

INDIAN CHRONICLE

29 June, 2024 | Saturday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:119 | Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Swift action by Hyderabad cybercrime cops saves techie's Rs 18 lakh

Hyderabad: Moving in swiftly, the Hyderabad cybercrime police in just 11 minutes saved a software professional from being cheated to the tune of Rs 18 lakh in a parcel fraud. The 31-year-old complainant from Amberpet working for a reputed software firm lost Rs. 18 lakh to a cyber fraudster who impersonated as an executive of a courier agency. According to DCP (Cybercrimes), D.Kavitha, the fraudster told the victim that his Aadhaar credentials were used to transport illegal drugs from Mumbai to Iran, and asked him to contact Mumbai cybercrime via Skype.

TSDCA seizes spurious drugs in Hyd

Hyderabad: In a significant breakthrough against counterfeit drugs, the Telangana State Drug Control Administration (TSDCA) has seized spurious drugs 'Vertin 8' tablets and 'Vertin 16' tablets falsely claimed to be manufactured by Abbot India Limited.

The drug inspectors of TSDCA, based on intelligence conducted raids at Goel Pharma, Sultan Bazaar, Koti and Yashwanth Pharma, Moosarambagh in Hyderabad and seized counterfeit versions of Vertin 8 (Betahistine tablets) and Vertin 16 tablets, which are prescribed by doctors to treat symptoms of Meniere's Disease, which includes vertigo (feeling dizzy and spinning sensation), tinnitus (ringing in ears), hearing loss and nausea. During the raids on Thursday and Friday, large stocks of both the drugs were seized and comparison statement obtained for the suspected batches from the original manufacturer.

Airlines asked to check fare surge to and from Delhi after airport roof collapse



GNS News Agency, June 28

The Civil Aviation Ministry added that flight cancellations and rescheduling to and from Delhi should be done without penal charges.

The Aviation Ministry has issued an advisory to all airlines, urging them to monitor any abnormal surge in airfares to and from Delhi after the collapse of Terminal 1's roof at the Delhi airport on Friday morning due to heavy rain. The ministry emphasised that flight cancellations and rescheduling should be done without penal charges. The Ministry of Civil Aviation tweeted, "In view of the unfortunate incident at Terminal 1 IGIA, Delhi, all airlines are advised to monitor any abnormal surge in airfares to and from Delhi and take necessary action regarding the same." The incident at Delhi airport prompted the cancellation of several flights from Terminal 1, while many other services have been shifted to other terminals. All flights scheduled to depart from Terminal 1 till 2 pm have been cancelled. Flights scheduled to depart after 2 pm will be operated from Terminal 2 and 3, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said. Earlier, the airlines had been advised to accommodate passengers on alternate flights or provide full refunds under the regulations, the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. Passengers will receive full refunds or have the option to rebook on alternative flights and routes.

Former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren released from jail after HC grants bail in alleged money laundering case

GNS News Agency, June 28

Ranchi: Former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren comes out of Birsa Munda Central Jail upon his release after Jharkhand High Court granted him bail in a money laundering case linked to a land scam, in Ranchi, on June

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren was released from Birsa Munda Jail here on Friday after the high court granted bail to him in a money laundering case linked to a land scam. Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay's court granted him regular bail. As Mr. Soren stepped out of the jail, a large number of JMM supporters cheered and raised slogans in favour of him. On June 13, after hearing the arguments of Mr. Soren's advocate and Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S V Raju appearing for Enforcement Directorate (ED) the court had reserved its order. The ED had arrested Mr. Soren on January 31, 2024 after questioning him for over seven hours. Mr. Soren then went to Raj Bhavan and resigned from the State's top post. Following his resignation Champai Soren was elected as the leader of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) legislative



party and on February 5, the new Champai Soren government won the trust with 47 MLAs voting in favour of the motion. The case is related to forging land documents of 8.5 acres in Badgai area of Ranchi. ED had initiated investigation in five cases of land scam on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by Jharkhand Police against several persons including government officials. ED investigation had revealed that a racket of land mafia was active in Jharkhand which is involved in tampering of the land records in Ranchi and Kolkata.

ED had claimed that original land records of ownerships were either tampered with or concealed to facilitate unlaw-

ful acquisition/possession/use of landed properties. Subsequently, on the basis of forged land records, such land parcels are sold to other persons. ED had earlier carried out 55 searches and nine surveys in such cases and incriminating evidence like forged seals of Land Revenue Department, forged land deeds, records of distribution of Proceeds of Crime among them, photographs doing forgery, evidence of giving bribes to government officials were seized. Searches had resulted in recovery and seizure of ₹1.27 crore of cash and further freezing of ₹3.56 crore in bank accounts' balances. In the cases of land scam, ED had provisionally attached tainted land parcels worth

TPCC Intellectual Cell chairman all praise for CM's initiative of integrated residential schools



GNS News Agency, June 28

In a statement to the press, Shyam Mohan Anantula, senior congress leader and Chairman of TPCC Intellectual Cell, commended the Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, for his groundbreaking initiative to establish "Integrated Residential Schools for OCs, BCs, SCs, STs, and Minorities" in every assembly constituency. Anantula quoted Mahatma Gandhi, stating that "Education is the best leveler of the Society", emphasizing the importance of education in achieving social, economic, and political equality.

Anantula highlighted the significance of CM Revanth Reddy's initiative in bridging the gap between different castes and religions, leading to positive socio-economic and political transformations. He praised the CM for his commitment to providing quality education to all children, irrespective of their background, drawing parallels with the inclusive education system in the United States, where "No child shall be left behind". During a meeting attended by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, CM Revanth Reddy announced the pilot projects of Integrated Residential Schools in Kodangal and Madhira constituencies, with 20 acres of land allotted for each location. Anantula expressed his wholehearted support for the initiative, emphasizing the need for similar projects to be implemented across all states in India to bring about rapid social transformation. Anantula urged all sections of society to cooperate and support CM Revanth Reddy's visionary initiative, emphasizing the importance of education in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. The establishment of Integrated Residential Schools in every assembly constituency is seen as a positive step towards achieving educational equality and bridging social divides.

Another BRS MLA joins Congress, sixth in four months



GNS News Agency, June 28

Hyderabad: In yet another jolt to Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), its MLA Kale Yadaiah joined the ruling Congress on Friday.

Yadaiah, who represents the Chevella constituency in Rangareddy district, joined the Congress in the presence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, AICC in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi and other leaders in Delhi. Yadaiah is the sixth MLA of BRS to defect to the Congress party in the last four months. The BRS has lost three MLAs to Congress during the last week. Several senior leaders of BRS switched loyalties to Congress since the latter came to power in December 2023. It is a homecoming for Yadaiah, who had defected to BRS in 2015 a few months after he was elected to Assembly on a Congress ticket. In 2018, he retained the Chevella seat as BRS candidate. In the Assembly elections held in November 2023, Yadaiah won Chevella seat for a third consecutive term, defeating

Supreme Court allows withdrawal of plea filed by NRI accused in imported coal scam case



GNS News Agency, June 28

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday allowed withdrawal of a plea filed by an NRI accused in a money laundering case linked to an alleged imported coal scam. The counsel appearing on accused Ahmed AR Buhari's behalf requested a Vacation Bench presided over by Justice Abhay S Oka for withdrawal of the Special Leave Petition with the liberty to approach the appropriate forum with application seeking bail. Acceding to the request, the Bench, also comprising Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, disposed of the plea as withdrawn keeping all the questions of law open.

In its March 8 order, the Madras High Court said that Buhari had kept on filing petitions and thereafter, claiming that a petition is pending, protracted the trial and invited delay in investigation on himself. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated the money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), against Buhari, the promoter of Coastal Energy Pvt. Ltd, Chennai, and other unknown officials of PSUs under various Sections of the IPC, and Section 13(2) read with Section 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The probe revealed that Buhari was controlling the Coastal Energy Private Limited, Coastal Energen Private Limited, Coal and Oil Group Dubai and other offshore entities located in Mauritius and the British Virgin Islands. The PSUs were supplied coal of lower calorific value instead of the higher specification for which the tenders were floated and executed by the CEPL or MMTC and the coal was supplied by CEPL either directly or through MMTC on the strength of overvalued invoice for lower quality supported with fraudulent Certificate of Sampling and Analysis (COSA) whereas the original COSA depicting the genuine quality of coal was suppressed. In the course of investigation, it was further revealed that Buhari generated proceeds of crime (POC) to the tune of Rs 564.48 crore from the over valuation of coal.

Yediyurappa molested minor, gave money to girl, her mother: Police chargesheet

GNS News Agency, June 28

A chargesheet filed by the police gives details of the alleged molestation incident involving former Karnataka Chief Minister Yediyurappa. It claims that Yediyurappa gave money to minor's mother to delete videos and photos of their visit to his house. Former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has been charged in a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) case, with the chargesheet revealing the details of the incident. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Karnataka Police filed the chargesheet in a special court on Thursday. According to the chargesheet, the Yediyurappa, allegedly held the minor's right wrist with his left hand when she and her daughter visited him. Yediyurappa then took the girl to a meeting room adjacent to the hall, latching the door behind them, the chargesheet mentioned. Inside the room, Yediyurappa reportedly asked the girl if she remembered the face of the person who raped her. When the victim, then six and

a half years old, replied affirmatively, Yediyurappa allegedly molested her, the chargesheet said.

It said that the distressed girl pushed his hand away and demanded the door be opened and, following this, Yediyurappa gave the girl some money and unlatched the door. Upon exiting the room, Yediyurappa gave some money to the complainant and stated he couldn't help her, subsequently sending her away, the police chargesheet said.

The CID mentioned that the situation took a further turn on February 20 this year, when the complainant uploaded a video of her visit on Facebook. In response, Yediyurappa, through his aides, who are accused A2, A3, and A4 in the chargesheet, summoned the complainant and the victim to his house. It further said that Yediyurappa convinced the complainant to delete the video and photos from Facebook and her phone gallery. It further alleged that Yediyurappa, through one of his aides, handed over Rs 2 lakh to the complainant.

CM Siddaramaiah, state ministers meet Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

GNS News Agency, June 28

New Delhi: A delegation of Karnataka ministers led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D. K. Shivakumar on Friday met Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari at his office in the national capital and submitted a memorandum seeking his cooperation regarding projects connected with the state.

The memorandum said, "On behalf of the people of Karnataka, I would like to express my gratitude for sanctioning many prestigious projects for the State of Karnataka. I am thankful to you and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for having approved the four green field corridors in the State including Satellite Town Ring Road to Bengaluru City. These corridors will optimise the efficiency of freight and passenger movement, and enhance the socio-economic development of the state and the country." I would like to draw your attention to the long-standing issue of declaration of 39 'in-principle approved roads' as National Highways for a length of 5,225 kms. The Ministry has initiated action to foreclose the DPR preparations to the nearest stage of study. However, I would like to request you to reconsider the issue and take a decision to upgrade state highways with traffic intensity of more than 10,000 PCU/day," Siddaramaiah said.

Harish Rao meets MLC Kavitha in Tihar jail

GNS News Agency, June 28

Hyderabad: Senior BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao met MLC K Kavitha in Tihar jail on Friday morning. During the Mulakat, he reportedly enquired about her well-being and asked her to stay strong, exuding confidence that she would come out clean. Kavitha is said to have enquired about the health condition of her father and BRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao, who is recuperating from a hip replacement surgery. They are also learnt to have discussed Telangana politics as well as family issues, among others. Besides BRS working president and her brother KT Rama Rao, former Ministers P Sabitha Indra Reddy and Satyavathi Rathod also met Kavitha in jail in recent times. The Rouse Avenue Court recently extended the judicial custody of MLC Kavitha till July 5 in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

Palla Srinivasa Rao Takes Charge as TDP State President

GNS News Agency, June 28

In a special ceremony held at the TDP party headquarters in Mangalagiri, Palla Srinivas officially took charge as the state president of the party. The acceptance program was attended by TDP National General Secretary Nara Lokesh and other party leaders who offered their best wishes to Palla Srinivas. Palla Srinivas, who previously served as the President of the Visakhapatnam Parliament Party, was appointed by TDP National President Chandrababu on June 16. Having emerged victorious in the AP Assembly election from Gajuwaka Constituency by a significant margin, Palla Srinivasa Rao's appointment as the state president was seen as a well-deserved recognition of his dedicated service to the party. Several senior TDP leaders praised Palla Srinivas for his leadership qualities and expressed confidence in his ability to lead the party in the state. With his new role as the state president, Palla Srinivas is expected to bring fresh energy and direction to the TDP in Andhra Pradesh.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Minority report

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has flagged a 'concerning increase' in anti-conversion laws, hate speech and demolition of homes and places of worship of members of minority communities in India. In his remarks at the release of the US State Department's 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom, Blinken said Christian groups in India had reported attacks by mobs, allegedly in league with the police, over accusations of conversion activities'. The report claims that Christians and Muslims were arrested under laws banning forced religious conversion. The unusually scathing criticism comes weeks after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government began its third successive term. It is bound to cast a shadow on India-US ties, which have made rapid strides in the strategic and defence domains in recent years.

Blinken had also mentioned India in his remarks during the release of the 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom two years ago, expressing concern over rising attacks on people and places of worship in the country. However, his comments this time may be seen through the prism of the US presidential elections, which are scheduled for November. With Christians accounting for two-thirds of the American population, highlighting alleged atrocities against them in countries such as India could be construed as a vote-catching tactic. While talking about the minorities in the US, Blinken has confined himself to the observation that reports of hate crimes and other incidents targeting Muslims and Jews have gone up dramatically. America seems more keen to 'advance religious freedom across the globe' than to set its own house in order. The Indian government does need to do course correction on the minority front, but it won't appreciate the US playing the Big Brother.

From Shiraz to Bengaluru, a Persian trader's legacy



GNS News Agency, June 28

Over two hundred years ago in the ancient city of Shiraz in Southern Persia, Agha Aly Asker was born. His story began in 1808, but it would culminate far away in Bengaluru — where the man who began as a horse trader became a confidant of kings. As Syeda Mirza tells the story in her book Agha Aly Asker, the young Agha Aly Asker and his brothers had heard about the British Raj's need for horses at a nearby chaikhaneh (tea house) and put forth an idea to their father, who consented to their plan.

In Karnataka, these would have been the early days of the Bangalore Cantonment. Tipu Sultan had only been recently defeated, and Mysore was far from a stable province. In this context, the British cavalry would certainly not have turned down quality mounts. Persian trader Agha Aly Asker Several homes and buildings — possibly close to a hundred, as historian Dharmendra Kumar stated, were built by Asker, some at Ali Asker Road between Cunningham Road and Infantry Road, as well as Richmond Town.

While their journey was not entirely smooth (they seem to have been detained at one point on suspicions of espionage), Agha Aly Asker managed to set himself up as a well-known trader in the city, known to the influential sections of Indian and British society alike. Some of the horses were stabled near the original racetrack of the Bangalore Turf Club near Agram, while he is also reputed to have had stables in areas like today's Arab Lines and Johnson Market.

