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Hyderabad Metro ridership drops in early 2024

Hyderabad: The average daily ridership of the Hyderabad Metro saw a slight decline in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2025, as reported by infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro Limited (L&T) during their Q1FY25 earnings call. The ridership dropped to 4,32,000 passengers per day from April to June 2024, down from 4,42,000 passengers per day in the same period of the previous fiscal year (Q1FY24). Despite the quarterly decline, year-over-year comparisons indicate an improvement. The average daily ridership in Q1FY24 (April to June 2023) was 4,22,000 passengers. P. Ramakrishnan, Head of Investor Relations at L&T, shared the statistics and noted the financial implications. The Hyderabad Metro consolidated a net loss of Rs 2.14 billion in Q1FY25, a significant reduction from the Rs 3.35 billion loss in Q1FY24.

Airtel expands its Wi-Fi service across an additional 1.9 million households in Telangana

Hyderabad: Bharti Airtel (Airtel) has increased its Wi-Fi service to an additional 1.9 million households in Telangana. The service is expanded across 46 cities and towns including Hyderabad, Adilabad and Sangareddy. Apart from high-speed reliable wireless internet service, Airtel Wi-Fi provides a host of other benefits including access to unlimited streaming, 20+ OTT services and over 350+ TV channels, a press release said. Customers can book Airtel Wi-Fi using the Airtel Thanks App or by calling 8130181301. Shivan Bhargava, CEO, Bharti Airtel, Telangana and AP, said.

Revanth Reddy Attends parade of firemen candidates, assures of further employment



GNS News Agency, July 26

In a significant event at the Telangana Fire Services and Civil Defense Training Institute, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the passing out parade for fireman candidates who have successfully completed four months of rigorous training. CM Revanth extended his heartfelt congratulations to the new firemen, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

During his address, Revanth emphasized the Telangana government's commitment to the aspirations of the youth, stating that the ongoing Telangana movement was fundamentally driven by the needs and dreams of the younger generation. He pointed out that education and agriculture have received top priority in the state budget, reflecting the government's focus on these essential sectors.

The Chief Minister highlighted his administration's achievements in public service, noting that salaries for government employees are now disbursed on the same date each month. Addressing the pressing issue of unemployment, he stated that the youth have been waiting for job opportunities for the past decade. However, he proudly announced that following his administration's transition to power, appointment documents have already been issued to 31,000 individuals. Revanth Reddy further assured that an additional 30,000 jobs would be filled within the next 90 days, reinforcing the government's dedication to creating employment opportunities for the youth. In closing, CM Revanth acknowledged the vital role of the fire brigade, stating that they are the first responders to any disaster, and underscored the importance of their training and readiness to serve the community.

Supreme Court extends interim stay on Kanwar Yatra nameplate diktat



GNS News Agency, July 26

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the continuation of its July 22 interim order staying the directives issued by the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh, asking eateries along the Kanwar Yatra routes to display the names of their owners, staff and other details. A Bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti said it won't issue any clarification on the July 22 order as "We have said what needed to be said in our July 22 order. Can't force anyone to disclose names." The Bench asked the Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments to file their response to the pleas challenging their respective directives. It allowed the petitioners to file their responses to the replies of the state governments and posted the matter on August 5. In its reply, the Uttar Pradesh government defended its directive requiring eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display the names of their owners and staff, saying the idea was to bring in transparency, avoid "potential confusion" and ensure a peaceful yatra. On July 22, the apex court ordered an interim stay on the directives issued by the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh governments.

India lost 628 tigers in past five years: Govt data

GNS News Agency, July 26

New Delhi: A total of 628 tigers died in India in the past five years due to natural causes and other reasons, including poaching, according to government data. Meanwhile, 349 people were killed in tiger attacks during this period, with Maharashtra alone recording 200 deaths. According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), 96 tigers died in 2019, 106 in 2020, 127 in 2021, 121 in 2022, and 178 in 2023.

On Kargil war anniversary, PM Modi warns Pakistan against supporting terrorism and proxy war against India

GNS News Agency, July 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 26 called out Pakistan's support to proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir and said the enemy will be given a befitting reply. The remarks came in the backdrop of growing militant attacks in the Jammu region. "Pakistan has failed in all its nefarious attempts in the past. Pakistan, however, has not learnt from history. It is trying to keep itself relevant by supporting terrorism and proxy war. I am speaking from a place where the masters of terror can hear my voice directly — I want to tell these patrons of terrorism that their nefarious intentions will never succeed. Our soldiers will crush terrorism with full force and the enemy will be given a befitting reply," Mr. Modi said. The Prime Minister was speaking at the 25th anniversary of the

1999 Kargil war, which is observed as 'Vijay Diwas'. He also paid homage to war heroes at the War Memorial, Drass, in Kargil district. PM Modi recalled the Indian Army's anti-enemy operations launched from the peaks of the Himalayas. "India wanted peace, but the enemy showed its dual face. Finally, falsehood was defeated. The victory in the Kargil war showed our commitment towards our nation and the valour of our brave forces. Our forces successfully executed the operation despite the extreme and challenging battle conditions," he said. Also read | Kargil Vijay Diwas: Tributes paid to Indian soldiers He said the land of Kargil was witness to the supreme sacrifices offered by the brave hearts 25 years ago. "The names of those who offered their lives for this land will remain alive forever. The entire nation is highly in-

debted to the martyrs of the Kargil war," PM Modi said. The shift to 'peace and harmony' The Prime Minister pledged that India would defeat every challenge that hinders the development of Ladakh or Jammu & Kashmir. "It will be five years since Article 370 was abolished in August. Jammu & Kashmir is staring at a bright future, talking about big dreams. Besides infrastructure development, the tourism sector is also growing rapidly in Ladakh and J&K," he said. He said it was after August 5, 2019, cinema halls in Kashmir have reopened. "After three and a half decades, Tazia procession (of Shia Muslims) was carried out in Srinagar for the first time. J&K held a successful G-20 meeting. Our heaven on earth is rapidly moving towards peace and harmony," he said. Referring to ₹6000 crore budgetary allocation to the Union Territory of



Ladakh, which is a quantum jump from earlier ₹1100 crore, Mr. Modi said Ladakh was chasing new dreams and touching new heights. "Ladakh will soon have a 4G network and the 13-km Zojila tunnel, an all-weather route, will also be completed," he added. PM Modi targeted the Congress for its failure to meet the demands of the armed forces in the past. "The

Congress failed to meet the demands of forces, including the Army and Indian Air Force (IAF). These demands fell on the deaf ears in the past. There was a huge yearning for reforms. Our government took a step to listen to the forces and today we have a list of 5000 weapons that are no longer being exported from outside," he said. Defending the

Agnipath scheme, PM Modi said, "It is an example of the necessary reforms done by the Army. For some people, the Army was meant for saluting politicians and parades. But the Army means the faith of 140 crore countrymen.

The goal of the Agnipath scheme is to make the Army young, to keep the Army continuously fit for war."

BRS milked Rythu Bandhu scheme funds, says Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka



GNS News Agency, July 26

Hyderabad : Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, taking a dig at the BRS government while presenting the budget for the 2024-25 financial year on Thursday, said that Rs 80,440 crore were spent on the implementation of Rythu Bandhu for farmers. "However, financial input assistance has been given to many ineligible persons, owners of fallow lands, and real estate businessmen. Thus, precious public funds were wasted by violating the rules framed by the then government. Against this backdrop, the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (RBS) with Rythu Bharosa benefits the real farmers by increasing the assistance and providing Rs Rs.15,000 per year," he said.

Bhatti added that a cabinet sub-committee appointed to the scheme has toured various districts and consulted farmers, experts and intellectuals. The views expressed at these forums will be placed before the Assembly to hold a detailed discussion to elicit the opinions of the members and to finalise modalities to implement the scheme. A new scheme will be launched during the current financial year by providing financial assistance of Rs.12,000 per year to improve agricultural labourers' living and economic standards, he informed. Highlighting that droughts and floods are a bane to the farmers, the Dy CM said natural calamities endanger the crops and cause economic destruction. Against this backdrop, it was decided to extend farm insurance to the farmers by joining the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), from the current year. Further, the state government will pay the crop insurance premium under the scheme.

He said that the farmer suffers due to a lack of remunerative prices for the products. The government has decided to encourage the cultivation of "Sanna" (super fine) rice. For this, the government has identified 33 super fine rice varieties, for which Rs 500 per quintal bonus will be provided to the farmers who cultivate these varieties. The Rythu Nestham Scheme (RNS) has been set up to bring awareness among farmers on the latest technology and to share the experiences of progressive farmers with other farmers, organised in collaboration with the scientists of Professor Jaya Shankar Telangana Agriculture University.

Budget is bereft of Bandhu, Bharosa; dubs govt 'Rythu Shatru'



For the first time, Rao came to the Assembly. Addressing the media after the presentation of the budget, he said the government was hostile to farmers. "There is no mention of important schemes in the budget

GNS News Agency, July 26

Hyderabad : Alleging that this was a 'Rythu Shatru' government, BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao said on Thursday that the budget lacked funding for schemes like 'Dalit Bandhu' and 'Rythu Bharosa'. He warned that

his party would rip apart the government in the coming days.

For the first time, Rao came to the Assembly. Addressing the media after the presentation of the budget, he said the government was hostile to farmers. "There is no mention of important schemes in the budget. There is no allocation for the sheep distribution schemes 'Dalit Bandhu' and 'Rythu Bharosa'. Just as farmers were praised, they were flattered and backstabbed. It is not like a budget, but like a story." "I did not come to the Assembly because we wanted to give six months of time to the Congress government. But we will not leave them now and will rip them apart," warned KCR.

He alleged that the government had started a new drama in the name of a Rs 2 lakh farmer loan waiver. "The budget is far from real. The government has not formulated any single policy. A single industry is not named. There is no clarity on anything. Nothing is given to women. The electricity supply in the State is not good. People are strongly opposed to the government. The BRS cadre will fight on public issues. There will be no let-up until the Congress implements its fraudulent election promises," said KCR. He said, "We brought many schemes for the economic upliftment of lakhs of people. The government tried to scuttle throats; there is no other example to show their feudal policies. The Finance Minister has stressed on various points in the speech, but there is not even a single new scheme. They said they are implementing loan waivers, but this is an existing scheme; there is nothing".

Grand Preparations Underway for Ashadham Bonalu in Hyderabad on July 28



GNS News Agency, July 26

The much-anticipated Ashadham Bonalu Fair is set to take place on the 28th of this month, with local temples adorned in vibrant decorations and lights. Committees at various temples have made significant arrangements to ensure a seamless experience for devotees. At the Sridevi Nallapochamma temple in Golnaka, preparations have reached an impressive level, with the temple fully restored and exquisitely decorated. Kommididi Gopal Reddy, general secretary of the temple committee, announced that on Sunday morning, the committee will perform an anointing ceremony, decoration, and present bonams to the goddess. The program for offering bonalu to Amma is scheduled to continue from 8 AM through the night. Devotees can expect a lively atmosphere as processions featuring pots and food carts make their way to the temple, enhancing the festive spirit. Local dignitaries, including MLA Kaleru Venkatesh and Corporator Doosari Lavanya Srinivas Goud, along with several public representatives and leaders from various political parties, are expected to participate in the Bonalu festivities. In Kunjehingaganagar, preparations are also in full swing for the Bonalu festival at the Srimahankali and Sribangaramaisamma temples. Basti committee members R.K. Babu, K. Ranchander, Singeetham Rajesh, Shekhar, Parushuram, Lakshminarayana, K. Chandu, and others have been overseeing the arrangements closely to ensure a splendid celebration. As the festival approaches, the excitement and anticipation

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ANSAR BIN NASAR SARRAN S/O NASER BIN AMAR SARRAN (Old name) born on 26-04-2002 at Hyderabad Earlier was holding Passport No. G2856178 DT: 16-04-2007 hereby changing my name and henceforth in future I would be known as ANSAR BIN NASAR S/O NASER BIN AMAR SARRAN (New Name) R/o H.No. 3-5-786/14/1, 1st Floor, Shear Gate King Koti, Hyderabad-500029, Telangana.

DECLARANT.

ANSAR BIN NASAR

S/O NASER BIN AMAR SARRAN

Place: Hyderabad

Date: 26-07-2024

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

The Games begin

FOOTBALL, archery, handball and rugby sevens events have already kicked off before the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games. The 19-day spectacle will see 10,500 athletes from over 200 nations compete in 329 events across 32 disciplines. Aiming to attract a younger audience, breaking, skateboarding, surfing and sports climbing are being introduced. The seven-medal tally at Tokyo 2020 represented India's most triumphant Olympics performance. The US topped with 113 medals, followed by China at 89 and the Russian Olympic Committee at 71. This time, more than 100 athletes are representing India across 16 disciplines in 69 medal events. As we cheer for the contingent, some questions will continue to be asked — why do some countries win more medals, and what explains the gap in the level of athletic prowess?

Raw talent and dedication are huge factors, but nothing can beat training and support. The ability to reach athletic potential depends upon the opportunities afforded to train in world-class facilities with top coaching. A country's GDP, studies have shown, is the single best predictor of its performance. In the case of the former Soviet and Eastern Bloc countries, their athletic success was attributed to the forced mobilisation of resources. The Union sports budget this year is Rs 3,442 crore, with the biggest share of Rs 900 crore allocated for Khelo India. Several states now offer cash rewards and jobs for medalists. Funding star athletes' training abroad is no more unusual. Is it enough? Not by any yardstick, certainly not for a country hoping to host the Games. While the need for wholehearted investment cannot be overstated, protests by top women wrestlers in the recent past exemplify the systemic flaws in Indian sport administration. The politician-bureaucrat hold has proved difficult to break.

