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Srisaillam Reservoir gates opened amid floods due to rains

In response to heavy rainfall and increasing flood flow from upper catchment areas, authorities at the Srisaillam reservoir have activated flood management protocols by raising three gates this week. Currently, the water level at Srisaillam stands at 878.40 feet, slight less than full capacity of 885 feet.

Kurnool Chief Engineer Kabir Basha confirmed the lifting of gates 6, 7, and 8 to facilitate the controlled release of water. Each gate has been raised by ten feet, allowing for an outflow of 27,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) per gate, amounting to a total release of 81,000 cusecs directed downstream to Nagarjuna Sagar.

Rainbow Hospitals launch adult vaccination initiative

Hyderabad: City-based Rainbow Children's Hospital has launched Adult Vaccination Outreach Network (AVON) aimed to cater to the immunization needs of adult population in Telangana State and elsewhere in the country.

Through AVON initiative, the hospital will offer Influenza vaccine, HPV (Human papillomavirus) vaccine, Pneumococcal vaccine, and Shingles that can prevent severe infections and cancer. The launch of AVON initiative was followed by a panel discussion on Protecting Adults from Preventable Diseases and Breaking Down Barriers to Adult Immunization.

S C refuses to intervene against bail to Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren



GNS News Agency, July 29

The Supreme Court on July 28 declined an appeal filed by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against bail granted to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in money laundering charges linked to a land 'scam'. A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan said the High Court judgment was "well-reasoned".

However, the Bench said the observations in the High Court judgment would not influence the trial judge during proceedings. Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, for the ED, argued the High Court did not consider crucial statements arraigned against Mr. Soren by prime witnesses. The agency argued the High Court decision was erroneous and challenged its finding that there was no primary facie evidence that Mr. Soren was guilty under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The High Court had also concluded that there was no likelihood of Mr. Soren committing an offence while out on bail. Earlier, opposing interim bail sought by Mr. Soren in the apex court, the ED had claimed he was guilty of the offence of money laundering for which he had been arrested in January. The chargesheet filed against him in the case had listed cogent evidence against him and his close associates, the agency had claimed.

It said Mr. Soren had resorted to filing false cases against the officials under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act to thwart the investigation. Moreover, he had used the State machinery to topple the ED investigation and create false trails. He would tamper with the evidence and influence witnesses, the ED had argued. The ED had contended that while Mr. Soren claimed he had no connection with the 8.86 acres of land at Shanti Nagar in Ranchi, he had allegedly tried to tamper with the evidence. Mr. Soren had opposed his arrest in the case. "Whatever material was in possession of the ED officer was not enough to arrest me under Article 19 (power to arrest) of the PMLA... The allegation against me at the time of the arrest was forcible or illegal possession of 8.86 acres of land in Ranchi. Forcible or illegal possession of land is not a scheduled offence under the PMLA," senior advocate Kapil Sibal had argued on his behalf in the top court.

Will resist division of Bengal at any cost: Mamata Banerjee



GNS News Agency, July 29

Kolkata: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said on the floor of the state Assembly that Trinamool Congress will resist all attempts to divide West Bengal. "Let them come to divide Bengal. We will show them how to resist that," the Chief Minister said while addressing the sixth day of the monsoon session of the Assembly.

Her comments come in the wake of a recent observation made by BJP's Lok Sabha member from Jharkhand Nishikant Dubey demanding the formation of a new Union Territory by bifurcating certain districts of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. A BJP legislator from Murshidabad assembly constituency, Gouri Sankar Ghosh also supported Nishikant Dubey's demand. Speaking on the occasion, Banerjee said that in the recent NITI Aayog meeting, on Saturday, she had raised the demand for the formation of the India-Bhutan River Commission, in line with the India-Bangladesh River Commission. "I have recorded this issue at the Niti Aayog meeting in the presence of the Prime Minister. I highlighted at the NITI Aayog meeting since the shape of West Bengal is like a boat, the problem of waterlogging in the state is immense," she further said. "BJP is taking a one-sided decision about sharing Teesta Water with Bangladesh. We will never accept that," the Chief Minister said. Speaking on the occasion, she accused the Union government of providing money to neighbouring states for the purpose of flood prevention.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy flays BRS over power contracts, says probe will continue

GNS News Agency, July 29

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy criticized the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government, labeling their handling of power contracts as misleading. He pointed out that the BRS had called for an inquiry into the Chhattisgarh, Yadadri, and Bhadradi agreements and highlighted that a commission was established based on those requests. The chief minister also noted that the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of continuing the inquiry, requesting a new



chairman for the commission, which is expected to be appointed by Monday evening. He further claimed that many of the advancements in Telangana's power supply stemmed from decisions

made during the YS regime, particularly in securing uninterrupted power supply for Hyderabad.

KCR praised for negotiating a special exemption for Telangana, securing a

distribution of 53.46 per cent electricity for the state compared to 46.54 percent for Andhra Pradesh. In a sharp rebuttal, CM Revanth Reddy demanded examination of records from 2015, asserting that KCR had misled the assembly on multiple occasions and illustrating how dissenting voices were silenced through marshals. Reddy also questioned the efficacy of the current solar power initiatives, claiming that under the previous governance, solar energy production remained at only one megawatt, predominantly handled by private companies.

New Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma: Opposition not an 'enemy'

GNS News Agency, July 29

Agartala: Former Tripura Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Dev Varma, who was appointed as Governor of Telangana by President Droupadi Murmu last week on Monday, said that the "opposition parties are not an enemy". Dev Varma has been appointed as the Governor of Telangana replacing C.P. Radhakrishnan, who held additional charge of Telangana along with Jharkhand, said that he would assume charge in the gubernatorial post in Hyderabad on July 31 and would attend the Governors' conference in the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi on August 1.

He said that Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy called him on Sunday and congratulated him for being appointed as the Governor of the state. Asked about Congress-ruled Telangana, Dev Varma, a veteran BJP leader associated with the party since 1990, said that "any opposition party is not an enemy". "The Congress is democratically elected in the state (Telangana). As a Constitutional head of the state, I would discharge my constitutional responsibility in consultation with the Chief Minister," the 67-year-old BJP leader told IANS. "It is not possible to run governments by BJP in every state. In a democracy, somewhere Congress will govern... Shiv Sena, Trinamool Congress, and other parties may run the governments. The Prime Minister also always advocates for healthy democratic activities."

Dev Varma, a member of the erstwhile Tripura royal family, said that he would work in the state (Telangana) in coordination with the state government. He added that his experience in Tripura would be utilised in Telangana and his understanding of that state (Telangana) can also be useful in Tripura as well.