While Asker already came from a fairly wealthy family, his success in India enabled him to branch out into property and building. An estimate of how far he had come is the fact that he once tried to purchase the building that became the Raj Bhavan for the sum of Rs 28,000. (It was finally purchased in 1862 for the Government by Commissioner Lewin Bowring). One may appreciate the scale of what this would have meant in the 1860s when comparing the rent on the building before it was sold — Rs 200 a month. Several homes and buildings — possibly close to a hundred, as historian Dharmendra Kumar stated, were built by Asker, some at Ali Asker Road between Cunningham Road and Infantry Road, as well as Richmond Town.

While Asker is said to have had a good rapport with high British officials such as Sir Cubbon, he was also known to the Mysore royals. As Dharmendra Kumar noted in a talk at the Bangalore International Centre in 2019, "Mummudi Krishnaraja Wodeyar had lost the throne... developed a great fondness for Aly Asker. The letters that he wrote to the British requesting them to restore his kingdom would never reach the East India Company office in Madras... Aly Asker offered to personally deliver the letters on horseback and post them." As Syeda Mirza also noted in the same event, the Farsi language would have been a unifying point here — Mummudi Krishnaraja Wodeyar would have been a fluent speaker, while higher British officials would have also learnt the language. His descendants have continued to hold positions of distinction in India — but the most famous of them is still none other than Sir Mirza Ismail, who famously served as Dewan to King Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and left an extensive mark on Bengaluru and Karnataka.

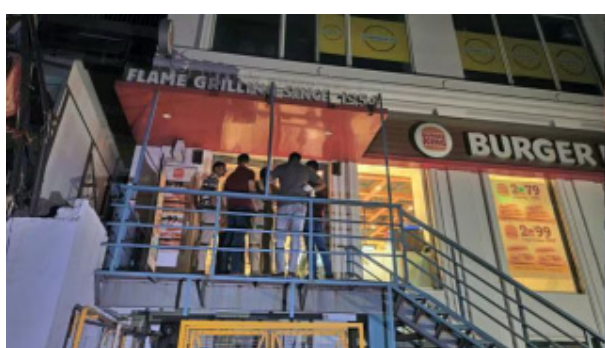
How clean can be my river



GNS News Agency, June 28

In a one-of-a-kind walk organised on Saturday by Pune Samvad, residents of Pune who signed up were taken on a tour along a river, which rarely becomes the topic of any conversation. Krunnal Gharre, an engineer-cum-advocate, and Anil Karanjawane, a teacher, led the tour on foot along the Ramnadi, which is a major river in Pune. On its banks thrive places like Baner, Aundh, and others, but large stretches of the water body have fallen prey to modernisation which has led to contamination with sewage and discolouration of its waters. At Bavdhan, Gharre and Karanjawane, joined hands six months ago to clean the 6-km stretch of the Ramnadi. The effort paid off after 21 days. They were joined by Mauli Satpute who supervised the work and raised funds, among other tasks.

Murder at Burger King: Woman who 'lured' victim to outlet spotted at Katra railway station



GNS News Agency, June 28

The incident is suspected to be the fallout of a gang rivalry, with Portugal-based gangster Bhau claiming responsibility in a post on Instagram. The incident is suspected to be the fallout of a gang rivalry, with Portugal-based gangster Bhau claiming responsibility in a post on Instagram. After 26-year-old Aman Joon was shot dead by two armed assailants inside a Burger King outlet in West Delhi's Rajouri Garden, the woman who allegedly lured him to the popular food joint was spotted at Jammu and Kashmir's Katra Railway Station on June 20 — two days after the crime — in fresh CCTV footage obtained by the Delhi Police.

The incident is suspected to be the fallout of a gang

The walk, attended by a crowd, made up of dancers, students, and nature lovers, began at the Ramnadi Bridge in Bavdhan. "When I was younger, there were farmlands around the river and farmers would look after the river-side. During the construction boom of the 1990s, farmers began selling their lands and moving away. Thereafter, thoughtless planning led to the present decadence of the river," said Karanjawane.

The trickle of water under Ramnadi Bridge is clear now, after the three got JCB machines through crowd funding and other resources to desilt and clean the river-bed, repair sewage chambers and set up barriers to trap sewage and trash that flow with the water once monsoon picks up. The walk wound past the Songbirds building complex, beside an old temple, as Gharre pointed out sites of waterfalls, pools with possible hidden springs as well as breaches in drains from where filth enters the river. "Organisations, private of government, or groups of people can use our model of Ramnadi to clean up stretches of Pawana and Indrayani rivers too," says Gharre, who is also vice president (Pune) of Aam Aadmi Party. The walk ended at Manas Lake which is being desilted at present, in view of the water shortage in Pune district. JCB machines are a common sight here. "The initiative of desilting the lake has been taken up by surrounding villages and building complexes. Somebody donated JCB machines and others helped out with other machinery. It is estimated that desilting Manas Lake will augment the lake with more than 3.5 crore litres of water," says Gharre.

rivalry, with Portugal-based gangster Bhau claiming responsibility in a post on Instagram. Police had earlier said the woman, Anu Dhankar, is part of the Himanshu Bhau gang and had been tasked to "get close" to Joon so that he is brought to a place where he could be killed by Bhau's sharpshooters. Hailing from Haryana's Rohtak, police said Dhankar is a Psychology graduate from a Delhi college and was living in a Paying Guest accommodation in Mukherjee Nagar. Police said she had set up a fake ID on Facebook and Instagram and befriended Joon three months ago. According to police sources, footage from Katra railway station shows 24-year-old Dhankar, also known as 'Lady Don' among her associates, boarding the Swaraj Express bound for Mumbai at 10 am on Thursday — two days after the crime which took place on June 18. Police sources said she stayed at a PG in Katra and technical surveillance revealed that she accessed its WiFi service. The footage, seen by The Indian Express, shows a woman, wearing a blue scarf around her face, wheeling a blue suitcase and walking briskly towards the platform. Police also said CCTV footage from the day of the murder showed Dhankar boarding the Metro at GTB Nagar to reach the Rajouri Garden Metro Station. Police said that after the murder, she took the Metro from Rajouri Garden and took the train till Shakarpur. Several teams of the Special Cell and district police are currently on the lookout for Dhankar and the two shooters.

AAP delegation meets L-G Saxena, demands Capital's share from Haryana

GNS News Agency, June 28

Amid the ongoing tussle between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the shortage of water, a delegation of senior AAP leaders met Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena Sunday demanding the national capital's share of water from Haryana. The 10-member delegation, which included Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and N D Gupta, General Secretary Pankaj Gupta, Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj and others, highlighted that Delhi is receiving 113 MGD (million gallons daily) less water than what it is entitled to, said AAP in a statement. The AAP said Saxena assured the delegation of his commitment to resolving the issue and making every effort to ensure Delhi receives its fair share from Haryana. Regarding the meeting, Singh said, "We told the L-G that Delhi is getting the same amount of water today as it was allocated in 1994... the population has increased three times over the years." Singh said the delegation also informed the L-G that the Delhi government has made several efforts at its level, including spending Rs 500 crore to resolve the leakage of canals and laying 12,000 km of pipelines in the city.

"The L-G has also given some suggestions; it was agreed to work on these together," Singh added. Cabinet Minister Bharadwaj said, "... Since the L-G is the central government's representative, we have requested him to talk to Haryana to release Delhi's share... the monsoon will start in a week, so it's just a matter of a few days." Earlier in the day, Bharadwaj, at a press conference, attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and claimed, "Despite

West Bengal not consulted over Ganga water treaty with Bangladesh: TMC

GNS News Agency, June 28

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal on Sunday criticised the Centre for not consulting the state before taking the decision to start negotiations with Bangladesh for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga Water Sharing Treaty. The criticism by the TMC comes a day after talks were held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on a range of issues including the treaty. TMC's Parliamentary Party Leader in Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, said the state is a party to the treaty, but was not consulted. Farakka-Ganga treaty is being renewed without consulting West Bengal, he said. "The state is a party to the treaty. Even our dues for the previous treaty have not been cleared," O'Brien told reporters here. "Dredging of the Ganga has been stopped. It is the primary reason for floods and erosion. This is a plan to sell off Bengal," he alleged. Prime Minister Modi on Saturday announced India and Bangladesh will begin technical-level talks for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga water treaty, and an Indian technical team will visit Bangladesh soon for the conservation and management of the Teesta river. An India-Bangladesh Shared Vision document, released after Modi and Hasina held delegation-level talks during the



writing letters to Modi ji, he has not said a word on Delhi's water crisis. He is completely silent on this matter; according to him, there is no water shortage in Delhi. What will he say anyway? He does not know anything." Bharadwaj also alleged that the Capital's share of water dropped drastically after the Lok Sabha election results. "On June 1, water production in Delhi was 989.95 MGD; 1,002 MGD on June 2 and 3; 1,004 MGD on June 4, 1,003 MGD on June 5... After the results, the level started to drop and on June 21, it came to 896 MGD... Earlier, Haryana was releasing 100 MGD less water to Delhi; now this is 117 MGD." He said the water share has dropped following their protest in the last three days, due to which 4.85 lakh people are not getting enough supply. Bharadwaj also challenged the L-G to release videos of his meetings with the AAP delegation and BJP MPs. "He (L-G) recorded the entire meeting with us. He must have recorded the meeting with the BJP MPs too. So, he should release both videos. The people of Delhi will know who is conspiring and who is standing up for them."

Ludhiana ASI's vehicle runs over 2 PCR cops, 1 dead



GNS News Agency, June 28

An assistant sub-inspector was arrested after he allegedly ran his private vehicle over two PCR (Police Control Room) cops on night patrolling duty near Salem Tabri Chowk in Ludhiana on Sunday. One cop got grievously injured in the accident and the other died. The deceased has been identified as Akashdeep Singh — a 2009-batch Punjab Police recruit. The injured policeman, Satnam Singh, is admitted to Dayanand Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in Ludhiana.

Sources said the accused, ASI Balwinder Singh, posted in Division Number 2 police station in Ludhiana, was under the influence of alcohol and was speeding at the time of the accident. Ludhiana Police Commissioner Kuldeep Singh Chahal said, "We have booked Balwinder Singh under Section 304 (causing death by rash and negligent act). We have taken blood samples of Balwinder Singh to see if he was under the influence of liquor or not. As of now, we have arrested him." The deceased Akashdeep Singh is survived by his wife and two minor kids. Police authorities said compensation would be paid to his family as per his service record.

Young motorcyclist killed in accident in Pune; mob sets truck on fire

GNS News Agency, June 28

A 22-year-old man was killed after his motorcycle was hit by a truck on Bhugaon Road in Pune, and an angry group of relatives of the victim and locals set the goods-laden truck on fire after its driver fled the scene.

Police have identified the deceased as Ganesh Shankar Shedge, a resident of Bhugaon, and the driver of the truck as Vishal Chhagan Pawale, 32, who hails from Pirangut. The incident took place around 11.15 pm on Friday on the road connecting Chandani Chowk to Bhugaon. "The investigation suggests that the driver of the truck tried to overtake the bike at high speed and hit the bike. Shedge was knocked down and sustained fatal injury to the head as he fell on the ground. The driver fled the accident spot leaving behind the truck," said an officer from the Hinjewadi police station.

An FIR was registered on Saturday and the truck driver was subsequently arrested on charges of rash driving and causing death due to negligence. A mob of at least 20 people including the victim's family members, relatives and residents of Bhugaon set the truck on fire over an hour after the incident. The cabin of the truck was gutted in the fire. The police later booked 20 people on the charges of arson and rioting.

MVA candidate Anil Parab seeks vigilance and leak detection unit to curb exam malpractices



In wake of the NEET paper leak and the cancellation of the UGC-NET, Anil Parab, Maha Vikas Aghadi candidate for the Mumbai Graduates seat of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, has called for a vigilance and leak detection unit to prevent question paper leaks in entrance and recruitment exams in the state.

GNS News Agency, June 28

In wake of the NEET paper leak and the cancellation of the UGC-NET, Anil Parab, Maha Vikas Aghadi candidate for the Mumbai Graduates seat of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, has called for a vigilance and leak detection unit to prevent question paper leaks in entrance and recruitment exams in the state. "Whether it's the NEET, UGC-NET, CET for PhD in Pune, revenue official job exam, or HSC exam, paper leaks are rampant in all government entrance and recruitment exams. Students and graduates prepare for years for these exams to secure either admissions or jobs. Such incidents not only destroy valuable years of their lives but also erode trust in these exams. This is a major concern," said the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader.

Parab, a former minister, made the remarks during an interaction in Chembur on Sunday morning with graduate voters. He was accompanied by Mumbai Congress president and newly elected MP Varsha Gaikwad. "After the Lok Sabha elections, the MVA is united for the Graduates election. All the Congress workers at the grassroots are working very hard. I'm sure of Parab's victory by a record margin," said Gaikwad. Parab said the lives of lakhs of students and graduates were at stake. "This dedicated unit should be headed by a senior IPS officer. I will take up this issue at all forums to provide relief to students and graduates," he added. Parab has been holding multiple meetings with Sena (UBT) office-bearers and voters for the Mumbai Graduate constituency election. On Saturday, Yuva Sena chief Aaditya Thackeray and former Mumbai University vice-chancellor Dr Bhalchandra Mungekar launched Parab's manifesto for the graduate voters.

Karnataka says no to mining in Devadari forest despite approval by Union minister Kumaraswamy



GNS News Agency, June 28

Amid environmentalists' opposition to starting mining operations in the Devadari forest in Ballari district, the Karnataka government has stopped the transfer of forest land to Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) for mining. The decision comes a week after Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy approved the commencement of mining operations by KIOCL, a public sector undertaking that proposed mining

in the forest area near Sandur in 2018.

In a letter dated June 21, Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre directed officials not to transfer forest land to the company. KIOCL had proposed to start operations in 401.5 hectares of forest land in the Devadari forest in Swamimalai block near Sandur. Around one lakh trees were expected to be chopped in the forest area if the company were to go ahead with its mining plan. "There are complaints that (KIOCL) has failed to implement the directions of the Centrally Empowered Committee (CEC) within the stipulated time, over violations that took place when the company took up mining activity at Kudremukh national forest," Khandre said in the letter. The minister also directed the forest department not to transfer the land until KIOCL implemented the directions of the CEC, which was formed after the company was taken to the Supreme Court over allegations that its open-cast mining had polluted the Bhadra river.

The state government's decision followed a meeting chaired by Khandre over the issue. Kumaraswamy had faced opposition from environmentalists after he cleared KIOCL's file related to the mining proposal.

