin allows controlled penetration, preventing over-exposure while still reaping retinol's smoothing, anti-aging skin benefits."

To mitigate potential dryness and irritation associated with retinol use, Dr Mahajan recommends sandwiching retinol between layers of moisturiser, as it can provide a protective barrier and help maintain skin hydration. When used alone, retinol can cause flaking, peeling, redness, and sensitivity. "Incorporating retinol into your routine requires patience and diligence. Take it slowly and listen to your skin," Dr Mahajan concluded.

Retinol, the powerhouse ingredient celebrated for its skin-renewing properties, has become a staple in skincare routines worldwide. However, despite its numerous benefits, using retinol requires a delicate balance and a keen understanding of its application. Dr Supriya (@dermashrine), a dermatologist and cosmetologist, shared five mistakes to avoid when incorporating retinol into your skincare regimen. Retinol is photosensitive, meaning it breaks down when exposed to sunlight. Therefore, Dr DM Mahajan, senior consultant dermatologist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, recommends applying retinol exclusively at night. "Using it during the day leaves (the skin) at risk of damage and irritation from UV rays and wear from environmental pollutants. Retinol applied before bedtime allows it to work its magic of stimulating collagen production and cell turnover during the night, which is the ideal time for skin restoration and repair," he told indianexpress.com.

Following retinol application, diligent sunscreen use the next day is crucial. Dr Mahajan explained that retinol, by increasing cell turnover and collagen production, makes the skin more vulnerable and thin. Thus, applying sunscreen the next day after using retinol protects the

Study says women need half the exercise men need to live longer. Is it true?

A new study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology offers encouraging news for women who struggle with gym motivation. The research suggests that women need only half the amount of exercise compared to men to achieve similar longevity benefits. Dr Martha Gulati, co-author of the study and director of preventive cardiology at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, highlighted this positive message for women: "A little goes a long way." The study found that men who engaged in roughly 300 minutes of aerobic exercise per week experienced an 18 per cent lower risk of death compared to inactive men. However, for women, only 140 minutes of weekly exercise yielded an equivalent benefit, with a 24 per cent lower mortality risk for those reaching 300 minutes. Interestingly, the study suggests the benefits plateaued for both genders beyond 300 minutes of weekly exercise.

Similar findings emerged when analysing muscle-strengthening activities like weight training. Women who participated in a single weekly session appeared to reap the same longevity rewards as men who completed three workouts a week. Dr Gulati attributed this difference to baseline muscle mass. Since women typically have less muscle mass than men, "they may experience greater benefits with smaller doses" of strength training, Dr Gulati told Time Magazine. Additionally, other sex-based physiological variations, such as those in the lungs and cardiovascular system, might also play a role. The researchers arrived at these conclusions by analysing self-reported exercise data from over 400,000 American adults who participated in the National Health Interview Survey between 1997 and 2017. This data was then compared with death records, with around 40,000 participants passing away during the study period. However, Dr Ratnakar Rao, HOD - sr. consultant joint replacements and arthroscopic surgeon, CARE Hospitals,HITEC City, Hyderabad, warned that such an assertion should be approached with caution. "Longevity is a multifaceted outcome influenced by diverse factors such as genetics,



Dr Martha Gulati, co-author of the study and director of preventive cardiology at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, highlighted this positive message for women: "A little goes a long way."

lifestyle choices, and overall health. Reducing it to a simplistic gender-based equation overlooks the intricacies of individual health profiles," he told indianexpress.com in an interaction. Dr Gulati acknowledged the study's limitations and the need for further research to solidify these findings. However, she emphasised the significance of this study, alongside others with similar conclusions. These studies highlight the crucial point that "women are not simply smaller men," she told Time Magazine. Dr Gulati argued that research and public health policy need to consider these sex-based differences. She emphasises the historical tendency to use men as the standard, even when it might not be the most accurate approach. Establishing a guideline for optimal exercise to enhance lifespan is a nuanced task. While the general recommendation for adults is around 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, according to Dr Rao, tailored approaches are vital.