'Delay' in releasing prize money: Haryana CM assures players of various games and their parents to resolve matter shortly



GNS News Agency, July 26

It was a day of wait and meetings with Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, apart from sports officials, for Tokyo Paralympics multiple medallist and shooter Singhraj Adhana and parents of Paris Olympics qualified Haryana players and Asian Para Games/Asian Games, CWG medallists for the delay in getting cash awards for national and international events, including Para Asian games and ISSF World Cup/Championships. While Adhana had competed in Para Asian Games in Hangzhou, fellow shooter Tokyo Paralympics gold medallist Manish Narwal, who had won a bronze in the P1 10 m air pistol SH1 category, and they are still awaiting the prize money for the Asian Para Games. "We had come to meet the Haryana CM to tell him about the delay in releasing the prize money for the Asian Para games medallists from the state and the delay in releasing cash awards for para shooters as well shooters for international events, including world cup and world championships from 2021 to present. After listening to our grievances, he assured us of quick resolution," Adhana told The Indian Express.

Adhana was accompanied by the parents of more than 15 shooters from the state, apart from para shooters Deepak Saini, Krishan Kumar and Rahul Jakhhar. While Haryana is sending six shooters to the Paris Olympics,

more than 60 shooters from the state have not received cash awards for international events other than the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. This includes multiple medals won in ISSF, the sport's world governing body, organised World Championships/World Cups as well national competitions. While the parents of some of the Paris Olympics-qualified shooters also met the Haryana CM, rifle shooter Ramita Jindal's father informed the shooters were not given Rs 5 lakh for the preparations for the Paris Olympics as announced by the Haryana government. "None of the Paris Olympics-qualified shooters, including my daughter Ramita Jindal, have been given Rs 5 lakh for the preparations of the Paris Olympics. Now that they have reached Paris, what more can we say? We have also been waiting for cash awards for the international events from 2021 to date. For a young shooter, such cash awards are a must to sustain and motivate them."

While Ramita got the cash award for the Asian Games bronze, many shooters need cash awards for international events for their training needs. Haryana is number one in terms of medals won for the country and we expect such things not to happen in Haryana," said Arvind Kumar Jindal, the father of Asian Games bronze medallist 10m air rifle shooter Ramita Jindal. Another parent said after the Haryana CM took cognisance of the matter, they were expecting a quick resolution of the issue. "We are glad that the Haryana CM assured us of quick resolution of the issues," said the parent, whose ward had won a medal in the Asian Para Games. The players and their parents also met the Haryana Director of Sports, Yashendra Singh. Singh called a meeting of the Haryana Cash Awards Sports Committee on Wednesday to resolve the issue. "Some of the para shooters and the parents of international medallists in the shooting met me today. There are some technical reasons which the sports department wanted to verify. I have called a meeting of the cash awards committee, along with two representatives from the shooters, on Wednesday. We will work to resolve their issues, at the earliest," Singh told T

PDMBA Trio selected as technical officials for Paris Olympics



GNS News Agency, July 26

PDMBA Olympics 2024CA Girish Natu has been appointed as Deputy Referee-2, Sudeep Barve as Umpire-3, and Shailesh Kulkarni as an umpire for the Paralympics. Three members of the Pune District and Metropolitan Badminton Association (PDMBA) have been selected as technical officials for the upcoming Paris Olympics. CA Girish Natu has been appointed as Deputy Referee-2, Sudeep Barve as Umpire-3, and Shailesh Kulkarni as an umpire for the Paralympics. Girish Natu made history in 2008 as the first Indian to serve as an umpire at the Beijing Olympics. He continued his exemplary service as a match coordinator at the 2012 London Olympics and currently holds the position of Chairman of the Badminton Asia Association's Referee Assessor Committee. Shailesh Kulkarni has officiated at numerous high-profile events, the 2023 Senior World Championships (Korea), and the Asian Paralympic Championships (China). Sudeep Barve has also umpired the BWF Super Series final in China last year and seven other international tournaments. His experience includes officiating at the 2019 World Championship and the 2022 Thomas Cup. "We are immensely proud to see three technical officers from our district heading to the Olympics. This rare accomplishment highlights the success of our 40-year-long technical officials training program led by Girish Natu," stated CA Ranjeet Natu, General Secretary of PDMBA. The selection of these three officials marks a significant milestone for Pune and highlights the city's contribution to the sport of badminton on an international level.

'TMC MLA tried to assault me on Assembly premises': West Bengal BJP Opposition leader



GNS News Agency, July 26

Leader of Opposition of West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari alleged Wednesday that a TMC MLA tried to assault him and he requested the Speaker to take action. Speaker Biman Banerjee said he has ordered an investigation. According to sources, after a question-answer session at the Assembly lobby, there was an altercation between the Leader of Opposition and the MLA of Purbasthali, Tapan Chatterjee. During the session, BJP MLA Shankar Ghosh reportedly mentioned this to the Speaker, who said to "not discuss the matter here" and in his letter, Adhikari wrote, "... Today at around 12.20 pm at the lower lobby... Chatterjee... rushed towards me and tried to assault me physically and threw abusive language in front of other MLAs and reporters. I felt insecure inside the Assembly precincts." He further wrote, "This is the second time we were threatened by the ruling party members. They are taking advantage because of the absence of personal security allotted to us inside Assembly precincts. You prevented them from entering the Assembly premises." "As a custodian of the House, you will be responsible if any untoward incident occurs inside the Assembly precincts. I request you to take appropriate action against the MLA," the BJP leader stated in his letter to the Speaker. Meanwhile, TMC MLA Tapan Chatterjee said, "During the Lok Sabha election campaign, he lied about my daughter's school job and said that I have two flats in Kolkata."

TMC moves resolution against NEET in West Bengal assembly



GNS News Agency, July 26

The Trinamool Congress Wednesday moved a resolution in the Assembly condemning the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), and demanding that the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) be reinstated in West Bengal.

A motion moved by the TMC and passed through voice vote said, "This House, while strongly condemning the failure of National Testing Agency (NTA) to conduct undergraduate and postgraduate examinations fairly and freely, urges the Government of West Bengal to conduct the JEE for ensuring a robust public healthcare system across the state, particularly in far-flung rural areas, in public interest." The resolution, moved by TMC MLAs Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas, Shashi Panja, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Nirmal Ghosh and Ashok Kumar Deb, stated, "Previously for the state quota of undergraduate and postgraduate seats in medical colleges in West Bengal, JEE was conducted by the Joint Entrance Board, which has since been abolished due to the NEET coming into force." "The NEET for undergraduate courses is based on the CBSE syllabus and not the syllabus of any state board... The majority of students aspiring for medical and AYUSH seats for undergraduate courses in West Bengal are students appearing in Uchha Madhyamik Examinations under the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Examination," it said. Speaking inside the assembly, state Education Minister Bratya Basu said, "In the whole episode, only one person did not comment on the issue, and he is our Prime Minister. What we are saying about the NEET scam is just the tip of the iceberg." "All powers were taken away from the hands of the state. As a result, the future of millions of students in the country is in question. We feel that the joint entrance examination should be returned to the state as it was before 2016-17. The State Joint Entrance Board can do this with transparency. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other states have already demanded this — the central government should immediately take a decision," he said. Opposition BJP MLAs said the TMC is "in no ethical position" to move the resolution, referring to the school jobs scam, in which dozens of TMC leaders had been arrested, that had rocked the state. BJP MLA Shankar Ghosh alleged, "We had seen more than Rs 50 crore recovered from under the bed of Partha Chatterjee and his friend Arpita Mukherjee. They are now talking about another scam. They have no right to say all these things." He added, "The Supreme Court refused to cancel the NET-UGC 2024, saying there is no material to prove systemic breach. After such an observation, how can our assembly move such a motion?" Earlier, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to reinstate JEE in the state.

Shaik Aayesha of UoH selected for BRICS Youth Summit 2024 at Russia

Hyderabad: Shaik Aayesha, Ph.D scholar from School of Chemistry, University of Hyderabad (UoH) working under Prof. Srinivasa Rao Yaragolla, was selected as one of the delegates for BRICS Youth summit 2024 and Meeting of the BRICS Youth Ministers being held in Ulyanovsk, Russia from July 22 to 26 under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, (Department of Youth Affairs). The main agenda is to bring awareness among youth to enhance the efficiency of the system of international relations and ensure its further democratization through BRICS by engaging young leaders across the globe in different panel sessions, discussion sessions, a press release said.

New study presented at AIDS 2024: Two yearly shots of Lenacapavir to prevent new HIV infections with 100% effectiveness

GNS News Agency, July 26

A twice-yearly injectable drug for HIV prevention, lenacapavir, is a breakthrough advancement in public health. On Wednesday at AIDS 2024, the 25th International AIDS Conference, Linda-Gail Bekker presented the full results from the 'PURPOSE 1' trial of twice-yearly injectable lenacapavir for HIV prevention. The new data provides details on the efficacy, safety and tolerability of twice a year lenacapavir injections and were presented at a special late-breaking session at the conference. The data has also been published today in The New England Journal of Medicine. "The results confirm that lenacapavir demonstrated 100% efficacy for HIV prevention in cisgender women," Linda-Gail Bekker, Chief Executive Officer at Desmond Tutu Health Foundation. Deputy Director, Prof of Medicine, The Desmond Tutu HIV Centre. "We believe these results are sustainable for women around the world," she said. "Funded by Gilead Sciences, a top pharmaceutical firm, the results of Phase 3 PURPOSE 1 trial sets a new standard for person-centred HIV prevention trials, demonstrating what can happen when a thoughtful scientific and community-focused trial design, a promising drug candidate and an inclusive trial implementation plan come together," she added.

Data from the Phase 3, double-blind, active-controlled, multicenter, randomised trial were collected from 5,345 HIV-negative, cisgender adolescent girls and young women aged 16-26 at 25 sites in South Africa and three sites in Uganda. Overall, lenacapavir was highly effective among trial participants, with zero HIV infections observed in the lenacapavir group (compared to background HIV incidence), translating to a 100% reduction in HIV infections.

Gilead expects results in late 2024/early 2025 from the programme's other pivotal trial, PURPOSE 2, which is assessing twice-yearly lenacapavir for PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) among cisgender men, transgender men, transgender women and gender non-binary individuals in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Thailand and the United States who have sex with partners assigned male at birth. "The results confirm that lenacapavir demonstrated 100% efficacy for HIV preven-



tion in cisgender women. These are stand out results but we need to turn to serious conversations around accessibility of the drug and reduction in prices," Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, UNAIDS. She quoted a study where experts have calculated the minimum price for mass production of a generic version and estimated it at \$40 a year. "If this price is offered then there is a fighting chance we can talk to our governments to be able to procure the drugs," she said, Gilead Sciences working towards strategy to enable access globally. Jared Baeten, Vice President, Clinical Development, Gilead Science, who was present at the roundtable meet said Gilead was committed to HIV prevention and treatment for more than three decades and are working towards a strategy to enable broad, sustainable access globally. "We are awaiting the results of the PURPOSE 2 trial in other populations by the end of the year and are prioritising swift access and enabling efficient paths for regulatory approval of Lenacapavir for PrEP in high-incidence, resource-limited countries," he said. Sharon Lewin, President of IAS — the International AIDS Society, AIDS 2024 International Co-Chair and Director of the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity at the University of Melbourne in Australia further added, "If approved and delivered — rapidly, affordably, and equitably — to those who need or want it, this long-acting tool could help accelerate global progress in HIV prevention. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the thousands of young women in South Africa and Uganda who volunteered to be part of this study."

After ending hunger strike, Maratha activist Jarange-Patil alleges plot by Fadnavis to jail and kill him



Jarange-Patil, who had restarted his fast on July 13, said on Wednesday that he was giving a new deadline of August 13 for the Government to meet the Maratha community's demand for reservation.

GNS News Agency, July 26

Eight days after he resumed his fast for Maratha reservation, Manoj

Jarange-Patil called it off on Wednesday but again targeted Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis by alleging a plot to "get him killed in jail"—drawing a BJP response that the quota activist "has lost his mental balance". Jarange-Patil, who had restarted his

fast on July 13, said on Wednesday that he was giving a new deadline of August 13 for the Government to meet the Maratha community's demand for reservation.

Jarange-Patil alleged that Fadnavis was behind the non-bailable warrant issued by a Pune court for him. "Fadnavis is the home minister. He heads the Law and Judiciary Department... He gets the police to approach the court for getting such warrants. He has made the police register a fabricated FIR against me," he told reporters. Jarange said he had done nothing wrong and alleged that Fadnavis got the non-bailable warrant issued. "I will not appear in the court... I have not taken anyone's money... If

the courts and police are listening to Fadnavis, I will not respond to the warrant." Jarange-Patil further alleged that the senior BJP leader had launched a campaign to put him in jail. "Fadnavis has launched a campaign to trap me in a case and put me in jail. He has given the task to 10-15 leaders. They want to put me in jail and get me killed by their men in jail," he said.

"He is the one who is behind the setting up SITs and sending the ED after different leaders. He gets warrants issued against them and even gets them cancelled. He decides who should go to jail and who should come out," he said. BJP spokesperson Pravin Darekar reacted sharply to the quota activist's allegations.

"Jarange has lost his mental balance. He is making wild allegations... The Maratha community has lost faith in him. We will not keep quiet. We will give a befitting reply to him," he said. Jarange-Patil called off his fast after his health deteriorated on Tuesday night and he was put on IV support. "I don't want to continue a fast with saline. This cannot be called a fast," he said as he sipped a glass of juice given by villagers in Antarwali Sarathi in Jalna district. "I told them that if they put me on saline, they would not get reservation but they did not listen... I was telling my associates that the Government was scared of my indefinite hunger strike and therefore they should allow me to continue with the fast," he said.

Kannada TV serial actor Sunny Mahipal booked for assaulting pregnant 'wife' in Bengaluru



GNS News Agency, July 26

Kannada actor assaultA woman claimed Kannada television actor Sunny Mahipal assaulted her with a knife in Bengaluru. A pregnant woman, who claimed to be the wife of Kannada television actor Sunny Mahipal, accused him of assaulting her with a knife in Bengaluru on Monday, leading the police to book a case against the actor on the same day.