Thanking President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for appointing him as the Governor of an important state, Dev Varma, an author of several books, said that for the first time since independence, a leader from Tripura has been appointed as the Governor. Earlier, leaders from other northeastern states,



including Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland, were appointed Governors, Dev Varma added. Dev Varma served as Tripura's Deputy Chief Minister from 2018 till 2023 under Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb-led BJP government in the state and continued in his post after Manik Saha became the Chief Minister following the resignation of Deb in May 2022. In the 2018 Assembly elections, when BJP wrested power in Tripura defeating the CPI(M) after 25 years, Dev Varma was elected to the Assembly from the Charilam constituency in Sepahijala district but he lost the seat to Tipra Motha Party in the 2023 Assembly polls. He said that earlier there was almost no organisational presence of the BJP in Tripura. However, after the party came to power in 2018 Assembly polls, it is now the main political force in the erstwhile princely state, which was ruled by the Left and Congress for several decades since it merged with India in October 1949. "There are two Lok Sabha members from Tripura. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made BJP leader (Pratima Bhowmik) from Tripura as Union Minister and gave several Padma awards to many personalities in the state. People of Tripura would remain grateful to Prime Minister Modi for helping Tripura in all sectors of development," Dev Varma added.

Don't you need NTPC power: Kishan to State govt



GNS News Agency, July 29

Hyderabad: Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy, lashed at the State government for not cooperating with the Centre's measures to make more power available to Telangana. He said that the Centre is taking every possible measure to increase power production, given the growing energy demand across the country. As part of the same, the NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved setting up a 4,000 megawatt (MW) super thermal power plant in Ramagundam of Peddapalli district, Telangana, he said. Accordingly, two power plants by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), each with 800 MW, have been completed and commissioned. The two power plants taken up with Rs 10,598.98 crore were dedicated by the Prime Minister on October 2, 2003, and March 4, 2024, and 85 per cent of the total generating capacity of

1,600 MW of the two plants is being utilised to meet the power demands of Telangana. The Centre wants to commission the remaining 2,400 MW projects at the earliest to provide energy security to Telangana. As part of the same, the NTPC must enter into a power purchase agreement with the Transmission Corporation of Telangana (TSTRANSCO) to begin the project and procure the coal necessary to run the power plants. The Centre wants to complete the Lara Super Thermal Power Project-II (STPP-II) early since the energy demand in India is increasing daily. Following this, the NTPC has been writing to the State to extend its cooperation on the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) as soon as possible.

Kishan Reddy said that the NTPC wrote four letters to the TSTRANSCO, but there has been no response so far. He said that the NTPC informed TSTRANSCO that it is left with no other option in the wake of a lack of response to its repeated letters but to conclude that the State government is not interested in purchasing power from the STPP-II project in Ramagundam. NTPC further informed that, if allowed, it will sell the power to other States in South India if the Telangana government shows no interest. The Union Minister said that the total energy demand in the country stood at 250 GW on May 30, 2024. The peak power demand in Telangana stood at 15.6 gigawatts in March 2024. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) estimated the peak power demand in Telangana would double by 2030.

This necessitates the early completion of the second phase of the NTPC power plant with a capacity of 2,400 MW to meet the demand in Telangana.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy Meets Governor CP Radhakrishnan Ahead of Transfer



GNS News Agency, July 29

In a significant political development in Telangana, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy met with the current Governor, CP Radhakrishnan, at the Raj Bhavan. The meeting took place following the recent announcement from the President regarding the appointment of CP Radhakrishnan as the new Governor of Maharashtra, a role he is set to assume shortly. As part of this transition, Jishnu Dev Varma has been appointed as the new Governor of Telangana, taking over the responsibilities from Radhakrishnan. Varma is scheduled to take the oath of office within the next two days. During their meeting, CM Revanth Reddy and Governor Radhakrishnan discussed various matters concerning the state before attending assembly meetings later in the day. This encounter marks the conclusion of Radhakrishnan's term in Telangana as he prepares for his new role in Maharashtra.

Telangana CM congratulates athletes on first-round wins at Paris Olympics



GNS News Agency, July 29

Hyderabad : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday spoke over-phone to the athletes from the state participating in the Paris Olympics 2024 and congratulated them on their success in the first round of their respective events. The Chief Minister spoke to boxer Nikhat Zareen, table tennis player Sreeja Akula and badminton star P. V. Sindhu and congratulated them on their best performance. According to the Chief Minister's Office, he also spoke to shooter Esha Singh preparing for her event and wished her the best. The Chief Minister wished that all the athletes from the state continue the same performance in the next rounds and bring laurels to the country. Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen entered the women's 50 kg category quarterfinals by defeating Germany's Maxi Carina Kloetzer on Sunday. India's top-ranked table tennis player Sreeja Akula entered the round of 32 with a 4-0 win over Sweden's Christina Kallberg. Star shuttler and two-time Olympic medalist began her Paris Olympics campaign with a win over Maldives' Fathimath Abdul Razzaq. Earlier, the Chief Minister congratulated shooter Manu Bhaker on winning a historic bronze for India in the women's 10m air pistol event at the Paris Olympics. She became the first Indian woman shooter to win a medal at the Olympics. "We are proud of your achievement," the Chief Minister said.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SALEEMA BEE W/O MOHAMMED SARDAR** (Old name) born on 01-01-1960 at Chillargi Earlier was holding Passport No. R5956824 DT: 08-02-2018 hereby changing my name and henceforth in future I would be known as **SALMA BEGUM W/O MOHAMMED SARDAR** (new name) R/o HNo. 2-2-233, Ambedkar nagar, Adilabad-504001 Telangana.

DECLARANT.
SALMA BEGUM
W/O MOHAMMED SARDAR

Place: Adilabad
Date: 31-07-2024

ED court allows former Punjab cop Jagdish Bhola to perform last rites of his father



bail applicant in the said complaint, he definitely does not deserve the relief of interim bail as prayed for. "However, in the interest of justice and fair play, the applicant is granted the alternative relief where under the Superintendent, Central Jail, Bathinda is directed to make necessary arrangements and to send applicant/accused Jagdish Singh @ Bholla in tight security to village Rai-Ke-Kallan, District Bathinda on July 26 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., for the purpose of cremation of his father (strictly as per the Punjab Jail Manual Rules)."

