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## Bikanervala opens 200th outlet at Aramghar in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Bikanervala, manufacturer of traditional Indian sweets and savories, in addition to expansion in the domestic market, also has plans to launch the brand in the United Kingdom, Australia and Europe. Bikanervala opened its outlet in Aramghar, Rajender Nagar, which marks its 200th outlet, and said the company has expansion plans to add 50 plus outlets in 2024-25 fiscal. Chetan Aggarwal, director of Bikanervala Foods, said the expansion reflects their commitment to provide patrons with unparalleled culinary experiences while staying true to our heritage. "The aim is to place the highly developed Indian Sweets & Fine Food Culture firmly on the world map," he said.

## Cyberabad police ban outsiders in Moinabad after Chilkur village tension

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad police clamped orders prohibiting entry of outsiders in Moinabad in view of the tension in the Chilkur village following demolition of a place of prayer on a Monday.

Avinash Mohanty, Cyberabad Commissioner issued the prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS.

The orders prohibit any gathering of five or more persons, and prohibits people who do not ordinarily reside in the area or do not ordinarily have work in the area from entering the limits of the Moinabad police station. The orders will be in effect from 6 am July 24 (Wednesday) to 11 pm on July 30

## Yemeni national among 18 killed as aircraft crashes during takeoff in Nepal's Kathmandu; pilot survives



Kathmandu, GNS News Agency, July 24

A private Nepalese airline plane crashed during take-off and caught fire at the Tribhuvan International Airport here on Wednesday, killing 18 people aboard, including a foreigner, while the pilot survived with major injuries. The Nepalese domestic plane N9AME, belonging to Saurya Airlines, was bound for Pokhara for regular

maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am. The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft "suffered a runway excursion and burst into massive flames immediately", the Search and Rescue Centre of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal said in a statement. Nepal army personnel stand by a plane crash site at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, Wednesday, July 24, 2024. AP/PTI Videos posted online showed the plane being enveloped in fire and smoke. Fire engines and ambulances were rushed to the spot after the incident. The deceased were identified as co-pilot S Katuwal and 17 employees of the Saurya Airlines, including a Nepali female and a Yemeni national. Pilot captain Manish Shakya, 37, is undergoing treatment at Kathmandu Model Hospital.

Of the deceased, 15 died on the spot while three died during treatment at a local hospital, authorities said. Following the accident, services at the Kathmandu airport were halted briefly before being resumed, the airport authorities said. Saurya Airlines operates flights to five tourist destinations within Nepal, with a fleet of three Bombardier CRJ-200 jets, according to the company's website. Nepal has been criticised for its poor air safety record in recent years, but the reasons also include partly sudden weather changes and partly airstrips located in

hard-to-access rocky terrains apart from human error. According to Nepal's civil aviation body, 914 people have died in air crashes in the country since the first disaster was recorded in August 1955. In January last year, all 72 people on board, including five Indians, were killed when a Yeti Airlines aircraft crashed in the resort city of Pokhara. The crash was attributed to a human error. Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing on January 15, 2023, which was the 104th crash in Nepali skies and third biggest in terms of casualties.

The only incidents in which more people were killed took place in July and September 1992. Those crashes involved aircraft of Thai Airways and Pakistan International Airlines and left 113 and 167 people dead, respectively. On May 29, 2022, all 22 people on board, including four members of an Indian family, were killed as a Tara Air plane crashed in Nepal's mountainous Mustang district. In 2016, all 23 people aboard were killed when a plane of the same airline flying the same route crashed after take-off. In March 2018, a US-Bangla Air crash occurred at the Tribhuvan International Airport, killing 51 people on board.

## Congress, BRS Challenge Each Other for Protest over Union Budget Allocations to state



GNS News Agency, July 24

In a heated exchange, the ruling Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) and the opposition Congress party have thrown down the gauntlet, challenging each other to take concrete steps in Delhi to address what they describe as the injustice done to Telangana in the recent Union Budget. K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), a prominent leader of the BRS, called on the Congress-led government to take initiative in the national capital for the welfare of the state. He expressed the willingness of the BRS to dedicate efforts towards protests, stating that their MLAs and MLCs are prepared to assemble alongside cabinet ministers for this cause, regardless of the duration.

Responding to KTR's challenge, Congress Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed agreement and readiness to initiate a "Diksha" in Delhi, emphasizing that both he and KCR, the leader of the opposition, are poised to mobilize for the state's interests. Reddy underscored the necessity of a united front to demand adequate funds for Telangana, suggesting that these discussions must take place in the national capital.

## Terrorist killed, soldier injured in Kupwara encounter



GNS News Agency, July 24

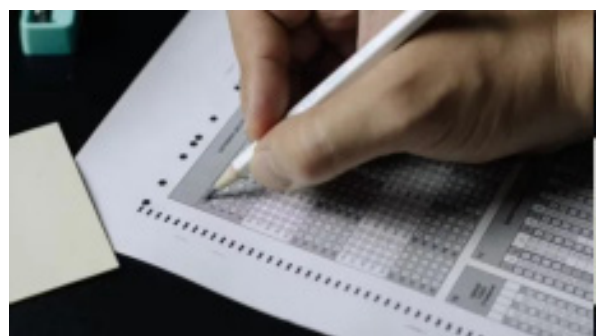
Srinagar: An unidentified terrorist was killed and a soldier injured in an overnight encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, the Army said on Wednesday. "Based on specific input regarding presence of terrorists in general area Kowut, Kupwara, a Joint Search Operation was launched by #IndianArmy and @JmukmrPolice on days leading up to 23 July 24," the Srinagar-based Chinar Corps posted on X. It said suspicious movement was noticed on Tuesday and the suspects were challenged by vigilant troops. In response, terrorists opened indiscriminate fire, leading to a gunbattle. "In the ensuing fire fight one terrorist has been eliminated and a NCO injured. Operation is in progress," the Army added.

## Nonstop drizzles blanket Hyderabad; yellow alert for Telangana on July 24, 25

GNS News Agency, July 24

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is experiencing continuous drizzles, which are expected to continue on Wednesday, accompanied by light to moderate rains in the evening. The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for parts of Telangana indicating heavy rains on July 24 and 25. The city recorded a maximum temperature at 27.8 degree Celsius on Tuesday. For the next two days, the maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 28 and 24 degree Celsius, respectively. Heavy rains lashed other districts of Telangana, particularly Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, Adilabad, and Nalgonda, while other districts received light to moderate rainfall. Notably, Bejjur and Chinamanepally in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad recorded substantial rainfall at 96 mm and 81 mm respectively. The IMD has issued a yellow alert for districts including Adilabad, Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancheri, Jagital, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, and Jayashankar Bhupalapally. With the relentless rains over the past few days, Hyderabad has recorded 277 mm of rainfall since the monsoon commenced in June, slightly above the normal 242.2 mm. Notably, Khairatabad has received the highest excess rainfall at 341 mm. Other areas including Nampally (333.2 mm), Secunderabad (316.3 mm), Asifnagar (295.3 mm), and Himayatnagar

## Bihar passes bill to curb paper leaks: Jail term, Rs 10 lakh fine proposed



GNS News Agency, July 24

The new legislation aims at curbing malpractices in competitive examinations, including the leak of question papers, in Bihar. The Bill comes amid controversy over NEET-UG 2024 question paper leak. The Bill comes amid controversy over NEET-UG 2024 question paper leak.

The Bihar assembly on Wednesday passed a bill aimed at curbing the scourge of question paper leaks and other malpractices in government recruitment examinations in the state. The Bihar Public Examinations (PE) (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, was tabled by state Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and passed with voice vote amidst a walkout by the opposition. The new legislation aims at curbing malpractices in competitive examinations, including the leak of question papers, in the state which, incidentally, has been at the centre of the NEET 2024 question paper leak controversy. The Bill stipulates severe punishment for those involved in such malpractices, including a prison term of three to five years and a fine of Rs 10 lakh.

## Farmer leaders from six States meet Rahul Gandhi



GNS News Agency, July 24

A delegation of farmer leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka met Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in Parliament House complex on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, and apprised him of the issues being faced by the tillers.

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal, former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Congress leaders Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Dharamvir Gandhi, Amar Singh, Deepender Singh Hooda and Jai Prakash were also present in the meeting.

The delegation comprised 12 farmer leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Sources said they apprised Mr. Gandhi of the issues being faced by farmers in their respective states.

## INDIA bloc MPs protest over 'discrimination' against opposition-ruled States in Union Budget

GNS News Agency, July 24

INDIA bloc MPs, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, staged a protest in Parliament premises on July 24 over the alleged discrimination against opposition-ruled States in the Union Budget. Besides Mr. Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, several MPs of the Congress, TMC, Samajwadi Party, DMK and the Left joined the protest held on the steps leading up to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. Protesting against the budget, Mr. Kharge said, "This Budget is anti-people, no one has got justice. They have talked about special package but special status has not been given. This is a deceptive budget and injustice to the people." The MPs raised placards such as 'We want India budget not NDA budget' and 'NDA betrays India in Budget'.

"Yesterday, through the budget, the government of India violated all the principles to keep the federal system," Congress general secretary, organisation, K.C. Venugopal, said. "The aim of the budget was to protect the government. Giving so many sops to just two states. We are not against giving funds to Andhra Pradesh and Bihar but other states should also get justice. That is why we are agitating today. Even the people are agitated with this," he said. SP MP Jaya Bachchan slammed the budget, saying youth have been given false promises. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said his State Uttar Pradesh has been discriminated against. They snatched away jobs and are now talking of apprenticeships, he said. The decision to protest had been taken at a meeting of floor leaders of INDIA bloc parties at the 10 Rajaji Marg residence of the Congress president on Tuesday evening.

Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Congress' deputy leader in



Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari, Congress' deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, NCP (SCP) chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, TMC leaders Derek O'Brien and Kalyan Banerjee, DMK's TR Baalu, JMM's Mahua Maji, AAP's Raghav Chadha and Sanjay Singh, and CPI(M)'s John Brittas, among others, had attended the meeting. "The concept of a budget has already been destroyed by this year's Union Budget. They have completely discriminated against most of the states. So the general sentiment of the INDIA bloc meeting was that we have to protest against this," Mr. Venugopal had told reporters after the meeting. Later, in a post on X, Venugopal had said, "The Union Budget presented today was extremely discriminatory and dangerous, which completely goes against the principles of federalism and fairness that the Union Government must follow." In protest, Congress chief ministers will be boycotting the NITI Aayog meeting scheduled for July 27. "This government's attitude is completely antithetical to Constitutional principles. We will not participate in an event that is solely designed to hide the true, discriminatory colours of this regime," he had said.

## Oppn walks out of RS over 'neglect' of States; FM hits back

GNS News Agency, July 24

New Delhi: The I.N.D.I.A opposition bloc parties, led by the Congress, staged a walkout from Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, in protest against all States, except two, being "ignored" in the Budget, an allegation termed "outrageous" by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who said all the States never found a mention in any of the previous Budgets, including those presented by the Congress. After Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected notices under Rule 267 that called for the suspension of the listed agenda to take up the issue, Leader of Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Union Budget for 2024-25 fiscal provided funds and schemes for only two States — Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. All other States did not find any mention, he said, terming the Budget a "kursi-bachao" document. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost the majority in the recently-concluded general election and had to seek support from regional parties ruling in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh for forming the government. The Janata Dal (United), which is in power in Bihar, and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the ruling party in Andhra Pradesh, have been demanding special economic packages for their States.

In the Budget presented on Tuesday, Sitharaman announced Rs 60,000 crore for Andhra Pradesh and pledged support to get Rs 15,000-crore assistance from multilateral agencies for the southern State. Kharge said the Congress and the other parties in the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A) "condemn" this discrimination. As Dhankhar gave Sitharaman the floor to respond, Kharge led the opposition bloc out of the House, saying they were walking out in protest. The Finance Minister said she did not name many States either



in the interim Budget presented in February ahead of the general election or in the full Budget tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, but that does not mean that government schemes are not working for the States. She cited the example of Maharashtra, which was not named in either of the Budgets, and said that did not prevent the Union Cabinet from approving the Rs 76,000-crore Vadnavan port project in Dahanu in the State last month. "Did Maharashtra get ignored because I did not mention the name of Maharashtra? (An amount of) Rs 76,000 crore has been announced for that project," she said. Sitharaman said she can go on to cite several other States that have got major projects. "If the speech does not mention the name of a particular State, does it mean that the schemes of the Government of India, the programmes of the Government of India, the externally-aided assistance which we obtain from the World Bank, ADB, AIIB and institutions like that do not go to these States? They go as per a routine," she said. The expenditure statement of the government gives out the item-wise allocation, the Finance Minister pointed out. "

# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Vision for agriculture

THE 2024-25 Budget introduces significant provisions aimed at transforming the agricultural sector with a focus on sustainability, productivity and economic growth for farmers. One crore farmers are envisaged to be initiated into natural farming within two years. This enterprise is to be complemented by establishing 10,000 bio-input resource centres for sustainable farm practices. To enhance vegetable production and streamline the supply chain, the Budget emphasises promoting Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), cooperatives and startups. Playing a critical role in the collection, storage and marketing of vegetables, these entities will help farmers receive better prices and reduce post-harvest losses.