The incident reportedly took place at the actor's house in Vignan Nagar near Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The woman sustained deep cut injuries on her left arm and the attack also led to a miscarriage, the police said. In her complaint, the woman said she is a law graduate and had met Mahipal through social media in February. The two soon got into a relationship. A police officer said, "The woman also said that when she came to know that she was pregnant, she informed Mahipal, who agreed to marry her. Later, he took her to a temple in RT Nagar and married her in June but continued to live separately. He had reportedly told her that he needs time to convince his parents." However, the complainant allegedly got to know that Mahipal was planning to get engaged to another woman and went to the actor's house on Monday, the police said. During the argument, Mahipal allegedly attacked the pregnant woman with a knife. The woman somehow managed to reach the hospital in her car and got admitted to a hospital, the officer added.

The police said Mahipal in his statement denied that he was married to the woman. Mahipal featured in Nethravathi, a Kannada TV serial, which got him fame. Later, he acted in many other Kannada TV serials.

Vadodara at risk of floods, teams deployed to evacuate people

GNS News Agency, July 26

The IMD issued a red alert in Vadodara as heavy rains lashed the district on Wednesday, leading to heavy waterlogging in several areas. The city's Vishwamitri river, which was flowing 5.5 feet high at 8 am, swelled up to 18.3 feet at 3 pm, and, in many areas, is rapidly rising almost to the mark of 22 feet — a mark which would spell the beginning of floods. Teams of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC), a team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and two teams of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been deployed to evacuate residents from low-lying areas in the city as the level of the Vishwamitri river has been rising rapidly. The administration is preparing for larger operations. Schools and colleges have been directed to remain closed on Thursday.

After the IMD previously issued an orange alert for Vadodara, the city received a total of 167.1 mm (6.5 inch) rainfall since 8 am on Wednesday, according to data from



the Control and Command Centre of the VMC. Several areas in the city were inundated, including Karelbaug, Fatehgunj, Sayajiganj, Raopura, Gorwa, Gotri, Kalali, Manjalpur, Tarsali, Vadsar, Gotri, Alkapuri, Subhanpura and Navayard. Water seeped into many houses across Vadodara.

Panchamasali Lingayat council asks Karnataka govt to clarify legal stand on OBC quota demand

GNS News Agency, July 26

OBC quotaThe Panchamasali Advocates Council has also asked Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to facilitate a discussion on the demand for the Panchamasali OBC quota in the state legislature. File photo/X/@AilpmkarnatakaA group of advocates from the Lingayat subset of Panchamasalis met on Tuesday to discuss and plan a legal strategy for resuming their agitation to seek reservations for the community under the OBC 2A category. They have requested clarification from the Karnataka Congress government regarding the state's legal stance on the community's demand for Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota.

The Congress government has been called upon to clarify its position within a month on the Panchamasali community's demand for inclusion in the OBC 2A category. This inclusion would allow the community to benefit from a 15 per cent quota in government jobs and educational opportunities for OBC communities. This resolution was one of four passed by the Panchamasali lawyers council on Tuesday. "The government should immediately call a meeting of its legal department and clarify within a month about the Panchamasali 2A and Lingayat OBC reservations," said a resolution passed by the Panchamasali advocates council in the presence of the Lingayat seer Basavaraj Mruthyunjaya Swamy.

"Legal hurdles should be removed, and reservations should be announced," said a second resolution taken at the advocates' council meeting. The Panchamasali advocates' council decided to form a high-level committee consisting of 11 legal experts to guide the Panchamasali community regarding the quota agitation. The Panchamasali Advocates Council has also asked Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to facilitate a discussion on the demand for the Panchamasali OBC quota in the state legislature.

Seer Basavaraj Mruthyunjaya Swami said on Tuesday that the Panchamasali group will hold a lawyers' conference at Belgaum on September 11 to discuss the community's quota demand and, if the demands are not addressed, hold a protest during the winter session of the state legislature in Belgaum in December this year. The Panchamasali Lingayats, a subset of the dominant Lingayat community in Karnataka, have been demanding reservations under the OBC category in the state for over three years. Their agitation hit a dead end in 2023 due to legal complications. The Lingayats, who make up around 15 per cent of the Karnataka population of six crore people, currently have a five per cent reservation under Category 3B of the Karnataka OBC quota matrix.

The BJP, which was in power between 2019 and 2023, tried to win over the Panchamasalis in 2023 before the 2024 Karnataka assembly polls. They did this by removing a four per cent quota that was previously available to Muslims under the 2B category of OBCs and reallocated it to the two main castes in Karnataka — the Lingayats and Vokkaligas. This was achieved by creating two new OBC quota categories, 2C and 2D. This BJP move resulted in an overall increase of the Lingayat and Vokkaliga quotas in Karnataka to seven (in the new 2D group) and six per cent (in the new 2C group) from the earlier five and four per cent, respectively. The Panchamasali group did not accept the BJP's decision, even though the BJP government told the Supreme Court that the state government in Karnataka would not implement the new quota policy following a plea challenging the withdrawal of the Muslim OBC quota. The matter is currently in political limbo as the legal issues arising from the BJP's attempted changes in reservations in 2023 are still pending before the Supreme Court.



"We have been seeking the 2A quota for Panchamasalis in jobs and education in Karnataka for three years. The previous government allotted the new 2D category to us but it was not implemented," Panchamasali Lingayat seer Basavaraj Mruthyunjaya Swami said in March ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. "We want 2A reservations in the state and the inclusion of all Lingayats in the central list of OBC communities eligible for reservations. We have done a lot of protests. If the demand is not met then we have to consider our political allegiances," he had said.

Toddler locks mother and brother in bathroom, Pune Fire Brigade roped in for rescue



GNS News Agency, July 26

Pune fire brigade rescueThe family's neighbours called the woman's husband and subsequently, the fire brigade was called. A rescue team and a fire tender from the Yerwada Fire Station were deployed in response to the call. A toddler ended up locking her mother and her three-year-old brother in a bathroom while playing in their house in the Chandan Nagar area of Pune on Wednesday. According to the Pune Fire Brigade, they received a call at their control room at around 12.40 pm about a family trapped inside their flat. They were told that the one-and-a-half-year-old girl locked her mother and brother in the bathroom with the flat's main door latched. The family's neighbours called the woman's husband and subsequently, the fire brigade was called. A rescue team and a fire tender from the Yerwada Fire Station were deployed in response to the call.

After reaching the spot, the firefighters found that the family was locked in the flat on the second floor of the building. The firefighters rescued the mother, who is in her 20s, and her two children after 20 minutes of reaching the building. "Our team members accessed the balcony of the neighbouring flat to enter the balcony of the locked apartment.

'At least we believe in judicial propriety': SC bench objects to another bench also initiating contempt proceedings in DDA case



GNS News Agency, July 26

A Supreme Court bench on Wednesday took serious exception to another bench also proceeding with contempt proceedings against the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) over the felling of trees on the approach road to the under-construction Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences in Southwest Delhi's ridge area, notwithstanding that the former was already seized of the matter, and said the latter "has not adhered to judicial propriety". "Though the other bench has not adhered to judicial propriety, we are doing so... When for the same cause of action for felling of trees, this court had issued notice, could the other bench have proceeded for that?" Justice B R Gavai presiding over a bench also comprising Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and K V Viswanathan said, referring to the Chief Justice of India the question which court should continue to hear the matter so as to avoid further conflicting orders.

Justice Gavai said, "The appropriate course for any bench would have been to refer the matter to the Chief Justice and get the order as to which bench should hear because ultimately, it is the chief justice who is the master of the roster." "What upset the bench was that a bench presided by Justice A S Oka too had gone ahead with the contempt proceedings in May, even after Justice Gavai's bench took it up in April. Appearing for the DDA vice-chairman, senior advocate Vikas Singh pointed out that the institutions in the ridge area were established after favourable conclusions from the Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee and the court itself. Singh added that the approach road, which would also facilitate access to the residential societies for CBI employees, SAARC University etc, was only 7.5 m wide and needed to be widened to 24 m. He said the inauguration of the hospital, on which Rs 2,200 crore had been spent, which was to take place in April had been deferred owing to the legal wrangling over the road widening.

Justice Gavai then told him, "We don't want any con-

flicting orders because at least we believe in judicial propriety." He advised the senior counsel to approach the CJ. Singh said he had approached the bench because the matter was already pending before it. He termed it a matter of national interest. He added that while the contempt proceedings can go on before the Justice Oka bench, "but in the process, this national interest project should not be lost". The court noted in its order that it had already issued a notice, on April 24, on the contempt plea against the DDA. It added that the DDA had also moved the bench by Justice Oka to seek permission to fell the trees but this was rejected on March 4. The bench presided by Justice Oka also initiated contempt proceedings vide order dated May 14. On being told by the amicus curiae that the contempt proceedings before Justice Oka's bench "have substantially travelled", Justice Gavai's bench said, "In that view of the matter in order to avoid conflicting orders, we find it appropriate that the contempt proceedings initiated the bench presided by one of us, Justice Gavai, by order dated April 24, 2024, are kept in abeyance."

As senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for parties challenging the DDA's actions, objected to Singh's submissions, Justice Gavai said, "We don't want to say anything on the question of propriety. When another bench had already been seized of the matter, how could another bench have looked into it?" Sankaranarayanan sought to clarify that the DDA's action is in contempt of two separate proceedings, in the T N Godavarman matter and the M C Mehta matter, both related to environmental issues. "Maybe, but then it was the same cause of action," said Justice Gavai.

The bench said in its order, "It would have been more appropriate for the other bench to seek clarification from the Chief Justice of India before initiating the contempt proceedings for the same cause of action as to which bench should continue with the same proceedings." "As already observed here and above, we do not propose to proceed with the contempt proceedings initiated by us since the proceedings before the other bench have already progressed," it added. "However, in order to avoid further conflicting orders being passed," the court said it found it appropriate that the CJ clarify which bench should hear the matters pertaining to the felling of trees in the ridge area. Justice Gavai said he recollected that he had been passing orders for the last two years regarding the protection of the environment in the ridge area. Sankaranarayanan said, "They have made a statement there (before the other bench) that they are withdrawing from this... It's been recorded that they are not going to widen the road, that they are going to restore completely. That's the statement made there."

In major bureaucratic reshuffle in Delhi, 8 IAS officers transferred and posted

GNS News Agency, July 26

Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Wednesday affected the transfers of over half a dozen senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and DANICS officers across departments under the Delhi government as well as those beyond its jurisdiction. In the transfers and postings announced by the Delhi government's services department, six of the IAS officers who were part of the overhaul were awaiting postings and belonged to the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) or Central cadres and batches from 1996 to 2008.

A Anbarasu, a 1996-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre — who held three significant charges including that of principal secretary, Public Works Department, Trade and Taxes as well as CEO of the Delhi Jal Board — was relieved of the charge of Principal Secretary, Trade and Taxes. Nikhil Kumar, a 2000-batch IAS AGMUT cadre officer, was posted as Secretary, Land & Building, 2008-batch officer Chanchal Yadav was posted as Secretary (Home), Arti Lal Sharma of the 2010 batch was posted in the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Jitender Yadav of the 2010 batch was posted as additional commissioner in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Ravi Jha of the 2011 batch as Deputy Commissioner (New Delhi) and 2008-batch DANICS officer Marathe Onkar Gopal was posted in the MCD as well. As part of the exercise, 2009-batch AGMUT cadre IAS officer Krishna Mohan Uppu, who was posted as Excise Secretary and had the addi-



tional charge of Secretary, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), was relieved of the former and given full charge of Secretary NDMC. After the passage of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023, the transfers and postings of all IAS and DANICS officers are done by the three-member National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA). The body, which is chaired by the Delhi chief minister, has the power to recommend transfer, posting, and vigilance matters related to all IAS and DANICS officers in the Capital and last met in January this year. Given its composition, IAS officers appointed directly by the Centre — the chief secretary and principal secretary (Home) who are the other two members of NCCSA — hold more sway in it compared to the chairperson.

'Stock market scam': 2 senior citizens lose Rs 96 lakh in Maharashtra

GNS News Agency, July 26

Two senior citizens, one from Thane and the other from Navi Mumbai, collectively lost Rs 96 lakh this week in what the Maharashtra Police are claiming to be a 'stock market scam'. Stock market scams have become widespread in the past few months with several persons, especially senior citizens, losing money after getting lured by high returns. Some fraudsters have also started issuing online ads asking people to contact them if they want to invest money and the police are unable to put a stop to these scams.

In the Thane case, a 65-year-old man, who recently retired as an administrator, wanted to invest his life savings in the share market. In May, when he was watching videos online, he saw an 'IIFL' advertisement. Assuming it to be the real investment company, he sent a text message to the number provided in the advertisement. The person then added him to a WhatsApp group. Subsequently, in nine transactions between June 14 and July 1, the man invested Rs 46 lakh. In a few days, on the app provided by the company, he saw that his money has grown to Rs 3.31 crore. However, when he tried to withdraw the money, he was asked to pay a fee. This is when he realised that he had been scammed. Earlier this month, the man approached Thane police and an FIR was registered against unknown accused on Tuesday. In the second case, a senior citizen from Navi Mumbai looking to invest money was added to a similar WhatsApp group and he ended up losing Rs 50 lakh. When he realised he had been duped, he approached the Navi Mumbai cyber police where an FIR was registered. At the cyber police station, he came across two other persons who had collectively lost Rs 50 lakh,



Two senior citizens, one from Thane and the other from Navi Mumbai, collectively lost Rs 96 lakh this week in what the Maharashtra Police are claiming to be a 'stock market scam'.

The police said, emphasising on the growing number of such cases.

A police officer said, "The number of people falling prey to this fake share market scam has increased. Senior citizens are especially vulnerable and several have lost their life savings. The accused in these cases usually operate from other states and the money is converted into cryptocurrencies and sent abroad." The officer added, "When victims dial the cyber helpline number 1930 immediately after being scammed, there is a chance that the money can be saved."