The order further reads, "The applicant/accused will bear the expenses of police guard and conveyance to be provided for taking him to village Rai-Ke-Kallan, District Bathinda. The... police officials are directed to ensure that immediately after attending the cremation of his father on July 26 (from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.), the applicant/accused be taken back to Central Jail, Bathinda... without any delay." Bhola had submitted an application for interim bail for one month after his father passed away. He had also requested that alternative directions be issued to the superintendent of the Bathinda Central Jail to send him to his village to perform the final rites of his father. The applicant stated that he was the only son of deceased Balshinder Singh and because of this the last rites of his father had to be performed by him. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) in its reply submitted that Bhola was facing trial under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. It, therefore, opposed the interim bail plea of one month but said the petitioner could be allowed to perform the final rites of his father if the court deemed it fit. Bhola is undergoing 24 years of imprisonment in drug smuggling cases and is an accused in a money laundering case.

GNS News Agency, July 29
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) in its reply submitted that Bhola was facing trial under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) in its reply submitted that Bhola was facing trial under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. A special ED court in Mohali Thursday allowed former Punjab Police DSP Jagdish Bhola to perform his father's last rites. Bhola's father Balshinder Singh died on Wednesday and he was set to be cremated on Friday.

The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Manjot Kaur while disposing of an application filed by Bhola's counsels ordered, "It is noteworthy that two connected complaints titled as 'ED Vs. Jagdish Singh @ Bholla and others' and 'ED Vs. Anoop Singh Kahlon and others' (having arisen out of complaint no. ECIR/02/2013) are pending trial before this court and have been fixed for July 26 for final orders. Keeping in view the gravity of the allegations having been levelled against the

Chandigarh mayor Kuldeep Kumar's phone being tapped, alleges BJP councillor Kanwarjeet Singh Rana



the mayor asked why he had not complained through the proper channels, Joshi said complaints had been lodged. "We have dropped a complaint at the adviser's office... it is a very serious thing," he added.

Both Rana and Joshi have been in the firing line following arguments with the mayor. Even in the last House meeting, marshals had intervened to move the BJP councillors out. During the war of words with the mayor on Friday, Rana said, "I also want to mention that your phone is being tapped as well. Your own party suspects that you may not move from here to there." AAP councillor Yogesh Dhingra reacted to this, saying, "How ironic that your (BJP) government is in power in the country and you are living in a state of constant fear." Reacting to the allegations, Punjab's AAP spokesperson Neel Garg told The Indian Express, "What will we do by tracking someone? This is an absolutely baseless and false allegation. Moreover, who other than the BJP knows better about encroaching on someone's privacy?" "How ironic that your (BJP) government is in power in the country and you are living in a state of constant fear," AAP councillor Yogesh Dhingra said. Row over sports event invite skipping mention of MP, mayor The General House meeting also saw AAP councillor Prem Lata and Congress's Taruna Mehta hit out at BJP councillors over an invite to a sports event of the Union Territory Cricket Association not mentioning the names of MP Manish Tewari or Mayor Kuldeep Kumar. "It is a government programme of the UT Cricket Association," Rana said. "Then why is the MP and mayor's name missing? In what capacity is BJP chief J P Malhotra's name mentioned if it is a government event," Lata asked.

GNS News Agency, July 29
Kanwarjeet Singh Rana, a senior BJP councillor in Chandigarh, on Friday alleged that Mayor Kuldeep Kumar's phone was being tapped by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab. Kumar denied the allegation, calling it "absolutely baseless". The remarks were made at a General House meeting of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation when BJP councillor Saurabh Joshi alleged that the AAP government was misusing its machinery to track the movements of BJP councillors and tapping their phones.

"Our movement is being tracked... Unknown people move around us to note what we are doing. Our phones are being tapped," Joshi alleged. "We can see unknown people around us doing recce... outside our house even... Saurabh Joshi and I are being targeted... If the AAP government thinks that they can track us and suppress our voice, this will not happen," Rana added. When

'To divide Bengal is to divide the country': Mamata Banerjee to participate in NITI Aayog meet to register her protest

GNS News Agency, July 29
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee NITI Aayog meet Banerjee said that Bengal is facing "economic, geographical, and political blockade" while ministers and BJP leaders are conspiring to divide the state. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that she would participate in the NITI Aayog meet on July 27 in Delhi, but only to register her protest. The West Bengal CM said that a minister had made statements to divide Bengal, while adding that to do so would be the same as dividing India.



the meeting, following which the Budget was placed. "Bengal and other opposition-ruled states were totally deprived in the Budget and were given step-motherly treatment," the CM said, adding that "this discrimination and political bias" will not be tolerated.

Banerjee said that Bengal is facing "economic, geographical, and political blockade" while ministers and BJP leaders are conspiring to divide the state. Stating that she will stay in the NITI Aayog meet and try to represent the state, Banerjee said, "If they allow me to record our voice, I will do so. Else, I will leave in protest." "As far as I know, Hemant (Soren) is also going to speak for his state," the TMC chief said.

"When Parliament is in process, a minister is making statements to divide Bengal. And now from different sources, different party members are giving different types of statements – to divide Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, and Bengal. We strongly condemn this attitude. To divide Bengal means to divide our country India. We don't support this" Banerjee said. This comes after Jharkhand BJP Nishikant Dubey proposed in the Parliament that certain parts of Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand be made into a Union Territory. West Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar and the Minister of State for Education also recently said that he had submitted a proposal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking to incorporate North Bengal in the North East states. Speaking to the media before leaving for Delhi, Banerjee said that the NITI Aayog asked to submit the written speech seven days before

Injustice, Centre oppressing people of Delhi like the British: Atishi over budget allocation

GNS News Agency, July 29
Continuing with her attack on the Centre over budget allocation for Delhi, AAP senior leader and Finance Minister Atishi Thursday accused the BJP-led Central government of doing "injustice" to the residents of the city, stating that it was "oppressing the people of Delhi like the British".



of Delhi? If the central government can give money to the rest of the states of the country, then the people of Delhi should also get the money they are entitled to. This is the demand of the people of Delhi," she said. Delhi BJP has termed the allegations false and a lie. State unit president Virendra Sachdeva said that the central government has done several works in Delhi and spent Rs 5.5 lakh crore for the development of the Capital.