Bengaluru eatery fined for failing to provide hot meal to woman customer

GNS News Agency, June 28

The complainant alleged that she had high blood pressure, and as she could not have food at the restaurant, she could not take her medicines either. (Express archives) The complainant alleged that she had high blood pressure, and as she could not have food at the restaurant, she could not take her medicines either. (Express archives) A restaurant located near a National Highway in the Bengaluru Urban district has been penalised for failing to provide hot and hygienic food to a customer. In its June 19 order, the First Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission fined the Udupi Garden restaurant an amount of Rs 7,000.

According to complainant Tahara, 56, a resident of Koramangala in Bengaluru, she was on her way to Hassan for a family trip on July 30, 2022, when she visited the restaurant to have breakfast. She alleged that the food was cold and not fresh at all. And when she asked the restaurant staff to provide a hot meal, she was rudely told that the same could not be provided. The complainant alleged that she had high blood pressure, and as she



could not have food at the restaurant, she could not take her medicines either. Commission president B Narayanappa fined the restaurant Rs 5,000 for deficiency of service. He also fined the eatery Rs 2,000 to recover litigation expenses.

Rajkot's first vegetable market grows old but its grandeur endures

GNS News Agency, June 28

Rajkot, known as the city where Mahatma Gandhi spent his formative years, was featured in the 1981 Gujarati movie Pankhino Malo (bird's nest). In the movie, actors Asrani and Jayshree T danced in front of major landmarks in the city to the tune of a Mahendra Kapoor song. One of the landmarks featured in the song is Dharmendra Road, which is mainly a clothes market. The song celebrates Rajkot as a colourful city blessed by God. But at the junction of Dharmendra Road and Para Bazaar stands another landmark — Sir Lakhajiraj Shaak Market (Sir Lakhajiraj Vegetable Market), the first formal vegetable market of the city, which is popularly called the capital of the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. Anyone going towards Para Bazaar from the narrow and busy Dharmendra Road cannot help but get distracted by the high, Mangalore-tiled pitched roof of the vegetable market rising proudly over the surrounding buildings with fire-sheet roofs or modern flat roofs.

"This was the first modern building constructed just outside the walled city in Rajkot as is indicated by the extensive use of steel," says Prof Gaurav Vadher, an assistant professor at the city-based Indubhai Parekh School of Architecture. (Express photo) "This was the first modern building constructed just outside the walled city in Rajkot as is indicated by the extensive use of steel," says Prof Gaurav Vadher, an assistant professor at the city-based Indubhai Parekh School of Architecture.

The market's four open gables, with finials tipping the ridge boards of the M-shaped roof, stand out from the immediate surroundings and impart the structure the architectural grandeur of a bygone era. As one enters the market, what catches the eyes is the 40-foot high roof, supported by scissor trusses having a horizontal tie member each and wooden ridge board and rafters. The trusses rest on 48 steel stanchions, 24 wooden columns and limestone-block walls. From the four entrances are visible the two planes in the roof—the upper plane's eaves extending over the stanchions and the lower plane's rafters starting from the beams resting on stanchions and leaning to the sidewalls of the structure. Though the entire structure is seemingly seamless, vendors say the smaller section with its gate opening on Dharmendra Road is an extension. The plate on that gate reads 'Sir Lakhajiraj Vegetable Market, Year of Establishment: 1934' and has as a relief the royal insignia of the erstwhile princely state of Rajkot. The so-called old market has 16 large platforms for vending vegetables. The so-called new one is smaller, having only eight vending platforms. "The indicators of the era in which the main market was built lies in the roof," says Premji Sakariya, president of Sir Lakhajiraj Vegetable Market Retail Merchants Association, while pointing to four pulleys suspended from the roof. "Lanterns were lit and then hoisted up by a rope round the pulley," he says, adding, "Rajkot was electrified in 1930, and therefore, the new market lacks the pulleys." The interior of the building is literally cast in stone. Cobblestone flooring looks new more than a century later. The vending platforms are also constructed using basalt, but the stones seem to have been sized with perfect angles.

"This was the first modern building constructed just outside the walled city in Rajkot as is indicated by the extensive use of steel," says Prof Gaurav Vadher, an assistant professor at the city-based Indubhai Parekh School of Architecture. "The structure has an attractive pitched roof. Because it is a public building, it required volumes to make it look grand. The architects played with the volume by dividing the roof into two planes and thereby breaking the linearity of the roof and also leaving space for ventilation and letting in sunlight while also distribut-



Sir Lakhajiraj Vegetable Market was established in 1934. The restrictions on autorickshaw entry a few years ago diverted customers to the nearby Jubilee vegetable market.

ing the weight of the structure," adds Vadher.

The professor says the building is simple yet unique. "It is a simple building with a roof with imprints of British architecture. But its beauty lies in its orientation, its spatial articulation of the trussed roof on a curving plan and its climatic response," Vadher elaborates. However, the market now seems well past its glory days. It has very few vegetable vendors and fewer buyers, a complete misfit in one of the most crowded shopping districts of Rajkot. It looks more like a milestone in time than a place in sync with the high-paced modern city life. Out of the 144 platforms created by dividing the 24 large platforms, only around 35 are now actually selling vegetables and fruits.

"Mostly women and elderly are the ones who come to purchase vegetables. Around eight years ago, entry of autorickshaws on Parabazaar and Dharmendra Road was prohibited. Women and the elderly can't lift weights and walk half a kilometre to catch an auto from Jubilee Chowk. The restrictions on autorickshaw entry diverted customers to the nearby Jubilee vegetable market and made Sir Lakhajiraj Vegetable Market dispensable," says Sakariya. "It is only the old loyal customers who take the pains to come to us for their need of vegetables," says Bhimji Korat, 64, a vegetable vendor whose father Arjanbhai was the one who was allotted a platform around 75 years ago in this almost-a-century old market. Not only has the vegetable market suffered in sales volumes, but the building has also been worn down. "It takes at least four men to open the iron chain-linked roller shutter in the market's gate opening on Dharmendra Road. The roof is all leaky during monsoon," complains Prakash Meghani, a vegetable vendor in the extended part of the building. The market is now the property of Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC), and the civic body charges vendors Rs 590 rent per month. Dipen Dodiya, RMC's in-charge city engineer, says, "It's an old structure, and we will undertake repair and renovation if necessary." But Dahya Meghani, 72, a third-generation fruits and vegetable vendor after his father Keshubhai and grandfather Kachrabhai, sounds resigned to this market. "Our market started losing business after Jubilee Vegetable Market was inaugurated in 1975. The ban on autorickshaws proved the proverbial last nail. We have seen days when people used to hire labourers to carry their vegetables from a platform in this market to autorickshaws waiting on the road. But it seems, like us vendors, this market has also grown old now," says the septuagenarian.

In a first, an Army Chief from Jammu and Kashmir Rifles as Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi set to take charge



GNS News Agency, June 28

The office of COAS has been held by Generals belonging to various regiments, most of which draw their lineage to the pre-partition era. However, JAKRIF was a state force before Independence and was integrated into the Indian Army in 1957 with the special honour of a new Regiment. In this week's column, we will examine this regiment that shot into the national limelight in the Kargil conflict when Capt Vikram Batra and Rifleman (now Subedar Major) Sanjay Kumar of the 13th Battalion of JAKRIF were awarded the nation's highest gallantry award, Param Vir Chakra.

Maj Gen DK Palit, who is associated with the 1962 India-China war and later wrote a book on it, wrote the first detailed account of JAKRIF's history. He was commissioned to write the regimental history by Lt Gen KS Katoch, who was appointed the first Colonel of the Regiment of JAKRIF on March 30, 1960. The then Sadar-e-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Karan Singh, from the ruling family of Jammu and Kashmir, was appointed the Honorary Colonel of the Regiment on August 6, 1962. The first of the J&K state forces, as they came to be known in the modern era, was raised during the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Some of the first J&K state force Infantry battalions raised were the Raghupratap (1 JAK Infantry), the Bodyguard (2 JAK Rifles), the Raghunath (3 JAK Rifles), the Fateh Shibji (4 JAK Rifles) and the Suraj Gorkha (5 JAK Infantry). The J&K state forces made vital contributions to the British and provided the largest contingent of Imperial Service Troops. These comprised a mixed brigade at Jammu Cantonment: one squadron of Kashmir Lancers, First and Second Jammu and Kashmir Mountain Batteries, grouped into the Imperial Service Artillery, and the Raghupratap, the Bodyguard and the Raghunath infantry battalions.

The composition of the Jammu and Kashmir (JAK) contingent of Imperial Service Troops included Gorkhas, although technically, they were not "people of the state".

Cybercriminals swindle Rs 1.3 crore from 73-year-old Noida woman after 5-day Skype 'interrogation'

GNS News Agency, June 28

An FIR under Indian Penal Code sections 419 (cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating) as well as section 66D of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 has been registered at the Noida cybercrime police station. Investigation in the matter is underway. (Representational photo) An FIR under Indian Penal Code sections 419 (cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating) as well as section 66D of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 has been registered at the Noida cybercrime police station. Investigation in the matter is underway. (Representational photo)

A 73-year-old woman in Noida was allegedly conned out of Rs 1.3 crore by cybercriminals who claimed that a parcel for her had been intercepted in Mumbai with some illegal items in it and that her Aadhaar card had been linked with six "accounts" involved in money-laundering. Shuchi Agrawal, a resident of Sector 49 in Noida, said in a police complaint that she received a call from an unknown number on June 13, where a woman introduced herself as a representative of the Andheri branch of the Fedex courier company. She was subsequently subjected to "digital interrogation" for five days, till June 17. "They said that one of my parcels has been seized, in which some illegal items such as LCD, iPad, expired passport, and 5kg clothes have been found. The caller further said that I will have to come to Mumbai for this (to clear my name) or they will connect me through Skype to Mumbai Police's narcotics department. The in-



terrogation through Skype call went for five days," read the complaint of the elderly woman. She further said, "They said that my Aadhaar card is linked with the six accounts which are involved in money laundering. They kept on threatening me and asked me to transfer the money in the name of a police clearance certificate (PCC). They asked me to transfer the money to a different bank account. I did a transfer of a total of Rs. 1.30 crore. The woman has provided to the police details of the bank account to which she said she had transferred the money. An FIR under Indian Penal Code sections 419 (cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating) as well as section 66D of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 has been registered at the Noida cybercrime police station. Investigation in the matter is underway.

Punjab and Haryana High Court rejects law student's plea against disqualification from exam by Panjab University

GNS News Agency, June 28

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has rejected the plea of an LLM student of Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh, who challenged his disqualification in the examination by the university after he was found allegedly guilty of making a symbol on his answer sheet for identification. The university on May 6, 2024, disqualified the petitioner from the examination of LLM (Masters of Law) (Second semester), including the 'victimology' examination, in which he was held 'guilty', under Regulation 25 of the Panjab University Calendar Volume (II), 2007.

As per the case, on April 26, 2024, a show cause notice, was issued to the petitioner, accusing him of putting identification marks on his answer book in violation of Regulation 25 of the PU Calendar Volume (II), 2007, and seeking his reply as to why action should not be taken against him under the said Regulation. The show cause notice further mentioned that the petitioner would be given a questionnaire to be replied by him on the spot and his answers to the questions or any other material submitted and relied upon by him would be placed before the Unfair Means Committee of the University for action. On May 6, 2024, the petitioner was informed that the Committee members had unanimously decided to disqualify him from the examination concerned, including the examination in which he was found guilty, under Regulation 25 of the Panjab University Calendar Volume (II), 2007. It was reported by the evaluator that the "petitioner had tried to give a symbol for identifying his

answer sheet and had written words/sentences, which were not relevant for the purpose of the examination and which was prohibited as per the instructions of the answer sheet". It was further stated that three words/sentences mentioned on various pages of the answer sheet were in violation of Regulation 25 of the Panjab University Calendar Volume (II), 2007 and that after hearing the petitioner, the unfair means case against the petitioner was decided by the Unfair Means Committee as the Committee members were of the view that he had deliberately made the said marks, which were distinctive marks and further unanimously concluded that there was no ground for inadvertence existed in the same. The petitioner challenged the PU order arguing that three words/phrases used by him in the answer sheet would not disclose his identity, and thus Regulation 25 would not stand violated. Also, the PU order is a non-speaking order and thus deserves to be set aside.

Hearing the matter, the single bench of Justice Vikas Bahl, first reproduced Regulation 25 of the Panjab University Calendar Volume (ii), 2007, as per which "if any candidate is found guilty of deliberately disclosing his identity or making any distinctive marks in his answer book, for that purpose shall be disqualified for the period mentioned in the said Regulation." Justice Bahl said, "It is not in dispute that the petitioner had written the three words/phrases in his answer sheet and the said words/phrases have been mentioned in the impugned order. It is also not disputed that three words/phrases were neither answers to any question nor were relevant to the paper.

'Lost in teleportation' and 'The Flowering Man' among FTII student films at IDSFFK



GNS News Agency, June 28

Set in a time when the technology of teleportation is commonplace, a man travelling from Delhi to Pune gets lost. His pregnant wife sets out on a search for him and, in the process, has to fight customer service and go through an absurd media trial. In another story, a man undergoes metamorphosis when a flowering plant starts growing from inside his mouth. This is a metaphor for his transition from father as a man to his daughter and, by the end of the story, to father as a woman. It is a journey of a teenage daughter embracing the new image of her father.

Set in a time when the technology of teleportation is commonplace, a man travelling from Delhi to Pune gets lost. Set in a time when the technology of teleportation is commonplace, a man travelling from Delhi to Pune gets lost. (A still from Lost in Teleportation) These films, Lost in Teleportation directed by Tanmay Gemini and The Flowering Man, by Soumyajit Ghosh Dastidar are among the five Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) student films have been shortlisted for the 16th International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala (IDSFFK), which will be held from July 26 to 31 in Thiruvananthapuram. The festival is organised by Kerala State Chalachitra Academy.

Gemini, 24, who studied computer science and then took a direction course at FTII about the idea of the film, says, "I am interested in science, and once I read that if teleportation is at all possible in the future, the matter that is being teleported will be destroyed at the source and recreated at the destination. So what if it doesn't get recreated? It is a trope in science fiction, be it teleportation or any other technologies gone wrong." But through it, he also wanted to shed light on this generation's existing problems with technology. "We are losing our sense of self in various ways, tech companies are collecting data and yet no one is concerned about privacy. So I wanted to extrapolate that and tell a story about a time when we lose ownership of our physical body, a time when even our physical bodies are a service provided by a company," says Gemini.

Dastidar, who hails from Durgapur, West Bengal, has studied direction and screenplay writing from FTII. About how he conceived the idea of The Flowering Man,

he says, "There is this popular childhood lore that if you swallow the seed of a fruit, a plant will start growing in your body, in winter when we would have oranges everyone would say spit out the seed, or a plant will start growing. I used to wonder how this is so unreal and what if somebody has done it. How would we see that person walking on the road, in the bus or a train with a plant coming out of their mouth, there is some kind of absurdity to that image, that stayed back with me." In another story, a man undergoes metamorphosis when a flowering plant starts growing from inside his mouth. In another story, a man undergoes metamorphosis when a flowering plant starts growing from inside his mouth. (A still from The Flowering Man) But Dastidar wanted to do more with that image and see what layers he could add to a story. So came the idea of his Shashi's transition from a human being to a plant and also his transition in gender from a father as a man to a father as a woman to his daughter. About the reality that Dastidar's experimental fantasy is rooted in, he says, "I have met a lot of older queer people. Today, the idea of coming out is very different from even ten years ago. In the 80s and 90s, when there was not much awareness, people gave into the norms of heteronormative society, and there was an older generation of queer people in traditional family structures. Coming out can happen at any time; for some, it comes in 15 to 20 years, but for someone else, it might also take 40 years."