47% of urban Indians faced financial frauds in last 3 years: Survey

financial fraud, urban Indians faced financial frauds, urban financial frauds, financial frauds, Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news stories LocalCircles said the credit card data of Indian consumers is easily available for sale by thousands of data vendors across India. As many as 47 per cent of urban Indians said either themselves or someone in their family have been a victim of financial frauds in the last three years, said a survey. Among the urban Indians who have experienced financial fraud in the last 3 years, 43 per cent experienced fraud with their credit card while 30 per cent experienced fraud via UPI transactions, the survey conducted by LocalCircles said. "Nearly 1 in 2 credit card fraud victims experienced unauthorised charges by domestic and international merchants and websites," it said. In the case of UPI frauds, 4 in 10 of those who experienced it said that the link/ QR code sent to them to accept a payment instead led to money being debited from their account, the survey said. The study shows that the RBI, UPI and banks issuing credit cards need to put in place more safeguards to help prevent such financial frauds, it said. The survey received over 23,000 responses from household consumers located in 302 districts of India. 62 per cent respondents were men while 38 per cent respondents were women, it said. "Consumer awareness needs to be created on priority for both UPI and credit card users. In addition, safeguards must be built so no Indian credit cards can be charged without an OTP authentication," it said. For UPI, increased consumer awareness is critical. In addition to these steps, there is also a strong need to sensitise local police stations so staff their can guide citizens to file an online complaint within minutes as opposed to the current scenario where majority of the staff even in urban India is not capable of guiding a victim of online financial fraud, the survey said. On different types of financial fraud transactions that

family members surveyed have experienced in the last 3 years, some among the 7,409 who responded to the question indicated more than one option with 43 per cent indicating "fraudulent transaction on credit card". Also 36 per cent indicated "fraudulent UPI transactions", 13 per cent admitted "fraudulent transactions on debit cards", 19 per cent said "fraudulent transactions on bank accounts", 6 per cent indicated "fraudulent transactions on ATM cards", 30 per cent mentioned "other types of fraud financial transactions" and 9 per cent of respondents did not give a clear reply. LocalCircles survey said. LocalCircles said the credit card data of Indian consumers is easily available for sale by thousands of data vendors across India. With personally identifiable information like PAN card, Aadhaar, mobile number, email and address easily available in databases for sale and credit cards details available with mobile number, email or address being common, anyone with knowledge of spreadsheets can join these databases to profile individuals. "Such datasets being available in public domain make credit card holders extremely vulnerable to frauds as many international websites/apps do not require OTP authentication before charging an Indian credit card once the user has their credit card set to permit international transactions," it said. Of urban Indian household consumers who experienced credit card fraud in the last 3 years, nearly one in two experienced unauthorised charges by domestic and/or international merchants/ websites, it said. On credit card frauds, it said 53 per cent mentioned "unauthorized charges levied by unknown international merchants/ websites", 53 per cent saying "unauthorized charges levied by domestic merchants/ websites with whom we transact", 41 per cent indicating "unauthorized charges levied by unknown domestic merchants/ websites" and 34 per cent mentioning "fraudulent transactions other than the ones listed above", the survey said.

Sharmin Segal says 'nothingness' comment on Meena Kumari 'taken out of context', answers if she behaved 'arrogantly' with Aditi Rao Hydari



It has been nearly two months since her OTT debut Heeramandi dropped on Netflix, but the conversations around Sharmin Segal refuses to stop. The actor has been at the receiving end of relentless trolling on social media over her performance on the Sanjay Leela Bhansali directed series, which many dubbed flat and one-note.

Sharmin's performance was soon turned into a meme and an Instagram trend, where people started mocking her dialogue delivery and mimicking her act on the period drama. Defending her performance on the show, Sharmin had previously claimed that she was inspired by Meena Kumari's act in Pakeezah(1972) and was trying to evoke a similar emotion in her performance as the tragic Alamzeb.

The comment, however, backfired as it invited more hate for Sharmin, as trolls went after her for comparing herself to a legend like Meena Kumari. In an interview with Zoom, the actor was asked about her "nothingness" comment on Meena Kumari, to which she answered that

her statement was selectively picked and turned into something "negative", which she never even meant. "I don't know why people are leaving out the sentence that I said which was, 'I tried to emulate the way Meena Kumari ji looks into nothingness' and just extracting the word 'nothingness' from what I said. In no way was I calling Meena Kumariji or her performance in Pakeezah 'nothingness'. That is not something I would ever do." I was referring to the way she stares into infinity and looks at something celestial that only she can see, whereas in reality there is nothing there. It is just sad how people have literally only picked up one negative word, which wasn't meant to be negative and taken it out of context. I would also like to make one more thing clear on this issue. I would never compare myself to Meena Kumariji. She is a legend. I was just inspired by her greatness. As an artist, we are always inspired by our surroundings and the people we look up to. It was never a comparison," she added. The actor also spoke about several videos on the internet which surfaced from the promotional events of Heeramandi, where many dubbed Sharmin's attitude towards her costars, especially Aditya Rao Hydari and Sanjeeda Sheikh as 'arrogant', where she was seen as a privileged insider schooling the two "outsiders".