Himachal plays host to over 1 crore tourists in 6 months



GNS News Agency, July 26

Despite monsoon-triggered landslides striking Himachal Pradesh, over 1 crore tourists visited the hilly state in the first six months of 2024, as per official data by the government. As many as 1,00,87,440 tourists, including 38,882 foreign tourists, visited Himachal Pradesh with popular destinations being Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Dalhousie, Kinnaur, and Lahaul and Spiti. Kullu and Shimla districts emerged as the top attractions, drawing 4,73,737 and 4,48,392 tourists, respectively, the data said. Kangra and Shimla emerged as the first preferences for foreign visitors, with 14,095 and 13,881 tourists visiting these spots respectively.

A state government officer said, "McLeod Ganj in Dharamshala where Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama resides, is in Kangra district. Foreign tourists are always eager to visit this place. In the last six months, 5,114 foreign tourists visited Kullu, and 1,917 visited Kinnaur." Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said favourable weather conditions in July have contributed to the trend, allowing tourists to escape the sticky summer heat of the plains and enjoy the scenic beauty of Himachal Pradesh. "Despite recent weather conditions affecting some roads, most roads across the state are open and are accessible to tourists and the general public. Himachal is also witnessing an influx of thousands of tourists in July, and these numbers are promising. We expect to surpass two crore visitors by the end of this year," he said. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of tourists keeping track of the latest travel advisories and road conditions through the helplines of the district administration, police department, and social media handles. "Tourist safety and enjoyment are our top priorities," he added. CM Sukhu reiterated the state government's commitment to the safety of visitors at various destinations in Himachal Pradesh. He said that the Public Works Department (PWD) is working diligently to clear road blockades and restore travel routes swiftly. The Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation is also encouraging tourists to check for updates on specific routes and travel with confidence. Regular updates on road conditions are being provided by the district administration and Himachal Police so that tourists do not face any inconvenience during their stay in the state, he added.

Panel constituted to probe claims of DUSU office vandalism submits report

GNS News Agency, July 26

A week after the Delhi University constituted a committee to probe into the claims of vandalism at the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) office, the panel submitted its interim report to Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh.

In its interim report, the panel has made 11 recommendations, which are yet to be approved by the VC. "DUSU office should be closed and repairs should not be initiated till the elections," "CCTV cameras should be installed around DUSU office and parking," and "timing of closing of the office should be 6 pm and the office should not open on holidays" — these are among the recommendations in the report. The DUSU elections are usually held in September every year. However, a delay is likely this year with CUET (Common University Entrance Test) results yet to be declared, which has affected the start of a fresh academic session. The panel has also recommended that the losses incurred during the incident should be "recovered from DUSU funds or personally" and that the "two supervisors on duty that night should be suspended". A fresh tussle had erupted between the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) amid allegations over DUSU chief Tushar Dedha's office on July 14. The panel has also insisted on "strict compliance of Lyngdoh Committee recommendations like no use of posters—handwritten or printed." The videos of the alleged vandalism were widely circulated on social media.

In a statement, RSS-affiliated ABVP had lashed out at the Congress's student wing. "On July 14, around 3 am, about 40 NSUI goons — including DUSU Vice President Abhi Dahiya, Yash Nandal, Raunak Khatri, Siddharth Sheoran — attacked the office at Delhi University's North Campus and vandalised the office of DUSU president

Tushar Dedha, the visitor room of DUSU secretary Aparajita and the office of DUSU co-secretary Sachin Baisla. The idol of Lord Ram kept in the office of the DUSU president was also broken in this attack. The water dispenser kept in the visitor room of DUSU among other things was broken," it claimed. DU proctor Rajni Abbi earlier told The Indian Express, "Primarily until now, we have found the DUSU president's office was vandalised. Several cans and liquor bottles were found at Vice-President Abhi Dahiya's office. The guard has given his statement..." Meanwhile, The Indian Express further learnt that this year, four DU colleges — Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, Mata Sundri College for Women, and Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College — presented a representation stating, "As per the decision of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, it has been decided to disassociate our four Khalsa Colleges from DUSU henceforth." Officials at the varsity stated that no reason was provided by these colleges and that this decision had been floated through the governing bodies of the respective colleges.



2020 Delhi riots: High Court issues notice to Delhi Police on Umar Khalid's bail plea

GNS News Agency, July 26

Umar Khalid is facing allegations of planned conspiracy, along with others, to cause riots in east Delhi between February 23 and 25, 2020, with offences under the Indian Penal Code, Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act (PDPP) Act, Arms Act, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 (UAPA).

A division bench of the Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Delhi Police, seeking its response on the bail plea by Delhi riots accused and former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Umar Khalid. The matter was taken up before the division bench of Justices Suresh Kait and Girish Kathpalia. The bail pleas of other accused in the alleged 'larger conspiracy' of the 2020 Delhi riots, namely Sharjeel Imam, Meeran Haider, Saleem Khan and Shifa Ur Rehman too were before the bench, all of which have now been posted for further hearing on August 29.

Two other bail pleas — one by Abdul Khalid Saifi and other by Gulfisha Fatima — too were listed before a division bench of Justices Suresh Kait and Manoj Jain where a request was made by their counsels to reserve the two matters for judgment as arguments from both sides have been completed. Notably, Justice Kait has been recommended by the SC Collegium for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. On July 22, another division bench of the court ordered for the listing of the matter before another court after Justice Amit Sharma, part of the division bench led by Justice Prathiba Singh, had recused himself from hearing the



matter.

Khalid has moved Delhi HC for bail for a second time after a division bench on October 18, 2022, had refused to release him. While Khalid had then moved the Supreme Court, he had subsequently withdrawn his plea from the apex court, citing a change in circumstances. Earlier on May 28, a Delhi trial court in Karkardooma had rejected Khalid's bail plea a second time. Khalid is facing allegations of planned conspiracy, along with others, to cause riots in east Delhi between February 23 and 25, 2020, with offences under the Indian Penal Code, Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act (PDPP) Act, Arms Act, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 (UAPA). The Delhi Crime Branch registered a First Information Report (FIR) in March 2020 in connection with the case and the special cell has undertaken an investigation.

Mumbai tour operator dupes radio channel CFO of Rs 13 lakh under pretext of arranging Canada tour, booked



GNS News Agency, July 26

The Chief Finance Officer of a renowned radio music channel who was planning a family trip to Canada allegedly lost Rs 13.25 lakh after he was duped by a tour operator in Mumbai, the police said. The Malad police on Tuesday booked the accused tour operator identified as Amit Singh who took money from the 49-year-old Ghatkopar resident under the pretext of arranging Canada family tour package for him through his firm, but did not do any booking of the hotels or flights. A search is on Singh who came into contact with the complainant six years ago when the accused was employed with the Indian office of a New York-based international tour operator, said investigators. During that period the complainant had gone on a US tour through Singh's office. According to the police, the complainant in March this year contacted Singh, who had by then established his own travel firm, 'Travel Connexion', to arrange a family trip to Canada.

"Since then has been sending details of various international tour packages to the complainant on WhatsApp. Singh sent a detailed chart of the Canada tour to the complainant, who liked it, and between April 1 and May 30, Singh transferred Rs 14.04 lakh to Singh for booking the Canada tour package, which mainly includes booking of flight tickets and hotel accommodations," the First Information Report stated. Singh told the complainant that booking of flight tickets and hotels in Canada have been done and also sent him the details of flight tickets and some of the hotels in Canada on his tour firm's letterhead, the police said. "Two months later, the radio channel official realised he was duped when he received an email on May 14 from a Pune-based tour company informing him that Singh had booked their Canada flight tickets via their company and they hadn't received the payment for the same," said a police officer. When he confronted Singh, the accused did not give any satisfactory response and told the complainant that he would soon make the payment to the Pune firm, the officer added. Moreover, Singh told the complainant that all bookings and payments for the Canada trip, except flight ticket bookings, have been made. The radio channel CFO contacted the hotels in Canada and discovered that Singh had lied to him on the hotel bookings. "He then cancelled the Canada tour, and asked Singh to refund the money immediately. After repeated follow-up, Singh only refunded Rs 79,427 and sought more time. He, however, failed to repay the money despite taking nearly a month's time," the FIR stated. The complainant sent legal notices

to Singh, but in vain. He then approached the police and filed the complaint. Malad police have booked Singh under sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code. The investigators are in the process of writing to the bank concerned to get the details of the money trail and find out where exactly Singh used the money sent by the complainant, said a police officer. The Chief Finance Officer of a renowned radio music channel who was planning a family trip to Canada allegedly lost Rs 13.25 lakh after he was duped by a tour operator in Mumbai, the police said. The Malad police on Tuesday booked the accused tour operator identified as Amit Singh who took money from the 49-year-old Ghatkopar resident under the pretext of arranging Canada family tour package for him through his firm, but did not do any booking of the hotels or flights. A search is on Singh who came into contact with the complainant six years ago when the accused was employed with the Indian office of a New York-based international tour operator, said investigators.

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Intense rain leaves Delhi grappling with waterlogging woes and traffic snarls

GNS News Agency, July 26

The Public Works Department received around 48 complaints related to waterlogging, largely from Zakhira, Rohini and Anand Parbat in North Delhi. Waterlogging was reported from Mathura Road, Sarai Kale Khan, Dhaura Kuan, Punjabi Bagh, Anand Vihar, Indira Gandhi Stadium and ITO. The Public Works Department received around 48 complaints related to waterlogging, largely from Zakhira, Rohini and Anand Parbat in North Delhi. Waterlogging was reported from Mathura Road, Sarai Kale Khan, Dhaura Kuan, Punjabi Bagh, Anand Vihar, Indira Gandhi Stadium and ITO. Intense spells of rain in several parts of Delhi in the early hours of Wednesday caused waterlogging, traffic snarls and uprooting of trees, even as residents grappled with above-normal humidity levels—100 per cent, as recorded by the India Meteorological Department's Safdarjung base station at 8.30 am.

The Safdarjung station recorded 27 mm rainfall between 5.30 am and 8.30 am. The cumulative rainfall logged in other weather stations in 24 hours till 8.30 am Wednesday was 17.8 mm in Palam, 24.2 mm in Lodhi Road, 26.6 mm in Ridge and 14.2 mm in Ayanagar. During the three-hour period between 2.30 am and 5.30 am, the Pusa, Narela, Najafgarh and Pitampura stations reported rain of 10.5 mm, 12.5 mm, 2.5 mm and 1 mm, respectively. According to the IMD, 0.1 mm to 15.5 mm rainfall is categorised as very light to light rainfall, moderate rainfall is 15.6 mm to 64.4 mm and heavy rainfall is 64.5 mm and 115.5 mm. The Public Works Department received around 48 complaints related to waterlogging, largely from Zakhira, Rohini and Anand Parbat in North Delhi. Waterlogging was reported from Mathura Road, Sarai Kale Khan, Dhaura Kuan, Punjabi Bagh, Anand Vihar, Indira Gandhi Stadium and ITO. The police issued traffic advisories due to waterlogging at Chhatta Rail Chowk, Zakhira underpass, Nigam Bodh Ghat and Anand



Parvat. They also cited two instances of uprooting of trees at Haryana Maitri Bhawan in Rani Bagh and near Rajdhani College. There was also a traffic alert issued for Ring Road in the carriageway from Punjabi Bagh towards Dhaura Kuan due to waterlogging at the construction site of the flyover. An X post by the Delhi Traffic Police at 10.31 am read, "Traffic is affected on Ring Road near Indira Gandhi Stadium in the carriageway from Rajghat towards Sarai Kale Khan due to waterlogging near IP Flyover. Kindly plan your journey accordingly."

For Wednesday, the IMD has predicted a generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain or thunderstorms. A nowcast for Delhi valid till 12.55 pm said, "Light to moderate rainfall is very likely to occur at NCR (Manesar) and light rainfall or drizzle is very likely to occur at few places of Delhi (Patel Nagar, Buddha Jayanti Park, President House, Najafgarh, Dwarka, Delhi Cantonment, Palam, Safdarjung, IGI Airport, Vasant Vihar, RK Puram, Vasant Kunj, Hauz Khas, Mehrauli, Chhattarpur, Ayanagar, Deramandi) and NCR (Gurugram)." The maximum temperature recorded on Tuesday was 36.2 degrees Celsius, which was a notch above normal and the minimum temperature on Wednesday was 24.8, 2.5 notches below normal.

Centre's step-motherly attitude towards Telangana: Sridhar Babu

GNS News Agency, July 26

Hyderabad: Expressing disappointment over the absence of budget allocations for key projects in Telangana in the union budget, Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu accused the BJP-led NDA government of adopting a step-motherly attitude towards Telangana. Speaking on the resolution introduced by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on the injustice done to Telangana in the union Budget in the assembly on Wednesday, Sridhar Babu said the Centre sanctioned funds to Andhra Pradesh as per the AP Reorganisation Act, but it neglected Telangana. "Why is Telangana not provided allocation under the same Act?" he asked. As per the Reorganisation Act, 35 promises were made to the State, but none of them figured in the union budget,

he said, adding that the attitude of the Centre towards Telangana was not good for the country. "Telangana is a big economic growth engine of the country. By ignoring it the country cannot become a 5 trillion dollar economy," he warned. Stating that Telangana was not against financial assistance being provided by the Centre to Andhra Pradesh, he said the centre should treat all the States equal and financially support them. "BJP is supporting AP due to political compulsions. But it cannot do injustice to Telangana," he said. The Industries Minister said Hyderabad Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (HBIC) was announced in the union budget, but not a single kilometre of road passes through the State. "Telangana is not going to benefit from this corridor. The entire benefit will go to AP," he said.

Tribal girl's IIT fees to be sponsored by Telangana govt

GNS News Agency, July 26

Rajanna-Sircilla: The State government has decided to provide financial assistance for the education of a tribal girl, who secured a seat in IIT Patna, Bihar. In this regard, the Chief Minister's Office issued orders on Tuesday.

Badavath Madhulatha, who secured the 824th rank in JEE mains examination in ST category, had got a seat in IIT Patna. However, she would have to pay Rs.3 lakh to confirm the seat. Unable to pay such a big amount because of the poor financial condition of her family, she withdrew her desire to pursue IIT and started grazing goats and sheep in her village in Gone Nayak thanda of

Veernapalli mandal. Her two sisters, who completed graduation, were doing cultivation in a small piece of land in their thanda..