When the character Shashi doesn't feel comfortable in his body anymore, a plant starts growing, and the seed of repressed sexuality finally starts blooming. However, at a point in the movie, his daughter confesses to him, "I was so angry with you. I was talking to a friend, and I said my father is dead." "That's a violent statement from a daughter," says Dastidar, who highlights that as children we always have a complaint with our parents that they don't understand us and we feel that they are supposed to. "But on our part we also have to understand who they are, I don't think we give them that kind of space to be comfortable themselves," he says. The Flowering Man had its world premiere at MAMI last year and was also screened at numerous film festivals after that. Both the films were also recently screened at MIFF.

Other FTII films shortlisted for IDSFFK are Waterman by Vishwas K and Akka River & Songs by Sanika Mulye. Sunflowers Were The First Ones To Know by Chidananda Naik, which won the first prize of La Cinef at Cannes this year, will also be screened. About what a screening at IDSFFK means to him, Dastidar says, "This film festival only focuses on non-fiction and short films. Otherwise, at other festivals, people only run for fiction feature films. It is important to dedicate space for smaller films because I believe innovation mostly happens through shorter pieces of work because stakes are low for experimentation."

'Crass politics of shaming fellow Indians': BJP leaders slam Shashi Tharoor's jibe over paper leaks in UP



GNS News Agency, June 28

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor landed in fresh controversy on Sunday, following his social media jibe over the alleged NEET and NET paper leaks in Uttar Pradesh.

The answer read, "Woh pradesh jahan pariksha se pehle uttar pata chal jaye use Uttar Pradesh kehte hain (The state where the answers are known before the exams is called Uttar Pradesh)." Referring to Tharoor as a "self entitled global citizen", former union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the post was a part of "shameless crass politics of shaming other fellow Indians".

Shameless crass politics of shaming other fellow Indians – that's the Congress way, ably demonstrated by this self-titled Global citizen.?? It was just a few months ago, another of Cong "global citizens" Pitroda described Indians as Africans, Chinese, Middle eastern etc. Likening the post to Sam Pitroda's remarks, Chandrasekhar said that it was just a few months ago that "another of Cong's 'global citizens'" had "described Indians as Africans, Chinese, Middle eastern etc".

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the three-time MP "frequently indulges in satirizing various cultures (first Northeast and now UP) with remarkably caustic words". "He has succumbed to the beguiling whispers of lunacy, his mind adrift in the ethereal mists of derangement," Sarma added, in what seemed to be an imitation of Tharoor's style of speech. Questioning whether the Congress and the Samajwadi Party would take action against Tharoor, BJP National Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said that the Thiruvananthapuram MP-elect had "insulted Land of Shri Ram & Shri Krishna – Uttar Pradesh with his tweet". Former union minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said that Tharoor had resorted to "frivolity", adding that the Congress leader was condemning the people of an entire state. "You don't see UP as yours, since you are deriding it," the Rajasthan minister wrote in a post on X.

Union Home Minister Shah suggests creation of large ponds in northeast, use of ISRO data for flood control

GNS News Agency, June 28

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said at least 50 large ponds should be created in the northeast to divert water of the Brahmaputra to help tackle floods and develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism. Chairing a review meeting on preparedness for flood management during the monsoon, Shah also emphasised on optimum use of satellite imagery provided by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for flood and water management. Shah said efforts should be made to upgrade the forecast system of water level of rivers for better flood management.

He said at least 50 large ponds should be created in the northeast so that the water of the Brahmaputra can be diverted and stored in these ponds, according to an official statement. This will help develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism in those areas at a low cost and also help tackle floods, eventually benefiting the local economy, he added. Recurring flooding of the Brahmaputra is a major issue for Assam and the northeastern region as it claims scores of lives and inundates thousands of hectares of land every year. Many people were killed, hundreds rendered homeless and communication lines and road networks snapped in Sikkim and Uttarakhand in the last few years following flash floods created due to the glacial lake outburst, which has become another major concern for the government during monsoon. The home minister said the natural drainage system should be an integral part of the designs of road construction to deal with their inundation in case of floods. Shah said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's disaster management is moving forward with a 'zero casualty approach'.

He instructed the departments concerned to conduct a detailed study of the recent floods in Sikkim and Manipur and submit a report to the Union home ministry. The home minister said flood monitoring centres of the Central Water Commission (CWC) should be in accordance with the requirements and of international standards.

Shah emphasised on the need to integrate weather, rainfall and flood warning related apps developed by various departments. He also reviewed long-term measures to formulate a comprehensive and far-reaching policy to mitigate the menace of floods in the country, the statement said. During the meeting, the home minister also reviewed the action taken on the decisions made during last year's meeting. Along with this, new technologies being adopted by all the agencies and the expansion of their network for flood management were also discussed. Shah appealed to all states and Union Territories to timely implement the advisories issued by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for flood management. He directed the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the CWC to complete the process of



recalibrating all the equipment used in flood forecast at the earliest.

He also directed to ensure that floodgates of all major dams are in good condition. The home minister said the non-perennial rivers are prone to more soil erosion and siltation, resulting in floods. He instructed the NDMA and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to take appropriate precautionary measures to prevent incidents of forest fire. For this, the home minister stressed on the need to regularly remove dry leaves and conduct mock drills with local residents and forest personnel.

Along with this, he also asked to analyse the incidents of repeated forest fires at the same place. Shah asked the NDMA to prepare a detailed manual to deal with incidents of forest fires. He directed that the IMD's alerts regarding lightning strikes should be disseminated to the public on time through SMS, TV, FM radio and other media. He emphasised on the need to integrate weather, rainfall and flood warning related apps developed by various departments so that their benefits could reach the targeted population. Shah directed that since the community is the first responder at the time of any disaster, there should be coordination and integration in the community awareness programmes being run by various agencies so that they can have the maximum impact. During the meeting, IMD, CWC, NDMA and the National Disaster Response Force made detailed presentations. The departments concerned also provided information on the action taken on the home minister's instructions given during last year's review meeting. They also apprised him about the preparedness for the current monsoon season and the future action plan. Every year, large swathes of Bihar, Assam and other eastern states are inundated due to a rise in the water level of various rivers due to monsoon rains.

Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and a few other states also encounter landslides and other rain-related issues during the monsoon. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Jammu and Kashmir have also witnessed flooding in recent years. Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and top officials attended the meeting.

Exit polls loss-making venture: Axis My India chief

GNS News Agency, June 28

"Exit polls are a loss-making venture because no media house will pay as much money as that invested on the ground ... the only profit that we make in exit polls is that we get visibility which we do not get while doing market research for corporate clients," he said. In an interaction with PTI editors at the agency's headquarters, Gupta said 70 per cent of his clientele is corporate clients and that is where the main revenue comes from. Gupta said, "Besides the other investments we make on ground ... every surveyor gets Rs 500 for a hitting the bull's eye (for an accurate prediction) and we covered 3,605 assembly constituencies (in this election). There are other incentives too depending upon the accuracy of prediction." "So, if all would have gone right, this money would have gone but its (company's) brand equity would have been high ... though it seems as a loss monetarily but its profit in terms of visibility," he said. Gupta said his company will go for a stock market listing once its other businesses, which are currently in the pipeline, turn profitable. Born in Waraseoni, a village in Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat, Gupta after working with the Thomson Press in Delhi moved to Mumbai in 1993 to work with an advertising agency. "I was the first to use utility bills for advertising and the idea proved to be very profitable back then," Gupta, 55, said.

He later went to the Harvard Business School and after returning to India, he began his career as pollster in 2013. Out of 65 elections, Gupta said, he accurately predicted 60. Gupta, became the centre of a controversy when the opposition alleged that he deliberately predicted a clean sweep for the BJP to manipulate the stock market, which hit a record high after the exit polls were announced and crashed on the day of counting, June 4. For the 2024



Gupta said his company will go for a stock market listing once its other businesses, which are currently in the pipeline, turn profitable.

elections, Axis My India predicted 361-401 seats for the BJP-led alliance and 131-166 seats for the opposition INDIA bloc in the 543-member Lok Sabha. "Out of 64 crore voters, we spoke to 5.82 lakh voters, which is a representational sample size. We covered 3,607 assembly constituencies, over 22,000 villages. Our on-ground interviews are monitored by a team, there is no possibility of any manipulation or bias," he said. Asked about whether Axis My India will go for a stock market listing as being planned earlier, Gupta said, "We are working on few products which are ready to be rolled out. Once they are successful, we will go for a stock market listing"

Four news channels off air in Andhra Pradesh post polls; YSRCP reaches out to TRAI

GNS News Agency, June 28

Some news channels have gone off air at several places in Andhra Pradesh following the declaration of the results of the Assembly and Parliamentary elections with an opposition YSRCP Parliamentarian alleging coercion by the state government leading to them being blocked. Allegations of channels- TV9, NTV, 10TV and Sakshi TV- being blocked have been levelled against the NDA government, comprising TDP, BJP and Janasena. YSRCP Rajya Sabha member S Niranjan Reddy complained to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) over the alleged blocking of these four vernacular news channels by the government. In a recent letter to TRAI, Reddy claimed the Andhra Pradesh Cable TV Operators Association took these four channels off air due to alleged coercion by the TDP-led government in the state.

"I am compelled to bring to your (TRAI) esteemed attention the illegal resolution passed by the Andhra Pradesh Cable TV Operators Association under pressure and directions from the newly formed government to permanently block several news channels," Reddy said. He alleged TV9, NTV, 10TV and Sakshi TV were blocked "without any lawful justification or procedural compliance." Overwhelmed by a negative publicity onslaught over several years allegedly by rivals, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had established Sakshi newspaper and television channel around 2008 to disseminate a counter narrative. Meanwhile, a local multi-system operator (cable TV service provider) from the Godavari region confirmed these four channels were blocked. "Yes, these four channels were blocked and this decision would have been taken at the management level and we have no role to play. The management does not consult us," the operator who did not wish to identify herself told PTI on Sunday.

She observed the channels which allegedly took a supportive role to the erstwhile YSRCP government were taken off air while noting that the new channels currently being telecast include TV5, ABN Andhrajyothi and ETV. Except satellite television service providers such as Tata Play and others, the operator noted that most multi-system operators and AP FibreNet took these channels off air, which were allegedly viewed as pro-YSRCP media houses. The operator, who services up to 300 households with cable TV connections observed that the blockade began even before N Chandrababu Naidu took oath as the Chief Minister.

Mizoram seeks Rs 237.6 crore assistance from Centre to address damage caused by Cyclone Remal

GNS News Agency, June 28

Rescue work underway after a stone quarry collapsed amid heavy rain in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, in Aizawl district. (PTI file) Rescue work underway after a stone quarry collapsed amid heavy rain in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, in Aizawl district. The Mizoram government has requested monetary assistance amounting to Rs 237.6 crore from the Centre for rehabilitation of people and repair the damages caused by landslides and rain that hit the state in the last week of May as a result of Cyclone Remal, state Disaster Management and Rehabilitation Minister K Sapdanga said

Sapdanga said Chief Minister Lalduhoma, who is

currently in Delhi, on Thursday submitted a memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and detailed the extent of the damage caused by Cyclone Remal and sought financial assistance from the Centre. The recent landslides, rain, and other calamities resulting from the cyclone killed 34 people and caused significant damage to public and private property, Sapdanga added. During a meeting of an inter-ministerial team representing various Union ministries and state departments in Aizawl on Saturday, Sapdanga highlighted that the damages were far more devastating and widespread than initially predicted. The minister expressed gratitude to the inter-ministerial team for visiting Mizoram to conduct spot verification of the damages caused by the cyclone.

Adelaide shopping mall evacuated over reports of mass brawl, armed men



GNS News Agency, June 28

Westfield Marion, Adelaide's largest shopping centre, was evacuated and locked down following a violent altercation between two groups of reportedly armed young men in the food court, police said. A shopping mall in Australia's Adelaide was evacuated and locked down on Sunday afternoon following a fight between two groups of young men, some reportedly armed, in the food court area, police said. South Australian police said they re-

ceived reports of an altercation at the Westfield Marion shopping centre and responded to the scene. The shopping centre's management had already initiated an evacuation and lockdown. Videos shared on social media showed chaotic scenes at the mall as people rushed for the exits and armed police officers swarming the building. Armed police responded after the Westfield Marion mall in Adelaide was locked down following reports of an armed individual. South Australia Police issued a statement: A thorough search of the premises was conducted, but police were unable to locate either group involved. Sistant Commissioner Scott Duval assured the public that there was no ongoing threat. "Based on the available evidence, this appears to be a targeted incident, not a random attack," Duval said, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corp. While no injuries were reported in the altercation itself, a 77-year-old woman reportedly fell during the evacuation and may have suffered a fracture, reported Reuters. A young girl, believed to be 14, may have also sustained injuries during the evacuation process. The incident comes after an attack at a Sydney mall less than three months ago, where a man went on a rampage with a knife, killing six people.

Trump's gesture for young fan in wig and suit: Photo-op, autographed \$20 bill

GNS News Agency, June 28

In a heartwarming moment that has gone viral, Donald Trump encountered a young supporter dressed like him at a campaign stop. As the child burst into tears of joy, Trump took photos with him and gave him a signed \$20 bill. Former US President Donald Trump brought a young supporter to tears of joy during a surprise campaign stop in Philadelphia on Saturday. According to a Daily Mail report, the young fan, named Timmy, was seen wearing a navy-blue suit, red tie, and blonde wig resembling Trump's signature style.

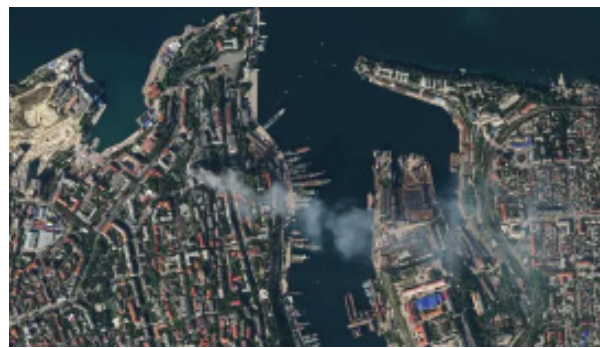
Trump warmly greeted the boy, gifted him a signed \$20 bill, and posed for a photo amidst a crowd of onlookers and security personnel. The heartwarming moment was captured on camera and the video has gone viral. During the interaction, Trump told the crowd, "I like that kid!" He also made a light-hearted remark to Timmy, who was overwhelmed with emotion on meeting his idol. "If your parents don't want you, I'll take you," Trump quipped.