Another notable initiative is the release of 109 new high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops. It aims to address climate change challenges and ensure stable agricultural production. A review of the agricultural research setup is also planned in a bid to reduce the country's dependence on imported edible oils, the Budget introduces measures to boost the cultivation of mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean and sunflower. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is set to revolutionise the sector by covering farmers and their lands within three years.

However, these ambitious provisions face implementation challenges. The widespread adoption of natural farming practices requires substantial training and support, which may strain resources. Establishing 10,000 bio-input resource centres and enhancing FPOs necessitate better coordination and investment. Promoting climate-resilient crop varieties and boosting oilseed production hinge on robust extension services. DPI initiatives also require overcoming technological barriers and ensuring equitable access. Addressing them is vital for realising the Budget's vision.

### Inside the Ambanis' favourite 88-year-old Cafe Mysore in Matunga

The mood at Mumbai's Cafe Mysore is jubilant after owner Shanteri Nagesh Nayak, 75, received a heartening reception from Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant Ambani at their wedding function on Monday. The newlyweds touched her feet and expressed that the entire Ambani family eagerly looks forward to Cafe Mysore's food every weekend. Established in 1936, Cafe Mysore is arguably the oldest Udipi eatery in Mumbai. Located in Matunga, it has a loyal base of customers flocking to the double-storey restaurant from around the city for its soft and fluffy idlis, crispy Mysore masala dosa, flavourful rasam and delectable sheera.

As legend has it, in pre-Independent India, a young A Rama Nayak stowed away on a ship from Mangalore to then Bombay without a shirt on his back and went on to become a formidable figure in Matunga, successfully running multiple restaurants in the neighbourhood. "After losing his father, he and his mother came to Mumbai. They stayed at Rama Krishna Ashram and cooked there in exchange for their stay. He later started working as a cook, got married, and moved into a chawl in Brahmanwada. He was so good at his work that he was appreciated by the owners," recalled Shanteri about her father-in-law, adding that he was a celebrated man when she got married and joined the family in 1975. "Between 1942 and 1960, he took over several hotels to manage, which was common practice at the time, and Cafe Mysore was one of them."

The eatery was much smaller then and in a dilapidated state. The late A Rama Nayak turned it around, and in 1973-74, he passed it on to his son Nagesh Rama Nayak. Shanteri's husband Nagesh, an engineer from Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), is credited with expanding the restaurant.

"He was a visionary and had a lot of ideas — he introduced the three-cavity-plate for serving efficiently, hot water washing of utensils, steam boilers for cooking, and himself designed the spiral staircase to save space. The first major renovation happened in the early 1980s," noted his son, Naresh Nagesh Nayak, 44, who currently owns the restaurant and handles its day-to-day operations. "When he passed away in 2009, my mother — one of the first graduates in her village near Mangalore — took over the reins of the restaurant and ran it efficiently alongside my sister Neha. I took over during the Covid period," added Naresh, who added a digital kiosk at the entry and a hands-free washing station in the restaurant, to keep up with the times. It was during his father's time that Reliance Industries' Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani — then a student at the University Department of Chemical Technology (now ICT) — started frequenting Cafe Mysore, a tradition that continues to this day. Naresh reminisced about his earliest memories of Mukesh Ambani dining at the restaurant. "I was barely seven years old, sitting on the manager's lap, when he pointed to the television screen showing two young gentlemen and then to a table in the restaurant. Those gentlemen were Mukesh and Anil Ambani, and my young brain could not comprehend how someone could be in two places at once," he laughed.

He recounted another instance when Mukesh Ambani dined upstairs in the air-conditioned section with his wife Nita and their three children. "When they finished their meal, the staff rushed to get the car but Mr Ambani walked leisurely with his kids, took out a hundred-rupee note, and bought them balloons from a roadside vendor," he shared.

"Mr Ambani has remained humble and still treats everyone as an equal. Even the children reflect his values. They did not have to touch my mother's feet but the way they treated her brought tears to my eyes," he added. To this day, food from Cafe Mysore is delivered to the Ambani residence every weekend with their F&B team placing and picking up the order in advance. Payment is made promptly. "Mr Ambani has spoken about only one brand in the media that's not theirs—it is Cafe Mysore," Naresh added with pride.

Over the years, many Udipi eateries have had to shut down. While Naresh admits that business is not what it was before Covid, he also shares that their boiler runs non-stop from 6 am to 10 pm, producing fresh plates of idlis — their most popular item — of which they sell over a thousand daily. When asked about their success mantra, Naresh said, "Our goal is to provide very honest value to the customer at the right price" — a practice upheld since his grandfather's time.

### Thomas Cook, Red Apple Travel directed to pay Rs 1 crore to man who lost his family on a trip to Sri Lanka



GNS News Agency, July 24

Thomas Cook Delhi Consumer Commission Saigal, along with his wife, son, daughter, and father-in-law, had booked a vacation package to Sri Lanka through Thomas Cook in November 2019 for Rs 3.56 lakh. This package included accommodations, sightseeing, transportation, and travel insurance. The Delhi Consumer Commission earlier this month directed travel companies Thomas Cook and Red Apple Travel to pay Rs 1 crore as compensation to Yogesh Saigal for the death of his family members in a road accident during a vacation in Sri Lanka.

Considering the mental and physical trauma faced due to the loss of his family caused by the negligence of the two travel companies, the Delhi State Consumer Dis-

putes Redressal Commission sided with Saigal in an order dated July 1. The loss of livelihood and future prospects of Saigal's wife were also taken into account. Saigal, along with his wife, son, daughter, and father-in-law, had booked a vacation package to Sri Lanka through Thomas Cook in November 2019 for Rs 3.56 lakh. This package included accommodations, sightseeing, transportation, and travel insurance.

On December 23, 2019, the vehicle carrying Saigal's family collided with a container truck in Colombo, resulting in the immediate deaths of his wife, son, and father-in-law. Saigal himself sustained severe injuries, including multiple fractures, and his daughter, Aishwarya, also suffered physical trauma. The complainant further alleged that a few hours before the commencement of their journey, he was informed that the arrangements in Sri Lanka would be managed by Red Apple Travel, a fact that was not disclosed to him during the booking process. Saigal further alleged that the involvement of Red Apple Travel was only revealed 36 hours prior to the journey, leaving the family with no option but to proceed or risk forfeiting the entire amount paid. The aftermath of the accident led to Saigal issuing a legal notice to Thomas Cook on February 24, 2021, seeking Rs. 89 crore in damages for negligence, deficiency in services, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements. In his complaint, Saigal argued that Thomas Cook had failed in its duty of care by not ensuring safe and reliable contractors for the tour.

### TN CM has to decide of his elevation as Deputy CM, says Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin



GNS News Agency, July 24

Tamil Nadu Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin "When media persons ask about the speculation about my elevation as deputy Chief Minister I tell them that all the state Ministers and office-bearers of the party and youth wing are functioning as deputies to the Chief Minister," he said. Tamil Nadu Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Saturday played down reports of his possible elevation as Deputy Chief Minister and said Chief Minister M K Stalin has to take a call on the issue.

In a brief chat with reporters here, he said, "it is the Chief Minister who has to decide." Udhayanidhi was responding to a question about reports indicating that he is likely to be elevated soon. Earlier addressing the 45th foundation day of the DMK youth wing here, Udhayanidhi who is the Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister, said the post of secretary of the party's youth wing which he held, was close to his heart.

"When media persons ask about the speculation about my elevation as deputy Chief Minister I tell them that all the state Ministers and office-bearers of the party and youth wing are functioning as deputies to the Chief Minister," he said. His primary commitment remained as the party's youth wing secretary he said and added "whatever the post, according to me, the youth wing secretary post is close to my heart." The Minister called upon the DMK youth wing members to daily devote at least ten minutes in the morning and evening to be active on social media.

### 24 Indian armed forces personnel to test their mettle at 2024 Paris Olympics

GNS News Agency, July 24

New Delhi: Twenty-four personnel from the armed forces, including ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and two women participants, are among the 117 Indian athletes who are set to test their mettle at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The presence of these two women athletes in the contingent marks the maiden participation of women service athletes at the Olympics, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement. Chopra, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist, is a subedar in the Indian Army.

Twenty-four personnel from the armed forces are among the 117 Indian athletes who are all set to make the nation proud at the Paris Olympics, beginning July 26, it said. Among these 24 athletes, 22 are men, including javelin thrower Subedar Neeraj Chopra, and two are women, it said. Chopra will again vie for the top honours as his participation in the Paris Olympics comes on the back of exceptional performances which earned him a gold medal each at the 2023 Asian Games, 2023 World Athletics Championship, 2024 Diamond League, and 2024 Paavo Nurmi Games, the statement said.

Also, 2022 Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Havildar Jaismine Lamboria and 2023 Asian Wrestling Championships bronze medalist CPO Ritika Hooda are the two women service personnel who are taking part in the Games for the first time, and would aim to create history. They will feature in boxing and wrestling respectively, it added. Sub Amit Panghal (boxing), CPO Tajinderpal Singh Toor (shot-put), Sub Avinash Mukund Sable (3,000-m steeplechase), CPO Muhammed Anas Yahiyah, PO(GW) Muhammed Ajmal, Sub Santhosh Kumar Tamarasani and JWO Mijo Chacko Kurian (4X400M men's relay), JWO Abdulla Aboobacker (triple jump), Sub Tarundeep Rai and Sub Dhiraj Bommadevara (archery) and Nb Sub Sandeep Singh (shooting) are also among the service personnel who would aim to bring laurels to the country.

The India Army had recently in a post on X said, "13 #IndianArmy athletes will be participating in 7 disciplines at the #ParisOlympics2024. The Indian Army's formidable presence includes athletes renowned for their exceptional skills and past achievements on the world stage." Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi had earlier interacted, via video conference, with Indian Army athletes who are set to represent India in the upcoming Paris Olympics.

### Nipah outbreak suspected in Kerala's Malappuram

GNS News Agency, July 24

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Saturday convened a high-level meeting to take steps to prevent a Nipah outbreak in the State. The meeting was convened in the wake of an outbreak of the virus infection that was suspected in northern Malappuram district. According to local media reports, a boy from Malappuram, who is under treatment in a private hospital in neighbouring Kozhikode, was suspected to have symptoms of Nipah and his samples were sent to a central lab for a detailed scientific examination.

As per a statement from the Health Minister's office, the final test results were yet to be received but steps, as per the Nipah protocol, have already been initiated in the morning. The actions would be coordinated according to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) formulated as per the government order with regard to Nipah prevention, it said. The Health Minister would reach Malappuram soon and lead the Nipah prevention activities, the statement added. Various higher officials, including the Health Secretary, National Health Mission State Director, District Collectors of Kozhikode and Malappuram and Health Director, took part in the meeting, it added. The State government had announced recently that a special action calendar was being prepared for the prevention of a Nipah outbreak, which has haunted the State on four occasions in the past.

### Onion slices in vegetable curry; kanwariyas damage eatery in UP's Muzaffarnagar

GNS News Agency, July 24

A group of kanwariyas from Haryana allegedly damaged a roadside dhaba in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district after they claimed to have found onion slices in the food. The eatery named 'Tau Hukewalah Haryana Tourist Dhaba' is located on the Delhi-Haridwar highway in the Sisauna block of the Muzaffarnagar district. The incident happened when the kanwariyas on their way to collect Ganga water from Haridwar decided to stop at the eatery for lunch on Friday. After allegedly finding onion slices in the vegetable curry served to them, the kanwariyas assaulted the dhaba workers and damaged the furniture and the refrigerator. They also ran after the cook who scammedpered to safety.

"The devotees had vowed not to consume onion and garlic during the yatra. They lost their temper when they found onion slices in their vegetable curry. We pacified them and appealed that they should carry on with the yatra," said Rogent Tyagi, Station House Officer, Chapar police station. The dhaba owner, Pramod Kumar, a resident of the nearby Perai village, said Friday's incident was the result of confusion. "I have been running this dhaba for the last few years and did not know that even onions are prohibited while serving meals to the devotees. I will keep this in mind to save my business from damage," added Kumar. "We asked the cook if he was preparing the dish without garlic and onion, and he told us that he wouldn't be using them while preparing the



dish. But despite this, we found onion slices in the curry. We avoid consuming onion and garlic till offering the Holy water to Lord Shiva in our village," claimed Hari Om, the leader of the kanwar group. Raju Kumar Sab, Deputy SP (Sadar), said elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure that the devotees do not face any hassle either while walking on the road or having their lunch and dinner. "We will try to ensure that such mistakes are not repeated in the future," he added. Meanwhile, Ashutosh Shivam, Deputy SP, Garhmukteshwar (Hapur district), directed restaurant owners selling non-vegetarian food on the Garh-Haridwar highway to not only do away with meat dishes during the 12-day kanwar yatra starting Monday but to also buy new utensils to cook food for devotees during the period.