Addressing a press conference, Atishi said, "In 2023-24, Delhiites paid Rs 2.07 lakh crore as income tax to the central government. In return, the central government allocated only Rs 1,168 crore to Delhi which is not even 0.4% of the tax paid by the people of Delhi." The minister said that in the last decade, ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has come to power at the Centre, Delhiites have paid Rs 15,59,933 crore as income tax but in return, they got only Rs 7,534 crore. "That is, Delhiites received only 0.48% of the income tax that they paid to the BJP-ruled central government in the last 10 years," she added. Atishi accused the BJP-ruled Centre of oppressing the people of Delhi like the British. "I want to ask the BJP-ruled central government on behalf of Delhiites, why is this injustice happening to the people

Bombay HC directs CWC to hand over 'illegal' custody of three infants to their 'adoptive' parents despite no valid adoption deeds



370 (exploitation) of IPC along with provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

As per advocates Heena Mistry and Saurabh Mehta for petitioners, the minor children were placed in their custody by their biological parents or by the person projecting as a biological parent and they continued to be in their care and protection from the date of alleged adoption deeds and formed part and parcel of their families. However, due to registration of FIR, the children were separated from them despite them showing all their love and affection upon them and being emotionally attached to them. The infants were produced before CWC, which housed them in specialised care centre on the pretext that the manner in which the custody was handed over to the petitioners was not legitimate as it was suspected that there was a child trafficking racket involved and the same was under investigation. The bench noted that 'unfortunately, by executing an Adoption Deed, which is either not registered or merely being notarized, definitely does not amount to a valid adoption. It added that the protocols for adoption prescribed by the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), constituted under the Union Ministry of Woman and Child Development had not been adhered to at all. The bench noted that as the petitioner couples were not arraigned as accused, it was needed to go into the legality of the adoption deeds. "Prima facie, at this stage, we do not find that the prosecution alleges that the children are either transferred or received by any of the modes specified under Section 370 and it is for the purpose of exploitation, as understood in the said section," the bench noted. It also observed that invocation of provisions of the 2015 Act was also not justified. Allowing the pleas, the court said it was open to petitioners to adopt the prescribed procedure for continuing the custody of the child with them by validly executing adoption deeds.

GNS News Agency, July 29
The Bombay High Court recently allowed pleas filed by three couples who claimed to be guardian or adopted parents of infants seeking direction to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) to handover custody of the infants, who, as per police, were unauthorisedly sold to petitioners. The court held that the children concerned did not fall under the category of 'children in need of care and protection' and therefore custody handed over to the CWC cannot be justified and the orders passed by CWC were 'illegal.'

It said the CWC itself does not get any power to deal with these children who are neither 'abandoned' nor 'orphans'. The court further observed that the petitioners (who were not named accused), though without adhering to procedures under law, were handed over custody of the minor children by their biological mothers and the said biological parents had not sought custody of their children. A division bench of Justices Bharati H Dangre and Manjusha A Deshpande was hearing habeas corpus pleas by three couples, in connection with FIR registered in April this year by city police, invoking Section

Repair work at Ravet Pumping House delays water supply in Pimpri-Chinchwad



(PCMC) on Friday said due to heavy rain, the turbidity of the Pawana river water has increased, leading to a technical failure at the Ravet Pumping House. The PCMC added that repair work is on.

The civic body further said that due to the repair work, the water supply is delayed in some areas. The water pressure is also low, the PCMC said, adding that the timing of water supply has also been affected and different areas are receiving water at different timings. Shrikant Savane, PCMC Chief Engineer of the Water Supply Department, urged citizens to use water judiciously. Savane added, "Due to heavy rains in the dam and river areas, the turbidity of the river water has increased significantly. This has caused a technical failure in the pumping system at the Ravet Pumping House. Repair work is underway and the water supply will be delayed and will come at a reduced pressure and quantity." "Amid the monsoon season, there is also a heightened risk of waterborne diseases. To ensure the health and safety of our citizens, the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation is taking necessary precautions to provide clean and safe water. However, as a precaution, citizens are advised to filter and boil their drinking water," he said.

GNS News Agency, July 29
The civic body further said that due to the repair work, the water supply is delayed in some areas. The water pressure is also low, the PCMC said, adding that the timing of water supply has also been affected and different areas are receiving water at different timings. Pimpri-Chinchwad The civic body further said that due to the repair work, the water supply is delayed in some areas. The water pressure is also low, the PCMC said, adding that the timing of water supply has also been affected and different areas are receiving water at different timings. The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

Mahua Moitra provided FIR copy after approaching Delhi HC; court to hear maintainability of quashing next

GNS News Agency, July 29
The Delhi High Court on Friday heard a petition by Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra relating to an FIR filed against her by the Delhi Police based on a complaint by the National Commission for Women (NCW). Mahua Moitra had filed the petition seeking a copy of the FIR and also the quashing of the complaint. Moitra was booked after she allegedly posted a video on social media, wherein NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma was seen arriving at the site of a stampede in Hathras. The post was later deleted.



Following the NCW complaint, Moitra was booked under Section 79 (intending to insult the modesty of any woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police. Appearing for Moitra before the court of Justice Neena Bansal, senior advocate Indira Jaising submitted that while the FIR was lodged on July 7, and the TMC lawyer through her legal representatives sought a copy of the FIR by way of a communication dated July 9, the same was not provided till date.

Karnataka Bitcoin scam: SIT uses C-DAC forensic report, witness statement of Rs 850 crore fraud to counter cops' bail pleas

GNS News Agency, July 29
A new forensic report for laptops seized from serial hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki after his arrest in November 2020 and a confession statement given to a court by a private cyber expert linked to the probe against the hacker have lent new twists to the Karnataka Bitcoin scam, with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) now suggesting a scam to the tune of Rs 850 crore. The computer forensics report dated May 21, 2024, provided by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), on electronic gadgets used by the hacker has revealed that police officials conducting investigations against the hacker illegally accessed his laptop, including cryptocurrency documents, after seizing the devices in 2020. Private cyber forensic expert B S Gagan Jain, who assisted the Bengaluru Crime Branch in its probe against hacker Sriki, has also revealed in a statement to

a magistrate that there was evidence of the presence of as many as 4,000 Bitcoins – valued at Rs 850 crore in 2020 – on Sriki's devices after his arrest. The CID SIT in Karnataka is probing a Bitcoin scam from the BJP government's tenure (2019-2023) where cryptocurrency and funds worth crores allegedly stolen by Sriki from international exchanges and gaming websites were allegedly siphoned away by policemen, politicians and others after his arrest. Over the past week, in the course of two separate anticipatory bail hearings for two former Bengaluru Crime Branch police officers – Police Inspector Prashanth Babu and Deputy Superintendent of Police Shridhar Pujar – who investigated the original cases of hacking against Sriki, the SIT has informed the high court and a special court of the C-DAC report and Jain's statement recorded under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in February this year.