When asked if she feels that outsiders versus insider narrative was drummed up, Sharmin said she wouldn't know anything about that, but felt her interview clips were "being taken out of context." "Some of my co-stars have spoken graciously as to how these interviews were taken out of context. I share a very cordial equation with both Aditi and Sanjeeda. I wish that people would not use 10 second out of context clips to define the relationship I share with them," she added.

Sendhil Ramamurthy on playing 'sexy photographer' in Do Aur Do Pyaar, infidelity in Vidya Balan-Pratik Gandhi starrer: 'It didn't paint any one person as a villain'

Sendhil Ramamurthy made his Bollywood comeback after over two decades. The Never Have I Ever actor received a lot of appreciation for his performance in Vidya Balan and Pratik Gandhi's Do Aur Do Pyaar which is now streaming on Disney+ Hotstar. Sendhil plays Vidya's love interest in the recently released rom-com. In this interview with indianexpress.com, the Indo-American actor, who has been a part of Shor In The City (2011) and Mindy Kaling's Never Have I Ever (2020) in the past, talks about making his Bollywood comeback and his secret of looking so youthful at 50. "This morning when I woke up I felt 79!" the actor jokes, adding, "Every part of my body was aching, I was playing a two-and-a-half-hour tennis match yesterday." Opening up on how he manages to look so fit at his age, Sendhil credits "good genetics". He adds, "I try to take care of myself but the majority of it is good genetics. I can't really take any credit for it."

Sendhil plays Vidya's boyfriend in Do Aur Do Pyaar, and he's a total scene stealer in the role of a globe-trotting photographer. On bagging the film, the actor says, "It was such an amazing experience. When I got the script from (producer) Tanuj Garg, who also produced Shor In The City. He said that they were about to begin the film and that the character he was offering me was not written as an NRI but they'd change it if I responded to it. I read Vikram and Kavya's scenes and realised that in a lot of places, he has to say a lot without dialogue. A lot of it is done with the look or a gesture and I thought this would be such a great challenge for me."

The non-judgmental approach towards marriage and infidelity also made the actor signed on the dotted line. "I loved the script, I loved that it was non-judgmental and took a mature look at marriages and extramarital affairs and it didn't paint any one person as a villain. I felt like any one of these characters could be off with their



own separate movie. Everybody was fleshed out in a way that their journey was realised and that's a very rare thing. I don't see things like that out in the market right now. I felt like this movie is going to have a clear run at this."

But what kept him away from working in India for so long after he did Shor In The City in 2011? He says he couldn't afford to be away from his children while they were growing up. He says, "I am dying to do more work in India. First of all, I tend to be picky. Then obviously there is a language barrier for me. So, the right role has to come along that speaks to me. Stuff has come through but it wasn't anything that really sparked my creative juices. And then going away for too long, with my family, I didn't really want to be away from my children for too long, where I could not fly home on the weekends. Now my children are teenagers and they don't want to hang out with me, they want to be with their friends. So now I am much more open and I'm putting it out in the universe that some more work comes to me from Indian cinema. I'd love to come back and do something soon."

Alka Yagnik reveals she has been diagnosed with 'rare hearing loss', cautions regarding exposure to loud music and headphones: 'A major setback'

Veteran playback singer Alka Yagnik has announced that she has been diagnosed with "a rare sensory neural hearing loss" that has abruptly halted her singing career. While she said that she hopes to recover, she described the diagnosis as a "major setback," and attributed her hearing loss to "a viral attack" some weeks ago. She wrote in an Instagram post that she first discovered that something wasn't right when she stepped out of a flight and realised she couldn't hear.



in action."

She continued, "It has been diagnosed by my docs as a rare sensory neural nerve hearing loss, due to a viral attack... This sudden, major setback has caught me completely unaware. As I attempt to come to terms with it please keep me in your prayers. For my fans and young colleagues, I would add a word of caution regarding exposure to very loud mu-

sic and headphones. One day, I wish to share the health perils of my professional life. With all your love and support I am hoping to recalibrate my life and come back to you soon. Your support and understanding will mean the world to me in this critical hour... ????"

One of the most prolific and prominent playback singers of the 1990s, Alka Yagnik has sung tens

of thousands of songs in films across several languages. She is the recipient of two National Film Awards and seven Filmfare Awards. In 2022, she was recognised by Guinness World Records as the most-streamed artist in the world. She has also appeared as a judge on singing reality shows, and most recently performed the song "Naram Kalija" in Imtiaz Ali's Amar Singh Chamkila.