### 'Does MVA support Maratha reservation under OBC category?': Maharashtra BJP chief

GNS News Agency, July 24

Turning the tables on the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Saturday dared the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and the Shiv Sena (UBT) to publicly clarify their stand on Maratha reservation. "Are MVA leaders supporting Jarange Patil who wants Maratha reservation under Other Backward Class (OBC) category? Will the Opposition support the dilution of the OBC quota? These are some key issues that the Opposition needs to answer first, instead of attacking the state government," he said, speaking to the media. "Instead of attacking Mahayuti, the Opposition MVA should make its views clear. I dare them to mention their support for Jarange Patil's demand of Maratha reservation under the OBC category in their manifestos," Bawankule added. Bawankule's remarks came on a day when Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Patil began an indefinite fast at Antarwali Sarathi village. Jarange Patil is demanding the implementation of the draft notification that will ensure that the 'sage soyare' or blood relatives of Marathas will get Kunbi certificates so that they can avail of reservation under the OBC quota. In Maharashtra, nobody will want dilution of the existing OBC quota or any existing quota, Bawankule said. "While we are committed to Maratha reservation, it cannot be at the expense of OBCs," he added.

Last week, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had convened an all-party meeting at the Vidhan Bhavan to discuss the Maratha reservation issue. However, Opposition parties boycotted the meeting. Reiterating the Mahayuti's commitment to give Marathas reservation, Bawankule said, "The chief minister has already said that the government is committed to the welfare of Marathas. It has given 10 per cent quota to Marathas under the Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) Act. What is unacceptable is Jarange Patil insisting that Marathas should be allowed to avail reservation under the OBC category." The Maratha versus OBC issue has become a polarising issue ahead of the Assembly polls in Maharashtra. Jarange Patil, who started the Maratha reservation agitation last August, has gone on a fast and held protests several times. During the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, he extensively toured the Marathwada region, giving a clarion call to his followers to teach the BJP a lesson. The BJP bore the brunt as it failed to win a single seat in the drought-prone region which has eight Lok Sabha seats and 46 Assembly seats. Officially, OBC leaders across party lines are opposed to Jarange Patil's demand for reservation within the OBC category. But Opposition leaders say it is for the government to resolve the issue. Senior NCP minister Chhagan Bhujbal had approached NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar this week seeking his intervention to resolve the Maratha versus OBC dispute. "Sharad Pawar with his vast experience should come forward to resolve the reservation issue as polarisation between Marathas and OBCs does not augur well for a progressive state like Maharashtra," Bhujbal said.

While Pawar has assured he would speak to the chief minister, he said he was unaware of what transpired



between the government and Jarange Patil, or between the government and OBC activist Laxman Hake. In 2018, after 58 silent rallies undertaken by the Maratha Kranti Morcha, the then government led by chief minister Devendra Fadnis gave 12 and 13 per cent quota to Marathas in government education and jobs under the SEBC Act. The Act was unanimously adopted by both Houses of the legislature. In May 2021, during the tenure of the MVA government led by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, the Supreme Court scrapped the Maratha quota. "The stated objective of the Maratha reservation was the upliftment of the poor backward Marathas in education and employment. Instead, it has become a political issue which is being used by mainstream parties to settle scores," Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Ambedkar said. "Nobody wants OBC quota compromised. What needs to be discussed is how to uplift poor Marathas who have long been neglected by dominant ruling classes," he added.

### CM Mamata Banerjee likely to be present in Niti Aayog meeting on July 27, press for Bengal's dues

GNS News Agency, July 24

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will likely attend the Governing Council meeting of the Niti Aayog scheduled to be held in Delhi on July 27. This would be the first visit of Banerjee to the national capital, after her party's impressive showing in the Lok Sabha elections. State government sources said Banerjee may reach Delhi on July 24 or 25 and meet with leaders of the INDIA bloc at the Parliament Hall. She is also likely to pay a visit to Sonia Gandhi at her residence.

It is not clear yet if Banerjee will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Niti Aayog meeting but sources said the Bengal CM will strongly raise with the Union Government the issue of pending Central dues for MGNREGA and PMAY schemes.

## Jarange launches fresh hunger strike for Maratha quota



GNS News Agency, July 24

Jalna: Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Saturday launched a fresh indefinite hunger strike in Maharashtra's Jalna district, demanding implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as blood relatives of the Maratha community members. Launching the fast in his native Antarwali Sarati village in the district, he said he had to undertake this step as the Maharashtra government has failed to fulfil the promise on the reservation issue. Earlier, Jarange had suspended his indefinite fast over the reservation issue on June 13, six days after launching it, and set a deadline of one month before the government to accept the community's demands.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Jarange said, "I had to launch this fast as the government did not keep its word. I will continue the strike till my death." He said a crucial meeting will be held on August 29, where the Maratha community will decide whether to contest the

upcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections. During the indefinite fast, he would undertake a State-wide tour from August 7-13, he said. "I will tour Maharashtra in an ambulance and address meetings. Following this, a series of meetings will be held at Antarwali Sarati from August 14 to 20 to discuss Assembly polls. On August 29, if the community decides against fielding any candidate, we will not field any. But we will then work towards defeating those who oppose Maratha reservation and support them who are in its favour," he said. He urged the Maratha community members to collect data on probable candidates to be fielded in the assembly polls, so that discussion can be held on them between August 14 and 20.

He further said the ruling Mahayuti alliance and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) were trying to take advantage of his agitation. "The Mahayuti wants me to field 288 candidates in the elections, while the MVA hopes that I would support it instead. But I know their tricks and I will not let their plans succeed," he said. He alleged that the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government launched the 'Ladki Bahin' and 'Ladka Bhau' schemes in view of the upcoming elections. "There were several welfare schemes that were shut down in the past," he said. Jarange accused Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of betraying the Dhargar community by failing to include them in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category, and alleged that OBC leaders were trying to create discord between Marathas and OBCs. On the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi's plan to launch 'Aarakshan Bachao Janyatra' on the reservation issue in parts of Maharashtra, he said, "We expect that Ambedkar will support us as he is the leader of the poor and weaker sections of the society."

## Shed paternalistic approach towards junior lawyers, pay them dignified sum: CJI Chandrachud

GNS News Agency, July 24

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday asked the advocates to shed away paternalistic approach towards junior lawyers and said paying them pretty low amounts leads to 'gatekeeping' of the profession. After inaugurating celebrations here to mark the 20th anniversary of the setting up of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, the chief justice hailed the contribution of the bench in serving as a repository of data and software backup for the Delhi High Court.

Raising the issue of entry-level juniors getting paid a "meagre" salary, Justice Chandrachud said "please shed away the paternalistic approach that they have come to learn and get exposure and experience, and that you are mentoring them." He pointed out that there was much to learn from the junior lawyers. Paying lower amounts such as Rs 5,000 per month to the juniors leads to "gatekeeping" of the profession, he said.

Maintaining that the juniors were particularly more cognizant of the contemporary realities, he advocated that the junior lawyers should be provided a "dignified sum commensurate with their hard work." "This over-romanticisation of hard work, especially work without sufficient pay, is not merely rhetorical, it leads to people being expected to work for long hours with less sleep and for lesser monetary value," Justice Chandrachud said and stressed that the entire Bar should raise competent lawyers unfettered by their social or economic background. Lauding the Bench for its latest "remarkable feat", the CJI said the Delhi High Court had set up a Disaster Recovery Centre at Madurai Bench this year to ensure regular backup of its data and softwares.

"So, Delhi has to look towards Tamil Nadu for a solution if it faces problems," Justice Chandrachud said in a



lighter vein. The CJI unveiled the Vigentennial Stupa at the Madurai Bench premises through a video conference. The celebrations at the Madurai Convention Centre, Tamukkam grounds, here, was attended among others by Supreme Court judges: Justice B R Gavai, Justice Surya Kant, Justice M M Sundresh, Justice K V Viswanathan, Justice R Mahadevan. Madras High Court Acting Chief Justice D Krishnakumar and Justices R Suresh Kumar, S S Sundar, and R Subramanian besides Advocate General of Tamil Nadu P S Raman, and Additional Solicitor General of India A R L Sunderesan also participated. Justice Sundresh unveiled a new name board for the Madurai Bench. Addressing the gathering, the CJI said establishing the bench of the high court was not just about setting up infrastructure or creating courtrooms or furnishing those courtrooms.

They are essential appendages to judicial work. The crucial part is about setting up conventions, about setting up traditions, which will ensure for the future," he said. "In the last 20 years, the Madurai Bench has made that transition into truly being a representative of the great traditions of the Madras High Court," the CJI added.

## Contractor booked after labourer dies in mishap in Malad

GNS News Agency, July 24

The Dindoshi police have booked the site supervisor and the contractor of a private construction company on charges of causing death by negligence after a 39-year-old labourer died after a portion of an excavated area at an under-construction SRA building site in Malad East caved in, following heavy showers on Friday afternoon. Three labourers were stuck in the soil inside the foundation pit of an under construction building. Two were rescued while a third labourer, identified as Premchand Jaiswal, died.

Amethi construction of the United Infra company is carrying out construction on the site belonging to Vora and Developers and called the labourers to the site on Friday morning. Jaiswal, along with another labourer, had reached the construction site behind Samudra Bar in Malad East on Friday morning. Jaiswal and his friend Sanjay Kumar Nishad were asked to enter the pit made for the foundation of the building.

While the two were clearing the soil from the pit, suddenly more soil fell into the pit. Jaiswal, Nishad and another labourer Shashti Das, who was already working under the pit, got stuck in the muddy soil, said police.

They screamed for help and other people present at the site pulled out Nishad and Das. Jaiswal could not be



pulled out as he was completely buried under the soil. The police and officials from the fire brigade pulled him out of the soil. Jaiswal was taken to the Trauma Care hospital in Jogeshwari, along with Nishad. While Nishad was discharged after primary medication, Jaiswal was declared dead, said a police officer. When police recorded Nishad's statement, he told police that when he and Jaiswal had asked for a helmet, the supervisor did not entertain their request. On the complaint of Nishad, police have booked the unidentified site supervisor and contractor Pravin Patel under Sections 116 (1) (causing death by negligence) and 3(5) (common intention) of Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS).

ply and Sewerage Board (GWSSB) and was posted in Navsari last year when the scam allegedly took place. The other two are contractors who purportedly submitted fake bills to claim the amount for the water supply work without doing anything on the ground. All three will be produced before the Surat court on Saturday evening. The CID started investigating the case after a complaint was filed by Jatinkumar Patel, an executive engineer at the GWSSB. According to the FIR, the accused siphoned off funds meant for water distribution works at Navsari, Vansda, and Bilimora under the Rejuvenation Tribal Programme without following the tender procedure between April 1, 2022, and August 25, 2023. According to the FIR, officials of the GWSSB vigilance department had carried out physical checks at 94 of the 163 locations where the works were said to be undertaken.

## 'Despite Canada's curbs on India, reverse migration still a fantasy': Expert



GNS News Agency, July 24

Singh who was invited as a special guest in a seminar organised by the Canadian Punjabi Cultural Society in Brampton recently stated that though the intake of students has reduced, reverse migration can happen only when India's social-economic condition would be better than Canada. Singh who was invited as a special guest in a seminar organised by the Canadian Punjabi Cultural Society in Brampton recently stated that though the intake of students has reduced, reverse migration can happen only when India's social-economic condition would be better than Canada. The curbs imposed by Canadian government on India in the past eight months is not going to reverse the rampant migration of students happening in India, according to retired economic professor Kuldeep Singh of Punjabi University.

Singh who was invited as a special guest in a seminar organised by the Canadian Punjabi Cultural Society in Brampton recently stated that though the intake of students has reduced, reverse migration can happen only when India's social-economic condition would be better than Canada. "Only then one can imagine reverting back, but still this is a fantasy, far from reality," he said. Quoting World Development Report, Prof Singh said, "Indian students going across the globe as international students has risen from 2 per cent in 2000 to 41 per cent in 2023."

While speaking on 'Global immigration of youth:

## Bombay HC tells social media firms to take prompt action against deepfakes of NSE's MD

GNS News Agency, July 24

The bench directed the social media platforms to remove or delete the content within ten hours upon receiving a complaint against such morphed videos and profiles where the plaintiff's trademark is infringed. The bench directed the social media platforms to remove or delete the content within ten hours upon receiving a complaint against such morphed videos and profiles where the plaintiff's trademark is infringed. The Bombay High Court has directed social media intermediaries to take prompt action against alleged deepfake videos of NSE's managing director and chief executive officer giving stock recommendations.