Sri Lanka will hold presidential election on September 21, its first since declaring bankruptcy in 2022



GNS News Agency, July 29

Sri Lanka's presidential polls will be held on September 21, the Election Commission said on Friday. Some 17 million voters will have their first chance of electing the country's leader, after a mass people's uprising ousted former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa two years ago. President Ranil Wickremesinghe was among the first to formally get into the fray. His office announced making a cash deposit at the Commission for his candidacy as an independent, although he has relied on the Rajapaksas' Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front) since his rise to Presidency through an urgent parliamentary vote, after Mr. Gotabaya's resignation amid the 2022 economic downturn. During his two years in office, Mr. Wickremesinghe has vowed to rebuild the country's economy with an International Monetary Fund-led austerity and reform programme. While no official announcement in regard to his candidacy was made

until Friday, the senior politician has sought to highlight his efforts towards economic stability in recent public speeches, signalling a desire to contest. However, his government faces fierce criticism over high living costs, with several sectors demanding salary hikes to cope.

Mr. Wickremesinghe, 75, has served as Prime Minister six times, and as President for two years now, but has never won a presidential election through a popular vote. In the election scheduled to be held this September, he faces two prominent challengers in Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa, and Leader of the National People's Power [NPP] alliance Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Sri Lanka's first three-cornered presidential race. All past presidential polls in Sri Lanka have had two main contenders and, in most cases, one obvious winner. Both, Mr. Premadasa and Mr. Dissanayake have been campaigning with a pledge to end corruption and alleviate people's economic distress through a renegotiated IMF package.

The Rajapaksas' SLPP is yet to name its candidate, likely to be a non-Rajapaksa. Some other aspirants, including former army chief Sarath Fonseka and Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, have thrown their hats into the ring. Meanwhile, a group of northern Tamil parties have agreed to field a "common Tamil candidate", a proposal that some others in Tamil polity have deemed a non-starter. While seeking votes from the majority Sinhalese electorate that is fragmented following the 2022 crisis, all presidential aspirants will also target the country's ethnic minorities — Tamils of the north and east, Hill country or Malayiyaha Tamils and Muslims — for their support.

Sri Lanka will hold presidential election on September 21, its first since declaring bankruptcy in 2022

GNS News Agency, July 29

Sri Lanka's presidential polls will be held on September 21, the Election Commission said on Friday. Some 17 million voters will have their first chance of electing the country's leader, after a mass people's uprising ousted former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa two years ago. President Ranil Wickremesinghe was among the first to formally get into the fray. His office announced making a cash deposit at the Commission for his candidacy as an independent, although he has relied on the Rajapaksas' Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front) since his rise to Presidency through an urgent parliamentary vote, after Mr. Gotabaya's resignation amid the 2022 economic downturn.



During his two years in office, Mr. Wickremesinghe has vowed to rebuild the country's economy with an International Monetary Fund-led austerity and reform programme. While no official announcement in regard to his candidacy was made until Friday, the senior politician has sought to highlight his efforts towards economic stability in recent public speeches, signalling a desire to contest. However, his government faces fierce criticism over high living costs, with several sectors demanding salary hikes to cope.

Why thousands of children of Indian-Americans face deportation risk

GNS News Agency, July 29

Over 250,000 children of legal immigrants, many of them Indian-Americans, face risk of being deported due to "aging out" as they turn 21 and lose dependent status. The White House is blaming the Republicans for the legislative impasse, while lawmakers and advocacy groups urge action to protect these individuals. Over 2,50,000 children of legal immigrants, many of whom are Indian-Americans, are at risk of being deported from the United States due to the "aging out" issue. These children, known as 'Documented Dreamers', came to the US with their parents on temporary work visas but now face deportation as they turn 21 and lose their dependent status.



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The National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) conducted a study of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data as of November 2, and found that over 1.2 million Indians, including dependents, are currently waiting for green cards in EB-1, EB-2 and EB-3 categories. This number is from a Forbes report.

these children, met with over 100 congressional offices and senior administration officials to advocate for a solution. "It is disappointing to see the lack of action and associated proposed regulations deprioritised and delayed. I hope President Biden and the administration see the support from this bipartisan letter and show they care about one of the most bipartisan issues in Congress," Dip Patel, founder of Improve The Dream was quoted as saying by PTI. Individuals like Jefrina, who came to the US at the age of 7, and Praneetha, who arrived at 8, have had to navigate temporary visa solutions to avoid self-deportation.

Jefrina, now a graduate student in Minnesota, shared, "My young adult life has been a series of temporary fixes to avoid self-deportation. I graduate from my Master's program in December and I'm yet again at the crossroads of leaving my family, pets, and friends." Praneetha, a cloud engineer in Texas, has lived in the US for over 15 years but faces uncertainty about her permanent residency status. Similarly, Roshan, who came to the US at age 10, was forced to leave the country last month after aging out in 2019 despite spending almost 16 years in the US. Dwarakesh Patel, who is a podcaster, often features faces like Jeff Bezos, Tony Blair, and more in his show, Dwarakesh Podcast, has also shared his story on X stated, "My family moved to the US when I was 8, but by the time I turned 20, my dad was still on an H1B (waiting to get processed for a green card). Once I turned 21, I would age out as his dependent, despite the fact that I basically grew up in the US. I thought I'd have to become a code monkey after college, and even that only if I was lucky enough to win the H-1B lottery. Otherwise, back to India."

Improve The Dream, an organisation representing

2 trains carrying athletes stopped en route to Paris as saboteurs target Olympics 2024



GNS News Agency, July 29

France's high-speed train network experienced significant disruption early Friday due to a series of coordinated sabotage attacks across the country. People wait at Gare de Lille-Flandres train station after a series of coordinated actions on France's high-speed train network. Two trains carrying Olympic athletes to Paris on the western Atlantique line were stopped on Friday, France's rail company SNCF said. The development comes just hours before the opening ceremony of Olympics 2024.

The rail company said that one train was cancelled, while the authorities are hoping that the other would become operational. France's high-speed train network experienced significant disruption early Friday due to a series of coordinated sabotage attacks across the country. These incidents have caused widespread travel chaos and highlighted potential security vulnerabilities. The sabotage occurred amidst an extensive security operation mobilising tens of thousands of police and military personnel to safeguard Paris for the major sporting event, drawing security forces from across the nation. SNCF reported that vandals targeted signal substations and cables on key routes connecting Paris with cities like Lille, Bordeaux, and Strasbourg. An additional attempt to damage the Paris-Marseille line was prevented. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks. However, security sources suggest the methods used point towards possible involvement by leftist militants or environmental activists, though no concrete evidence has surfaced yet. French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said, "What we know, what we see, is that this operation was prepared, coordinated, that nerve centres were targeted, which shows a certain knowledge of the network to know where to strike." Meanwhile, the SNCF has urged all travellers to postpone their journeys.