Reports on the girl's situation that were published in the media were brought to the notice of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who summoned Madhulatha to Hyderabad. He also instructed officials to provide financial assistance to Madhulatha till the completion of her education. The government would provide the financial assistance via the Tribal Welfare department. Madhulatha is the third child of Ramulu and Saroja. The parents thanked the Chief Minister and Vemulawada MLA Adi Srinivas for taking the initiative to help their daughter.

Who is Kim Beom-su, founder of South Korean tech giant Kakao?



GNS News Agency, July 26

On July 23, South Korean authorities arrested Kim Beom-su, the billionaire founder of tech giant Kakao Corp, on accusations of stock manipulation during the acquisition of a K-Pop agency last year. Here are some facts about Kim and the conglomerate that dominates South Korea's tech scene. Founder Kim, who is also known as Brian Kim, is regarded by the industry as a rags-to-riches visionary. He grew up in poverty, sharing a single room with seven members of his family at one point, and now has a net worth of about \$3.4 billion, according to Forbes. He is 58 years old. Kim is currently detained in a solitary cell, 1.4 square metres (15 square feet) big, at Seoul Nambu Detention Centre, South Korean media reported.

Kim founded South Korea's first online game portal Hangame in 1998. He and his partners launched the KakaoTalk app in 2010, and the free messaging service took mobile users by storm a year later when smartphones began to proliferate in South Korea. KakaoTalk gradually introduced services such as emojis, helping it attract thousands of users. It is now South Korea's dominant chat platform, with 48 million monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2024, boasting a 93% penetration rate in South Korea's 52 million population. In 2014, Kakao

merged with internet search portal operator, Daum, in a deal that valued Kakao at about \$3.1 billion and resulted in a backdoor listing. Leveraging KakaoTalk's massive user base since, the company has expanded into services including advertising, games, music streaming, entertainment, shopping, payments, online banking, and transport.

Kakao has seen its number of affiliates grow from 26 companies in 2014 to 124 companies in 2024. Kakao's group of affiliates are worth 86 trillion won (\$1 = 1,385.3300 won) (\$62 billion) by assets according to South Korea's Fair Trade Commission. The conglomerate has added to its war chest and paid off investors via IPOs, listing Kakao Games in 2020, KakaoBank and KakaoPay in 2021. Kakao's mobility unit holds a more than 90% market share in South Korea's taxi-hailing market. In November 2023, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said the service was monopolistic and called for a review.

A data centre fire in October 2022 knocked out some KakaoTalk and related services for up to several days and sparked public concern over how much government agencies and private companies rely on the app. In March 2023, Kakao Corp and affiliate Kakao Entertainment won a takeover battle against K-Pop supergroup BTS manager Hybe to acquire K-Pop agency SM Entertainment, two months after Kakao Entertainment received a 1.2 trillion won investment from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and Singapore's GIC. Kim's arrest stems from a probe into whether Kakao and its executives committed any illegalities during the takeover process. In late 2023, South Korean prosecutors charged an executive for allegedly manipulating SM's stock price to hinder Hybe from acquiring it, by mobilising about 240 billion won (\$173.24 million) to buy up the stock. Prosecutors are currently investigating Kakao affiliates in at least four other matters, local media have said.

New U.K. Foreign Secretary Lammy to arrive for talks; FTA, security issues on top of agenda

GNS News Agency, July 26

In the first high-level visit by the newly-elected Labour government in the United Kingdom, U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy will arrive on July 24 morning for a day-long visit, where a "full reset" of ties and "economic, domestic and global security" will be at the top of the agenda, the British Foreign Office (FCDO) announced. Mr. Lammy, who is coming to Delhi on his way to Laos for ASEAN meetings, will hold bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. He is expected to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will hold meetings with National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal as well before leaving for Vientiane on Thursday morning. Mr. Lammy is also expected to discuss plans for the new U.K. PM Keir Starmer and Mr. Modi to exchange visits. "I am traveling to India in my first month as Foreign Secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home," Mr. Lammy said in a statement ahead of his departure, calling India the "emerging superpower of the 21st century", one of the fastest growing economies, with the world's largest population.

With his visit, Mr. Lammy will be fulfilling a promise made at an Indian diaspora event shortly before the U.K.'s election on July 4 that he would visit India "within the month" if the Labour government was elected. He is expected to put reviving India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks for an early conclusion at the top of his agenda and will also discuss the next steps in the Strategic Partnership. While most of the FTA negotiations, that began in 2022, were completed with the previous Rishi Sunak government, they were put on hold earlier this year with both countries heading to general elections. Officials said that a few issues, including the question of business mobility, tariffs and market access for certain goods still remain unresolved.

"Our Free Trade Agreement negotiations is the floor not the ceiling of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth, from Bengaluru to Birmingham. We have shared interests on the green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security," Mr. Lammy said. According to the FCDO statement,



Mr. Lammy's agenda in India includes a visit to a high-tech facility, meetings with Indian business leaders and discussions on cooperating on clean energy initiatives, as well as assisting climate resilience projects for small island states in the Global South. Apart from these bilateral issues, India is expected to discuss its concerns about anti-Indian, pro-Khalistan groups operating in the U.K., which have been raised several times in the past. Officials are expected to bring up the long-pending extradition cases against businessmen Vijay Mallya and Lalit Modi, who are wanted in India.

Mr. Lammy may also raise the continued imprisonment of two British nationals in high-profile and controversial cases: Jagtar Singh Johal, arrested in 2017 for his alleged role in targeted killings by pro-Khalistan groups in Punjab, and Christian Michel, who India extradited from the UAE in 2017, wanted in India as the alleged middleman in the Agusta Westland corruption case. In both cases the U.K. government and UN and U.S.-based human rights agencies have questioned their continued imprisonment without a trial, as well as allegations of torture and arbitrary detention in India. Mr. Sunak had raised the Michel case with Mr. Modi on the sidelines of the G-20 summit last year. In the case of Mr. Johal, Mr. Starmer, then in Opposition, had himself written to the U.K. government demanding that the U.K. push for Mr. Johal, accusing Indian authorities of arresting the "online activist" when he visited India for his wedding, and claimed that he had been "tortured into making a confession to charges carrying the death penalty" in the letter.

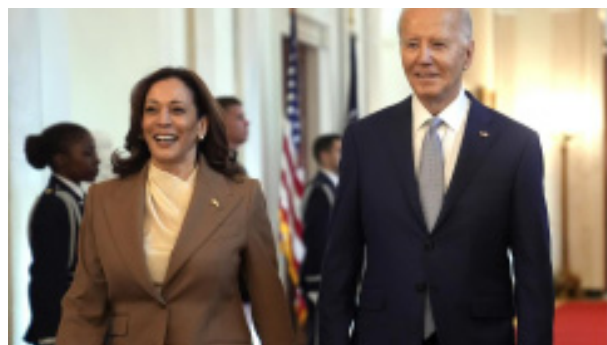
Trump campaign files complaint to block Biden's campaign funds being transferred to Harris

GNS News Agency, July 26

The Trump campaign has filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission arguing that money raised for U.S. President Joe Biden's 2024 reelection bid could not be transferred to Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign. The complaint was filed on Tuesday by the Trump campaign's general counsel David Warrington and argues that transferring the funds to Harris's presidential campaign would amount to "flagrantly violating" the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. On Sunday, President Biden announced that he was withdrawing from the race for the White House on November 5 and endorsed Ms. Harris amid mounting pressure from top Democrats and donors following his disastrous presidential debate against Trump in late June.

"Kamala Harris is seeking to perpetrate a USD 91.5 million dollar heist of Joe Biden's leftover campaign cash — a brazen money grab that would constitute the single largest excessive contribution and biggest violation in the history of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended," Mr. Warrington said. The Harris campaign dismissed it as baseless. In his complaint that was first reported by The New York Times, Warrington accused Biden and Harris of "flagrantly violating the Act by making and receiving an excessive contribution of nearly one hundred million dollars, and for filing fraudulent forms with the Commission purporting to repurpose one candidate's principal campaign committee for the use of another candidate." "Kamala Harris is in the process of committing the largest campaign finance violation in American history and she is using the Commission's own forms to do it," Warrington said in his filing.

"The Commission must not and cannot sit idly by while one candidate takes nearly one hundred million dollars from the authorised committee of another, in violation of the Act and the will of the donors who gave the



money in the first place," he wrote. Mr. Warrington alleged that if "Kamala Harris were a candidate for something in 2024, federal law requires her to have filed a Statement of Candidacy and for her name to have appeared in the name of her authorised committee. But Kamala Harris's name does not appear in the name of her purported authorised committee, 'Biden for President,' and, until Sunday, no Statement of Candidacy existed for her. Harris campaign spokesperson Charles Kretschmer Lutvak responded to the FEC complaint in a statement on Tuesday, saying, "Republicans may be jealous that Democrats are energised to defeat Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again allies, but baseless legal claims — like the ones they've made for years to try to suppress votes and steal elections — will only distract them while we sign up volunteers, talk to voters, and win this election." The statement also cited the campaign's fundraising efforts so far, "raising USD 100 million in our first 36 hours and signing up 58,000 volunteers." It's unlikely that the commission would take any action until well after Election Day, given its slow pace of resolving enforcement questions, CNN reported. An FEC spokesperson declined to comment, citing the agency's policy on not discussing enforcement matters, the report said.

SCO countries hold first joint live anti-terror drills with all member states



Security officials from the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held the first joint anti-terrorism drill in China focussing on live drills and specialised operations such as "the eradication of terrorist groups." The "Interaction-2024" joint counter-terrorism exercises were held recently in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China's Ministry of Public Security said. "The exercise marks the first time the relevant agencies from all SCO member states have participated in a joint counter-terrorism live drill," the state-run Xinhua news agency reported on July 23.

Since terrorist threats often spill over to other countries and flow around the globe, the latest large-scale SCO exercise was held to enhance the member states' capabilities and interoperability in joint anti-terrorism operations, Global Times report said. The latest exercise has established a new model for joint live drills by relevant agencies and enhanced the joint operational capabilities of the SCO member states' authorities, the Ministry of Public Security said, adding, in response to significant terrorist threats, the exercise included specialised operations such as "the eradication of terrorist groups." Photos released by the state-run media showed that soldiers and police officers fully armed with assault rifles, pistols, and riot shields launching an assault — some via armoured and all-terrain vehicles and some via helicopter with aerial drones and robot dogs — also deployed

in the exercise. Representatives from SCO member states, the SCO Secretariat, and the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure observed the exercise. The Beijing-based SCO has emerged as one of the largest trans-regional international organisations focussing on deepening security-related cooperation with its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence. Earlier this month, Belarus became the 10th official member state of the SCO that already has China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The SCO member states have a long history of effective cooperation in counter-terrorism. All the previously held anti-terrorism exercises were bilateral or multilateral but did not feature all member states, Li Wei, a research fellow and security expert from the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, told the Global Times. The latest drill reflected that all SCO member states share a common understanding of the threats posed by terrorism, Mr. Li said. Countries in Central, South and West Asia are all facing terrorist threats from various sources, and Russia just suffered from a concert hall terrorist attack in Moscow in March, Mr. Li said, noting that China also faces potential terrorist threats, and a resurgence of terrorist activities have been observed also in other parts of the world such as South-east Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas.

9-month pregnant Gaza woman dies in Israeli airstrike, baby survives inside her

GNS News Agency, July 26

Nine months pregnant, Ola Al-Kurd could not wait to hold her baby and bring new life to Gaza during a war which has killed over 39,000 fellow Palestinians and razed much of the enclave. That special moment never came. An Israeli airstrike smashed into the family home in Al-Nuseirat in central Gaza on July 19, according to her father Adnan Al-Kurd. The blast threw Ola down several floors to her death in the house, whose inhabitants included women, children and the elderly, he said. Somehow, her baby survived, as did her husband, who was hospitalised. "It's a miracle that the fetus stayed alive inside of her when she was martyred (died)," Adnan Al-Kurd said, contemplating a photo of his daughter's graduation. The explosion, like many others, killed several members of a single family, a daily tragedy across Gaza since Israel began its offensive in Gaza in response to a devastating cross-border attack by Palestinian Hamas militants on Oct. 7 last year. Mediators from the United States, Qatar and Egypt have failed in multiple attempts to secure a ceasefire. So it is highly unlikely that Israeli airstrikes and shelling will end anytime soon. "She wanted to hold her child and fill our home with his presence," Al-Kurd said. "She would say, 'Mom, hopefully, this will make up for the loss of my martyred brothers and bring life back to our home.'"

Entirely against the odds, surgeons at Al Awda hospital in Nuseirat — where Ola was first taken after the strike — managed to deliver the newborn, Malek Yassin. He was then transferred to Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where an aunt touched the baby's face as he lay in an incubator. "Thank God, this baby's life was saved and he is now alive and well," doctor Khaileh Al-Dakran said at the hospital, where many medical facilities have been destroyed in over nine months of war. Al-Kurd gazes at pho-



tos of his three late children killed in the Gaza war. He said baby Yassin is blond like his deceased uncle Omar. "I go visit him everyday. He is a part of me," he said. Babies who survive frequent Israeli bombardment get no relief as the conflict inflicts more destruction in the heavily built-up, densely populated Gaza Strip.

"We are in fact facing very great difficulties in the nursery department," said Al-Dakran, due to a lack of sufficient medication and supplies and fears that the hospital generator could stop at any moment due to fuel shortages. Hospitals across impoverished Gaza have been demolished or seriously damaged during the war, which began when Hamas-led fighters attacked Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking over 250 hostages according to Israeli tallies. Israel responded with an air and ground offensive that has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry, and levelled much of the coastal territory. "What is the fault of this child to start his life under difficult and very bad circumstances, deprived of the most basic necessities of life?" said Dakran.

Doug Emhoff takes off gloves to defend wife Kamala Harris against Trump's scathing attacks: 'All that is going to...'