'Sahara Shri' Subrata Roy didn't allow Aamir Ali to quit flight attendant job to pursue modelling: 'He was making sure I kept earning'



Actor Aamir Ali, who worked as a cabin crew member before embarking on a modelling career that eventually led to film and television acting offers, recalled his interactions with the late owner of Sahara India Parivar, Subrata Roy. He said that the larger-than-life businessman would playfully smack him on the face every time they'd meet, and personally granted him the necessary permission to take leaves to pursue modelling gigs. Subrata Roy also refused to allow Aamir to officially quit his job at the airline until he found his footing in the entertainment industry. In an interview with ABP Live, he said, "When I started getting ads, I took a break from my day job. Then, I met sir again on a flight. He praised me, and said that I was doing very well. I thanked him, and told him that I was thinking of quitting and pursuing my modelling career full-time. He didn't allow me to quit. To this day, I'm probably an employee."

Aamir continued, "I never claimed my gratuity also. They still have it probably, but that's my love for what they did for me. It was so sweet of him; he was making sure that I would keep earning a basic amount of money to run my house while I found my footing in the entertainment industry. Who does that? Then, when I started getting films, I felt ashamed to keep collecting their money, so I told him to stop." Aamir said that he still remembers the lessons that he learned from Subrata Roy. He said, "I still value one of his biggest teachings: Kaal, sthaan, patra; time, place, and what you speak. This is what defines you as a person." The businessman wasn't immune to controversy; his life will be dramatised in the upcoming third season of the SonyLIV show Scam, helmed by filmmaker Hansal Mehta. Incidentally, Hansal directed Aamir's first film, and most recently worked with him on the show Lootere.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui says daughter Shora, 14, is preparing to be an actor, refused his help: 'With folded hands, she went to her teacher...'



Nawazuddin Siddiqui is all set to fight the nepotism debate as his daughter Shora Siddiqui prepares to follow her father's footsteps and is now training to be an actor. Nawazuddin, who is promoting his upcoming Zee5 film Rautu Ka Raaz, shared that Shora went and begged her teacher to give her an admission in school's performing art faculty and is already watching world cinema at the age of 14. Talking to Film Companion, Nawazuddin said, "My daughter is taking training right now. She herself went and got admitted to the performing art faculty, haath jod ke teacher ke saamne (with folded hands in front of her teacher) she said, 'I want to learn acting.'"

He also revealed the components of Shora's training syllabus and how she'll be performing a play in her final year. He said, "In that department, in that school, they will be performing a play in the final year, for that they'll have to stitch their own costumes, they'll have to do the carpentry work themselves, whatever props will be used, they'll have to make it themselves, they'll also have to take care of the lighting, do all the work themselves and at last there will be a show which will be ticketed. This is the kind of rigorous training she is taking. She is doing all of this by herself." He said that while he's never asked her to take up acting, he is supporting her

passion in every way possible. "Now that I see that she is taking so much interest, so just as other parents, we too tell her 'toh chalo kar lo tum,' (ok, you do it). She is doing it independently and for the longest time, I didn't even know that she got through the performing arts faculty. I don't even know what all workshops she does, she attends quite a lot of them, she is doing the summer workshop right now. She searches them herself and tells her mother or me that she wants to do it and asks me to pay the fees."

When asked if he has been teaching her any acting or if she comes to him for help, Nawazuddin said, "No, ghar ki murgi dal baraabar hoti hai na, waisa hai. She watches a lot of film, watches world cinema. She is all of 14 and she watches one film every day. She had once performed one piece to show me, I asked her how she did it and she said, 'papa, main puri taiyaari kar rahi hoon. Filmein dekhti hoon main (Papa, I am preparing, I watch a lot of films).' So its like that, its her passion, so what can I say?" Nawazuddin had earlier shared that his daughter is inclined towards acting. He shares videos of her performing and she has already gained quite a bit of popularity on social media for her acting skills. Nawazuddin and Aaliya also have a son, Yaani.