Bihar man charged in US with selling fake cancer drugs, faces 100-year jail

GNS News Agency, July 29

A 43-year-old Bihar man, Sanjay Kumar, has been charged with selling counterfeit oncology drugs, including cancer-immunotherapy medicine Keytruda, in the US. Kumar, who was arrested in Houston, Texas, has been charged on five counts, with the maximum penalty of 20 years on each count. Indian national charged in US for selling and shipping counterfeit cancer drugs



A federal grand jury in Houston, Texas, has charged a 43-year-old Indian national from Bihar with selling and shipping counterfeit oncology medicines worth tens of thousands of dollars into the US. The man from Bihar has been charged on five counts and faces up to 100 years in prison. Hailing from Bihar, Sanjay Kumar, and other co-conspirators allegedly arranged for the shipment and sale of counterfeit versions of oncology pharmaceuticals, including Keytruda -- a cancer immunotherapy, to people in the United States, according to court documents.

count, according to the US Department of Justice. Kumar was arrested on June 26 in Houston after he landed in the United States with the intention of negotiating and expanding his business of selling fake Keytruda in the American market, according to a US attorney. "Keytruda is a cancer immunotherapy that is approved in the United States for 19 different indications, including the treatment of certain types of melanoma, lung cancer, head and neck cancer, Hodgkin lymphoma, gastric cancer, cervical cancer, and breast cancer," authorities revealed.

Sanjay Kumar is charged with one count of conspiracy to traffic counterfeit drugs and four counts of trafficking in counterfeit drugs. If convicted, the Bihar man faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on each

BTS ARMY rhymes with Bangladesh protesters' blood, sweat & tears

GNS News Agency, July 29

Popular K-pop band BTS' massive online fan base has found a sudden interest in student-led anti-quota protests raging in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi students protesting government quotas found support from an unexpected quarter earlier this month when the country was reeling under widespread violence and an internet shutdown: the online fanbase of the South Korean pop band BTS. India Today has identified at least 50 self-declared BTS fan pages that posted and amplified posts carrying hashtags such as #StepDownHasina, #StudentsUnderAttack and #QuotaReformProtest. At least 140 people were killed in clashes in Dhaka and other cities during protests calling for an end to reservation in government jobs and education for the kin of those who fought for the country's independence from Pakistan over 50 years ago. During the unrest, the internet was completely inaccessible for at least five days and partially accessible for about a week, leaving crores unable to access social media. During this period, Bangladeshi citizens living in foreign countries arguably were the only ones to raise their compatriots' voice -- calling for putting pressure on the Hasina government with social media trends. Even domestic news channels were off-air for days.



In their effort to gain wider attention, many of them turned to the BTS 'ARMY' (Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth), as the band's fans call themselves -- calling on them to amplify the protesters voice. Many of them obliged. Many of these accounts shared similar content, often using the phrase "We stand with Bangladeshi students," which appeared in nearly 9,000 tweets and retweets within a week ending on July 23. Many of the participants, like @btslinesiconic, which has over 84,000 followers, never posted anything about Bangladesh before this campaign. "All eyes on Bangladesh. We stand with Bangladeshi students," its post reads.

changed its name to "xo, saaf quota reform BD students" and began sharing posts supporting the protest. This user tagged Spanish authorities and international organisations in tweets, with one tweet reading, "We need international media coverage from you." Other users, like @makkeishitero and @bbooahaoshi, also changed their display names and added "quota reform BD students" and "save our students, quota reform BD". The historical tweets of several of these accounts show strong participation in campaigns supporting the free Palestine movement. In 2021, several BTS fan pages were targeted for copyright claims on X by a Dhaka-based group called "Team Copyright." The group stated that it intended to "destroy the toxic fanbase" and criticised BTS for "promoting atheism and homosexuality", reported The Verge. Internet shutdown Internet observatory NetBlocks reported restrictions on Facebook and WhatsApp on July 16 and July 17, followed by a total internet shutdown in Bangladesh from the next day which continued for another four days. Fixed-line internet connectivity was partially restored on July 23. "Internet connectivity in Bangladesh remains widely disrupted despite some restoration of fixed-line services," Netblocks Director Alp Toker said in a statement sent to India Today. He said the shutdown adversely affected families and left rights activists struggling to keep an eye on any potential human rights violations during the protest.

Some even went so far as to change their display names or profile pictures. For instance, @lunovjae

Barack Obama, Michelle endorse Kamala Harris as Democratic presidential pick

GNS News Agency, July 29

Former US President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama have endorsed Kamala Harris as the Democratic presidential nominee. After days of speculation, former US President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama have endorsed US Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic presidential nominee. In a tweet, Barack Obama said that he and his wife think that their "friend" Harris would make a "fantastic President of the United States." Earlier this week, Michelle and I called our friend Kamala Harris. We told her we think she'll make a fantastic President of the United States, and that she has our full support. At this critical moment for our country, we're going to do everything we can to make sure she wins in November. We hope you'll join us," Barack Obama tweeted with a clip capturing a phone call between the US Vice President and the Obamas. The 55-second clip shows Kamala Harris, 59, heading towards her motorcade while backstage of an event, and answering a phone call - on speaker. She smiles from ear to ear, realising that both Barack and Michelle Obama are on the call. "Oh, it's good to hear you both," the US Vice President is heard in the clip. "I can't have this phone call without saying to

my girl Kamala: I am proud of you," Michelle Obama says, adding that the campaign is going to be "historic". Then, Barack Obama is heard saying that he and his wife couldn't be prouder to endorse Kamala Harris, and "do everything we can to get you through this election and into the Oval Office". The 59-year-old Vice President shared the same clip on her X account as well. "It means so much to have your endorsements, Michelle Obama and Barack Obama. Let's get to work," she tweeted. The endorsements come after days of speculation that Harris, who was pitched for the White House top after US President Joe Biden dropped out of the race last week, may not have the full support of the Obamas. The delay in endorsement, which was in stark contrast with other Democratic leaders, including former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, backing Harris - led to the speculation. Furthermore, a Biden family source told The New York Post that Barack Obama is "very upset" because he knows "incompetent" Kamala Harris cannot win. According to the source, Barack Obama had hoped to get Joe Biden out of the way, and an article written by Hollywood actor George Clooney in the New York Times asking him to drop out of the White House race was part of that plan.