The encounter between Trump and his young fan when the presumptive Republican presidential nominee made an unexpected stop at Tony and Nick's Steaks, a popular food joint in Philadelphia, in the battleground state of Pennsylvania. During his visit, Trump reportedly left a generous \$500 tip and wrote "no taxes on tips" on the receipt. It was a nod to his plan for tax-free tips for restaurant workers, a move tailored to resonate with blue-collar communities, even in a predominantly Democratic



city like Philadelphia. The highlight of Trump's Philadelphia visit was his rally at Temple University, where he criticised President Joe Biden's economic policies, citing a purported 34 per cent approval rating for Biden among Pennsylvanians, Fox News reported. Addressing supporters at the Liacouras Center's 10,000-seat auditorium, Trump said, "Few communities have suffered more under the Biden regime than Philadelphia. 'Hitting out at Biden over the issues of crime and safety, he claimed, 'Under crooked Joe, the city of brotherly love is being ravaged by bloodshed and crime.' Trump assured the crowd that his administration would bring "law and order and safety back to our streets." Pennsylvania's significance in the electoral landscape is pivotal, with its 19 electoral votes potentially determining the outcome of the November election.

Ukraine missile attack on Crimea kills three, injures over a hundred



GNS News Agency, June 28

Sevastopol, a Black Sea port city and naval base on the Russian annexed Crimean Peninsula, has been attacked by Ukraine but the latest attack was highly deadly. Fragments hit beachgoers in Sevastopol after at least one missile was intercepted by air defences and exploded in the air, according to officials. Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote on Telegram that two children and one adult had died. A Russian health ministry official told RIA Novosti news agency that 124 people were injured, including 27 children. Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine used US-supplied weapons in the attack and accused it of using cluster munitions. Sevastopol, a Black Sea port city and naval base on the Crimean peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014, regularly comes under fire from Ukraine but Sunday's attack was unusually deadly. Razvozhayev said the attack hit Uchkuyevka, an area with sandy beaches and hotels. Videos posted on social media showed people running from the beach as explosions go off and people in swimming outfits carrying a stretcher. AFP could not verify their authenticity. A local news channel on Telegram, ChP Sevastopol, cited witnesses as saying that an elderly woman was killed as she swam in the sea. The investigative committee, which probes major crimes, said it was opening

an investigation into "a terrorist act".

The governor said Ukraine had launched five missiles which Russian air defences intercepted over the sea but fragments fell onto the shore area and shrapnel wounded people. Razvozhayev said missile fragments hit beach areas in the north of the city and set fire to a house and woodland. A Russian defence ministry statement said Ukraine committed a "terrorist attack on the civilian infrastructure of Sevastopol with US-supplied ATACMS tactical missiles loaded with cluster warheads". The ministry said four missiles were downed and a fifth changed trajectory after being intercepted "with its warhead exploding in the air over the city". Ukraine's military has not commented on the attack, which came a day after a Russian guided bomb strike on the city of Kharkiv hit an apartment building, killing two people and injuring more than 50.

On Sunday, another Russian strike hit a house in the city, killing one and injuring five, regional governor Oleg Syneubov said. Kharkiv mayor Igor Terekhov said three people were wounded by a separate strike on a children's educational facility. A drone launched by Ukraine on Russia's southern Belgorod region on Sunday killed a man, the governor said. Three Ukrainian attack drones struck Graivoron, near the border with Ukraine, said Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, with one hitting a car park near a multi-storey block of flats. "A peaceful civilian was killed. The man died from his wounds at the spot" and three people were wounded, Gladkov wrote on Telegram. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in a social media post urged supporter countries to help Ukraine step up attacks on Russian soil. "We have enough determination to destroy terrorists on their territory - it is only fair -- and we need the same determination from our partners. We can stop Russia," Zelensky wrote. This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.

New Mexico wildfires: FBI offers reward for information about those responsible

GNS News Agency, June 28

Federal authorities offered a reward for information about those responsible for igniting a pair of New Mexico wildfires that killed two people and destroyed hundreds of homes in the past week. The FBI on Saturday offered up to USD 10,000 for information in connection with the South Fork Fire and Salt Fire in southern New Mexico, which forced thousands to flee. An agency statement said it was seeking public assistance in "identifying the cause" of the fires near Ruidoso, New Mexico, that were discovered June 17. But the notice also pointedly suggested human hands were to blame, saying the reward was for information leading to arrest and conviction of "the person or persons responsible for starting the fires." The South Fork Fire, which reached 26 square miles (67 square kilometres), was 26 per cent contained on Saturday, while the Salt Fire, at 12 square miles (31 square kilometres), was 7 per cent contained as of Saturday morning, according to the National Interagency Fire Centre. Full containment was not expected until July 15.

Recent rains and cooler weather have assisted more than 1,000 firefighters working to contain the fires. Fire crews on Saturday took advantage of temperatures in the 70s Fahrenheit (21 to 26 Celsius), scattered showers and light winds to use bulldozers to dig protective lines while hand crews used shovels in more rugged terrain to battle the fires near the mountain village of Ruidoso. Elsewhere in New Mexico, heavy rain and flash flood warnings prompted officials to order some mandatory evacuations Friday in the city of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and communities near Albuquerque, about 200 miles (320 kilometres) north of Ruidoso. Las Vegas set up shelters for displaced residents, and some evacuation orders remained in place there on Saturday. Flash flood warnings were cancelled Saturday, though the National Weather Service said afternoon storms could produce excessive runoff and more flooding in the area.

The wildfires have destroyed or damaged an estimated 1,400 structures. Other fallout from the fires, including downed power lines, damaged water, sewer and gas lines, flooding in burn scars, continued "to pose risks to firefighters and the public," according to a Saturday update from the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natu-



ral Resources Department. Evacuations in areas near Ruidoso and road closures were still in effect. In Ruidoso, full-time residents will be allowed to return Monday, though everyday life won't return to normal. "You're going to need to bring a week's worth of food, you're going to need to bring drinking water," Mayor Lynn Crawford said on Facebook. President Joe Biden issued a disaster declaration for parts of southern New Mexico on Thursday, freeing up funding and more resources to help with recovery efforts including temporary housing, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property and other emergency work in Lincoln County and on lands belonging to the Mescalero Apache Tribe. Deanne Criswell, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, met with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Crawford and Mescalero Apache President Thora Walsh Padilla on Saturday. "These communities have our support for as long as it takes to recover," Criswell posted on the social media platform X. Much of the Southwest has been exceedingly dry and hot in recent months. Those conditions, along with strong wind, whipped the flames out of control, rapidly advancing the South Fork Fire into Ruidoso in a matter of hours. Evacuations extended to hundreds of homes, businesses, a regional medical center and the Ruidoso Downs horse track. Nationwide, wildfires have scorched more than 3,344 square miles (8,660 square kilometres) this year, a figure higher than the 10-year average, according to the National Interagency Fire Centre. This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.

Floods maroon Iowa, heatwave in other states: US faces double whammy

GNS News Agency, June 28

The US faced contrasting weather with Iowa getting hit heavy rain in the past few days while the remaining parts of the country reeled under an intense heatwave and the weather office issuing a heat advisory for the next few days. Floodwaters forced people out of their homes in parts of Iowa, the result of weeks of rain, while much of the US longed for relief on Saturday from yet another round of extraordinary heat. Sirens blared at 2 am in Rock Valley, Iowa, with a population of 4,200, where people in hundreds of homes were told to get out as the Rock River could no longer take the rain that had slammed the region. The city lacked running water because wells were unusable.

Mayor Kevin Van Otterloo said a state helicopter was on its way to help but was called off when boats were able to reach stranded residents. "We've had so much rain here," he said. "We had four inches last night in an hour and a half. Our ground just cannot take anymore." Governor Kim Reynolds declared a disaster for 21 counties in northern Iowa, including Sioux County, which includes Rock Valley. In a drone video posted by the local sheriff, no streets were visible, just roofs and treetops poking above the water. In South Dakota, Gov. Kristi Noem declared an emergency after the southeastern part of the state received heavy rainfall. The town of Canton, 48 kilometres southeast of Sioux Falls, has received 18 inches of rain. Several highways were closed, including a key stretch of Interstate 29 south of Sioux Falls that later reopened. Sioux Falls, the state's largest city, had more than seven inches of rain in three days. "Even though the rain is slowing down, we need to keep vigilant," said Noem. "The worst of the flooding along our rivers will be Monday and Tuesday."

Elsewhere in the US, the miserable grip of heat and humidity continued. The National Weather Service said roughly 15 million people were under a heat warning — the highest level of alert — while another 90 million were under a heat advisory. Millions across the country have had their lives disrupted by stretches of unusually high temperatures. Last year, the US experienced the most heatwaves since 1936, experts said. An AP analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that excessive heat contributed to more than 2,300 deaths, the highest in 45 years of records. Temperatures around 37.8 degrees Celsius were predicted for Washington, DC, and Richmond, Virginia, while Philadelphia; Newark, New Jersey; Columbus, Ohio; and Detroit were bracing for temperatures above 32 degrees Celsius.

Heat-related hospital visits in New York state lately were 500 per cent higher than on the average June day, according to the Department of Health. "We still have this prolonged heat wave across portions of the Ohio Valley and into the Northeast," weather service meteorologist Marc Chenard said. "We get a little bit of relief by early in the week, at least in the eastern US, the Northeast, but in general above-normal temperatures are going to cover a large portion of the country even into next week." In southeastern Michigan, DTE Energy said 7,400 customers remained without power as of Saturday afternoon due to storm-related outages, down from 75,000 earlier in the week. A heat index of 37.8 Celsius didn't stop Florida couple Judy and Bill Watson from watching the Tigers



play the White Sox at Detroit's Comerica Park. Their afternoon visit was a milestone: Bill Watson has now seen games at all 30 MLB ballparks.

"We're from Florida. You might be interviewing the wrong people about heat," the 71-year-old Bradenton man said with a smile. "We drank water and beer occasionally. We were just happy it didn't get rained out." Across the country in California, temperatures in the state's Central Valley were expected to reach as high as 41.1 Celsius, and the NWS issued a heat advisory through 8 pm. Nearly 4,000 homes and businesses in Sacramento lost power for less than an hour in the middle of the day, the Sacramento Bee reported. In Iowa, power was cut off at wastewater treatment plants in Hawarden and Spencer, which together have 14,000 residents. Aiden Engelkes said he and his girlfriend grabbed clothes, cats and bottled water and left their flooded first-floor apartment in Spencer for a friend's dry space on the fourth floor. His Chevy SUV was under the roiling water outside, except for a bit of its antenna. Across the street, he said, friends were on a roof waiting for help. While the chances for rain were forecast as small into the middle of next week, the National Weather Service predicted expanded flooding before then in the area as high water moved downstream on several rivers in northern Iowa.

Flooding also closed state highways and county roads in southern Minnesota. Windom, a town of about 4,800 people, received 1.25 inches of rain on top of earlier heavy downpours, and the Des Moines River there had a record crest. "We're having a tough time just keeping up, putting up barricades," city council member Jenny Quaid said. "We put barricades up, and then all of a sudden, the water's rising so much, the barricade's way back in the water." In New Mexico, heavy rain and flash flood warnings prompted officials to order some evacuations, with shelters set up for displaced residents. The NWS announced a flash flood emergency on Friday night through early Saturday. The impacted areas included the city of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and communities near Albuquerque. In Ruidoso, a mountain village in New Mexico, full-time residents will be allowed to return Monday after they were forced out by wildfires, though everyday life won't return to normal. "You're going to need to bring a week's worth of food, you're going to need to bring drinking water," Mayor Lynn Crawford said on Facebook.

Buckingham Fountain in Chicago closed after it was dyed red by vandals

The historic Buckingham Fountain has been closed "under further notice" following a vandalism attack, the Chicago Park District said Saturday. Protesters dyed the fountain's water red and spray-painted certain areas around the plaza. Staffers say the monument was thrashed after 11 p.m. local time when the fountain was turned off. Damage was discovered "in and around" the fountain when officers responded to calls of vandalism, the authorities said.

It is believed that vandals dumped a highly concentrated but non-toxic pond dye, causing the entire fountain to turn red, per CBS 2. Slogans like "Gaza is bleeding" and "Stop genocide" were scrawled on the bricks around the plaza. While the writings have been removed, the fountain will remain closed indefinitely for maintenance. A routine check is conducted every



A routine check is conducted every morning before the fountain is turned on. When staffers noticed the issue Saturday morning, the Chicago landmark was abruptly closed, leaving tourists and visitors disappointed. Authorities reported that no injuries or arrests took place.

morning before the fountain is turned on. When staffers noticed the issue Saturday morning, the Chicago landmark was abruptly closed, leaving tourists and visitors disappointed. Authorities reported that no injuries or arrests took place. "I expected to see water! I mean, come on, and yeah,

it's a little disappointing," said Tom Martin, who was visiting from Washington. "I'm somewhat sympathetic to what they're trying to accomplish, but this is not the way," Tom added, per CBS. By Saturday afternoon, the dyed water was drained into Lake Michigan via large pipes, turning part of the lakeshore

red. Meanwhile, Karen Wintz, who was visiting from the New Orleans area, said, "We've been walking all day, and I'm like, what? And so I go to my phone to see what hours it comes on, because I thought maybe it is a night thing — and that's when I found the news article that it had been, I guess, vandalized."

Thermal plants fire up coal as capacity addition lags, private sector interest wanes



(CEA), nearly 24 GW of thermal capacity was added against a target of 50 GW. In FY24, 6.2 GW was added against a target of 14.7 GW, a shortfall of 58 per cent. The most capacity added in the last five years was in FY20, which was 6.8 GW with a shortfall of 34 per cent.

Private sector takes a backseat The contribution of the private sector over the last five years was just 1.7 GW, or 7 per cent of the total thermal capacity added. In FY21 and FY23, the private sector added zero thermal capacity. The absence of the private sector is also apparent in capacity that is currently under-construction—of the total 29.4 GW distributed across 22 projects, private capacity under-construction is just 1.6 GW held by one project owned by a subsidiary of Adani Power Limited. A total of 26 private projects with a capacity of almost 24 GW are currently either on hold or not likely to be commissioned.