Kabir Khan accepts Chandu Champion's box office opening 'lower' than expected, is hopeful to cash in on word of mouth: 'We believe in the film'

Filmmaker Kabir Khan has opened up about the low opening collection of his latest sports biopic drama Chandu Champion and says the Kartik Aaryan film may have taken a slow start at the box office but is here for the long run. Based on the life of Paralympic gold medalist Murlikant Petkar, Chandu Champion released last Friday to rave reviews. Despite a positive word of mouth, the film recorded a disappointing first day collection of Rs 5.4 cr, making it one of the lowest Kartik Aaryan openers. The film eventually showed some growth in the next two days and has now collected Rs 30.12 cr in four days, as per makers. In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Kabir Khan was asked about the film's first day collections and if he has been able to figure out what went

wrong. "It is too early to say what are the reasons but post COVID it has become very difficult to analyse logically what is happening in terms of the behaviour. The opening was definitely lower than what we all were expecting because of the tremendous response to the trailer, to the song units that were out. So one would expect a slightly healthier opening but that didn't pan out the way we wanted to." The filmmaker, known for blockbusters like Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Ek Tha Tiger, both headlined by Salman Khan, said the team is happy with the way the film is "growing" and with the "incredible" word of mouth it is receiving. "We still believe in the film strongly, we are happy with the film and are inundated with the love.

‘Only one who copped lot of flak’: David Warner reflects on ball-tampering scandal ahead of impending retirement



GNS News Agency, June 22

The 37-year-old left-hander will call time on a 15-year career for Australia, featuring in three World Cup wins for Australia. The dynamic opener, who retired from Tests and ODIs earlier this year, has recorded 49 centuries across formats. Warner's stellar career was tainted during Australia's tour to South Africa in 2018 where he was found guilty of ball-tampering during a Test in Cape Town. Warner served a one-year ban by Cricket Australia for his involvement in the scandal but returned to the national side with positive returns thereafter. However, the incidents in South Africa have continued to haunt Warner, stating that he copped a fair share of flak over the years. "My back was always up against the wall when I came back, and I knew that. I copped my fair share over my career. I've probably been the only one that's ever copped a lot of flak, whether it's people who don't like the Australian cricket team or don't like me. "I've always been that person who has copped it. I always feel like I've taken a lot of pressure off a lot of guys as well and I think understandably, I've been that person to be able to absorb that. But one can only absorb (so much). For me it's great to go out knowing I'm not going to cop it anymore," Warner told reporters in Antigua on Tuesday ahead of Australia's Super 8 campaign.

"I felt I had great support from, especially our coaching group now and selectors have been great. All in all, I've had a privileged career, since 2018 I've really enjoyed that time coming back and just being around the guys and training hard and working as hard as I can," he added. Despite the blotch on his record, Warner hoped fans would remember his contribution in redefining opening across formats. Only 67 runs short of 19,000 runs, Warner is second only to Ricky Ponting among Australian batters. "It's going to be inevitable that when people talk about me in 20 or 30 years' time, there will always be that sandpaper scandal. But for me, if they're real cricket tragics and they love cricket, and my closest supporters, they will always see me as that cricketer. Someone who tried to change the game. Someone who tried to follow in the footsteps of the openers before me and tried to score runs at a great tempo and change Test cricket in a way. Be that person who went from T20 cricket to play Test cricket - batting at No. 6 and then opening. For me, hopefully I can be remembered for that, but I understand 2018, it always comes up and it's unfortunate - but it is what it is.

"Warner also reflected on the possibility of the Aussies winning a second title and holding all three ICC titles - along with the World Test Championship and ODI World Cup in 2023 - together for the first time in history. "I think it would be special, most definitely. As a team you strive for as much success as you can and to do that would be a great accomplishment. It's not just for me, it's about the systems we've had in place, the way the coaches and selectors have structured the whole thing.

"It's been a process of 18-24 months and they've done a fantastic job to one, keep the guys on the park, but two, keep that core group together and I think it will be a fantastic fit for all of us," Warner remarked. Australia is slotted in Group 1 of the Super 8s with India, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. They will take on Bangladesh first in Antigua on Friday.

Sleep advisor, sleeping pods & kits: India's Plan Zzzz for its Paris dreams

GNS News Agency, June 22

Neeraj Chopra had to spend most nights at the Olympic village tossing and turning in bed before his gold medal winning effort at the Tokyo Games. Jet lag, a late evening visit by anti-doping sleuths and anxiety were reasons he couldn't even catch forty winks. The javelin thrower wasn't alone in dealing with this ordeal. Invariably, at the heart of every success or failure story at the world's grandest sporting spectacle is a sleepless Olympian. And so, at the July 26 to August 11 Paris Olympics, the Indian contingent will be accompanied by an expert who will ensure that the athletes aren't sleep-deprived. Europe's long daylight hours in July-August, the Olympics months, too can play tricks with the minds of those not used to the sun rising as early as 4 am and setting as late as 11 pm.