Deadpool and Wolverine box office collection day 1 early report: Marvel film eyes over Rs 20 crore opening



Deadpool and Wolverine box office collection day 1 early report: The signs are all clear that the latest Ryan Reynolds-Hugh Jackman starrer Deadpool and Wolverine is off to a flying start at the Indian box office, recording the best figures for a Hollywood film released this year. According to early estimates by trade tracker Sacnilk, the Marvel superhero film is expected to take an opening of over Rs 20 crore all-India nett.

The figures in the north of Rs 20 crore will make Deadpool and Wolverine the biggest Hollywood opener of the year after Godzilla x Kong, which netted Rs 12.60 crore earlier this year. According to industry tracker Sacnilk, the superhero film has already clocked over Rs 12 crore. The film opened to be glowing reviews across the world and is expected to be the movie which will make Marvel bounce back after the Avengers slump. Armed with terrific word of mouth, Deadpool and Wolverine is likely to break some recent Hollywood records in India.

When it comes to the top advance booking for Hollywood films in national chains, Deadpool and Wolverine was already in the top 10 with a sale of 2.13 lakh tickets, ahead of films like Christopher Nolan's Oppenheimer, Captain Marvel, Black Panther 2 and Mission Impossible

7. In terms of the opening, the film will place itself in top six of all time in the country, if it manages to nett over Rs 20 crore. The top opening day for Hollywood films in India is led by Avengers Endgame (Rs 53.10 crore), Avatar The Way of Water (Rs 40 crore), Spiderman No Way Home (Rs 32.67 crore), Avengers Infinity War (Rs 31.30 crore) and Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (Rs 28.35 crore). The solid opening of Deadpool and Wolverine has set the film for a bigger weekend, with virtually no competition at sight. The Indian spectacle Kalki 2898 AD, led by Prabhas and Deepika Padukone, is in its last leg, while the Vicky Kaushal-Triptii Dimri starrer Bad Newz is the one that will be impacted severely by the Hollywood biggie, as both are multiplex-friendly films.

Earlier this year, Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire entered the Rs 100 crore club in India, finding a place in the top 15 biggest Hollywood earners of all time in the country. Deadpool and Wolverine is likely to cross Rs 70 crore mark in the first weekend itself and maintain a good run till big films arrive on the Independence Day weekend. Directed by Shawn Levy (Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb, Free Guy fame), the film features Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman as Deadpool and Wolverine, respectively, alongside Emma Corrin, and Matthew Macfadyen.

Riddhima Kapoor answers how Kapoor family dealt with Rishi Kapoor, Rajiv Kapoor's deaths: 'We became closer, more united'

Riddhima Kapoor Sahani reflected on the tough phase the Kapoor family faced a few years ago as they dealt with the losses of family members — while her father Rishi Kapoor died in April 2020, uncle Rajiv Kapoor passed away in February 2021. Earlier, Riddhima's aunt Ritu Nanda died of cancer in January 2021. Riddhima, who will be seen making her debut in Netflix's Fabulous Lives Of Bollywood Wives season 3, accepted that the years have been challenging but at the same time, the family united to face the harrowing circumstances. "We've got closer since then. A little bit more," she said in an interview with Anushka Arora. Riddhima is the elder sister of actor Ranbir Kapoor and daughter of Rishi and Neetu Kapoor.

She added, "We just look out for each other, so it's just brought the family very very close because a lot of people, a lot of family members have passed on. I am not talking about my immediate family, I am talking about even the extended family. You know, all of us have become closer and more united. We call each other up every other day, we are on FaceTime, we don't have to meet every other day, or every single day, but at least we know what is happening with each other, so definitely it has brought us very very close."

Earlier, Ranbir had also spoken about Rishi's death ahead of his film, Animal's release. "I lost my father in the



last few years and I think everyone who loses a parent, they always feel they never spent enough time with them. While I was growing up, my father was very busy. He was shooting most of the time, that too, double shifts-triple shifts. He was travelling everywhere so there was not a really friendly relationship between us. We couldn't just sit and chat, and I really have that one regret in my life. I wish I could be friends with my father. I wish I could share more with him, which is one regret I always live with. I respected him but we were never friendly. But I'm glad I have a daughter to love. When God takes away something, he also gives something back," Ranbir said.

Soundarya Rajinikanth wins hearts by sharing pictures of Rajinikanth turning 'Superhero Thatha'



Imagine going to school on a regular Friday, opening up your books, finishing your homework at the last minute before the teacher walks in, and bam! One of the biggest superstars of Indian cinema unassumingly walks in wearing a black t-shirt and a white pyjama. It was this sight that greeted kids of a private school in Chennai when Rajinikanth walked into the class to drop his reluctant grandson.

Filmmaker Soundarya Rajinikanth shared photos of her father Rajinikanth and her son, and wrote, "My son didn't want to go to school this morning... and SUPERHERO THATHA dearest took him to school himself. You are the best in EVERY ROLE you play on and off screen my darling appa. #BestGrandfather #BestFather #JustTheBest." While the first picture featured Rajinikanth smiling at his grandson who had no interest in going to school, the second photo had him walking into the classroom among extremely excited students.

Social media was abuzz with many netizens enquir-

ing about the school to enroll their own kids, and a few others sharing how the students would have been equal parts surprised and blessed to have seen Rajinikanth in their classroom. Many highlighted the reaction of one young girl in the background, and said it reflected the response many would have if they meet Rajinikanth out of the blue.

Sonam Kapoor dines with Sunil Mittal's daughter Eiesha in London

Mumbai: Actress Sonam Kapoor shared pictures of her dinner date with Eiesha Bharti Pasricha, daughter of business tycoon Sunil Bharti Mittal, in London. Sonam reshared Eiesha Bharti Pasricha's Instagram story, showcasing a glimpse of a sophisticated evening.

The dining location's lush interiors and intimate setting added to the evening's allure. The actress also shared pictures of exquisite delicacies laid out on the table. Sonam has been in London for the past few days with her son Yayu and sister Rhea Kapoor, who has been sharing lovely pictures from their vacation. The actress's husband, businessman Anand Ahuja, owns a big house in London, and she divides her time between Mumbai, Delhi, and London. Sonam's friend in London, Eiesha Bharti Pasricha, is a well-known lifestyle investor. Eiesha has invested in several brands and she is married to Shyam Pasricha, an Indian-born entrepreneur in London.

Rajeev Khandelwal recalls casting couch experience during which he was serenaded with a song, sent away with icy warning

Actor Rajeev Khandelwal opened up about a casting couch experience that he had, and recalled the details of the interaction. He said that the film producer in question bragged about having recently delivered a Rs 100 crore hit, and proceeded to serenade him with a song. When Rajeev walked out of the meeting having turned down his advances, he was given an icy warning.