A single bench of Justice R I Chagla in the order of July 16 also directed social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Telegram to remove or delete all accounts infringing upon the trademark of NSE. "The balance of convenience also lies in favour of the Plaintiff (NSE) and irreparable loss and/or harm will be caused to the Plaintiff, unless the ad-interim (temporary) relief sought for is granted," the HC said. The bench directed the social media platforms to remove or delete the content within ten hours upon receiving a complaint against such morphed videos and profiles where the plaintiff's trademark is infringed. The court said social media firms are mandated by the Information Technology Rules to take prompt action on the complaints of entities like NSE about unauthorised use of their trademark on dubious "web pages and/or profiles, accounts and/or advertisement and/or videos and/or contents and/or social media groups".

The NSE had moved HC claiming that the platforms featured a fabricated video of its managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) Ashishkumar Chauhan doling out investment and stock tips. The video was allegedly generated using sophisticated AI (artificial intelligence) technology to imitate his voice and facial expressions. The NSE sought an order directing the platforms to take down and remove the unauthorised videos. The NSE further claimed that some perpetrators have allegedly used its trademark and circulated false and misleading advertisements on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The NSE in its



plea said that in April this year, it had also filed a complaint with the cyber police. Senior counsel Birendra Saraf, appearing for the NSE, told the court that despite complaining to the grievance cell of the social media intermediaries no action has been taken against such deepfake videos and those infringing upon the trademark.

This deceptive behaviour of the violators is capable of manipulating the markets and thereby resulting in unfair trade practices as well as breach of various regulations of market regulator SEBI (Security Exchange Board of India) enacted from time to time, Saraf argued. Justice Chagla said NSE had made out a "strong prima facie case" for grant of ad-interim relief sought not only against the intermediaries but also against the unknown perpetrators for infringing its rights. The HC has restrained any persons from infringing the plaintiff's registered trademark "NSE". The court directed the intermediaries to file their affidavits giving details of all those accounts and the persons handling those accounts involved in publishing the fake videos and content similar to fake videos or using the stock exchange's registered trademark "NSE".

The affidavits shall be filed within three weeks, the court said and posted the matter for further hearing on August 19. The court in its order noted that in the alleged deepfake videos, the NSE's MD and CEO can be seen recommending viewers to join a WhatsApp community where the company would allegedly recommend stock picks. The videos further assure "full reimbursement by the plaintiff" of the losses caused to investors executing the suggested trades with diligence, the bench noted.

## Unscientific construction along NH-66 caused landslide near Shirur, says Karnataka minister Krishna Byre Gowda

GNS News Agency, July 24

Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has claimed that unscientific road construction along National Highway 66 was responsible for the landslide near the Shirur region of Ankola in the Uttara Kannada district on July 16. Seven people have died in the incident and several others are still missing. "In Karwar, near Ankola, a landslide has occurred on the national highway. While constructing the national highway, they have cut the hill in a steep manner, it is almost a vertical cut. When a hill is cut for an infrastructure project, a slope is usually provided in order to prevent landslides in the rainy season," Byre Gowda said in the state legislature on Friday, speaking about the road construction measures deployed to expand the highway.

"If you cut the hill in a vertical manner at a 90-degree angle, it is a manner of welcoming a disaster during the monsoon. The national highway has been designed in an unscientific manner and this is the cause of the landslide is what the people are saying," Byre Gowda said. "On one side there is a landslide, on the other side there is water that is standing at a height of five feet on the national highway. Our officials had to travel in a truck on account of high water levels on the highway to reach the spot of the landslide," he said. "The chief secretary has spoken to the NHAI (National Highways Authority of India) about the unscientific manner of design," he added. "So far we have recovered seven bodies including that of a family and two lorry drivers. There is news that a lorry belonging to Sagar Timber Company is miss-



ing. The GPS location is provided. The family of the lorry driver from Kozhikode has said that there has been no communication for four days. Heavy vehicles are working 24/7 to remove the debris from the highway to find the missing lorry and its driver," the Uttara Kannada district Superintendent of Police M Narayana said. The last GPS location for truck driver Arjun S from Kerala has been identified as the landslide spot, the district police said earlier on Friday. Arjun, who is from Kozhikode, was driving a Benz lorry with the registration number KA-15-A-7427. Rescuers are using heavy equipment at the site of the landslide to find the truck driver and several others who are believed to have stopped at a roadside hotel when the landslide occurred on July 16. The landslide occurred near Shirur village under the Ankola police station limits of the Uttara Kannada district, on the edge of National Highway 66, at around 8.30 am on July 16.

## Mizoram bids farewell to Zadingi, the fearless woman who killed a tiger with an axe



GNS News Agency, July 24

Chief Minister Lalduhoma also mourned the death of Zadingi and extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved family. Chief Minister Lalduhoma also mourned the death of Zadingi and extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved family. Mizoram on Saturday bid farewell to Zadingi, the fearless woman who carved her name into India's gallantry history by killing a tiger with her axe. Zadingi, who achieved this remarkable feat 46 years ago, passed away on Friday at the age of 72 in her native village of Buarpui in south Mizoram's Lunglei district, near the Bangladesh border, after a prolonged battle with cancer. She is survived by five children and a grandchild.

Her funeral program was held at noon in her native village during which church leaders, community leaders, and several dignitaries paid their last respects, family sources said. Chief Minister Lalduhoma also mourned the death of Zadingi and extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

"Zadingi, one of the bravest Mizo women, who was worth imitating and also an awardee of India's bravery award 'Shaurya Chakra' has passed away. I deeply mourn her death and extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved family," Lalduhoma said on his social media handle. Zadingi was just 26 when she encountered the tiger while gathering firewood in a jungle near her village.

She recounted the event in an interview when she was alive, explaining that she first mistook the noise in a bush for a wild boar. Despite her calls for help, her friends, terrified by the sound, did not come to her aid. When the tiger emerged, Zadingi had no time to escape. Standing just three feet from the big cat, she struck it on the forehead with her axe, killing it with a single blow. Although the tiger scratched her finger with its paw, she remained composed and managed to inform the villagers of the incident. The encounter took place on July 3, 1978. After killing the tiger, Zadingi learned that her friends had been too scared to assist her. The mummified body of the tiger is now on display at the state museum. Zadingi's bravery earned her the Shaurya Chakra in 1980.

Her heroic act has transcended Mizoram, making her a celebrated figure beyond the state's borders. She remains the only recorded Mizo woman, and perhaps the only woman in India, to have killed a tiger with an axe. Her heroic act was included in the Hindi curriculum of the Mizoram elementary syllabus for many years. In August 2021, Zadingi was diagnosed with colon cancer, just a month after her husband Lalthanmawia died of cancer. Despite undergoing two major surgeries, her condition worsened earlier this year before she finally passed away on Friday.

## Flash floods in UP village after Nepal releases 'excess' water; over 100 stranded people rescued

GNS News Agency, July 24

Rescue teams evacuated over 100 villagers who were stranded in flash floods after Nepal released an "excessive" amount of water that resulted in flooding in Ghaghra river here, officials said. The residents of Chahalwa village, close to India-Nepal border, were stranded in the agricultural fields situated on the other side of river Ghaghra near the border, they said.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the office of the Relief Commissioner of UP said the farmers and labourers of the village daily cross the river for agricultural work. On Friday, 115 villagers had gone to the fields during which the water level was low, the statement said. At around 6 pm, due to the excessive amount of water released from Nepal, the water level of the river increased, trapping the villagers. As the river swelled up, 63 people managed to be brought out safely by boats, but the remaining villagers were stuck in the fields, it said. According to the statement, the rescue operation with the help of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams



continued till late night and the remaining villagers were brought to safe places. Food packers were distributed to them and medical teams were deployed for health check-ups, officials said. Additional District Magistrate, Tehsil and Police Administration and officials of other related departments, including irrigation, have been asked to camp on the spot till the situation becomes normal, officials added.

## Jharkhand court convicts 5 Jamtara cyber criminals for money laundering



GNS News Agency, July 24

A special PMLA court in Ranchi on Saturday convicted five Jamtara residents under the anti-money laundering law for running an "organised" cyber crime syndicate, official sources said. A Netflix series named "Jamtara" that streamed in 2020 is said to have been based on real-life incidents of phishing phone calls and bank accounts scamming launched by some criminals from this district giving it the moniker of 'cyber crime capital' for

many years. Police and other probe agencies later went full steam against these criminals, many of whom were youngsters.

Official sources told PTI those convicted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) include Ganesh Mandal (51), his son Pradeep Kumar Mandal (30), Santosh Mandal (51) and his sons Pintu Mandal (33) and Ankush Kumar Mandal (27). The quantum of sentence is expected to be announced by the court on July 23, the sources said. The federal probe agency had filed a charge sheet against the five accused in May, 2019. The ED slapped criminal charges under the PMLA against these cyber criminals after taking cognisance of a Jharkhand Police FIR and charge sheet that charged them with illegal withdrawal and transfer of money from the ATMs/bank accounts of gullible people in guise of being a bank official. The ED had said its investigation found that the accused "in connivance with other persons acquired funds in their bank accounts and family member's bank accounts by cheating the bank customers, some other individuals and invested the same in the construction of houses and purchase of vehicles."

## Police officials consume alcohol, drugs while on duty, gamble at stations: Goa police internal note

GNS News Agency, July 24

"The note has been issued to take action if such instances are found," a senior police official told The Indian Express. (Representative/ Photo: SP North, Goa Police official X account) "The note has been issued to take action if such instances are found," a senior police official told The Indian Express. (Representative/ Photo: SP North, Goa Police official X account) An internal note issued by Goa police has flagged concerns of alcoholism and drug abuse among police personnel in the coastal state, stating that officials often consume intoxicants during duty hours and also indulge in gambling at police station premises.

The police department has directed the district Superintendents of Police to conduct monthly surprise visits. The officers in-charge of respective police stations have also been directed to compile a list of police officials who indulge in such activities for "necessary action", The Indian Express has learnt. The note, issued by the office of Superintendent of Police (Headquarters) earlier this week, states, "It has been reported that nowadays there is (an) increase in the number of alcohol and drug addicts among the police officials, thus spoiling their physical as well as mental health." The note claims that the police stations and restrooms have become places where "officers and lower staff consume alcohol and other drugs on duty", and "gambling is also a part of activities in police stations/unit premises." "The SPs of the district/unit shall make surprise visits once a month and take action against such officials/personnel who are addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling activities while on duty," it stated.



An internal note issued by Goa police has flagged concerns of alcoholism and drug abuse among police personnel in the coastal state, stating that officials often consume intoxicants during duty hours and also indulge in gambling at police station premises.

A senior police official, requesting anonymity, said, "It is a cautionary note, which was to be circulated within the police department. There is no recent study or a statistic to suggest that there is an increase in incidence of liquor or drug addiction among the police personnel in the state. The note has been issued to take action if such instances are found." Meanwhile, Goa DGP Alok Kumar, who took over as police chief on Monday, held a meeting with senior police officers in South Goa district on Saturday. DGP Kumar told reporters that several issues pertaining to improving policing and road safety in order to curb accidents were discussed during the meeting. While praising the efforts of the Goa police in solving "big" cases promptly, he said the police department remained committed to strengthening community relationships.

## Parents of Agniveer who died in Kashmir appeals for probe into son's death



GNS News Agency, July 24

The soldier's body was brought to his native village Lahlari in Himachal's Hamirpur district on Friday and the last rites were performed with full state honours. The soldier's body was brought to his native village Lahlari in Himachal's Hamirpur district on Friday and the last rites were performed with full state honours. The parents of an Agniveer soldier, who died in Kashmir earlier this week, have urged the president and prime minister to hold an inquiry into their son's death and give them justice. Nikhil Dhadwal, who was posted in the Tanda area in Kashmir's Akhnoor died on Thursday. He was from the first batch of Agniveers and had completed two years in the Army.

Dhadwal's father Daler Singh, a taxi driver, said that

he was informed on the phone that his son sustained an injury and later died. He urged President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to get an inquiry conducted into the cause of death on Saturday. The soldier's body was brought to his native village Lahlari in Himachal's Hamirpur district on Friday and the last rites were performed with full state honours. Dhadwal's parents said that the family was earlier informed by the army that he was seriously injured but later they told that he died. Justice should be provided so that no one is afraid of joining a scheme like Agniveer, said his father. Akhil, the brother of the deceased soldier, has also requested the government to investigate his death and do justice to him. "How did the death happen? It should be found out," he said. On Friday, emotional scenes were witnessed as the Akhil lit the pyre in presence of hundreds of local people and others. The family suspects that there is a mystery behind the death of their son which should be investigated. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, in a message to the family, said the news of the untimely death of Agniveer Nikhil is very sad. May God give strength to the bereaved family to bear this loss. Deputy Commissioner Amarjit Singh and SP, Bhagat Singh had also visited the home of Nikhil and consoled the bereaved family. Lt Col Varun Gandhi who had accompanied the body from Kashmir to Hamirpur did not comment about the reason behind the Agniveer's death.