For the first time, the Indian contingent will have a 'sleep advisor' as part of a sports science team at the Olympics. In addition, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA)-appointed medical team is likely to install sleeping pods inside the Games Village, giving the athletes exclusive access. The entire team will also be given a 'travel sleeping kit' to help them doze off. Dr Monika Sharma, an expert who will ensure that the athletes aren't sleep-deprived. Europe's long daylight hours in July-August, the Olympics months, too can play tricks with the minds of those not used to the sun rising as early as 4 am and setting as late as 11 pm.

Dr Sharma has already begun consultations with India's athletes, travelling across the world to meet them in person and "help them identify their challenges and remove some of the barriers to good sleep". In her initial conversations, Dr Sharma said she observed that "ignorance about sleep is quite profound" among athletes. Her first step has been to educate them and then design "sleep strategies" where the quality of sleep will be prioritised over the number of hours. Keeping their identities confidential, Dr Sharma said she's classified the athletes into three categories: the ones who are alien to this concept, a bunch who have experienced sleep deprivation at previous Olympics and are ready to talk, and those who are so obsessed with the idea of winning that they are willing to take any help that comes their way. "At this level, where skills and expertise are pretty high, athletes are looking to get an edge. Getting optimum sleep, and restorative sleep definitely gives them that edge. We want to remove any element of luck and unpredictability," she said. In Paris, the athletes are likely to face challenges that go beyond the usual ones at an Olympics. The high summer temperatures predicted during the Games in the French capital are seen as another potential cause for sleep disruption, especially since the rooms at the Athletes Village do not have fans or air-conditioners.

"We are gearing up to cover this aspect. We are designing a travel sleep kit for our athletes to make them comfortable. It will have sleep masks, travel pillows and ear plugs, among other things," Dr Sharma said. "Another novel investment we are making is we are also looking at providing them with sleep pods. They are an additional opportunity for athletes to down-regulate and supplement their sleep, which we know will be compromised to some extent." Indeed, sleep is often at a premium at the Olympics, one of the biggest casualties in an athlete's pursuit of a podium. The night before Abhinav Bindra won independent India's first Olympic gold, he couldn't catch a wink. In the build-up to the 2016 Rio Olympics, the International Olympic Committee's research revealed that nearly 49 per cent of athletes surveyed admitted they'd been "poor sleepers". Citing data gathered by global studies, Dr Sharma said "tiny tweaks



in sleep management can lead to drastic improvements." "Data suggests it improves athletes' reaction time by 11 per cent, jump height by 10 per cent and sprint performance by 4 per cent," she said. Conversely, she added that studies reveal "68 per cent (of athletes) are more likely to suffer injuries when they are competing or training if they are not sleeping well as compared to those who prioritise sleeping." "From a physical standpoint, muscle recovery, tissue repair... all the growth and healing, the magical things take place in sleep. Hence we need to protect and prioritise sleep," she said.

Embrace fitness like 'desi pehlwans'

Hyderabad: Looking for new exercise equipment to start your fitness journey? How about working out like homegrown pehlwans do, with traditional fitness gear like mudgar, gada and samptola? Fitness trainer Balveer Singh of Mudgar Akhada, who runs a desi fitness centre out of his home in Dhoolpet specialises in traditional workouts, swears by the advantages of desi exercise equipment, in developing core strength and even muscles. "Desi workout directly affects one's core strength and stability. The traditional workout gear builds strength, improves flexibility and grip, and enhances overall fitness. For instance, mudgar exercises provide a good cardiovascular workout and help to improve heart health," says Balveer Singh. The traditional workout at Mudgar Akhada includes yoga asanas, dands, baithaks, samptola, sapatey, mudgar, gada workouts and many more. When asked why one should choose traditional workout equipment over modern gyms, he says, "Unlike modern gym equipment, where the focus of lifting weights is only on muscles, the movement from lifting desi workout equipment improves both upper and lower body."

The 38-year-old emphasises that his clients have a good lifestyle which includes a proper diet, adequate sleep and regular exercises, leading to improvements in weight loss, cholesterol and thyroid levels. Reshma Neenambika, who trains at Mudgar Akhada, reveals improvement in her cholesterol level. "My cholesterol level dropped from 470 to 220 within a month after having started exercising at the akhada. Impressed with the positive development in my body, I aim to continue traditional workout routines throughout my life." R Sanjana, who also trains at the akhada, added, "I opted for traditional workout for weight loss and it was the best decision for my well-being." Balveer started with traditional workouts at home in 2002 and since then has been dedicated for the cause of raising awareness about traditional methods of training. He has trained more than 2,000 people so far. Mudgar Akhada also runs a foundation that trains people from humble backgrounds for free. The foundation organises mudgar-friendly challenges in different parts of the city and the participant who swings a mudgar of 10-13 kg for 100 times wins a free mudgar. Balveer, who is not social media savvy, thanks the internet community for rediscovering traditional Indian workouts and the recent growing popularity among the youngsters.