R Shankar Raman, CFO of Larsen & Toubro Limited, India's largest construction company that also builds power plants, in a recent earnings call said that "all the power investment has ceased because all the power producers, the private capital who backed it, are all in NCLT in different forms". In addition to insolvency proceedings plaguing the private sector, the estimated capital cost for setting up of new coal-fired thermal capacity has also gone up to Rs 8.34 crore per MW. For contrast, the cost for setting up 1 MW of solar power can be half as much. "The cost of putting up a power plant has definitely gone up because we have seen a lot of international banks walk away from financing coal-fired projects. When you borrow from international banks, the interest rate is much lower but when you borrow from local institutions, then the interest rate can go up to double digits. That means that you're really not able to finance your project at the cheaper level. But countries like China continue to add huge capacities. In the last couple of years, China has added almost 218 GW coal-fired capacities, which is half of India's current total power generation," Deepak Kannan, Global Head of Coal Pricing at S&P Global Commodity Insights, told The Indian Express. "I don't blame anybody for sticking to coal because that is the only way out from a policy perspective. For the industries, you still have to rely on coal for 24x7 power supply, especially in developing economies. It makes more sense for the government to promote solar power in villages where they don't run motors throughout the day or in homes where you run a few appliances but require less battery capacities," Kannan added. Leading private companies in the power sector have thus far sent mixed signals. In addition to the under-construction capacity of 1.6 GW in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, Adani Power also plans to add 1.6 GW more in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh. Tata Power Company Limited, on the other hand, does not plan any greenfield investment in thermal capacity in the next 2 to 3 years, executives confirmed in the QY4FY24 earnings call.

"Well, as you know, we have seen the FDRE (firm and dispatchable renewable energy) projects are going to be the new future. And the number of bids that are expected are very large, where you get a certainty of getting renewable power. There is huge pressure. It is not only about supply, but there is a huge pressure from the customer side also that they want to transition to clean energy, whether it is industry or commercial or even residential consumer," Praveer Sinha, CEO of Tata Power, said in the earnings call on May 8. The future of FDRE, which employs energy storage systems to consistently supply renewable power to consumers, is yet to be settled with industry leaders sharing varied views on the economic feasibility of battery energy storage systems (BESS). Many see utility-scale adoption of BESS only from 2030 onwards. "The sharp growth in electricity demand is necessitating a rethink from the Government on thermal capacity addition, with push for investments in new thermal power projects including by the private sector, with the target of adding 80 GW of new thermal power capacity by 2032 to meet the growing energy needs. Given the long gestation period, it is imperative for the power generation companies to initiate work on these projects over the next 18 to 24 months to meet the 2032 timeline," ICRA noted in a power sector update late last year. The growth in generation and capacity addition mismatch comes at a time when the Power Ministry has been increasingly relying on thermal plants to meet demand in peak hours when renewable sources like solar do not generate electricity. Over the last few weeks, it instructed 15 imported coal-fired and all gas-based thermal plants to be operational during the summer months, with temperatures hitting record highs.

Could men be getting birth control soon? Know all about the possible newest offering showing promise



For decades, men's birth control options have been limited. But exciting news is emerging! Researchers are making significant progress on a long-acting and reversible birth control method specifically for men. This experimental product takes the form of a once-daily hormonal gel applied to the shoulders. Similar to birth control pills for women, the gel disrupts sperm production in the testes. It contains two key ingredients: nestorone, a progestin, and testosterone, the male sex hormone. Nestorone works by suppressing the natural production of testosterone within the testes, thereby hindering sperm development, explained Dr Priyanka Suhag, Consultant, Dept of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi.

However, testosterone plays a crucial role in various bodily functions, including muscle maintenance and libido. To ensure men's health, the gel provides just enough testosterone to maintain normalcy while effectively limiting sperm production. Since 2005, researchers have been meticulously refining the gel's dosage and concentration. Recent trials involving over 300 couples

appear to have yielded the optimal formula. A healthy sperm count typically falls between 15 million and 200 million per millilitre of semen. Studies have shown that counts below 1 million are sufficient to prevent pregnancy. Encouragingly, the trial demonstrated that 86% of participants achieved this desired low sperm count within 15 weeks of using the gel. For some men, it worked even faster, suppressing sperm production within just 4-8 weeks. "Daily application to the shoulders and upper arms allows the gel to be absorbed through the skin, making it a convenient and non-invasive treatment option. This method of contraception aims to provide men with a reliable and reversible means of preventing pregnancy, offering a potential alternative to traditional male contraceptive methods," Dr Suhag explained in an interaction with indianexpress.com.

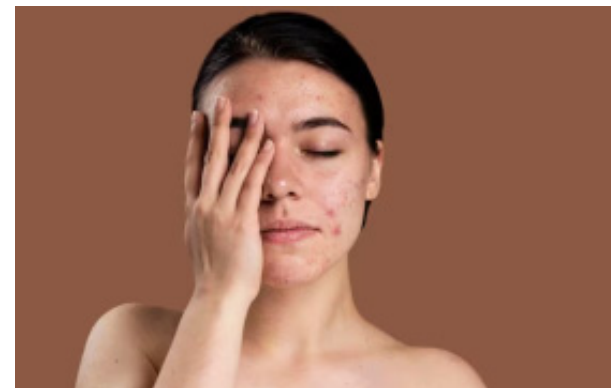
Why should making male birth control be a priority?

For the longest time, birth control and family planning have been the sole responsibility of women, especially in low-income households, but with the ushering in of male birth control, shared responsibility can be promoted. Dr Suhag noted that it also increases the number of available contraceptive options, so couples can choose the method they prefer. Many women face health issues or side effects that make hormonal birth control unsuitable, highlighting the need for alternative options like male birth control, she added. Compared to female contraceptives, male birth control, such as the topical Nestorone-Testosterone gel, is less invasive. While methods like IUDs and hormonal implants involve significant hormonal adjustments or invasive procedures, the gel is non-invasive, with fewer systemic side effects, according to Dr Suhag, making it a more straightforward and potentially more acceptable option for many men.

Pay attention to these signs on your face; here's what they can indicate about your health

Did you know that your face can reveal a lot about your overall health? From changes in skin colour and texture to the appearance of new lines or spots, these signs might be more than just cosmetic concerns. In this article, we'll explore how certain facial features can indicate various health conditions and why it's important to pay attention to these signals. Dr Ajay Rana, dermatologist, aesthetic physician and founder director of ILAMED says, "Subtle changes in facial features or skin condition can serve as external indicators of internal health problems because the skin is a visible organ that can reflect physiological imbalances." Common facial signs that may suggest specific health conditions: Several facial signs can suggest specific health conditions," says Dr. Charu Sharma, Head of Dermatology at Cureskin. However, she reminds us that they are not definitive diagnostic tools on their own.

Yellowing of skin and eyes: Could be a sign of serious liver problems like hepatitis or cirrhosis. Puffy face: Might indicate issues with your kidneys, heart, or thyroid gland. Dark circles: Tiredness, allergies, or anemia could be the reason behind those dark circles under your eyes. Acne and oily skin: Hormonal imbalances or PCOS might be causing these breakouts. Dry, flaky skin: This dryness could be due to thyroid problems or simply not drinking enough water. Poor nutrition can lead to deficiencies that affect skin health, such as lack of vitamins and minerals causing dry skin, acne, or pale complexion. Dr Sharma agrees that several emerging technologies are enhancing our ability to diagnose health concerns through facial analysis. "Advanced imaging techniques, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning algorithms are being developed to analyse facial features and skin conditions more accurately," she informs. For instance, she continues, AI can detect patterns and anomalies in skin texture, colour, and elasticity that might be overlooked by the human eye. Telemedicine platforms are also integrating these technologies, allowing for remote diagnosis and monitoring of patients. These



advancements hold great promise for early detection and personalised healthcare. She notes, "These technologies are still under development and require further research before widespread use. Hence, a doctor's advice is primitive to confirm or rule out any of the skin and health-related concerns."

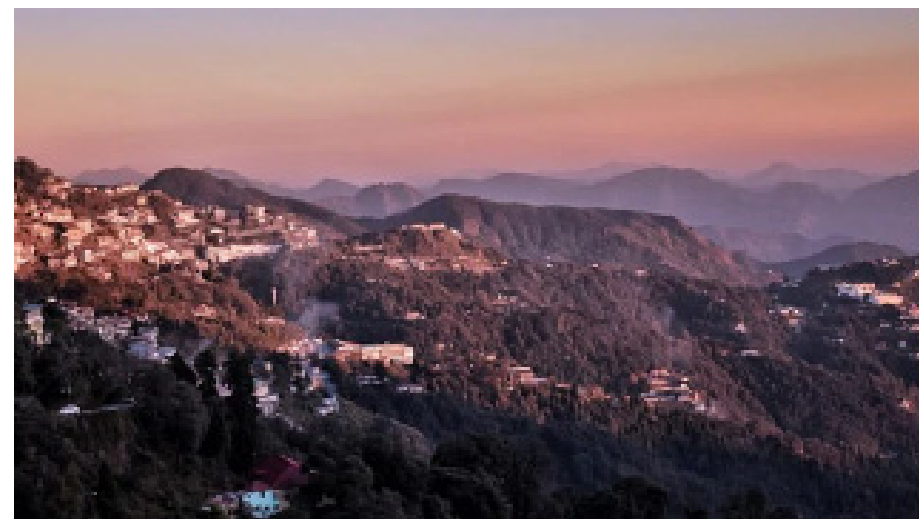
Lifestyle factors that significantly impact the appearance of our face: Lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, and sleep play a significant role in the appearance of our face and can signal health concerns, according to Dr Rana. Diet: Poor nutrition can lead to deficiencies that affect skin health, such as lack of vitamins and minerals causing dry skin, acne, or pale complexion. Conversely, a balanced diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals promotes healthy skin and can improve complexion. Exercise: Regular physical activity improves blood circulation, which nourishes skin cells and helps remove toxins, contributing to a healthier, more vibrant appearance. Lack of exercise, on the other hand, can lead to poor circulation and a dull complexion. Sleep: Adequate sleep is crucial for skin repair and regeneration. Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to dark circles, puffiness, and a sallow complexion, signaling stress and potential health issues.

After Swiss Alps, this unique phenomenon occurs only in Mussoorie

Mussoorie, the Queen of Hills, is a popular tourist destination renowned for its breathtaking views and serene atmosphere. But during the winter months, the skies above Mussoorie transform into an artist's canvas, showcasing a mesmerising phenomenon called the Winterline. Do you know the hill station is the only place in the world where this phenomenon occurs other than the Swiss Alps? For those who don't know, the Winterline is a distinct horizontal line that appears in the sky at dusk. It's formed due to a unique combination of atmospheric conditions. Here's the science behind it:

Temperature Inversion: During winter, warm air gets trapped below colder air in the valleys surrounding Mussoorie. This creates a temperature inversion, where the temperature increases with altitude instead of the usual decrease.

Dust and Refraction: Dust particles suspended in the colder air act as a barrier, bending the light rays from the setting sun. The result? A dramatic visual effect. As the sun dips below the horizon, its rays refract through the layers of air with different temperatures. This



For those who don't know, the Winterline is a distinct horizontal line that appears in the sky at dusk. It's formed due to a unique combination of atmospheric conditions. Here's the science behind it:

creates a visible demarcation line in the sky – the Winterline. The area above the line appears a lighter blue, while the region below, containing the dust particles, takes on a darker, more greyish hue.

When and where to witness the winterline

The winterline is a seasonal spectacle, typically gracing the skies of Mussoorie from late October to February. However, the exact timing can vary depending on weather conditions. The best chance of witnessing this

phenomenon is on clear evenings with minimal cloud cover.

Due to its dependence on atmospheric conditions, the visibility of the winterline can vary across locations. However, some vantage points in Mussoorie offer a better chance of experiencing this celestial magic. Here are a few suggestions: Mall Road: The bustling heart of Mussoorie provides a central location to witness the winterline. Lal Tibba: The highest point in Mussoorie, Lal Tibba offers panoramic

views, making it an ideal spot to observe the phenomenon. Gandhi Chowk: This popular square is another option, especially if you're exploring the town centre. The winterline is a fleeting yet captivating spectacle that adds to the charm of Mussoorie during winters. If you're planning a trip to this hill station during the winter months, keep your eyes peeled for the dramatic display of nature's artistry in the sky. You might just be rewarded with a glimpse of the mesmerising winterline.

Outlook for Indian economy remains bright on government's push on capex, fiscal consolidation: RBI

The outlook on growth of the Indian economy remains robust, given the government's sustained focus on capital expenditure while maintaining fiscal consolidation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its annual report for 2023-24. Strong corporate balance sheets, rising capacity utilisation, double digit credit growth, healthy financial sector, and the ongoing disinflation are likely to be other growth levers for the domestic economy, it added.

"The outlook for the Indian economy remains bright, underpinned by a sustained strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals, robust financial and corporate sectors and a resilient external sector," the annual report said. The government's continued thrust on capex while pursuing fiscal consolidation, and consumer and business optimism augur well for investment and consumption demand. Indian



economy expanded at a robust pace in 2023-24, with real GDP growth accelerating to 7.6 per cent from 7 per cent in the previous year — the third successive year of 7 per cent or above growth, as per the second advance estimates of National Income 2023-24 released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in February. The real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7 per cent with risks evenly balanced. The report said as

the headline inflation eases towards the 4 per cent target, it will spur consumption demand especially in rural areas. The RBI has projected consumer price-based inflation (CPI) or retail inflation to ease to 3.8 per cent in the July-September quarter. For FY25, inflation is projected at 4.5 per cent. The report said that the geopolitical tensions, geoeconomic fragmentation, global financial market

volatility, international commodity price movements and erratic weather developments pose downside risks to the growth outlook and upside risks to the inflation outlook. The economy would also have to navigate the medium-term challenges posed by rapid adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning (ML) technologies and recurrent climate shocks, it said.

Sonakshi Sinha, Zaheer Iqbal wedding first pics: Couple ties the knot with blessings of 'both our families, both our gods', turn off comments on Instagram



Actors Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal are finally married! The couple, who has been dating for years, opted for a low-key registered marriage and the civil ceremony took place at Sonakshi's apartment in Bandra, Mumbai, on Sunday evening. Both Sonakshi and Zaheer took to their Instagram handles to share wedding first photos. The couple was dressed in matching off-white outfits — while Sonakshi opted for a beautiful saree, Zaheer was in a kurta. They were surrounded by their loved ones, including father of the bride Shatrughan Sinha. He was seen standing besides Sonakshi as she signed the documents for her registered wedding.

"On this very day, seven years back (23.06.2017) in each others eyes, we saw love in its purest form and decided to hold on to it. Today that love has guided us through all the challenges and triumphs... leading up to this moment... where with the blessings of both our families and both our gods... we are now man and wife. Here's to love, hope and all things beautiful with each other, from now until forever," Sonakshi and Zaheer captioned the photos. However, both Sonakshi and Zaheer switched off comments from their Instagram photos in an attempt to ward off hate. The wedding ceremony was attended by family members and close friends, including her Heeramandi co-star Aditi Rao Hydari and fiancé and actor Siddharth. The pre-wedding festivities began on Saturday with pujas held at Sonakshi's family home, Ramayan. The Heeramandi actor, dressed in a blue kurta suit, attended the puja alongside her mother, Poonam Sinha. Before the puja, the couple hosted an indoor party

for friends and family on June 20, followed by a mehendi ceremony on June 21. Among the attendees were Sonakshi's parents, Shatrughan Sinha and Poonam Sinha. According to reports, they had also organised bachelor and bachelorette parties with their respective friends.