## Kerala's spending increased by 30-35 per cent despite Centre's restrictions: Minister Balagopal

GNS News Agency, July 24

Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopal on Saturday said that the government's expenditure on development and welfare measures has increased by 30-35 per cent despite the Centre's attempts to "financially choke" the state. Speaking to mediapersons ahead of the upcoming Union Budget, Balagopal said that the average yearly expenditure of the state under the first Pinarayi Vijayan government was around Rs 1.20 lakh crore. During the second Vijayan regime, the state's average yearly expenditure increased to Rs 1.60 lakh crore. "This is despite the severe financial restrictions on us, including cuts in our borrowing limits. We even implemented a pay revision. Ours was one of the few states that did it," Balagopal said. He said that if the UDF had come to power in 2021, then the pay revision would not have been implemented.

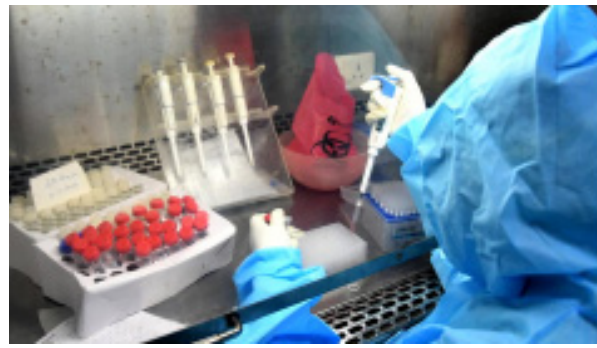
He further claimed that the average spending of the second LDF government would have been much higher if the expenditures by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) were also included. The finance minister said that since 2016, KIIFB has spent around Rs 30,000 crore on development of which about Rs 20,000 crore was spent during the second LDF government's tenure. He said that around Rs 27,000 crore has been spent on social welfare pension in the three years of the current LDF government and only about four months arrears remain to be paid. The minister further said that the government had to pay more than the amounts allocated to each department in the budget in order to ensure the public did not face any issues. "The government is doing all this and carrying out development work despite the Centre's attempts to financially choke us," he claimed.

Balagopal said that the government also spent more than Rs 3,000 crore out of its pocket on initiatives like National Health Mission (NHM), Anganwadis and ASHA on behalf of the Centre which is yet to reimburse the



amount. The minister said that in view of the financial restrictions by the Centre, priorities would be restructured but there would not be any huge cuts in spending. He said preference would be given to general public needs, employment generation, labour and necessary works. The minister also reiterated the requests made by the state to the Centre during the pre-budget meeting held in June in the national capital. He said that the Centre has been requested to announce a special package of Rs 24,000 crore for the southern state in the Union Budget 2024-25. He said the amount sought was actually what was cut from the state's borrowing limits in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. "We asked for what we were entitled to," he added. Balagopal, in the press conference, also said that the state urgently needed a special capital investment of Rs 5,000 crore for fulfilling Kerala's part in the development of the Vizhinjam port and the surrounding region. He also pointed out that Kerala was the only state which had spent 25 per cent of the land acquisition cost of the National Highway widening, which amounted to around Rs 6,000 crore. Besides these, the minister also referred to the state's long pending demand for establishing an AIIMS in Kerala.

## Centre rejects study claiming 11.9 lakh excess deaths in India during 2020 COVID-19 pandemic



GNS News Agency, July 24

The Union Health Ministry has rubbished reports highlighting a higher number of deaths in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic in India. The Ministry claims that the study, published in the Science Advances, was based on untenable and unacceptable estimates. "It is strongly asserted that an excess mortality of about 11.9 lakh deaths reported in the Science Advances paper in 2020 over the previous year is a gross and misleading overestimate. It is noteworthy that excess mortality during the pandemic means an increase in deaths due to all causes, and cannot be equated with deaths that were directly caused by COVID-19," the Ministry said.

According to the Ministry, the paper reports results on age and sex, which are contrary to research and program data on COVID-19 in India. The paper claims that excess mortality was greater in females and in younger age groups (particularly 0-19 year old children). Data on about 5.3 lakh recorded deaths due to COVID-19 virus, as well as research data from cohorts and registries consistently shows higher mortality due to the virus in males than females (2:1) and in older age groups (several fold higher in > 60 years olds than in 0-15 year old children). These inconsistent and unexplainable results in the published paper further reduce any confidence in its claims. In a statement issued on Saturday, the Ministry said that "the excess mortality reported in the Science Advances paper in 2020 over the previous year is a gross and misleading overestimate. The study is erroneous and methodology followed by the authors has critical flaws; the claims are inconsistent and unexplainable. The all-cause excess mortality in 2020 compared with the previous year in India is markedly less than the 11.9 lakh deaths reported in the Science Advances paper."

It added that discrepancies between the study's findings and established COVID-19 mortality patterns further undermine its credibility. "Study fails to acknowledge India's robust Civil Registration System (CRS), which recorded a substantial increase in death registrations (over 99%) in 2020, not solely attributable to the pan-

demic," the Ministry maintained. While the authors claim to follow standard methodology of analysing the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), there are critical flaws in methodology.

It noted that the most important flaw is that the authors have taken a subset of households included in the NFHS-5 survey between January and April 2021, compared mortality in these households in 2020 with 2019, and extrapolated the results to the entire country. "The NFHS sample is representative of the country only when it is considered as a whole. The 23% of households included in this analysis from part of 14 States cannot be considered representative of the country. The other critical flaw is related to possible selection and reporting biases in the included sample due to the time in which these data were collected, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic," the Ministry said, adding that the paper is methodologically flawed and shows results that are untenable and unacceptable. It elaborates that the paper erroneously argues for the need for such analyses claiming that the vital registration system in low and middle income countries including India is weak. This is far from being correct. The CRS in India is highly robust and captures over 99% of deaths. This reporting has constantly increased from 75% in 2015 to over 99% in 2020. Data from this system shows death registration has increased by 4.74 lakh in the year 2020 compared to 2019. There was a similar increase of 4.86 lakh and 6.90 lakh in death registration in the year 2018 and 2019 over the respective previous years. Notably, all excess deaths in a year in the CRS are not attributable to the pandemic. Excess number is also due to an increasing trend of death registration in CRS (it was 92% in 2019) and a larger population base in the succeeding year.

## Exposure to extreme heat kills BSF officer, jawan in Gujarat

GNS News Agency, July 24

Ahmedabad: A Border Security Force officer and a jawan died during patrol due to extreme heat exposure at the 'Harami Nallah' creek area along the India-Pakistan international front in Gujarat, official sources said Saturday.

The incident, in which an Assistant Commandant and a Head Constable are stated to have suffered a heat stroke and dehydration, took place on Friday along the border, the sources said.

The two were undertaking a 'zero line' patrol when they collapsed. The two BSF men were rushed to a health facility in Bhuj but they could not be saved, they said.



## Airport systems working normally, says Aviation Ministry, day after Windows outage hit flights



airlinesThe impact of the outage was most pronounced in the aviation sector, with hundreds of flights delayed and several cancelled as airline operators found their systems inoperative and had to switch to manual processes. After the Microsoft outage severely impacted flight operations across the country, airline systems across airports in India resumed operations normally from 3 am Saturday, the civil aviation ministry said.

The official statement, posted by Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu on X, also travel adjustments and refund processes are being taken care of. "Since 3 am, Airline systems across airports have started working normally. Flight operations are going smoothly now. There is a backlog because of disruptions yesterday, and it is getting cleared gradually. By noon today, we expect all issues to be resolved," the statement read.

The impact of the outage of Microsoft 365 and Azure services was most pronounced in the aviation sector. Hundreds of flights including those by Indigo, Air India, SpiceJet and Akasa Air were delayed and several cancelled as airline operators found their systems inoperative and had to switch to manual processes. At the Delhi Airport for instance, more than 400 flights faced delays and over 50 were cancelled, as per data compiled by flightradar24.

The global technical downtime seemed to partly emanate from a faulty software update issued by major US cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. Major corporations across the world use software developed by CrowdStrike, which is why all their systems faced the outage at the same time. Cloud-based services keep flights on time and our airports running smoothly. So when these services went down, it was as if someone pulled the plug on their operations.

What different airlines said on the disruptions?

India's largest airliner Indigo said that its systems "across the network" were impacted by the issue with Microsoft Azure, "which has resulted in increased wait times at our contact centres and airports". In a statement on Friday, it said: "You may experience slower check-ins and longer queues... Our digital team is also coordinating closely with Microsoft Azure to resolve these issues swiftly." In a post on social media platform X, the airliner said that its online services like booking, check-in and manage booking services will be temporarily unavailable. "Digital infrastructure issues have temporarily impacted online and airport operations across multiple airlines and airports globally. Please plan your travel and keep sufficient time in hand for airport procedures. We regret the inconvenience and appreciate your patience and understanding during this time," it said on X. "We're currently facing a technical issue in providing updates on flight disruptions. Our team is actively working to resolve this issue. We regret any inconvenience caused and will update you once the issue is resolved. Thank you for your patience and cooperation," Spicejet said.

## Not thinking of giving banking license to business houses at present: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday spoke on host of issues related to relationship between central bank and the government, giving banking license to business houses, interest rates, action on regulated entities due to non compliance of norms and rise in rural consumption. In an interaction with Shyamal Majumdar, Editor, Financial Express, the Governor said the RBI is currently not contemplating giving banking license to corporate houses.

"Experience world over has shown that when real sector companies enter into the banking space, there are potential conflicts of interest. The problem around related-party transactions is also a major issue," Das said when asked if the RBI will shed its hesitations over allowing business houses, private equity and venture capital funds to have larger stakes in banking entities.

It will be very difficult to monitor or to regulate or prevent the related-party transactions and so, the risks involved are very high, he added. Related-party transaction refers to any transaction, or relationship, in which the company or any of its subsidiaries is or will be a participant, and any related party has or will have a direct or indirect interest. When asked if RBI, at present, was ruling out entry of corporate houses into the banking sector, Das said, "at this point, there is no thinking in that direction." He said the banking penetration in India has been quite wide. Today, the number of bank branches have become less relevant because the reach is being achieved through technology. "Therefore, what India needs is not proliferation in the number of banks. What India needs is sound, healthy and well governed banks, which, we feel, will be able to mobilise savings and meet credit requirements throughout the country through technology," Das said.

The Governor, however, said that the RBI was open to receiving new applications for setting up universal banks. As and when an appropriate fit and proper application comes, the RBI will not hesitate in examining it, he said. When asked to respond to former RBI Governor D Subbarao's statement, in his recent book, that there was a demand that RBI should be a cheerleader for the government, Das said, "At least I am saying from my experience that nobody expects the RBI to be a cheerleader." He said he has never experienced any such demand in his tenure as the RBI Governor. Das said the coordination between the RBI and the government during the crisis like the COVID was very smooth, which ensured that the country's economy revived very fast and stronger from the pandemic.



He said differences in opinion between the RBI and the government are bound to happen but those are resolved amicably. When asked about the view that higher interest rates can affect growth, the Governor said the RBI's mandate is to maintain price stability, keeping in mind the objective of growth. "Even with the current interest rates, the growth in India has been very robust. In the last three years, the average growth rate has been 8.3 per cent. This year (FY2025), our projection is 7.2 per cent, and we are very optimistic that it will be achieved," he said.

Das said the recent actions taken on some of the banks, NBFCs or other financial institutions for non-compliance of regulatory norms were in the interest of customers. "Whenever we see such problems, our first effort is to engage with them (non-compliant entities) bilaterally. We engaged for months and sometimes more than a year also, but when we see that the compliance is not happening or is inadequate, we have to impose business restrictions. The idea is not to penalize them but business restrictions are imposed in the interest of the customers," Das said. On rural demand, the Governor said he was very optimistic about rural consumption picking up because the monsoon is expected to do well.

## RIL profit declines 5.45% in June quarter on weak oil-to-chemicals business, higher depreciation

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has posted a 5.45 per cent fall in the net profit at Rs 15,138 crore during the quarter ended June 2024 as against Rs 16,011 crore during the same period a year ago following weak O2C business and higher depreciation. On a sequential basis, net profit declined by 20.12 per cent from Rs 18,951 crore in the March 2024 quarter. Total income of RIL rose by 11.90 per cent to Rs 240,200 crore during June 2024 quarter from Rs 214,644 crore a year ago.

The company's oil-to-chemicals (O2C) EBITDA was lower by 14.3 per cent on account of lower gasoline cracks (-30 per cent) and lower downstream chemical deltas, particularly PE (-17 per cent), PP (-16 per cent) and integrated polyester margin (-15 per cent). Depreciation increased by 15.5 per cent to Rs 13,596 crore (\$ 1.6 billion) on expanded asset base across all the businesses, higher network utilization in digital services business, higher retail store count and ramp-up in upstream production.