Fitness test for Neeraj Chopra with German wonderkid Max Dehning in fray



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Dehning was 19-years-old in February when he became the youngest to throw 90 metres in Halle. Dehning hit the headlines, the history-maker's unexpected upswing in distance became a talking point too. From a best of 79.13 metres, Dehning had surged to 90.20m. The rise of a new German challenger months before the Olympics was an exciting prospect. On Tuesday evening, Neeraj and Dehning will be among the eight men at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland. He has a 90-metre throw against his name, but Dehning hasn't entered the big league yet. Since his big throw, he has orbited between the 80-82 metre mark. A 12th-place finish in the European Championships last week saw him dip to 76.16 metres. "Your only competition is yourself," he had posted on Instagram from Rome. Neeraj vs Dehning is not the storyline but just an interesting footnote because on current form, the world and European Under-20 silver medalist is unlikely to create an upset in a competitive field. There are others Neeraj will have to watch out for when he makes a return after skipping the Ostrava Golden Spike last month because of discomfort of the adductor muscle after competing in back-to-back events in Doha and Bhubaneswar.

Turku will be the last but one competition for Neeraj before the Paris Summer Games for the Olympic champion. Neeraj had clarified that skipping Ostrava was precautionary. Turku will present an opportunity to evaluate how his body responds during competition. Not for the first time the adductor muscle has troubled Neeraj and a discomfort-free outing will be a confidence booster for the 26-year-old.

Getting back to the high 80s too will be an all-is-well sign after a dip in his last outing, the Federation Cup in

Bhubaneswar — just four days after the Doha Diamond League. He touched 82.27 metres in his fourth attempt at the Federation Cup and then skipped the last two rounds not wanting to strain his body. Neeraj Chopra fed Cup 2024 Neeraj Chopra makes a throw during the men's Javelin Throw event at the 27th National Federation Senior Athletics Competition, in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, May 15, 2024. Neeraj won gold in the event. (PTI Photo) The Federation Cup was not on the star javelin thrower's original schedule but he travelled to Bhubaneswar after a call with Athletics Federation of India (AFI) officials. Chopra said he wasn't keen to participate in the June-end Inter-State Championships at Panchkula, a competition mandatory for all Olympics-bound athletes as per AFI policy since it would disturb his training and competition schedule in Europe. The only option before him, hence was the Federation Cup.

There are big names in Turku with pedigree to test Neeraj, though the highly consistent Jakub Vadlejch, the athlete from Czechia who has consistently run Neeraj close over the past two seasons and even bested him at the Doha Diamond League in May and last year's Diamond League Finals won't be there. A bigger star cast was set to line up but there have been pull-outs. Arshad Nadeem from Pakistan, a World Championship and Asian Games medallist was to make a comeback after elbow surgery but his name is no longer on the official entry list. Julian Webber, the silver medalist at the European Championships also withdrew. That leaves local favourite Oliver Helander, the 2022 winner, as the strongest challenger to Neeraj. There's also Grenada's Anderson Peters, the 2022 World Champion, not having the best of seasons after being involved in a brawl on a boat two years ago. Peters registered 86.62 metres to finish third at the Doha Diamond League, behind second-placed Neeraj. After a month away from competition, this will feel like a mini-comeback for Neeraj and his legion of fans. Despite winning everything there is to win, Chopra recently picked just one throw as special. An indication of how high he has set the bar for himself. In a recent interview with cricketer Dinesh Karthik on the show 'Get Set Gold', Neeraj said: "To date, I am only satisfied with one throw of mine, which was 86.48 m in the World Under-20 Championships 2016. That was one throw where I felt it was a special, unique one, but I have not been satisfied with any throw since." On Tuesday evening, he will trade a pain-free outing over a special throw as the Olympics is around the corner.