GNS News Agency, July 26

In his first appearance since Harris formally launched her presidential campaign following President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 White House race, Emhoff was questioned on Trump's assault on the likely Democratic nominee. This comes after Trump brutally trolled Harris on Truth Social by giving her a new nickname "Lyn' Kamala" and called her "vicious and dumb," and a "totally failed and insignificant vice president." Trump even referred to Harris as "crazy," "nuts," and "Laughing Kamala" at a rally in Michigan on Saturday night. In a post on Truth Social after Biden stepped aside from the race, the GOP nominee expressed frustration over the media coverage of Biden and Harris. "Wow, just watching the Fake News, and they're doing their very best to turn the Worst President in the History of our Country into a 'Brilliant and Heroic Leader' (He was heroic because he quit!), and to turn 'Dumb as a Rock' Kamala Harris from a totally failed and insignificant Vice President into a future 'Great' President," he wrote.

Hitting back at Trump for insulting Harris, Emhoff told reporters, "That's all he's got?", but asserted that "all that is going to change and it must change." He then cited Harris' Monday speech at Wilmington, Delaware, and said she has made her case against the criminally convicted



candidate "very clear". According to him, Harris has outlined her vision for the future of the US, "where there's freedom" and "where we're not having to talk about these issues of today in this post-Dobbs hellscape that Donald Trump created". Blasting Trump for encouraging censorship, he pledged that his spouse would keep highlighting the ex-president's COVID-19 mismanagement and how he caused an insurrection. He remarked that they will prosecute the case against Trump and "his lies, his gaslighting". Emhoff further mentioned that Democrats rapidly united behind Harris "because she's talking about an America that we all have a place in... She's gonna unite the country."

Employment rate rises 6% provisionally in FY24 from 3.2% in FY23: RBI data



Indias employment rate, Employment rate rises, RBI data, Reserve Bank of India, Female unemployment rate, Labour Force Participation Rate, Female Worker Population Ratio, agriculture, manufacturing sector, Indian express newsIn the year ended 2022-23, employment in the country stood at 57.75 crore, compared to 56.56 crore in 2021-22, the RBI data showed.

The country's employment rate grew by 6 per cent in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024 from a growth of 3.2 per cent in 2022-23, according to the Reserve Bank of India's data. Employment in the country increased by 4.67 crore to 64.33 crore (provisional) in the fiscal year 2023-24, from 59.67 crore in 2022-23, the RBI's Measuring Productivity at the Industry Level-The India KLEMS [Capital (K), Labour (L), Energy (E), Material (M) and Services (S)] database showed.

In the year ended 2022-23, employment in the coun-

try stood at 57.75 crore, compared to 56.56 crore in 2021-22, the RBI data showed. The database covers 27 industries comprising the entire Indian economy. The database also provides these estimates at the broad sectoral levels (agriculture, manufacturing and services) and at the all-India levels. It includes measures of Gross Value Added (GVA), Gross Value of Output (GVO), Labour Employment (L), Labour Quality (LQ), Capital Stock (K), Capital Composition (KQ), the consumptions of Energy (E), Material (M) and Services (S) inputs, Labour Productivity (LP) and Total Factor Productivity (TFP). As per the latest quarterly bulletin of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in May 2024, unemployment rate (UR) in urban areas decreased from 6.8 per cent during January-March 2023 to 6.7 per cent in January-March 2024 for persons of age 15 years and above. Female unemployment rate declined from 9.2 per cent in January-March 2023 to 8.5 per cent in January-March 2024. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in urban areas has shown an increasing trend from 48.5 per cent in January - March 2023 to 50.2 per cent during January - March 2024 for persons of age 15 years and above, the PLFS data showed. There was an increasing trend in Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons of age 15 years and above from 45.2 per cent in January - March 2023 to 46.9 per cent in January - March 2024. Female Worker Population Ratio in urban areas rose from 20.6 per cent in January - March 2023 to 23.4 per cent during January - March 2024, reflecting an overall increasing trend in WPR, the data showed.

Life insurers post 22.91% growth in Q1 new business premium

Life insurance companies, Q1 new business premium, current financial year, private sector insurers, Life Insurance Council, new policy issuances, insurance protection, Indian express newsIn the group policy segment, single premiums grew by 13.49 per cent with monthly collections coming in at Rs 28,711 crore. (Representational Image) Life insurance companies on Monday reported a 22.91 per cent rise in first-year premium on a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) basis in the April-June period (Q1) of the current financial year (FY25), aided by strong growth by public and private sector insurers.

According to data released by the Life Insurance Council, the new business premium (NBP) increased to Rs 89,726.7 crore in the first quarter of FY25 from Rs 73,004.87 crore in the same period of last year.

Driven by a strong demand for enhanced insurance protection from individual consumers, new policy issuances increased by 12.13 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis in the month of June, resulting in the addition of new 21.79 lakh policies as against 19.43 lakh policies in the year ago period. "This strong performance can be ascribed to the fact that life insurers are increasingly focusing on en-

couraging first-time life insurance buyers to buy essential life insurance solutions, contributing to the 14.93 per cent growth in combined individual premium collections for the month of June and 18.25 per cent growth on a YTD basis," it said. In the group policy segment, single premiums grew by 13.49 per cent with monthly collections coming in at Rs 28,711 crore. In fact, the group policy category witnessed a 14.75 per cent growth in premiums collected in June while new policy issuances expanded by 6.73 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis, it said. "The life insurance industry in India has been making significant strides forward by expanding access to insurance and making an effort to reach out to areas and segments of the country's population that were previously underserved when it comes to their insurance needs," the council said. Towards this end, life insurers added more than 2,19,820 individual life insurance agents, with an overall 1.20 per cent growth in cumulative agent count, it said. "Still, the sustained pace of agent addition is being complimented by the high speed of digitisation by life insurers, paving the way for additional gains in insurance penetration that should provide a significant boost to new business premiums in FY25 and beyond," the council said.

End of Old Tax Regime would depend on the acceptability of new regime among taxpayers: CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal

The government further sweetened the New Tax Regime in the Union Budget for 2024-25, hoping that the move will nudge more salaried taxpayers to migrate to the relatively simple and exemption-free income tax format. According to RAVI AGRAWAL, Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, taxpayers were already switching to the NTR in large numbers, and the latest rejig is expected to accelerate the process further. Does that mean that the end of the road for the Old Tax Regime is on the horizon? Agrawal says that it will depend on how the acceptability of the NTR grows. In an interaction with AGGAM WALIA and SUKALP SHARMA, Agrawal delves into the NTR and other key direct tax-related moves in the Budget, including the changes in capital gains tax, scrapping of the so-called Angel Tax, and the planned comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act. Edited excerpts: While the New Tax Regime has been made more attractive, there is a feeling in some sections that the additional tax savings are not substantial.

This is all a relative concept. The counter question would be: What would be an adequate amount? Rs 20,000, Rs 25,000, or Rs 30,000, or Rs 40,000? We have to give benefits to taxpayers but at the same time, we have to garner revenues for welfare schemes...Funding has to be there and sources are the same. There has to be a trade-off.

The New Tax Regime has been sweetened further. Is the Old Tax Regime going to be discontinued, if not immediately then down the road?

That only time will tell because it would depend on the acceptability of the New Tax Regime. From the data that we have, two-thirds of the people are finding value in it and are opting for the New Tax Regime. That is an encouraging sign. Let us see how we end this financial year... Depending on that we will see what call has to be taken as regards the Old Tax Regime.

The next full Budget would be upon us in a few months. Can we expect the further sweetening of the New Tax Regime?

Let us live in the present. We have already given substantial benefits. We will see how things shape up. For more liquidity in the hands of the salaried class, other than the new (income tax) regime, we have said that if TDS (tax deducted at source) has been deducted from other activities, credit would be given. Similarly, for business also, TDS has been reduced because the liquidity was getting blocked for one year... So, through other provisions, we are trying to add liquidity in the hands of the people.

What suddenly changed the government's thinking on Angel Tax, given that just last year there was a move to expand its ambit, which had led to a pushback from startups and their investors?

That (negatively impacting investments in startups) was never the intention of the government. We need to understand that we also have to ensure that funds through other than acceptable means do not flow. For startups, sufficient and reasonable relaxations were there in con-

sultation with DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade). But still, people felt that this provision was coming in the way of bringing in more investments from outside, which was never the intention. So, the thought was that if more investment can come by doing away with this (Angel Tax), then it is better to do so. If going forward, funds come through some undesirable means, then there are provisions which would take care of it.

A move that frayed a lot of nerves is the set of changes in the long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax. The CBDT and the government have been issuing clarifications. Do you now feel that at the outset, the message and intent could not be communicated clearly?

The Budget was announced just the day before (Tuesday)... within a few hours the press conference took place and after that there were clarifications also. It was never the case that the CBDT or the government was hesitant in sharing details and clarifications. But technology today is so fast with instant feedback and response... People need time to actually absorb these details, and as and when issues are flagged, they are clarified. We were never shy or hesitant in giving any clarification... Also, unless those concerns are raised, the clarifications also cannot be given. We cannot say that the strategy could have been different.

What was the rationale of this cut-off date of 2001 with regard to the indexation benefit under the new LTCG tax regime?

Grandfathering till 2001 was already there for properties purchased earlier than that. Then also, the idea was how to make it simple... 2001 was taken as the base at that time and we have kept the same now to provide a comfort level... The fair market value as of 2001 was subject to indexation in the earlier regime, and the same logic is there now also.

With 2001 as the base, in the last 23-24 years, cost indexation is about 3.5 times, which means that capital gains would be higher in the new (LTCG) regime. However, capital gains tax would be lower because the rate has gone down from 20 per cent to 12.5 per cent... property rates have risen beyond a threshold where this new regime is beneficial. There could be some instances where the old indexation-based regime would be beneficial, but those would be a minority.

Even if capital gains are high, the rollover option is there and you can invest in a new property to completely absorb the capital gains.

Was the move also made with a view to deter investors crowding the residential real estate market vis-à-vis actual end users?

No, that was not a factor. But in any case, if someone is investing only for the purpose of investing, he is buying only to earn returns on property. In that case, if the person is required to pay something extra on the profits that he has earned, then that is okay. The person ought to pay.

Pakistan government defends X ban in court, cites compliance with laws



Pakistan authorities on Monday informed a high court that banning the social media platform X is not against the laws of the country. The Sindh High Court (SHC) was hearing a case against the ban on the social media platform X, which was blocked on February 17 in the wake of rigging controversy during the Feb 8 elections. The Ministry of Interior in its response submitted to the court stated that the ban on X was not against Article 19 of the Constitution. "All legal requirements were fulfilled before imposing the ban on X. Article 19 allows freedom of speech, but it also entails certain legal restrictions," the ministry stated.

Article 19 of the constitution of Pakistan is about free-

dom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of the press. It further stated that the platform has been used to upload hate speech against national institutions, prompting concerns about national security and dignity, and reports from sensitive agencies.

The ministry argued in its statement that the "petition is not admissible" as it was the responsibility of the government to protect the rights of citizens. It added that X repeatedly flouted the local laws. "X has not signed any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan to adhere to local regulations," it stated, noting that similar bans have been imposed on other social media platforms like TikTok, which were later allowed to operate after signing MoUs and ensuring compliance with Pakistani laws. It further said that other countries also imposed occasional restrictions on social media for national interests and urged the court to reject the petition in the interest of national security and the preservation of public order. Though X was banned on February 17, it was not until a month later that the government officially acknowledged the ban. After its banning, a user required a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access the popular platform. Interestingly, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other top officials continue to use X for posting statements despite blocking access to it by the Pakistan government.

Indian organisations plan to use gen-AI for security, but lack confidence in effective implementation

73% Indian organisations plan to harness generative AI (GenAI) within the next 12 months to enhance security measures and align IT objectives with broader business goals. But only 8% of them demonstrate high confidence in effectively implementing GenAI technologies, according to a study commissioned by Tenable. The study identified two major challenges hindering Indian organisations from utilising or optimising AI technologies: a lack of technological maturity (71%) and uncertainty about the applicability of AI within their operations (54%).

The study further highlighted that many organisations, 40%, perceive GenAI as a greater security threat than opportunity. The sentiment reflects widespread apprehension regarding cybersecurity risks associated with GenAI implementation. Internal misuse of GenAI emerged as a prominent concern, with 67% of respondents expressing worry about potential misuse within their organisations. Additionally, 60% of respondents say that providing sensitive data to open-source GenAI puts them at risk of intellectual property theft.

However, security and IT leaders in the country are optimistic about the potential benefits of GenAI, with 31% saying they believe GenAI can enhance preventive threat response. Additionally, 42% think it can automate security measures, and 40% feel it can improve actionability, the study found. Indian organisations are also vary of the impact of data used to train AI models. 73% of Indian organisations agree or strongly agree that the success of generative AI heavily relies on the data used to fuel it.



"Despite the rise of AI, many Indian businesses are still developing their technology maturity and often lack the resources or skills needed to properly create, train, and implement AI, as well as maintain high standards of data governance," Nigel Ng, Senior Vice President, Tenable APJ, said. The use of cloud services, virtualisation platforms, microservices, applications, and code libraries introduces additional challenges that are prompting security professionals in India to explore the best ways to leverage AI for preventive security efforts, Nigel adds. The study is based on an online survey conducted by Forrester Consulting and includes responses from 826 IT and cybersecurity professionals including 52 Indian respondents at large enterprises in Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Japan, the UK and US.

In an electric vehicle, what is regenerative braking? | Explained

The impulse to be sustainable — driven by the incessant pressure to lower our emissions — often manifests as lowering consumption and increasing reuse alongside reforms like tweaking consumer behaviour. Electric vehicles are the site of many of these changes, aided by state-led incentives and subsidies. Regenerative braking is an important mechanism in these vehicles that increases their energy use efficiency.

What is braking?