RIL's digital arm Reliance Jio Platform made a 11.7 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 5,698 crore during June 2024 as against Rs 5,101 crore a year ago and a 12.8 per cent increase in revenue of Rs 34,548 crore (Rs 30,640 crore). Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd reported a 4.6 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 2,549 crore in the latest quarter as against Rs 2,436 crore last year. Gross revenue increased by 8.1 per cent to Rs 75,615 crore from Rs 69,948 crore. Reliance Jio Infocomm has posted a net profit of Rs 5,445 crore for the June quarter as against Rs 4,863 crore a year ago, showing a rise of 11.96 per cent. Revenue rose by 10.13 per cent to Rs 26,478 crore for Q1 from Rs 24,042 in the same period a year ago.

RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh D. Ambani said: "Consolidated EBITDA for the quarter improved from a year ago with strong contribution from consumer and upstream businesses offsetting weak O2C operating environment. Reliance's resilient operating and financial performance in this quarter underscores the strength of



its diverse portfolio of businesses. "Importantly, these businesses are contributing significantly to India's growth, providing vital energy and vibrant channels for digital and physical distribution of goods and services. The digital services business registered an impressive financial performance year-on-year, continuing its positive growth momentum," Ambani said.

Jio's True 5G network, covering 85 per cent of India's 5G capacity, continues to attract users, while the fixed broadband offerings are witnessing increasing consumer traction both in homes and enterprises. The attractive value proposition offered by Jio is enabling more Indians to transition to next-gen data networks, he said.

"With fast-paced expansion of its retail footprint, Reliance Retail continues to cement its position as the preferred retailer for millions of Indians. The digital and new commerce segments are also scaling up rapidly. Reliance Retail is focused not only on providing quality products to customers, but also on enhancing overall customer experience, both during and after sales," Ambani said.

"The deep integration and flexibility built into our O2C business model helped mitigate the impact of challenging operating environment.

## Why is your partner uninterested in everything? Should you dump them or wait it out? Therapist answers



Have you got a partner who never wants to try anything fun and exciting on the weekends, prefers the couch to going out, or shuts down every fresh idea you suggest? Relationships can be challenging, but with a person like this, it may feel like swimming against the stream. Indianexpress.com spoke to Priyamvada Tendulkar, a counselling psychologist, to understand how to tackle such a relationship. Tendulkar said that if your partner is otherwise uninterested in everything, there may be three underlying reasons:

Your partner may be an introvert. Introverts are shy and uncomfortable in social settings, often feeling drained by social interactions. However, they aren't boring; their one-on-one conversations are usually deep and interesting, as they like to skip the small talk," Tendulkar said. She noted that introverts can be frustrated by the loud and boisterous personality of extroverts. If you are an extrovert, this incompatibility may cause issues in the relationship. "If your partner is an introvert, both of you need to decide whether to work through this and find a balance or call it quits." Changing oneself for the other isn't healthy, but if the relationship is worth fighting for, finding a middle ground can help. "Depression hollows

out a person's motivation to exist. If your partner is experiencing temporary situational depression, you can show supportive patience. In cases of long-term clinical depression, often caused by trauma and abuse, your role is to gently suggest professional help. It is up to them to decide whether to accept it," said Tendulkar. Instead of playing the blame game, she suggested providing them with incentives to get better by expressing your needs in the relationship. Your partner may have an avoidant personality type

According to Tendulkar, unsociable or avoidant individuals are averse to shared intimate experiences and difficult to connect with. Human emotions and feelings elude them, and even if interested in novel activities, they do not like sharing them with their partners. "If your partner falls into this category, know that they dislike change and are addicted to comfort. They have a disturbingly low discomfort tolerance and do not like experimenting beyond their narrow definition of what's fun and easy," she said. These tendencies often result from parenting styles that prioritised comfort, preventing them from outgrowing that mindset. Avoidant individuals struggle in relationships with novelty-seekers who enjoy adventures and new experiences, said Tendulkar.

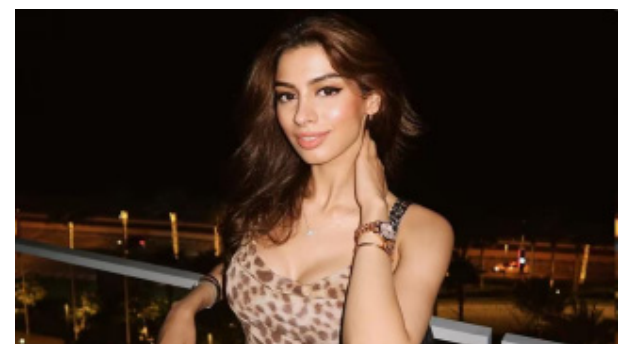
## Khushi Kapoor says she can binge-watch for 7-8 hours straight; expert shares why that's harmful

Who doesn't love a good weekend binge? Curling up on your couch with a bowl of hot buttered popcorn and a fizzy drink to melt away the worries of the week ahead — sounds like a dream. Khushi Kapoor, seen in a recent reel for Bumble's Opening Moves campaign, shared that she can easily pull off a seven to eight-hour binge-watch marathon, with her pet dogs. To find out the potential health impacts of these marathons, indianexpress.com consulted Dr Suchismitha Rajamanya, lead consultant & HOD — internal medicine at Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru.

"While weekends are for unwinding and detoxing from work, extended binge sessions and movie marathons can disrupt your body's natural cycle. It's crucial to maintain discipline and stick close to your weekday routine, as otherwise, Mondays may leave you feeling tired despite 'resting' all weekend," Rajamanya cautioned. According to her, many people try to compensate for a lack of an active social life by binge-watching shows, seeking connection with the characters on screen and living vicariously through their reel lives. binge It's unfortunate that young children are recording pre-diabetes and fatty liver at much early stages due to this altered lifestyle, making them susceptible to more diseases later in life. (Source: Freepik)

What happens when you binge watch for hours?

Rajamanya said that people often snack on un-



healthy, junk foods while consuming content, leading to increased calorie intake and potential weight gain. Alcohol and fizzy drinks exacerbate these issues. Being lethargic can also diminish the processing capacity of the brain, she said. "Not to mention the bad posture that comes with it. People are either laying down for hours or hunched over handheld devices, with eyes glued to screens. This can cause unnecessary eye strain and dryness," said Rajamanya. According to her, it's unfortunate that young children are recording pre-diabetes and fatty liver at much early stages due to this altered lifestyle, making them susceptible to more diseases later in life. To mitigate these risks, she advised taking breaks every 30 minutes to stretch. "Get up, go for a short walk, maybe read a book or go shopping. Keep yourself active and moving," she said.

## Do genes dictate acne, body weight? Experts weigh in

Many of us struggle with acne breakouts or weight management, and it's easy to point a finger at our genes. Then again the reality is more nuanced. Genes certainly play a part in both, but that's not the whole story. It turns out there's a connection between your genes, your skin, and your weight. Let's explore the intriguing relationship between genes, acne, and weight, and uncover how you can take charge of your health irrespective of your genetic background. Dr Marwil Luis, a clinical aesthetician, explains that genetics do not impact acne development. However, it's not as simple as an on/off switch. Our genes affect how our immune system fights germs that cause acne and controls the production of oil. Dr Luis states that acne expression often peaks during the teen and adult years (around ages 12 to 24). This suggests a hormonal link that our genes may influence.

Meanwhile, Dr Shareefa Isa Chause, a dermatologist, explains why some people gain weight more easily. She says there isn't one gene that makes you overweight, however, some genes can



be like amplifiers." If you have these genes and you don't eat healthy or exercise, they can get turned on, leading to obesity and inflammation. This inflammation can also worsen acne. This inflammation can also worsen acne. She highlights PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) as another factor that can interact with genes and hormones to aggravate both acne and weight issues. You can significantly impact how your genes are expressed. There are some simple tips you can take to fight acne and manage weight:

Neglect fancy diets and processed junk. Eat fruits, veggies, spare

meats, and whole grains rather. This simple alteration gives our bodies the necessary nutrients they need for clear skin and healthy weight. Regular physical exercise is important for hormone regulation, metabolism boost, weight control, and potentially reducing acne outbreaks. Hormonal imbalances can affect your skin and weight. However, consult your physician, if you suspect a problem. Addressing hormonal issues can result in clearer skin and better weight operation. Dr Luis suggests using a gentle skincare routine with a cleanser containing salicylic acid and a moisturiser with a water base. For active acne, a doctor may sug-

gest an antibiotic cream like clindamycin. Dr Luis also recommends testing for the following conditions in individuals concerned about weight gain. Hypothyroidism: A condition affecting the thyroid gland, which regulates metabolism. An inactive thyroid can contribute to weight gain. Growth hormone deficiency: Growth hormone plays a role in regulating metabolism and body composition, its deficiency can make it difficult to lose weight. These tests are often made early on in childhood but can be done at any age. These tests mustn't actually test for obesity-related genes; rather, they bring to light possible underlying disorders.

## Gulshan Devaiah says he 'didn't vibe at all' with Janhvi Kapoor during Ulajh, denies being 'intimidated' by her: 'Don't think she finds me interesting'



He then complimented Janhvi, saying that despite these issues, they got the job done. Gulshan noted that Janhvi was a "professional," who did her job. "But I never felt that it was getting in the way of us doing the scenes, it didn't feel like, 'Oh I am not getting enough or something is lacking.' I never felt that. We were trying to achieve whatever the director wanted and that was coming together! Because she is a professional actor, doing her job," he said. Janhvi then revealed that someone had asked her to go out for coffee with Gulshan, assuming that the actor, who made his debut almost a decade before she did, was "intimidated" by her. "I got a call once on set saying, 'I feel you and Gulshan should go for coffee, together. Because between takes you aren't cracking jokes.' And she was like, 'Maybe you should laugh at his jokes because otherwise he might be feeling a little intimidated,'" she added, as the camera cut to Gulshan, who said, "No, not at all."

The video also caught the attention of actor Vijay Varma, who commented, "I think the journalists are only trained and prepared to hear 'we were like a family' narrative. They need the training and not @gulshandevaiah78. Tu mast Aadmi and with the talent hai re gullu and personality you have.. I know you don't get intimidated easily." Actor Sobhita Dhulipala also tagged Gulshan and Vijay in her comments and wrote "emotional." When journalist Sucharita Tyagi noted how Ulajha director Sudhanshu Saria was caught in the middle between Janhvi and Gulshan, the actor replied, "Suds was nervous... very very nervous. So were the PR team present. When Tyagi wrote she doesn't 'blame' them, Gulshan added, "Never. I'm a little unpredictable and it's tough to get where I'm going." Written by Parvez Shaikh and Sudhanshu Saria, with dialogues by Atika Chauhan, Ulajh also stars Adil Hussain, Rajesh Tailang, Meiyang Chang, Rajendra Gupta, and Jitendra Joshi. The film is set to release on August 2.

A routine promotional interview for a film produced a viral clip thanks to one crucial ingredient that's often missing from such interactions: Candidness. Actor Gulshan Devaiah surprised his Ulajh co-star Janhvi Kapoor as he publicly revealed that he didn't "vibe" with her while working on the upcoming thriller. In an interview with Film Companion, Gulshan confessed that there was a distance between them, but declared that Janhvi is a professional who didn't let the awkwardness get in the way of her performance. "It is not like we are sitting and chatting, we don't vibe at all, actually. I don't think she finds me funny, interesting or anything like that," he said.

Gulshan's revelation made Janhvi burst out in nervous laughter, having been completely taken aback by his candid on-camera confession. "I think this is the funniest thing you have said," she said.

"Yes, but we don't! I was like, 'Bro we are not vibing, this is not happening,'" Gulshan said, and added, "So, it's not going to be like we are going to spend time and get to know somebody and use that familiarity in the performance. That's not going to happen. That happens at other places with other actors, you vibe like that. Not necessarily become friends but you find something common, interesting about them or something to do together."

## 'Business class ticket, five-star room': Bollywood makeup artist Shaan Mu lists his demands

Makeup artist Shaan Mutthathil, who has worked in Bollywood for several years, spoke about how much money he makes amid controversy around escalating entourage costs in the film industry. He said that he has worked hard to get to where he is, and that he asks for the money that his experience and reputation command. He also addressed complaints made by filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, and admitted that he earns more on movies than even first assistant directors and managers.