The many fault lines of T20 World Cup 2024:

Illogical pre-seeding, priority treatment for India and more

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Josh Hazlewood ruffled some feathers when he discussed the possibility of Australia doing their bit to nudge England out of the competition. He agreed to a question that it was in Australia's best interests to perhaps prop up Scotland's chances and precipitate an early exit Jos for Buttler and Co. But matters in Group B concluded with the two powerhouses finishing first and second. Australia won all four of their matches with a healthy net run rate of 2.791. Typically in any global tournament, that would mean some advantage. But not at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Australia, who finished top of Group B, were pre-determined to meet India, who finished top of Group A, in the Super 8 stage. Why? Because India were pre-seeded as A1 and Australia as B2 for Super 8s, irrespective of whether they finished first or second in the group. "I think there's a big question to be asked about the pre-seeding. I'm not sure I'm a fan of that," Australian pacer Mitchell Starc said after the win against Scotland. He raised one of many important questions about the format and scheduling in place for the 2024 edition. Lack of transparency surrounding the draw, a schedule that gives India a fair few favours and a structure that actively discourages any surprise or intrigue are some of the faultlines running through this World Cup in USA and West Indies. Opaque group stage draws. First things first, the ICC continues to be opaque with their "draws" for the World Cups. It doesn't matter which format, India and Pakistan end up playing each other in the opening round. One has to go all the way back to the 2012 T20 World Cup for a major ICC event where India and Pakistan weren't pre-drawn to be guaranteed a face-off. Pakistan's captain Babar Azam, right, and India's captain Rohit Sharma walk into the field before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup



cricket match between India and Pakistan at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Westbury, New York. Pakistan's captain Babar Azam, right, and India's captain Rohit Sharma walk into the field before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Westbury, New York. (AP | PTI) There is little information on how these draws take place, they are just announced. Imagine a football World Cup where Argentina and Brazil are "drawn" to face each other always in the opening stages because it is guaranteed to draw eyeballs. Of late, Australia vs England and Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh games too are on ICC's 'must-play' list.

As mentioned above, the group-stage matches were designed to have barely any impact on the Super 8 stage that begins on Wednesday. Group 1 was to be: A1, B2, C1, D2 and Group 2 was A2, B1, C2, D1 - where 1 & 2 are not based on where the teams finished but on seedings that were fixed. The element of natural progression that you'd want to see in a World Cup is lacking, it's far too rigid. There is also an element of surprise that is lacking in determining how teams progress in the tournament, which completely resets from Wednesday with the group stage having no carryover whatsoever to the Super 8. The fact that

USA, Afghanistan and Bangladesh defied the seedings to make it to the Super 8 ended up adding some intrigue to the second stage. But a fascinating match like Afghanistan vs West Indies had absolutely no bearing on where they were likely to end up in the next stage, stripping the tournament of jeopardy. For all the talk of Australia potentially facing a probe and sanction if they somehow lost against Scotland - which could have been to their complete advantage - the tournament was designed in a way that a bunch of dead rubbers were inevitable. One team above all is no secret that any World Cup in cricket is planned out to maximise India's presence. (Recall the 2007 ODI WC situation where India were stunned in the group stage, after a shock defeat to Bangladesh.) At the risk of gravitating toward football again, France in 2002 or Germany in 2018 (or 2022) - when one of the game's biggest teams is forced to exit early - doesn't appear likely for India anymore because the draws feel heavily curated. The ODI World Cup format has transformed into a UEFA Champions League of sorts and the supposed shorter and wilder T20 format too does everything to make sure India are unlikely to exit without playing at least five or six matches. Even in their forgettable campaign in 2021, India were guaranteed five matches because it was a Super 12 with 6 teams each

in a pool. T20 World Cup 2024: India vs Canada abandoned Indian team head coach Rahul Dravid, right, speaks to captain Rohit Sharma ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between Canada and India at the Central Broward Regional Park Stadium, Lauderhill, Fla., Saturday, June 15, 2024. (AP/PTI) In 2024, India had the comforts of minimal travel in the group stage (three matches in Nassau followed by a quick trip to Florida) whereas most other teams had to hop between venues, even countries, and clock plenty of air miles. India got a warm-up match in Nassau, whereas their three opponents there in the group stage were all playing their first matches at the new venue the day they met India. Sample this: When the USA faced India in New York, the 'co-hosts' of the tournament were playing at the venue for the first time ever while the away team had already played three matches there. Catering to India's primetime Rohit Sharma and Co also have the advantage of knowing that every one of their matches will be played at the same time - corresponding to prime time in India. There is no need to adapt to playing at different times of the day. Even their Super 8 matches were already pre-decided to be 8pm starts in India. And India are the only side that knows which venue they will play their semifinal that also starts at 8pm IST. A lot of it is presumably dictated by the broadcasters.