Shatrughan Sinha's presence at the party put to rest rumours that he disapproved of the union and would not attend the wedding. Speculation had arisen after Shatrughan mentioned to Times Now that he was "waiting to be informed" about his daughter's wedding. He said, "All I can say is, aaj kal ke bachche consent nahin lete maa-baap ke, sirf inform karte hain (Nowadays, children don't seek permission; they simply inform their parents)." Similarly, when Sonakshi's brother Luv Sinha was asked about the actor's wedding speculation, he refused to respond to ETimes and said, "I've no involvement in the matter." However, Shatrughan later dismissed such rumours and confirmed he would be present at the wedding and assured that he was with Sonakshi in her decision. "I will be there at the wedding, certainly. Why shouldn't I and why won't I? Her happiness is my happiness and vice versa. She has every right to choose her partner and the other details of her wedding," he told Zoom. Reports suggest that Sonakshi and Zaheer first met at a party, which was hosted by Salman Khan. They later started dating, but kept their relationship under wraps. They made their relationship official in 2023 after they appeared together at Aayush Sharma and Arpita Khari's Eid celebration.

After Bade Miyan Chote Miyan box-office debacle, Vasu Bhagnani sells Pooja Entertainment's Mumbai office to repay Rs 250 cr debt: report

When producer Vasu Bhagnani decided to make Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, starring Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff, he had high hopes for the film. Helmed by Ali Abbas Zafar, the actioner, made on a massive budget of Rs 350 crores, created a lot of buzz before its release but failed miserably at the box office. The film, produced by Bhagnani's Pooja Entertainment, was a dud which caused the production house massive financial loss; it came on the back of earlier flops. Recent news reports indicate that Bhagnani sold his Mumbai office to pay off a Rs 250 crore debt. He also significantly reduced the production house's workforce to recover from the financial losses. Nearly 80% of employees were let go, and the office was relocated to a two-bedroom flat in Mumbai, according to a report by Bollywood Hungama. The downsizing began in January after a Tiger Shroff movie, which had struggled for two years to get a theatrical release, was shelved. The production house has not responded to the report. "It all started with Bell Bottom, one of the first Hindi movies released in theatres post the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The film flopped badly at the box office, followed by another failure with Mission Raniganj. The company's troubles continued when the big-budget Ganapath failed to perform and was rejected by Netflix despite an acquisition deal. Financial red flags had already appeared by this point, and the significant investment in Bade Miyan Chote Miyan worsened the situation. Despite hoping that the ac-



"It all started with Bell Bottom, one of the first Hindi movies released in theatres post the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The film flopped badly at the box office, followed by another failure with Mission Raniganj

tion film starring Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff would improve their financial standing, its historic failure almost crippled the company. Vasu had no choice but to sell the building to pay off the enormous debt," a source familiar with the development told Bollywood Hungama.

Founded in 1986, Pooja Entertainment has produced around 40 films to date. The company achieved significant success with movies directed by David Dhawan, including Coolie No.1, Hero No.1, Biwi No.1, and Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, as well as critically acclaimed films like Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein and Om Jai Jagadish. However, its success has been overshadowed by recent box office failures. The production house encountered further difficulties after Bade Miyan Chote Miyan flopped at the box office, earning just Rs 59.17 crores despite a Rs

350 crore investment.

Previously, Pooja Entertainment faced criticism for delayed payments to several crew members, with many taking to Instagram to voice their grievances. Vaishnavi Palikar, who worked with the production house, wrote on her Instagram Story, "I did a movie 2 years ago with a very well-known production house. Me, along with at least 100 crew members, are awaiting our payments (2 months' salaries) since 2 years. Meanwhile, actors have been paid immediately because they are ACTORS. None of the producers have an answer to our question: Where is my hard-earned money? Most importantly, when can I get my hard-earned money?" "DON'T MISS Sonakshi Sinha, Zaheer Iqbal wedding live updates: Sonakshi-Zaheer to have their registered marriage at Heeramandi's actor apartment Ruchika Kamble, who shared Palikar's story, slammed Bhagnani, Jackky, and Deepshika Deshmukh for not paying the employees, highlighting that during the making of their film, they should realize that the film is going over budget. "The production house in question is @pooja_ent. The producers are @jackkybhagnani, @vashubhagnani, and @deepshikadeshmukh. Why shy away from tagging them? At every stage of making the film, when the producers realize the movie is going over budget yet take the decision of filming it but deny the crew their money, quoting all the money is exhausted, it is nothing less than harassment. Such unethical and unprofessional behavior doesn't need to be protected. We need to tag them and at least warn the rest of the people to stay away from this production house

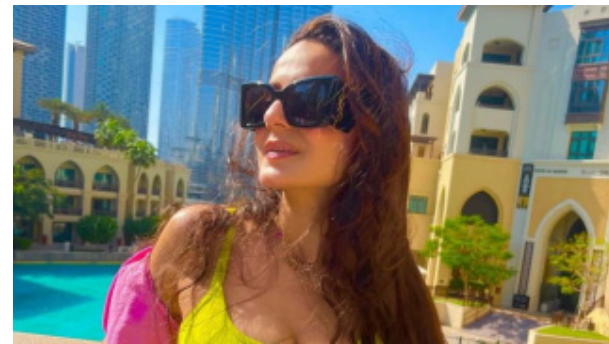
Ameesha Patel answers why she is not married, responds to fan who wants her to wed Salman Khan: 'What's your key point?'

Ameesha Patel, who was last seen in the blockbuster Gadar 2, a sequel to the 2001 film Gadar, may be away from the screens, but she ensures that she keeps treating her fans to her day-to-day updates and stays in touch with them through social media. In a fun AMA session on X (formerly Twitter), the Kaho Naa...Pyaar Hai actor candidly answered fan questions, revealing updates on Gadar 3 and Humraaz 2 and also spilling the beans on her marriage.

An X user asked Ameesha who her favourite star kid is, and without wasting time, she answered, "For me, the cutest kids in Bollywood have always been Kareena's son Taimur and SRK's Abram. These two are simply damn cute." When a fan asked her if she will be seen in Gadar 3, the actor answered, "As I said, if offered and if I'm super happy with my role, then only shall I do it. Mr. Anil Sharma is family to me and always will be. Our creative differences are for the betterment of the film, but our respect and fondness for each other go way deeper than all this. So yes, if we are on the same page, then I will happily do Gadar 3."

Answering a fan question about participating in Bigg Boss, she said, "I was in Bigg Boss as a MAALKIN years back. Ghar ke andar, not possible in this life for me. I would rather roam in London and shop than be inside. I love and respect others who are participating and admire them, but it's not for me for sure." The actor also praised Kartik Aaryan and said that she "always admired Kartik Aaryan." "He's a great dancer, a great actor, and very humble. Even in Chandu Champion, he's simply outstanding. He will surely be a 300 and 400 crore-plus star at the box office someday. He has all the potential to achieve it," she added.

When a fan poked fun that both Ameesha and Salman Khan are unmarried and if there is a possibility of the two getting married in the future, the 49-year-old joked, "Salman is not married and nor am I? So you feel we should get married? What's your key point for us to get married — shaadi or a film project?" The actor also revealed that she is willing to get married but is unable to



find a groom. "Ladka nahin mil raha hai. I am ready since long," she quipped. A fan tweeted, "In Gadar 3, can your screen time be increased, please? I genuinely slept in scenes where you were not there. I visit theatres with my hard-earned money to see you." Ameesha, defending the film and her role, replied, "Firstly, Gadar 2 was a great film, and the screenplay was executed as per the script; it's very important to keep that as the top priority if you want your film to be loved. As an actor, one can't be selfish and must keep the film before our needs. I love Sakina (her Gadar character) and I value the love you all have towards Sakina. But yes, if offered Gadar 3, I will surely only do it if I'm super happy with the script, as I was in Gadar 1." The actor during the session also spoke about Humraaz 2 being in the pipeline. "Script work is fully on for Humraaz 2 as per Abbas-Mustanji. My super cool Bobby has done a dhamaka in Animal, so we need a script of that level, which the directors and producers are working on. This is all I know. Once I know more, I will surely let all fans know," she shared. The questions that followed included fans asking her about her favourite superstar from the South, to which Ameesha responded, "I have worked with all of them. From Pawan Kalyan to Mahesh Babu to Junior NTR and also Balakrishna. In Tamil, I have worked with Vijay. They are all simply outstanding."

Telangana government approves extra shows and hiked ticket prices for Kalki 2898 AD, netizens express concern: 'Don't make movies a luxury'

Dystopian sci-fi epic Kalki 2898 AD, starring Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, among others, is finally arriving in theatres on June 27. Ahead of its release, the Telangana government has approved extra shows and higher ticket prices for the opening week.

News of a 5:30 AM show on release day in Telangana sent fans into a frenzy. However, the accompanying ticket price hike for the first eight days (Rs. 70 for single screens, Rs. 100 for multiplexes) caused some grumbles. While some are thrilled about the early show, others worry this pricing strategy might backfire. A user, sharing a copy of the permit, wrote on X (formerly Twitter), "Prabhas Kalki film ticket price hike, Telangana government approves extra shows. Ticket price hike is allowed for 8 days from 27th of this month to 4th of July. An increase of Rs.70 in regular theaters and Rs. 100 in multiplexes is allowed. On 27 the show starts at 5:30."

Social media buzzed with concerns about the impact of high ticket prices. One fan pointed out the Telugu film industry's struggle with early OTT releases, questioning if this is the right move. Another worried about piracy, suggesting that exorbitant prices might push people towards illegal streaming. A third user highlighted the financial strain of school fees in June, questioning the timing of the price hike.

"I think ticket price hike is going to KILL this movie."

Devoleena Bhattacharjee slams Armaan Malik and his wives, makers: 'This is not entertainment, it's filth'

With Bigg Boss OTT 3 well underway, the contestants for the Anil Kapoor-hosted show have already left tongues wagging. Armaan Malik and his two wives Payal and Kritika, especially, have invited some backlash on social media. While fans have been slamming the YouTube content creators for sending out the wrong message, there are various narratives also coming out about Armaan, which is further damaging his public image. Amidst all this flak, ex-Bigg Boss contestant and actress Devoleena Bhattacharjee has also slammed the makers in a long post on X (formerly known as Twitter) for sending out a wrong message to the audience by encouraging multiple marriages.

Reacting to Armaan, Payal, and Kritika's love story that was shared on the grand premiere, an angry Devoleena called this content filth in the name of entertainment. She even slammed the Bigg Boss makers for bringing 'such kind' of people on the show. Devoleena wrote, "Do you think this is entertainment? This is not entertainment, it's filth. Don't make the mistake of taking



this lightly because it's not just a reel, it's real. I mean, I can't even understand how anyone can call this shamelessness entertainment. I feel disgusted just hearing about it. Gross. I mean, in just 6/7 days love happened, marriage happened, and then the same thing with the wife's best friend. This is beyond my imagination."

Devoleena's reaction comes from another thread on Twitter from Lady Khabri that read, "Shameless Trio who don't even care about their kids and happily encourage polygamy are now in Bigg Boss OTT 3. Armaan Malik, Payal Malik,

Kritika Malik. It's pathetic to see how senseless the two ladies are, the guy is anyways shameless."

In her long post, Devoleena added, "And Bigg Boss, what has happened to you? Kya itne bure din chal rahe hai apke that you find polygamy entertaining? What were you thinking when you introduced such contestants? This show is watched by people from children to the elderly. What do you want to teach the new generation? That they can have 2-3-4 marriages? Everyone can live happily together? Go and ask those who suffer from such incidents ev-

ery day, living their lives in misery. This is why the Special Marriage Act and UCC (Uniform Civil Code) should be mandatory. So that the law is the same for everyone and society can be free from such filth. A second wife while having a first wife. Imagine if, in the name of equality, wives started having 2-2 husbands, would you still be entertained?" "And I don't understand who their followers are. And for what reason do they follow them? Is your mind in the right place or not please get it treated first. If you find this shamelessness right then your life is a waste."

After historic win over Aussies, Rashid sends home a message: 'Roll up your sleeves... celebrate, dance'



GNS News Agency, June 28

MOMENTS AFTER Afghanistan's historic 21-run win over Australia in the Super 8 game of the T20 World Cup at Kingstown, a video cropped up on the team's social media account that conveyed what the conquest meant for the nation that has historically seen many invasions. The clip had captain Rashid Khan, 25, and Man of the Match Gulbadin Naib, 33, passionately belting out a Pashto verse. There were no subtitles. Maybe, there was no need as this was the team's two old hands talking directly to the fans back home.

Kandahar-born Delhi University PhD student and cricket fan Nazamudin Asar, after sharing his excitement over his team's chances of making it to the semifinal from a group that has India and Australia, translated the verse. "Roll up your sleeves, come celebrate and dance. Poor people like us rarely get the chance to enjoy as happiness belongs to those who are strong and rich..." That's what they were singing, that's exactly what Afghanistan feels today," Asar said, before adding a typical self-deprecating Afghan touch. "Everyone is on the streets. Last time this happened was when there was an earthquake." In the Afghan city of Khost, there is a man who could have been at the Arnos Vale stadium, but missed out. The team's assistant coach Raees Ahmadzai couldn't travel with the team because of a knee surgery. He says he has lost his voice, he was with thousands others on the streets chanting "Afghanistan Zindabad". "A couple of days ago we celebrated Eid, and it feels like we are celebrating it again after this win. It is something very special for many reasons," Ahmadzai tells The Indian Express. "Beating Australia is very special for this nation. They refused to play the series against us. They were very lucky that they got away in the ODI World Cup. We were waiting for this result." "The two nations have a history. Australia refused to play a bilateral series against Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of 2021. They were taking a stand against the regime not allowing women to play sports. The tense Afghanistan vs Australia 50-over World Cup game in India last year added fuel to the fire.

Ahmadzai recalls the evening in Mumbai when Australia were on the brink of defeat but recovered miraculously. Glenn Maxwell broke Afghan hearts with his unbeaten 201. He chased down 292 from 91/7. At this T20 World Cup too, Maxwell seemed ready for a repeat. He scored 59 from 41 balls and the target of 149 seemed well within his striking range. That was not to be, he would

become one of Gulbadin's four scalps. The part-time batting all-rounder with a bodybuilder physique would out-muscle and out-fox the Aussie with his strength and smartness.