Appearing on the Phitte Muh with Sik & Jaz podcast, he said that his contract spells out exactly what he expects in addition of his regular payment. "If your art is good, you can ask exactly like everyone else. For me right now, it's in my contract that if a bride takes me, (I would need) one business class ticket, two economy class tickets, one five-star hotel room that is closest to the bride. It's a rule. Of course, they do say, 'Even assistants are so expensive?' If the assistant stays somewhere else, he needs to have a car that he can take anytime to come with my kit. I'm very particular when I do a bride right now, I say one business class, two economy, a good hotel for (my assistants), but for me, the closest five-star hotel. They can put you anywhere they want," he said. He continued, "For shoots, it's hours. When you're young, you can do 14 hours or 15 hours. Bollywood shoot or any other shoot, it doesn't finish (on time). So, I'm very clear, I'll give half-an-hour extra, but after that it's one-and-a-half day shift. Whatever you have paid me I need half amount more, and the actresses I work with know me, and they back me up. I give 12 hours plus half-an-hour, but after that, the



people who are making us shoot are making money..." He said that even he would like stars to be on his chair for an hour extra, but he doesn't make such demands. "Let's be clear, nobody is doing seva here," he said, adding that he doesn't see a cut of the profits when a film does well at the box office, which is why he asks what he does upfront. But you have to be prepared to be replaced. Shaan said that someone in his position can ask for upwards of Rs 1 lakh per day on a shoot, and defended his right to do so, even as others working on a film remain under-paid in comparison.

Shaan has worked with actors such as Jacqueline Fernandez and Shradha Kapoor, among many others. He has also done hair and makeup for over 1,000 brides, by his own estimation. The Indian Express has reported extensively on the escalating entourage costs in Bollywood recently.

## Kangana Ranaut slams Sonu Sood for comparing food vendor spitting in meal to Shabri's Ramayana episode; latter says he never 'justified' act



Actor Sonu Sood on Saturday denied equating a cook allegedly spitting in food with Lord Ram eating Shabri's berries in the Ramayana, and rallied for "severe punishment" for those who engage in such acts. The tweet was posted after actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut slammed him for seemingly justifying the act.

Actor Sonu Sood on Saturday denied equating a cook allegedly spitting in food with Lord Ram eating Shabri's berries in the Ramayana, and rallied for "severe punishment" for those who engage in such acts. The tweet was posted after actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut slammed him for seemingly justifying the act. On Friday, Sonu Sood had reacted to the

Uttar Pradesh government's order to all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names. The actor had tweeted, "There should be only one name plate on every shop: 'HUMANITY' ????"

"I have never justified those who spit in food. It is their character which will never change. They should be given severe punish-

ment for this. But let humanity remain humanity, friend. The time we spend in explaining to each other, we should spend that much time on the needy people! By the way, let me tell you all, I am the biggest fan of the work of the UP government. Every house in UP, Bihar is my family. Remember, no matter what state, city, religion, if you need anything, let me know. The

number is the same ????" he tweeted.

It all began when a user had shared a video in which a food vendor is purportedly making rotis smeared with spit, and asked that to be "parceled" to the actor, reacting to which, Sood had written, "Our Shri Ram Ji ate the sour berries of Shabri, so why can't I eat them? Violence can be defeated by non-violence my brother ?? Humanity must just remain intact. Jai Shri Ram ???"

When a news item claimed that Sonu Sood "justified" the vendor spitting while cooking, Kangana Ranaut quote-tweeted the post and wrote, "Next you know Sonu ji will direct his own Ramayana based on his own personal findings about God and religion."

Wah kya baat hai Bollywood se ek aur Ramayana ???Kangana also appeared to be making a reference to the upcoming Ramayana film, starring Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita and KGF star Yash as Raavana. The film is directed by Dangal helmer Nitesh Tiwari.

## Sushmita Sen can't take eyes off Rohman Shawl as he blushes, fans call them a 'cute couple'.



Sushmita Sen recently attended an award show and as the actor was leaving the venue, she was surrounded by fans who wanted to take selfies with her. In the midst of this, Sushmita's ex-boyfriend Rohman Shawl came to her rescue as he shielded her and helped her in getting out of there. He safely escorted her to the car and got in after her. This gesture of Rohman is being widely appreciated by netizens.

One of them wrote, "Respect for Rohman Shawl. Very protective guy". Another comment read, "They look cute together." The video was from Indian Telly Awards where Sushmita bagged an award. The actress could be seen wearing a shimmering all-black outfit. Meanwhile, Rohman dressed in a casual white shirt paired with black pants. In another video, the actress can be seen lovingly looking at Rohman, who gets conscious and begins to blush.

Sushmita Sen and Rohman Shawl dated for many years before announcing their separation in 2021. Sushmita took to her Instagram handle to share the news and wrote, "We began as friends, we remain friends!! The relationship was long over... the love remains!"

While Sushmita and Rohman were not seen together for a couple of years, the duo were spotted again in 2023. And since then, they have made many public appearances together. Rohman also shares a good bond with both of Sushmita's daughters Renee and Alisah. It is yet to be known if the two are back together as both have stayed mum about it. In a 2023 interview with Radio Mirchi, Rohman had opened up about his relationship with the actress and said, "We look good together. Doesn't matter, we don't live for people. You do your things, what people want to say, it's up to them. You don't have to answer anybody. We can't keep commenting on everything that people are saying."

In an earlier interview with Rajeev Masand, Sushmita Sen had revealed that she met Rohman Shawl via Instagram. She said, "Rohman sent me a direct message on Instagram. I don't check direct messages but I was going through it and accidentally opened a DM which was sent to me by Rohman Shawl." She then replied to the message. Rohman replied, "I'm jumping from one roof to another... I cannot believe you responded." Eventually, they met over a coffee date and started their relationship. Sushmita Sen was recently seen in the third season of Aarya, and the web series Taali.

## When Amir Khan shaved off his head after his girlfriend broke up with him: 'It was a childish thing to do'

Superstar Amir Khan is a perfectionist actor, but how is he as a lover? "Intense," he said in a throwback interview of Rendezvous with Simi Garewal, where he revealed that he once shaved his head off after the girl he was in love with left him. During one episode of the popular talk show of the 90s, Amir was asked if he had shaved off his head for the 1984 Ketan Mehta directorial Holi. Amir said he had indeed shaved his head, but over a break-up and not for a film. "A lot of people think I shaved my head for the film, when in fact I shaved my head for some other reason all together. I lost a girl I loved; one day she told me she didn't love me so as a reaction I went and shaved my head off," Amir said on the episode which aired in 1999. Introspecting about his act, Amir Khan laughed and added, "It was quite a childish and immature thing to do but that's what I did. So when I met Ketan for the film, he asked me, 'Where's your hair?!' I told him 'Gone with the girl!'"

When noted that he was an intense lover, Amir said, "Ya I guess so. Sounds like it! She rejected me, we were in a relationship for a fair amount of time. If she felt she didn't love me or valued me, it was something that I completely respect and till today I respect that decision of hers," he added.

On the episode, Amir said before he met Reena Dutta, he fell in love four times. The actor had confessed that he once wrote a love letter in blood to Reena, who



was quite upset with him after this. "I was appropriately put in my place by her. She didn't like it at all. She was quite upset with me." When asked what made Amir do that, he shared that it was his immature way of interpreting love. "You know I was young and I thought that... I thought it's a way to express the deep love that I have for her but today I feel that... I mean I hear of lot of kids doing that and I receive a lot of letters in blood and I think that it's not a nice thing to do. You don't need to do that to express your love for a person so I wouldn't advice youngsters to do that." Amir married Reena in 1986 and has two children with her, Junaid and daughter Ira. The couple divorced in 2002. Amir then married filmmaker Kiran Rao in 2005 but the couple split in 2021.

## Taimur's nanny Lalita Dsilva recalls being 'concerned for his safety' when paparazzi 'chased' him: 'Bahut pressure tha'



Actor couple Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan's first-born son Taimur became an internet star as soon as he was born. Right from the time he was a little baby, the paparazzi started clicking him and Taimur became a household name with his pictures and videos flooding social media. But it was stressful period, his nanny Lalita Dsilva recalled, as she had to shield him from unwanted media attention. Paps in Mumbai would be permanently stationed outside Kareena and Saif's residence, capturing Taimur's daily activities—right from his walks to him going to school, who would often be spotted with Lalita Dsilva, a pediatric nurse with over 30 years of experience.

In an interview with Hindustan Times, Dsilva recalled how the paparazzi would always have their lenses turned towards the toddler, and why she had to protect him from the media gaze.

"There was pressure from the public and media. I would have to tell people 'yeh baccha hai, don't chase him, why are you behaving like this' I had to tell mothers 'I know Taimur is very cute, his parents are also cute and handsome, but take care of your kids also, click your own children's pics.' Bahut pressure tha, but I managed. I had no experience of clearing the media or stop them from clicking pics, but I managed. I was very concerned for Taimur's safety, that he should be kept secure from all this," she added. "He was quite smart because he knew that we were actors, as I had told him we were in the movies. And he just turned around and told me, 'But I am



not famous. Why are they clicking my picture?" Kareena had added that Taimur has now gotten used to it. "But he knows that he's not famous and he doesn't like it."

## Varun Sandesh's 'Virajji' trailer promises to be blood-curdling

Hyderabad: Makers of Varun Sandesh-starrer 'Virajji' released the trailer of the film on Thursday. Going by the trailer, the movie appears to be a dark psychological thriller.

The trailer begins with a voice-over revealing a mental asylum that was built on a hill outside a village in the 1970s. While the asylum is shown to be filled with patients in the past, it later appears to be abandoned and haunted as time passes, after the inmates are subjected to various experiments.

The makers use quick cuts to build tension without giving away the plot. The 2-minute trailer promises a blend of action, emotions and suspense, while hinting at a twisty thriller with a dire past. Most parts of the trailer are seen to be inky to add suspense to the plot.

Ebenezer Paul's background score adds to the suspense, intensifying the uncanny atmosphere. Varun Sandesh's performance seems commendable, following his role in 'Nindhya.'

## Gambhir, Virat shared text messages; new coach says he has 'huge respect' for star batsman



GNS News Agency, July 24

Ever since Gautam Gambhir was announced as head coach, the cricketing world wondered how he would get along with Virat Kohli, since the two Delhi cricketers have had few public spats in the past. And addressing the media for the first time since taking over as India's head coach Gambhir said he had a very good off-field relationship with Kohli.

"My relationship is not public," Gambhir said. "What kind of relationship do I share with Kohli? I think it's between two mature individuals on the field. Everyone has

got the right to fight for their own team for their own jersey, and come back to a winning dressing room," he said about the instances where both of them have been involved in verbal altercations on the field in the IPL. But Gambhir said with the Indian team all of it would change. "At the moment we are representing India, representing 140 crore Indians and I'm sure we got to be on the same page and try to make India proud. And I shared a very good relationship off the field and we'll continue to do that," Gambhir said.

Gambhir and Kohli have shared the dressing room together at Delhi as well as India. After Kohli scored his maiden ODI century, Gambhir even gave away his man of the match award to him. However, in the IPL, first as players and then as a player-coach of opposition teams, they have gone at each other. But Gambhir said he has been in touch with the former India captain. "We shared messages and I think it is not important to share what we discuss and share. During the games or after the games, sometimes we just want headlines. It is not important. The most important thing is he is a thorough professional, he's a world-class athlete, he's a world-class player. I've always said that I have huge respect for him as a player, and it's going to continue that and hopefully we can work together really well," Gambhir said.

## Why SKY preferred over Hardik? One reason was 'dressing room feedback'

GNS News Agency, July 24

It didn't take long. The first question thrown at chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar was regarding Hardik Pandya being overlooked for T20I captaincy when everything pointed out to his elevation to the role, after his stellar performances in the T20 World Cup final. "We listened to the feedbacks from the dressing room," is how Agarkar put with regards to making Suryakumar Yadav the captain. It was a clear indication that even as Pandya was part of the Indian set-up as a vice-captain, the selectors were looking at other options and more importantly listening to voices that matter—players. "We received good feedbacks about Surya and we believe he has the qualities and hopefully he can develop into the role," Agarkar said of their pick. As Agarkar mentioned, it wasn't a decision taken in a hurry. Feedbacks were taken, pros and cons were evaluated and in the end there was one clinching factor, which Agarkar didn't try to sugarcoat. "Fitness obviously has been a challenge for him (Pandya) over the last few years and that becomes a little bit difficult for a coach and selectors. We want someone who is available more often than not," Agarkar said. Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir (left) and Chairman of senior selection committee Ajit Agarkar after the press conference in Mumbai. (Express Photo by Devendra Pandey)

Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir (left) and Chairman of senior selection committee Ajit Agarkar after the press conference in Mumbai.

Then the mic passed on to the man who the whole of India has been waiting to hear – new head coach Gautam



Gambhir. There have been plenty of questions as to whether Gambhir's style of functioning would work in the Indian set-up. As has always been the case, Gambhir sat with the game face on, just smiling once in a half-an-hour interaction. But he explained his outlook in coaching. "It is important to give players the freedom. That is what I absolutely believe in. I don't want to have a relationship between the head coach and players. The best relationship is the one which is built on trust and that is going to be very important," Gambhir said. The biggest goal, he asserted, is winning the dressing room. "I've always said a happy dressing room is a winning dressing room. And that is my responsibility alongside the entire support staff. I've big shoes to fill, but looking forward to it," Gambhir said. It sounded simple. But Gambhir and India will know it won't be as simple, particularly with a tough tour of Australia not far off.