Braking is the mechanism by which an automotive vehicle in motion slows down. A vehicle moving faster has more kinetic energy than a vehicle moving slower, so the process of braking removes (mostly) kinetic energy from the vehicle. The law of energy conservation means this removed energy has to go somewhere. For example, the disc brake is one type of mechanical brake: it works by pressing brake pads against a disc attached to spinning wheels, and uses friction to convert some of the wheels' kinetic energy into heat. This is why the discs of disc brakes have holes cut into them, to dissipate heat better. Another type is the induction brake: a magnet induces circular electric currents in a spinning wheel (made of a conducting material, like metal). These currents produce their own magnetic field, which opposes that of the external magnet. The opposition acts like a drag on the wheel and forces it to slow down. In terms of energy: the metal resists the flow of the circular currents and dissipates heat.

What is regenerative braking?

Regenerative braking is a brake system designed to convert the kinetic energy of the wheels to a form that can be stored and used for other purposes. As such, it creates a process in which at least part of the energy delivered to the vehicle's wheels can be recovered in a situation when the vehicle doesn't need it. Regenerative braking is one type of dynamic braking. In an electric vehicle, of the types becoming common on Indian roads, a battery onboard the vehicle draws electric power from the grid and stores it. When the vehicle moves, the battery powers an electric motor that propels the vehicle, converting electrical to mechanical energy. This motor is called the traction motor.

During regenerative braking, the motor operates as a generator, turning mechanical energy back to electrical energy. In the vehicle, this means an electric current will be produced as the vehicle brakes, which is stored separately in a battery. In some other vehicles, especially trains, the current is fed back into the traction motor. The other type of dynamic braking is rheostatic braking, where the current is sent to an array of resistors that dissipate the electrical energy as heat. It is often necessary for a vehicle to have both regenerative and rheostatic braking in case the electrical energy recovered can't be stored or used right away.

How does a motor become a generator?

A motor has two essential parts: a rotor (the thing that rotates) and a stator (the thing that's stationary). In a rudimentary design, the stator consists of permanent magnets or electromagnets while the rotor consists of current-carrying wires coiled around in loops. The stator surrounds the rotor. When a charged particle, like an elec-



tron, moves inside a magnetic field, the field exerts a force on the particle called the Lorentz force. Whether the force will push or pull the wire in which the electron is moving depends on the direction of the electric current.

This is when the coiling helps. The current at the coil's two ends moves in opposite directions, so the magnetic fields imposed by the stator will push on one end of the coil and pull on the other. And these opposing forces will continue to act on the two sides of the rotor until the voltage across the wire is constant. Thus, a motor converts electrical energy to rotary motion. In a generator, mechanical energy from an external source can be fed to the rotor to induce a current in the stator. Simply speaking, by switching the traction motor between these two configurations, an electric (or hybrid) vehicle can implement regenerative braking.

Does regenerative braking have downsides?

While it is a simple energy recovery mechanism, regenerative braking has some downsides. For example, it alone often doesn't suffice to bring an electric vehicle to a halt. It has to be used together with a conventional system that dissipates some of the kinetic energy as heat. Such a system is also required to prevent vehicles from backsliding downhill, which many regenerative brakes won't prevent. Another example is that the amount of energy a regenerative brake can recover drops as the vehicle's velocity drops as well.

This said, a regenerative brake can be beneficial for an electric vehicle's energy-use efficiency in stop-start traffic.

Are there other ways to recover energy?

The design of a regenerative brake depends on the energy form to which the mechanical energy from the wheels is to be converted. An electric vehicle funnels it into a generator and obtains a current, which is stored in a battery or a supercapacitor. Similarly, the mechanical energy can be used to increase the angular momentum of a rotating flywheel. Flywheels are especially useful because they can receive energy much faster than other such systems.

For every unit increase in speed, they also store exponentially more energy. Engineers have been able to build flywheels with carbon-composites that, in a vacuum, can spin at up to 50,000 rpm. The flywheel can be linked to a reciprocating engine to manage or augment its output, like in Formula One racing, or to a gyroscope to help submarines and satellites navigate. Recovered kinetic energy can also be fed to a pump that compresses air, which can be useful to start

Hardik Pandya reacts on Natasa Stankovic's photos with son Agastya after divorce announcement.



Natasa Stankovic, who flew to Serbia with her son Agastya Pandya a day before announcing her separation with cricketer husband Hardik Pandya, has now shared a series of photos with her son from their recent visit to a museum. However, what caught the attention of netizens was the comments section where Hardik left a comment for his son and ex-wife. Soon after Natasa shared the post on her Instagram handle, Hardik dropped two different comments both of which featured emoticons. While the first comment featured an evil eye emoticon, followed by a heart eyes emoticon and super sign, the second comment, which the cricketer dropped two minutes after the first one was just a simple red heart.

Last week, the couple took to their respective Instagram handles to share a note that announced their separation. The note read, "After 4 years of being together, Hardik and I have decided to mutually part ways. We

tried our best together and gave it our all, and we believe this is in the best interest for the both of us." The note further read, "This was a tough decision for us to make, given the joy, mutual respect and companionship we enjoyed together and as we grew a family." "We are blessed with Agastya, who will continue to be at the centre of both our lives and we will co-parent to ensure that we give him everything that we can for his happiness. We sincerely request your support and understanding to give us the privacy during this difficult and sensitive time", concluded the note. The rumours of the two separating sparked soon after fans noticed Natasa's absence from most of the IPL matches followed by the T20 World Cup. Amid all this, Natasa too was frequently sharing cryptic posts hinting at their separation. The two, who met in 2019, tied the knot in May 2020 and welcomed their son Agastya in the same year. In 2023, the couple had a grand destination wedding in Udaipur.

Tabu recalls when Ajay Devgn reprimanded her driver for slow driving: 'Bailgaadi chala raha hai kya?'

Tabu and Ajay Devgn are two actors who frequently collaborate on the big screen. Their upcoming film, Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha, marks their tenth film together. However, their relationship extends beyond films, as the two have been close friends for decades. In a recent interaction, they spoke about their enduring friendship, with Tabu revealing interesting details about Ajay's college days.

In an interview with The Lalantop, when asked about their long-lasting friendship in an industry where relationships sometimes end after a film's shoot, Tabu responded, "Our friendship didn't start on a set, maybe that's why it has lasted."

When Tabu was further asked about Ajay's younger days and how he was during those times, she revealed that he used to drive quite fast, a trait that, she claimed, hasn't changed to this day. She said, "He hasn't changed much. Just that before, he would drive an open jeep, and now he doesn't, but the speed at which he drives has stayed the same." Although Ajay refuted this, claiming he drives much slower now. Tabu shared an incident of his fast-driving, saying, "Now also if he offers to drop me, I get scared. One day he stopped my car and told my driver, 'Bailgaadi chala raha hai kya? Jaldi chala. Meri gaadi



peeche hai. (Are you driving a bullock cart? Drive fast, my car is behind you.)" Ajay defended himself and said this happened 25 years ago. Explaining his youthful brashness, Ajay added, "I don't deny it. When you are 18-19, you live life a certain way, and then you understand things and change. This happens to everyone." Tabu and Ajay first shared the screen in the 1994 film Vijaypath. They have also starred in films like Haqeeqat, Thakshak, Drishyam, Fitoor, Golmaal Again, De De Pyaar De, Drishyam 2, and Bholaa. Their upcoming film Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha is set to release on August 2. The film is written and directed by Neeraj Pandey.

Rohit Shetty defends star's entourage cost, says cost of filmmaking has increased overall: 'It's not just the actors'



Bollywood is arguably witnessing one of the toughest times where many films are not working at the box office and there have been many discussions around the increasing budget of films and the high entourage costs. Recently, Rohit Shetty, who is known for giving several hits to Bollywood such as the Golmaal series, Singham, Sooryavanshi, and Simmba among others, also shared his opinion on the issue. In a new interview, the filmmaker said that the cost of making films has increased overall, thereby hinting that entourage cost and star fee is not the only problem in Bollywood's ongoing crisis.

Celine Dion to perform at Paris Olympics opening ceremony

Los Angeles: Legendary singer-songwriter Celine Dion, who has been battling a rare neurological condition called stiff-person syndrome, is expected to make her return to the stage at the Olympic Games. The singer is rumoured to be taking to the Paris Olympics stage during the opening ceremony on Friday, reports Variety.

It will mark the pop legend's first performance since halting her touring schedule and stepping away from the spotlight after being diagnosed with Stiff Person Syndrome in December 2022. As per Variety, the singer arrived in Paris at the Royal Monceau Hotel near the Champs-Élysées, where Lady Gaga, another potential opening ceremony headliner, is also staying. Specific details about Dion's performance are being kept under wraps. The Canadian singer teased that a comeback may be imminent in an April interview with Vogue France, in

which she said: "I've chosen to work with all my body and soul, from head to toe, with a medical team. I want to be the best I can be. My goal is to see the Eiffel Tower again." She also said that she was working every day to get stronger. She told Vogue France: "For four years I've been saying to myself that I'm not going back, that I'm ready, that I'm not ready... As things stand, I can't stand here and say to you: 'Yes, in four months', she said. "I don't know... My body will tell me." It turns out that she may indeed be performing in front of the famous Parisian landmark, as the opening ceremony will take place in the shape of a nautical parade along the Seine, culminating near the Trocadero, facing the Eiffel Tower. The ceremony, which will take place outside of a stadium for the first time in history, will showcase Paris' iconic locations and bring together 3,500 actors, dancers and musical performers.

Dalljiet Kaur secures stay order against estranged husband Nikhil Patel preventing her eviction from his Kenya home

Dalljiet Kaur marital woes with her Kenya-based husband, Nikhil Patel, have been in the public eye for two months now. The actor accused him of having an extramarital affair while announcing their separation on social media. In a recent development, Dalljiet has taken legal action against her estranged husband, leading to a Kenya court issuing a stay to prevent Patel from evicting Kaur and her child, Jaydon, from their home in Kenya.

According to court documents obtained by E Times, the court has restrained Patel and his employees from evicting Kaur and her son. It also states that they can't throw out her personal belongings from their house in Kenya. In June, Patel issued a legal notice to Kaur with an ultimatum demanding that she move her belongings out of his house. However, the new stay order will prevent him from taking such action.

Earlier, Kaur had shared cryptic messages on Instagram, hinting that Patel had an extramarital affair. In her Instagram stories, Kaur asked her social media followers, "What's your thought on extramarital affairs? Who is to be blamed?... The girl... The husband... The wife." In another story, she wrote, "You are out on social media



with her now every day shamelessly. Your wife and son came back in 10 months of the wedding. The entire family is humiliated. Some dignity for the kids would have been good. At least you should have left your wife a little dignity publicly as I was quiet about a lot of other things too." Dalljiet Kaur and Nikhil Patel tied the knot on March 18, 2023. The television actor was previously married to actor Shalin Bhanot, with whom she shares her son, Jaydon. Their marriage ended in divorce in 2015.

Director Halitha Shameem at Minmini audio launch: 'Khatija Rahman is a pure soul, and it reflected in her music'

Known for sensitive and sensible films like Poovarasan Peepee, Silu Karuppatti, and Aelay, director Halitha Shameem is gearing up for the release of her most ambitious project, Minmini. The film, which stars Esther Anil, Pravin Kishore, and Gaurav Kalaai, went on floors in 2015. The makers decided to wait for the child actors to grow up and play their parts as young adults, and resumed the shoot in 2022. After a series of intentional delays, the film, backed by noted cinematographer Manoj Paramahansa and C Murali Krishna, is set to hit the screens on August 9. Talking at the event, an emotional Manoj recounted how he even missed the birth of his child because they were shooting at a remote location in Ladakh without network coverage. "I am pretty sure that when my son grows up and finds the passion for cinema, he'll understand me." In a heartfelt speech, Manoj also shared how the trend of violence and bloodshed in cinema is reaching its last phase. "Even though I have worked in a lot of such films, I strongly believe that trend will give way for the family friendly films made popular by the likes of K Balachander and Fazil in the 80s and 90s."

The producer-cinematographer also revealed the film that inspired him to take the theatrical route instead of releasing Minmini on OTT. "The success of Manjummel Boys, especially in Tamil Nadu, gave me the confidence to go for a theatrical release. Honestly, the film is not made for financial purposes, and we'd be glad to just break even. I just wanted to back Halitha's vision and conviction, and after eight years of perseverance, here we are," said Manoj, and landed the line of the day when he compared debut music composer Khatija Rahman to a surprising legend. "Of course, Khatija is AR Rahman sir's daughter, but the music that she has given for Minmini reminded me of the works of the Maestro Ilaiyaraaja."

Among the actors, Esther Anil won the hearts of the audience when she spoke about how it was surreal to finish shooting her last scene in Minmini. "I carried the character of Praveena with me for eight long years. Even when I was doing other films, somewhere deep within, I



was still holding on to the character. After the last day's shoot was complete, I returned to my room, looked into the mirror, and understood that it was finally time to let go. It was an emotional moment," said Esther, who has starred in blockbuster films like the Drishyam series, and Papanasam. Halitha was effusive with her praise about her actors and technicians who stood by her throughout the process. "I decided to rope in Khatija as the composer because I wanted a very sensitive score for Minmini. I find her to be a pure soul with a divine voice, and this is reflected in the music of the film," shared Halitha. Expressing her gratitude for the patience of her actors, the filmmaker shared, "They never once asked me about the release date, and completely surrendered to the process. In fact, when I started filming Minmini, it wasn't supposed to be shot with the same actors." Shining light on the thought process that made Minmini into what it is today, Halitha said, "I didn't work on this idea because it was novel. I did it because my actors were compelling performers, and I wasn't sure if the older actors we had auditioned for their roles as young adults would be able to do justice to the roles. I decided to wait for them, and now, I see them all as different people now, but they still became the characters in my film. Minmini is for them. Minmini is them," signed off Halitha.

Deepika Padukone asked Amitabh Bachchan-Jaya Bachchan to intervene when she and Ranveer Singh couldn't agree: 'The experienced couple...'



Deepika Padukone asked Amitabh Bachchan-Jaya Bachchan's suggestion when she and Ranveer disagreed. Deepika Padukone asked Amitabh Bachchan-Jaya Bachchan's suggestion when she and Ranveer disagreed. Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan have been married for over 50 years. Big B, who interacts with his fans and his audience on a regular basis, is often asked about the secret behind his successful marriage and he always manages to give an answer that makes the audience cheer for him. A few years ago, at Star Screen Awards, Kapil Sharma asked him a similar question but Amitabh's answer won Kapil's heart.