In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, when the topic of his casting couch experience was raised, Rajeev said, "I didn't create a scene or anything, but I as good as gave him a middle-finger and left." Asked if the person in question was a popular figure, Rajeev said, "Yes. He'd just given a Rs 100 crore film recently. He said this to me. He said, 'I've just delivered a 100-crore hit, you're saying no to me?'"

Recalling the harrowing experience, Rajeev continued, "He wouldn't show me a script, but insisted on singing a song for me. Imagine the situation. You're sitting across somebody who is telling you, 'I was told you're a drop-dead gorgeous man, but I don't see it. But there's something very masculine about you'. I got the hint. He asked if I wanted to do his film, but I told him I needed to see a script first. He said, 'I don't give my scripts to anybody, but I like you, so I'll sing a song for you'." Rajeev said that he patiently listened while the person sang. "He said, 'Look into my eyes while I sing', and I wondered if I'm on MTV Bakra," Rajeev said, and mentioned that the



person actually sang well. "When he was done, he asked me again if I was doing the film, and I repeated that I would need to see a script. He got up, showed me the door, and walked me to my car, and said, 'I was going to sign you for a two-film deal, let me see where you reach in life.'"

Rajeev said that shortly afterwards, he starred in his breakout movie Aamir, and even invited this person to the premiere with a message that read, "It's not a 100-crore film, it's a small film, would love to have you there." The person didn't show up, Rajeev said, adding that he was recently attempting to 'revive' an old project, but isn't 'very active' these days.

Mahesh Bhatt says he walked out of Ghulam after Aamir Khan asked if he can dedicate his life to movie: 'I said no'



Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt is always full of stories. One such is about the phase in his career where he felt he was done with directing and was convinced movies were not that big for him to dedicate his entire life to it. This was the time he chose to walk out of Ghulam, headlined by superstar Aamir Khan. The Vikram Bhatt-helmed blockbuster was initially supposed to be directed by Mahesh Bhatt. In a conversation with indianexpress.com, Bhatt recalls Aamir asking him if he could channel all his passion and dedicate his life to the making of Ghulam. Bhatt turned this down. "I choose to walk away from it. I told Aamir, I didn't think movies meant so much to me that I would dedicate my entire life to it. It doesn't mean so much to me and I'd be lying if I say otherwise," Bhatt says, adding that Aamir was "quite stunned" by his integrity. "I told him if there is one person who can give his life to it, it is Vikram Bhatt. When I saw Ghulam, I announced on stage that he made a better film than I could!" He adds: "That is the victory of a master... That he may give an unlit candle his flame, but when the flame becomes a radiant sun, you bask in that, it is wonderful."

When Indianexpress.com met the ace filmmaker, he was taking a quick break between camera setups. Alone in the room, Bhatt was keeping himself busy on the phone,

a device that has an amusing connection with his career, at least some part of it. "In the mid-90s, the desire to make movies started withering in me," Bhatt remembers. The veteran filmmaker, who dabbled in every genre throughout the late 80s and 90s, excelling at the box office and raking in critical acclaim, says he reached a stage in his career where he started to feel he was done with filmmaking. Bhatt had by then directed some landmark films of the era, including Arth, Saaranish, Daddy, Aashiqui, Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin, Zakhm, and Sadak. "I thought this is the same... is this what I want? I had seen back-to-back hits, received critical acclaim, had box office acclaim, and then it was the same nonsense of, 'First half is good, the second half is slow'. You listen to mediocre people sitting down and passing judgment. Then you think, how much more do you want it and why? So the desire started withering in me... that was the wasteland phase of my life," he tells indianexpress.com.

This was when Bhatt started trusting his aides, especially filmmaker Vikram Bhatt, to execute his "phone direction". Vikram's father Pravin Bhatt was the DOP on almost all of Bhatt's films since his 1974 debut Manzilein Aur Bhi Hain. Others have revealed how during this phase, Bhatt would call in with instructions on how to frame shots and get the job done. "Now, when I look back and wonder why I would leave everything and go, I think it is because I didn't feel the need to perform as a director. There was a younger, sharper mind, who could do far better and do justice to it. I trusted him (Vikram Bhatt) more with it. That's how he became a director when I started playing hooky and giving 'phone direction'," Bhatt reminisces about the phase where he almost went into auto-pilot mode. Mahesh Bhatt and Vikram Bhatt have reunited for the new Disney Plus Hotstar film Bloody Ishq. Starring Avika Gor and Vardhan Puri, the film is written by Mahesh Bhatt and directed by Vikram Bhatt.

Khel Khel Mein song Hauli Hauli: 'Pure Nostalgia', say netizens as Akshay Kumar and Fardeen Khan recreate 'Heyy Baby' hook step



Khel Khel Mein song? No! An ode to Heyy Baby, say netizens. Almost two decades later, Akshay Kumar and Fardeen Khan will finally share the screen in the multi-starrer film Khel Khel Mein, directed by Mudassar Aziz. While the film revolves around three couples Akshay Kumar-Vaani Kapoor, Ammy Virk-Taapsee Pannu, and Aditya Seal-Pragya Jaiswal, actor Fardeen Khan, who recently made his acting comeback after 14 years in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Heeramandi, has an important role to play.

On Friday, the makers of Khel Khel Mein released their first track, much before the film's trailer, titled Hauli Hauli. The Punjabi song, penned and composed by Guru Randhawa, is also crooned by the singer-composer along with Yo Yo Honey Singh and Neha Kakkar. While the peppy song seemed like a part of a wedding celebration, more than the co-stars' chemistry what caught people's

attention is Fardeen Khan's entry mid-song and recreating the iconic step from Heyy Baby with Akshay Kumar. Soon after the song was uploaded on T-Series YouTube channel, fans flooded the comments section by expressing their love for singer-rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh. Meanwhile, others noticed the Heyy Baby touch to the song and expressed happiness. A user wrote, "Heyy baby step nostalgia hits after watching Akshay and Fardeen." Another user commented, "Akshay and Fardeen vibing to iconic Heyy Baby hook step." Fardeen Khan, who marked his debut in films in 1998, went MIA after his 2010 film Dulha Mil Gaya. After making his OTT debut with the web series Heeramandi, Khel Kheli Mein will be Fardeen's first film after 14 years. The comedy-drama is all set to hit the theatres on Independence Day. The movie will clash with Rajkumar Rao and Shradha Kapoor-starrer Stree 2.