After the game, skipper Rashid was subtle in mentioning Australia's boycott and related political complexities. "Cricket is the only reason Afghanistan celebrates. And if we keep that source away from us as well, I don't know what will remain... I don't know what's the solution... I don't know much about politics and I don't even like it. If we play (Australia) in a World Cup, why don't we play in a bilateral series?" Back in Kosht, Ahmadzai shares the emotional chat he had with his players and the inspirational head coach and former England international Jonathan Trott after the memorable win. "They all were glad that the boys didn't panic when he started hitting boundaries. We were calm, we never panic," he says. Ahmadzai jokes about Gulbadin's special celebration of flexing his muscles after getting wickets. "I have told him so many times to stop flexing his muscles. You are not bowling 150 kph, you are a 120 kph bowler. He will always say 'sir, I will do something special for my team soon but please don't stop me from showing off my muscles'. Today indeed he has earned the right," says Ahmadzai. Gulbadin also plays for IPL team Delhi Capitals where he is coached by former India player Praveen Amre. Like most Afghans, Gulbadin too has an unending urge to learn and make the most of the training they get in IPL. "He joined in the fag end of the IPL and during that time you generally don't have many practice sessions but whatever we had, he never missed one. There was a hunger to improve. What I liked the most about him is his self-belief," Amre says.

Naveen-ul-Haq (3/20) was another star of the match for Afghanistan. Besides his smart variations in bowling, he is famous in India for his run-ins with Virat Kohli during the IPL. "I call him Mr Cleaver. He is a very proud Afghan, a tough guy. He is feisty in the field and never eases up backs away from a fight," says Ahmadzai. Naveen didn't, he was the one who set the tone for Afghanistan by cleaning up the dangerous Travis Head with the third ball of the match. Ahead of the tournament, West Indies great Brian Lara and former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif were among the few cricketers, who picked Afghanistan as one of the semi-finalists. Latif was appointed as the first head coach of the Afghanistan team in 2010. He shares an anecdote about his first visit to a cricket field there.

"It was the first day and when I reached the ground, there was an American chopper, a Sikorsky and an aeroplane lying next to the cricket ground, where Afghanistan cricketers used to train. Later in the evening, it would become our dressing room," says Latif. Afghanistan cricket has come a long way from the days of that plane-wreck locker room. But there is something that they retained from the days of war and strife. Ahmadzai says it is the Afghan DNA to not give up, which is instilled in the Rashid Khan-led team. "We are warrior clans, we always want to win. I have seen players coming for training after burying their loved ones. We never had it easy. Earlier our country was known for war, now they talk about our cricket, Rashid Khan, Gurbaz, Gulbadin, Naveen, Nabi," he says.

After Afghanistan's heartbreak, Rashid Khan says: 'We'll always remember this World Cup'

GNS News Agency, June 28

Rashid Khan Afghanistan's captain Rashid Khan reacts after the nine wicket loss to South Africa in their men's T20 World Cup semifinal cricket match at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago. (PTI Photo) Afghanistan's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign ended in a bittersweet manner after they got thrashed in the semifinal against South Africa on Thursday. However, irrespective of the semifinal loss the side has been impressive throughout the tournament. On their way to the semifinal, they registered thumping wins over New Zealand and Australia who were considered favourites of the side ahead of the tournament.

After their exit Skipper Rashid Khan took to X (formerly known as Twitter) and wrote a heartfelt message. "We will always remember this #T20WorldCup!" The fight put ahead by everyone on this team is commendable and I'm proud of all of us! We will continue to build from here and come with more grit in the next one Thank you to everyone who believed in us and helped us to keep the fight on. "In many ways, Afghanistan's cricketing journey is Rashid's journey, intertwined and inseparable. You tell his story, you are telling the story of his country's stirring cricketing journey too. He is his country's cricketing icon and identity, he defines his country's cricketing ethos; he defines their World Cup dream run. Playing an important semi-final just 48 hours after a historic night at St



Vincent seemed too much for Afghanistan. After a four-hour flight delay, they arrived at Trinidad only on the eve of the game, leaving them with no real chance of having a practice session to even access the conditions at this new stadium, which sits on the skirts of Port of Spain. Given all of this in the backdrop, fielding first could have helped Afghanistan calm their nerves, particularly if one considers the struggles of the South African batsmen against their spinners. But, having won four of their five matches at this World Cup while batting first, it was entirely possible that Afghanistan wanted to be in the comfort zone of defending a total. It is what their spinners relish, especially on decks where there is assistance of the bowlers.

"You saw what happened at the Asian Championships, no? We were faster than these teams and while I was running I just took a huge lead and had no clue where the rest were. That is not an ideal scenario when you are chasing a qualification mark. You need teams that push you," said Amoj Jaacob, who will have to pull out an extraordinary run if the mixed team stands a chance to qualify. But we can't say that it is impossible," said Jacob, who has a personal best of 45.68s. The chances of the mixed relay team qualifying for Paris seem bleak, Jacob feels that PBs might help the relay team make it. "We are still in it. If I and Anas bhai run a sub-45s race and the rest pull out their personal bests we might still make it," said the spirited runner. AFI president Adille Sumariwalla felt that the mixed relay team had a chance and said, "Personally, I feel that the mixed 4x400m relay will be the next big thing after the men's 4x400m relay, though many people may not agree with this." High jumpers Sarvesh Kushare (29) and Tejaswin Shankar (38), long jumper Jeswin Aldrin (32) - who has had a lukewarm season, triple jumpers Abdulla Aboobacker (21) and Praveen Chitravel (24), shot putters Abha Khatua (25) and Tajinderpal Singh Toor (25), javelin throwers Annu Rani (19) and Manu DP (15), and Jyothi Yarraji (31) are those in reckoning for Paris.

Ricky Ponting finds use of brand new pitch for Afghanistan vs South Africa semi-final 'strange'



GNS News Agency, June 28

Afghanistan's Naveen-ul-Haq an teammate Fazalhaq Farooqi walk from the field after they were dismissed for 56 runs during the men's T20 World Cup semifinal cricket match between Afghanistan and South Africa at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, Wednesday, June 26, 2024. (AP Photo) Naveen-ul-Haq an teammate Fazalhaq Farooqi walk off the field after Afghanistan were dismissed for 56 runs during the men's T20 World Cup semifinal against South Africa at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad and Tobago

The pitch at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, which was used for the first semi-final of the T20 World Cup on Wednesday and saw Afghanistan crash to their lowest ever T20 total, has come under sharp focus. In a tournament where pitches in the US leg of the matches came under intense scrutiny for being underprepared, even in the Caribbean leg some of the tracks have been hard to score off. However, in the new pitch used for the semifinal, apart from seam movement, the unpredictability of the bounce made it all the more challenging for the batsmen from both sides. During the pitch report it was evident that the grass cover would aide movement. And pointing to the cracks on offer, former Australia captain Ricky Ponting suggested that bounce or lack of it could well be a factor. And it turned out to be true as South Africa's seamers capitalised on the conditions and take them through to their maiden World Cup final appearance.

"It seems strange to me that you'll use a brand new wicket for a semifinal one that you've actually got no idea about how it's going to play. We heard the preparation for this wicket started about a week and a half," Ponting told the host broadcaster. And more than the movement on offer, Ponting was particularly unhappy with uneven bounce. "There was a game early in the tournament - West Indies and New Zealand - which was a 150 plays

140 type game. And at least they had some sort of idea of how that wicket was going to play. I know the ball swung that night. That's okay. You can deal with that. But the variation in bounce and seam that we've seen here, I'm not sure if I'm the groundsman, I'll be experimenting with something like that in such a big moment," Ponting said.

As Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada went about hitting the good length areas, apart from the movement on offer, thanks to the former's height, there was some exaggerated bounce. But when Anrich Nortje - who hits the deck hard - came on to bowl, he saw one of his deliveries that kept climbing even after going past the batsman. As Karim Janat tried to slash, it missed the top edge and the ball kept climbing, giving no chance for the wicketkeeper as it went for 4 byes. Then in his next over, Rashid Khan could do nothing about Nortje's delivery, which didn't climb from back of a good length and instead kept low to crash the stumps.

Thereafter the uneven bounce became the norm during South Africa's innings. Off the second ball of the chase, Naveen-ul-Haq's length delivery climbed significantly to hit Quinton de Kock on the midriff. And two deliveries later, another length delivery would hit the deck and get find excessive bounce again. In the next over bowled by Fazalhaq Farooqi, who mostly bowled fuller, there was no space for extra bounce. But the hit-the-deck bowlers seemed to make the most out of it. In his second over, Naveen once again got steep bounce. But in his third, he made deliveries that jumped off from good length as well as kept low from the same areas. Then Rashid Khan got one of his leg-breaks to shoot low. However, the seventh over bowled by Azmatullah Omarzai that caused lot of problems. Three of his deliveries - all from good length - shot low. One of it climbed just ankle-high and another went below the bat to the keeper. But the last ball of the over would see the ball climb awkwardly from the same good length area with the batsman Reeza Hendricks doing well to keep the ball down by playing it with a loose grip. Had Afghanistan managed a three-figure total, the story could have been a lot different. But with just 56 on board, South Africa managed to knock it off. "I think it was a tough night for us as a team and we could've done better than us. But conditions didn't let us do that but you should be mentally ready for any situation. I thought we didn't bat well. We were struggling when Mujeeb got injured, but Nabi, Fazal... that made our job as a spinning unit easier. The consistency in bowling was something pleasing for me. We came here before the tournament and if you told us we would be playing the semi-final against South Africa, we would accept that," Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan said.

Georgia's No 7 Khvicha Kvaratskhelia outshines idol Cristiano Ronaldo in history-making 2-0 victory

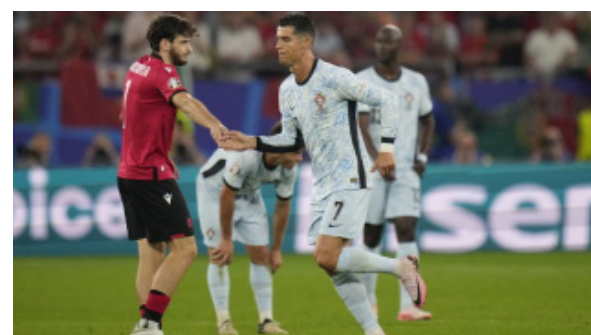
GNS News Agency, June 28

"Will I ask Cristiano for his jersey after the game? Maybe. Probably. OK, yes. Why not? He is my idol. I will tell him that. But that does not mean we can't win," This was what Georgia's No. 7 Khvicha Kvaratskhelia had written in the Players Tribune last week. Ten days later, Georgia outplayed Portugal and notched up a historic 2-0 win. The two number 7s have a connection. Recently an old picture of the two started making rounds on the internet. It from 2013 when Cristiano Ronaldo, a certified Real Madrid superstar then, had visited the Dinamo Tbilisi Academy in Georgia.

In that picture, Kvaratskhelia, a 12-year-old boy then, was poking his head from over the crowd standing around Ronaldo. On Thursday night, the boy, now a 23-year-old man, made sure that the picture was back in circulation as he helped Georgia qualify for the next round of the Euro. The Veltins-Arena witnessed history on the night when Kvaratskhelia not only outshone his much more decorated Portuguese counterpart, he ensured that his country, the lowest ranked team in this tournament, can dream just a bit bigger. 93 seconds. That was all it took for Kvaratskhelia to stun Portugal. The Selecao looked shell shocked as the Georgia players wheeled off in celebrations with the match not even 2 minutes old. Portugal's Antonio Silva, playing his first match of the Euro, saw Kvaratskhelia bearing down on him a few yards away from the centre circle. With the nerves getting the best of him, he tried to pass it to a nearby teammate but ended up giving the ball away to an advancing Georges Mikautadze.

Kvaratskhelia, one of the most in demand wingers in the world right now after his 2022/23 title Serie A title winning season with Napoli, started ramping up the speed from the left, running past the flabbergasted Silva who was unable to keep up with the Georgian's pace. Mikautadze would see the run and threaded a pass through to him which he slotted coolly to the left of the keeper. The move for the goal was simple and straightforward, a classic counter attack, something of a rarity in this era. It perfectly encapsulated how Georgia have played this tournament, an uncomplicated, kamikaze style of attack.

Against Turkey in their opening match, the approach did not work well with the Georgia side falling to a 3-1 defeat. That must have brought back memories of the time when in 2020, Georgia lost in the playoffs to North Macedonia, failing to qualify for that edition of the Euro. "I remember the disappointment we experienced. It completely broke us down, as players and as a country. People lost all the joy with football and sports. We had such a big chance, we were playing at home against North Macedonia and should have won. It was difficult at that time and I think we didn't prepare well as it was Covid time," captain Guram Kashia had told the Guardian in the run-up to Euro 2024. After the loss to Turkey, it would have been easy for Georgia players and their captain to lose hope and alter their system and opt for a much more conservative brand of football. But they decided against it and went all out against the Czech Republic and dragged out a 1-1 draw. Kvaratskhelia's goal against Portugal was the rubber stamp on the credentials of their system, with Georgia sitting deep for most of the match, absorbing everything Cristiano Ronaldo and co were throwing at them before breaking with counters. The second of Georgia's goals came at the expense of Portugal's desperation to get something from the match, leaving the defence light. Luka Lochoshvili tried to take advantage of



the gaps in the Portuguese defence, marauding inside the penalty box before he was bundled over by Silva. The referee gave a penalty and Mikautadze calmly beat the keeper from the spot. 9 minutes after the goal, Portugal subdued off a fuming Ronaldo who kicked at the turf out of frustration while Georgia's No. 7 continued to run rings around the Selecao defence. A study in contrast, if there was ever one. Georgia next play Spain in the Round of 16, a team they haven't beaten since 2016. But after the display on Thursday night, all bets are off. Why? "Because football is football. Nobody knows. Nobody thought we would even qualify. Now they don't believe again. They say Georgia has no chance. But do you know what I say? I say.... They didn't ask any Georgians," as Kvaratskhelia so articulately put it last week in an Tribune article.

Entire T20 World Cup tournament planned to favour India, claims Vaughan

GNS News Agency, June 28

New Delhi: Former England captain Michael Vaughan criticised the scheduling of the T20 World Cup semifinals, alleging that the whole tournament is planned to favour India and is "unfair" to other teams. In the first semifinal of the tournament in Tarouba on Thursday, South Africa outclassed Afghanistan by nine wickets to cruise to the finals, ending their historic campaign in the tournament.

Vaughan claimed that Afghanistan's final should have been scheduled in Guyana, where India will take on defending champions England later in the day. "Surely this Semi should have been the Guyana one... but because the whole event is geared towards India it's so unfair on others..." Vaughan wrote on X.

Vaughan earlier stated that Afghanistan did not get enough time to prepare for their first-ever semi-final due to the flight delay and travelling. "So Afghanistan qualify for the WC semi winning in St Vincent on Monday night... 4 hr flight delay on Tues to Trinidad so no time to practice or get accustomed to a new venue... utter lack of respect to players I am afraid.. #T20WorldCup2024" he posted on X.

Afghanistan batters faltered against Proteas' formidable bowling attack led by pacers Marco Jansen (three wickets), Kagiso Rabada (two wickets) and Anrich Nortje (two wickets) while Tabraiz Shamsi returned with the figures of 3-6 in his 1.5 overs to bundle out Afghanistan for 56/10 in 11.5 overs.