Kapil, who was hosting the event, actually asked Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone, who has more nakhras (tantrums) – boys or girls? Ranveer voted for girls and said, "Ladkiyan karti hain obviously (Girls, obviously)." Deepika then said, "Main isse sehmat nahi hun. Bilkul bhi sehmat nahi hun (I don't agree with this at all.)" and added, "Ladko ke zyada hote hain (Boys have more



tantrums.)" Kapil then asked Deepika if men and women divided the days that they would get to speak, much like the odd-even days in Delhi, "Kya hum mardo ko bolne ka mauka milega? (Will boys get a chance to speak?)" Deepika quickly turned it around on Kapil and told him to ask this to the "experienced couple" hinting towards Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan. Kapil then gathered himself and asked Amitabh, "Sir ghar mein zyada kinki chalti hai? (Who has the final word?)" Bachchan couldn't hold back his laughter and asked Kapil to come closer and he was visibly walking away out of fear. As Kapil inched closer and sat near Bachchan, the actor said, "Mere ghar mein toh aapki chalti hai. (In my house, you have the final word.)" Kapil was over the moon as he heard this and replied with a laugh, "How sweet of you sir. Mera payment badha dia aapne market mein itni baat bol ke. (You have helped me in increasing my payment.)" Kapil Sharma has been hosting his sketch comedy show for over a decade now. He was recently seen on Netflix hosting

County club formed in 1970 bans sixes due to neighbors' complaints of balls breaking windows, cars and sheds in vicinity



GNS News Agency, July 26

Due to bizarre circumstances in the neighborhood, one of the oldest counties (formed in 1790) in English cricket Southwick and Shoreham Cricket Club, near Brighton in West Sussex has asked its players to stop hitting sixes. The players have been informed that the first six will not count for any runs but the second attempt to clear the boundary by the player will be deemed out. The decision has been made as result of the smaller dimensions of the ground which means the ball flies into the neighborhood to damage windows, cars, and sheds in the vicinity.

"It's a very small ground," said a nearby neighbor Mary Gill to MailOnline. "My parents and grandparents lived in this house before me and cricket balls were always sailing over and causing damage," she added. "One time - probably in the 1940s - my baby brother was outside in the garden and my mother found a cricket ball in his pram. Over the years we've had tiles smashed off the roof, windows broken and all sorts of damage," the 80-year-old recalled. However, as expected the players were unhappy with the decision. "Hitting the bowler for a six is part of the glory of the sport. How can you ban it? It's ridiculous. To take that away removes the joy of it. I don't agree that the rules should be tinkered with in this fashion," one of the batters said. "Everything is about health and safety these days and insurance companies are charging a fortune to indemnify sports clubs against accidental damage or injury to bystanders. If you buy a house next to a cricket ground then you've got expect a few cricket balls in your garden," another player would say. This is not the first time in English cricket that such peculiar decisions with regards to boundaries have been taken in English county. The St Lawrence ground in Canterbury (Kent) had trees inside the boundaries hitting them would yield four runs.

West Indian legends demand apology for Brian Lara's abuse claims regarding Viv Richards in his book



GNS News Agency, July 26

Former West Indies batter Brian Lara's recently published book "LARA The England Chronicles" has attracted unwanted attention after Vivian Richards and Carl Hooper were "disheartened" by the "gross misrepresentations" made by Lara in his book. Both the players claimed that their characters in the books were portrayed in a "harmful manner."

"Sir Vivian Richards and Mr Carl Hooper are deeply disheartened by the gross misrepresentations made about them in Mr Brian Lara's recently released book. The allegations not only distort the reality of their relationship but also impugn their characters in an unjust and harmful manner," read their joint statement as quoted by PTI. "The claim that Sir Vivian was aggressive towards Mr Hooper and made him cry once a week is categorically false. Such descriptions paint Sir Vivian as a perpe-

trator of emotional abuse - an assertion that is not only baseless but also deeply hurtful to both parties," read the statement from Richards and Hooper. There is a passage in the book that states, "I (Brian Lara) will say this: Viv used to make me cry every three weeks, but he would make Carl cry once a week. Viv's tone of voice is intimidating and if you're not strong enough, you can take that personally and be affected by it." "Me, I was never really affected by it. In a way I welcomed it, because I was so much under his arm that I knew abuse was coming and I was a strong personality. Carl? I know for a fact that Carl shied away from Viv Richards," it further adds. Reacting to the claims made in the book both Richards and Hooper would ask for an apology. "We demand that Mr. Lara immediately issue a public retraction of these false claims and offer a sincere apology for the harm caused. It is crucial for the integrity of public discourse and their personal and professional lives that the truth is set right,"

5 members of Australia women's water polo team test positive for Covid



GNS News Agency, July 26

Covid-19 reared its ugly head just a couple of days before the official start of the Olympics in Paris as 5 Australian water polo players from the women's team were infected. Australia's chef de mission Anna Meares said that the Covid cases were confined to the water polo team only, adding that the affected players are clear to practice when they feel well enough to train.

"We treat Covid differently to any other respiratory illness, but we want to ensure that we have our protocols working as well and dealing with these illnesses and minimizing them is a part and parcel of every Olympic Games," she said on Wednesday. The protocols include wearing masks and isolating from other team members outside of training. The whole team has been tested, according to Meares. "More broadly, we have our respiratory illnesses protocol in place and we have reinforced with all of the teams as they arrive into our village," she said. "Two basic rules around that really simple hygiene practices are effective. And if you are feeling unwell or have any symptoms, get tested." France's health minister Frederic Valletoux, meanwhile, told a francinfo broadcaster as quoted by USA Today, "Of course, Covid is here. We've seen a small peak. But we are far from what we saw in 2020, 2021, 2022." Paris is the first Olympics

since the Tokyo Summer Games in 2021 and Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022 were staged in Covid bubbles with rigorous testing protocols. The Olympics this time will start from July 26 and go on till August 11 with the opening ceremony set to kick things off on the aforementioned 26th July.

India boys sixth, girls seventh in World Junior Squash team events



GNS News Agency, July 26

Houston: India boys finished sixth and the girls seventh in the team events of the World Junior Squash Championships which concluded here on Tuesday. The boys lost to England 1-2 in a match for fifth position, while the girls beat New Zealand 2-1 in the clash for the seventh - both matches going to the decider.

Rohit-Kohli retirements big loss for India, Sri Lanka have to take maximum advantage: Jayasuriya



GNS News Agency, July 26

Sri Lanka head coach Sanath Jayasuriya has said India will miss the services of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja in the T20I format following their retirements after the T20 World Cup. While Rohit and Kohli will head to Sri Lanka for the three-match ODI series that follow the T20Is starting Saturday, Jayasuriya said the hosts will aim to make the most of their absence in the shortest format. Suryakumar Yadav will take over the reins as India's T20I captain with Shubman Gill named his deputy. "Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are best players in the world. Looking at their talent and the kind of cricket they have played we all know where they belong, along with Jadeja," Jayasuriya was quoted as saying by Associated Press during a press meet. "Their absence will be a loss to the Indian team and we have to take maximum advantage out of that," he said. Meanwhile, Jayasuriya revealed that Sri Lanka's players have taken the help of Rajasthan Royals high-performance director Zubin Bharucha in their preparations for the series. Despite few players of the squad being active in the Lankan Premier League, Jayasuriya said the team benefitted from a six-day camp with Bharucha.

"We just started the sessions just after the LPL. Most of the players are playing the LPL, so they were busy with cricket and what we wanted (for them) was to play cricket as much as possible," Jayasuriya said. "We got Zubin from Rajasthan Royals and we had about six days of work and also with the other cricketers who finished with the LPL. I hope the players have learnt what you (management) wanted to do in terms of practice and their technique. The preparation was good, and we have two more days in Kandy before the T20 starts," he added. "It is important to learn as international cricketers new techniques, new approaches and shot making to be effective," the former Sri Lanka captain said.

The Sri Lankan side has been subject to constant shuffle in personnel over the last couple of seasons. Following the group-stage exit at the recent T20 World Cup, head coach Chris Silverwood stepped down to make way for Jayasuriya as an interim head coach. Former skipper Mahela Jayawardena resign from his position as high performance consultant while T20I skipper Wanindu Hasaranga also relinquished his role. "It is up to the players, we have been doing all the work in terms of practice, we have given training, we have got best coaches. I think Sri Lanka Cricket has provided most of the things and now it is up to the players," Jayasuriya remarked on the current state of the team. "We need to give a little bit of time. I know, for the cricket-loving public it is frustrating sometimes but be patient, give us time, we are working on it. It is really hard work on it with the players and they will do well," the 1996 World Cup-winning all-rounder said. "We have enough of talent. What we want (from them) is to go out in the middle and deliver - it is not easy, we know that. We have delivered when we were playing and now the time has come, people are waiting for this present team to perform and with what we are doing at the moment they will deliver very soon," he added.

Hikaru Nakamura, Anish Giri to join Magnus Carlsen, Viswanathan Anand as icon players in season 2

GNS News Agency, July 26

Hikaru Nakamura, Anish Giri will join former world champions Magnus Carlsen, Viswanathan Anand and stars like Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Ian Nepomniachtchi as "icon players" in the second season of the Global Chess League. While Nakamura will play for the newest team American Gambits, Giri will make his debut in the second season with PBG Alaskan Knights.

"I followed the Global Chess League in its first season and was hooked to the format. It is an exciting opportunity not only for the top players, but also for fans as they get to pick a team with their favorite players to cheer on. I am excited to be a part of the American Gambits team, and I look forward to meeting my teammates in London," Nakamura said. Meanwhile, Carlsen, who featured in the first season of the Global Chess League, will continue to play for Alpine SG Pipers while five-time world champion Anand will once again represent Ganges Grandmasters.

"The first season in Dubai was a fantastic experience. Chess has been an individual sport, but the concept of a team setting introduced by the Global Chess League is very exciting and refreshing. I look forward to playing again with the Alpine SG Pipers," Carlsen said.

After taking the Mumbai Masters to the final last season, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave will again play for the Mumbai-based franchise. Two-time world chess championship contender Ian Nepomniachtchi will be the icon player for the Triveni Continental Kings. While announcing the names of the icon players, Sameer Pathak, CEO



of Global Chess League, revealed that the organisers would be announcing the rest of the players for each of the six teams in the coming weeks. "With such renowned names at the helm of each team, we are confident that the exciting matches will offer millions of chess fans an incredible experience," Pathak said. The second season of the Global Chess League, a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and FIDE, will be held from October 3 to 12 at Friends House in London. Anand had recently hailed the Global Chess League as an "Indian way" of organising sport. "Indians are enjoying lots of sport now. But we like imposing our own business model on it. We want something new. That's why last year we had the Global Chess League, which was this new Indian way of organising sport," Anand said at the Express Adda last week.

Matheesha Pathirana hails MS Dhoni and CSK for transforming his career



GNS News Agency, July 26

Sri Lankan young speedster has hailed MS Dhoni and CSK for transforming his career. Pathirana made his international debut after playing for CSK in IPL 2022. Sri Lankan youngster Matheesha Pathirana has hailed Indian Premier League (IPL) team CSK for changing his career. Notably, Pathirana will be seen playing for his country in the upcoming white-ball series against India beginning from July 27. Recently, Pathirana reflected on his young career and revealed how big a role CSK and MS Dhoni played in transforming his career.

The 21-year-old made his IPL debut in 2022 and scalped two wickets from two games. Following his IPL debut, he made his international debut the same year as he received his T20I cap against Afghanistan. Pathirana had a phenomenal season with the ball in the next edition picking 19 wickets from 12 matches at an average of 19.53. He further picked up 13 wickets from six games in the 2024 edition at an average of 13. Speaking about his rapid rise in international cricket, Pathirana thanked CSK saying playing for the IPL team opened the doors for his national selection as people began recognizing him. He further called playing for CSK 'a gift from God' and said that sharing the dressing room with MS Dhoni was 'very special'. "After my under-19s, I was not in any squads in Sri Lanka. But since my debut for CSK, I got those chances and got selected for Sri Lanka's main team. Playing for CSK is a gift from god for me. Until I played for CSK, not many knew me. Sharing the dressing room with Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) is very special for youngsters like me, especially coming from Sri Lanka," Pathirana said on Sportstar. If we can win vs India, it will be a confidence booster. Pathirana further speaking ahead, the fast bowler

said that it will be a good challenge to face World Champions India in the upcoming T20I series. "I think it will be a good challenge. India is coming with a new coach and some new players; their combination will be slightly different. But it will be a good challenge for us because they are world champions. We have a very good side and a lot of talent and potential. Unfortunately, we didn't do well in the T20 World Cup. But if we can win this series, it will be a confidence booster for the next three years," said Pathirana. In the nine T20Is played so far, Pathirana has taken 14 wickets from nine matches at an average of 17.07 and an economy of 8.05. In Odis, he has 17 wickets from 12 matches at an average of 36.23 and an economy of 7.27. The youngster will be eager to play a pivotal role for his team as they take on India in a three-match T20I series beginning from July 27.

Real Madrid first football club to exceed one billion euros in revenue

GNS News Agency, July 26

Madrid: Real Madrid have become the first football club to cross 1 billion euros in revenue with a net profit of 16 million euros in the year 2023-24.

The board of directors of Real Madrid CF has formulated the annual accounts for the 2023-2024 financial year in a meeting held on Tuesday. Revenue for the 2023/24 season, excluding players transfers, reached to 1.073 billion euros, which is 27 per cent more than the previous year, according to the data available on the club's website.

"Operating income (before disposal of fixed assets) for the 2023/24 financial year reached 1,073 million euros, representing an increase of 230 million euros (27%) compared to the 2022/23 financial year. In this financial year, despite the stadium not yet being fully operational, the Club has managed to exceed the 1 billion euros mark for operating income before disposal of fixed assets, a figure not previously achieved by any football club," it said in a release.