## Gautam Gambhir on Virat Kohli: 'Good for the TRP, but my relationship is not public'

GNS News Agency, July 24

Team India's head coach Gautam Gambhir said that he share a good relationship with Virat Kohli, with whom he has had a multiple on-field clash in the IPL. "Good for the TRP, but my relationship is not public," he told reporters during his first press conference as Team India head coach.

"What kind of a relationship I share with Virat Kohli... I think it's between two mature individuals. On the field, everyone has got the right to fight for their own jersey and come back to a winning dressing room." But at the moment, we're representing India, representing 140 crore Indians and I'm sure we're going to be on the same page and try and make India proud. Virat Kohli and Gambhir had a heated clash in IPL 2023 when the latter was the Lucknow Super Giants team mentor. (BCCI) "I share a very good relationship off the field and will continue to do that. But yes, to make it more public what kind of a relationship... I think it's between two individuals," he said. Gambhir revealed that he has had a lot of chats with Virat Kohli, since the time he has been appointed as Team India's head coach.

"I've had a lot of chats with him... we've shared messages. It's not important what we discussed, how many chats have I had with him, after my announcement or before my announcement or during the game, after the games," he said. "Sometimes, just because we want headlines, it's not important. Right now, the most important thing is we both are going to be working extremely hard to make India proud. And that's our job." Timeline of the Kohli-Gambhir saga: Kohli and Gambhir played for India for nearly five years together with both Delhi batters playing crucial roles in India's 2011 World Cup victory. Gambhir, seven years Kohli's senior, was part of the Delhi unit during Kohli's First-Class (2006) and T20 debuts in 2007. The left-handed Gambhir was also lauded for his gesture of handing over the Player of the Match to Kohli when the youngster scored his maiden ODI century in 2009 after forging a 224-run stand with the former against Sri Lanka at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Gambhir would later play the last two Tests of his career under Kohli's captaincy in 2016. The first clash between Kohli and Gambhir came in an IPL 2013 match in Bengaluru. Gambhir and Kohli exchanged words after the RCB skipper was dismissed for 35 in a chase. Kohli, walking back to the dugout, returned briefly to have a heated argument with his counterpart, before other KKR players intervened to douse the fire.

Between 2016 and 2020, Gambhir post-retirement, had made several remarks lambasting Kohli's leadership during his captaincy tenure with the Indian team. Gambhir even labelled Kohli "not a shrewd captain", stating that he was "lucky" to be retained as RCB captain for long. In a nail-biting finish in Bengaluru, Lucknow Super Giants pipped RCB by one wicket. Gambhir was there in the LSG dugout this time as the team mentor and the former India batter provoked the home crowd with a 'finger on his lips' response to the crowd. In the reverse



fixture in Lucknow, Kohli returned the gesture to the Lucknow crowd after an 18-run win. An on-field tussle with LSG pacer Naveen-ul-Haq then carried on after the game. Kohli was then approached by LSG's Kyle Mayers for a chat, when Gambhir intervened and pulled his player away from the RCB batter. Soon, the cameras caught Kohli and Gambhir in a heated exchange, prompting a host of players from both teams to hop in and control the situation.

## Agarkar reveals why they chose Suryakumar over Hardik as T20I captain

Mumbai: Fitness, feedback from the dressing room and consistent availability swung the pendulum in Suryakumar Yadav's favour when it was decided to appoint him captain of the Indian T20 team ahead of Hardik Pandya, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said here on Monday.

Agarkar made these remarks while addressing a media conference along with newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir ahead of India's tour of Sri Lanka where the team will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs against the hosts starting July 27. "Fitness was a clear challenge and we wanted someone who was likely to be available more often," Agarkar said during the joint press conference. "He is one of the best T20 batters and as captain, he is likely to play all the games. We think he is a deserving captain and we will see how he fits into the role," he said. Regarding star all-rounder Pandya, Agarkar said, "Hardik's skill-sets are difficult to find and fitness is difficult to find. We have got a bit more time and we can look at a few things." "Fitness was a clear challenge and we wanted someone who was likely to be available more often," Agarkar said. "We have taken general feedback from the dressing room also," he added. As regards to former vice-captain KL Rahul being overlooked, he retorted, "I wasn't there when KL was superseded." The T20 series against Sri Lanka will start on July 27, followed by games on July 28 and 30.

## Football – the world's most popular sport, but plagued by indecision and lack of identity at the Games



GNS News Agency, July 24

The grandest sporting exhibition in Paris, the Olympics, would unfold without the country's most famous sportsperson, Kylian Mbappe. The French superstar footballer had, in the past, expressed his desire to compete in the event and win the "holy grail", but his transfer to Real Madrid, which prohibits those that had competed in the Euros and COPA America from participating in the Olympics, meant he would miss out. Unlike continental events and the World Cup, clubs have the power to decide a player's participation in the Olympics. Some French politicians, rumours swirled, negotiated an exemption with the Spanish football giants, but Madrid did not relent. So when the Olympic torch is lit and the contingents parade in boats along the River Seine, past the city's historic landmarks, Mbappe would be in Madrid, soaking in the fanfare and tuning up for the pre-season that begins on August 1.

"Everyone knows I want to compete at the Games but if my club doesn't want that to happen, I'll understand because I am mature enough to understand both views," he said. Kylian Mbappe Real Madrid Kylian Mbappe of France reacts after losing a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni) Not only Mbappe, most of France's rich pool of footballing talent would be absent from the Games and wouldn't be even in their country. So much so that France's Olympic football team coach Thierry Henry would say: "The last time I received so many rejections was at university." France is not an aberration, the powerhouses among the 16 nations would be without their stars — Nico Williams and Lamine Yamal are not in the Spain squad; Argentina is minus Messi and a host of COPA America winners; Mohammed Salah, the anointed flag-bearer of Egypt in Paris, has chosen Liverpool over his country in a last-minute u-turn, Christian Pulisic wouldn't feature for the USA either. Some of the storied football nations, such as Uruguay, Italy, the Netherlands and England, have historically detached themselves from the Olympics. Both Asian and African champions, Qatar and Ivory Coast, did not qualify through the continental U-23 championships. Instead, on show in Paris, would be a clutch of minnows such as Mali, Uzbekistan and Dominican Republic. Mismatches and thrashing thus are routine (Germany thrashed Fiji 10-0 in 2016), quality is not often of the elite level, even though football is the one sport guaranteed to fill stadiums. UPSC Current Affairs Pointers of the past week | July 15 to July 21, 2024 Spain's Alvaro Morata holds the trophy as he celebrates with his

teammates after winning the final match between Spain and England at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany, Sunday, July 14, 2024. Spain won 2-1.

At the heart of this indifference is football's identity crisis, specifically in the men's stream, at the Olympics. No one really knows what it is, whether it is an exhibition of superstardom, or a youth development vehicle, or even an accidental parody. It is a paradox — it's not a fully amateur competition as it once was; it is not a professional grandee like the World Cup or the Euros either. It's meant for U-23s — though the best in the group are already established and occupied in pre-season rigours — but all teams could field three older than 23. It starts before the opening ceremony and ends after most big events have concluded; it is among the most featured disciplines in the event, yet a gold medal is not considered the pinnacle. Lots of goals are scored, but there is hardly any recall value. The Olympics adds little to football, just as football, in its current iteration, adds little to the Olympics. Thus, football at the Olympics is a mix of everything, and like all things without a sharp, pinpoint focus, it is complex and confused. The great minds that have shaped and influenced the Olympics have not yet discovered the formula to package football so that it could embellish the spectacle, lighten each other's existence, rather than exist as a half-baked counterfeit, wandering in a state of purposelessness. The sport has been a regular fixture since 1896, even though it was a club affair in the initial edition. Post the first World War, it was briefly the most coveted medal in football, as no other major international tournament existed yet. British broadcaster David Goldblatt called Uruguay's defeat of Argentina in the final of the 1928 Olympics, "football's first world championship". But two years later, Uruguay would host the first World Cup and change the history of the sport and its relationship with the Olympics. The sport was absent from the Los Angeles Games of 1932. FIFA feared the Olympics would take lustre off the nascent World Cup tournament; American organisers contested the "amateurism" of football, now that a fully professional football tournament has been held. Besides, stories go, that they were fearful of the sport taking root in the country and displace established ones like baseball and American football.

German organisers successfully lobbied for it to be reinstated for the Berlin Games, although the teams had to meet the definition of amateurism. It took another Los Angeles sojourn, in 1984 to tweak the rules again. Teams could now field professional players, but teams from Europe and Americas should not have competed in the World Cup or continent tournaments.

Eight years on, it was reformed into an U-23 format, though at the next edition, three players over 23 were allowed. Football at the Olympics, thus, feels like a forced coexistence, showing both in poor light. Perhaps, football and Olympics in this era are not made for each other, perhaps both need a mutually beneficial divorce. Or maybe a functional solution could be worked out — like making it a wholly U-21 or U-19 event, or revamping the qualification route, or breathing some context into it, rather than packing an already packed calendar and letting football unfold as a farce — to liberate it from its state of purposelessness.

## Ajit Agarkar on picking Suryakumar Yadav ahead of Hardik Pandya as India's T20I captain: 'We wanted a captain, who is likely to play all the games'

GNS News Agency, July 24

T20 World Cup: Hardik Pandya 3-fer vs Ireland India's Hardik Pandya greets fans during an exhibition cricket match between Bangladesh and India at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, Saturday, June 1, 2024, in Westbury, N.Y. The match is a warmup for the T20 Cricket World Cup tournament. Ajit Agarkar revealed that fitness was one of the reason why Hardik Pandya was not considered for India's T20I captain and this is why Suryakumar Yadav pipped him for the role of India's T20I captain. "He is one of the deserving candidates," Agarkar told the reporters. "He is one of the best T20 batters in the world. We feel that Surya has all the necessary qualities to be a good captain. We wanted a captain, who is likely to play all the games," he said. "Surya has the necessary ability to lead the team. We wanted a captain who is around. We will see how he will do in two years time." Agarkar said Hardik is still an invaluable player for the Indian team. "As far as Hardik is concerned, he is still a very important player. And that's what we want him to be, those skillsets are hard to find," he said. Hardik Pandya T20I rankings India's Hardik Pandya celebrates the wicket of South Africa's Kagiso Rabada during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final cricket match between India and South Africa at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, Saturday, June 29, 2024. "We also feel we can manage Hardik better, we've seen what



he can do with the bat and ball in the World Cup... We speak to every player, about whether their role has changed.

And yeah we've spoken to him..." Agarkar also made it clear that at this point Suryakumar Yadav is only considered for the T20Is. "At this point, Surya is being seen just as a T20 player, not being considered for ODIs," said Agarkar. Jadeja not dropped Chief selector Ajit Agarkar has cleared the air that all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is not dropped from the team. "Jadeja was not dropped from ODIs. The decision was made considering the test workload coming up soon after," he said. "We should have clarified that after selection that 'No he [Jadeja] has not been dropped'. He's very much in the scheme of things."

## Gautam Gambhir Press Conference Highlights: New Indian coach speaks on Surya's appointment as captain, Hardik snub and more

GNS News Agency, July 24

Gautam Gambhir Press Conference Highlights: The new India head coach speaks ahead of his first assignment, the IND vs SL series. Gautam Gambhir Press Conference Highlights: The Indian head coach alongside chief selector Ajit Agarkar after their press conference.

India New Head Coach Press Conference Highlights: Newly appointed India cricket team head coach Gautam Gambhir addressed his first press conference in Mumbai since taking over the role earlier this month. This, ahead of his first assignment with the national team — the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka that will see India play three T20Is and as many ODIs. On agenda at the press conference, were questions about the recent leadership change in the dressing room with Suryakumar Yadav having been named as the T20I captain and Hardik Pandya, who was

Rohit Sharma's deputy in the T20 World Cup win, snubbed from the role. Gambhir also spoke about what the future holds for Rohit and Virat Kohli, the two seniors who retired from the shortest format after the World Cup win.

Gambhir took over the role from Rahul Dravid, who was the head coach of the team since November 2021 and signed off after India's triumph at the 2024 T20 World Cup in June. Gambhir's arrival in the dressing room comes ahead of a packed international schedule. India's tour of Sri Lanka will swiftly be followed by home series against Bangladesh, New Zealand before a five-match Test series at the end of the year in Australia. Gautam Gambhir Press Conference Live: Follow live updates from the new Indian team head coach address in Mumbai. Why SKY preferred over Hardik? One reason was 'dressing room feedback'