

INDIAN CHRONICLE

31 July, 2024 | Wednesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:146 Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

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AI-powered personalised learning labs launched in 24 government schools

Hyderabad: The Cognizant Foundation, in collaboration with Educational Initiatives (Ei) and State government, launched 'Ei Mindspark,' an artificial intelligence-enabled personalized and adaptive learning tool, across 24 government schools.

The Cognizant Mindspark Labs integrates pedagogy, teacher instruction, and a learning management system to assess and develop customized learning paths for children with an aim to address learning gaps identified in students, improve their foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and enhance overall educational outcomes.

PM Modi congratulates Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh for bronze medal win



GNS News Agency, July 30

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Indian shooters, Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh for clinching bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at Paris Olympics 2024.

Prime Minister on 'X' wrote, "Our shooters continue to make us proud! Congratulations to @realmanubhaker and Sarabjot Singh for winning the Bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the #Olympics. Both of them have shown great skills and teamwork. India is incredibly delighted." Meanwhile, Manu Bhaker also etched her name into the annals of Indian sports history, becoming the first Indian woman to win multiple medals at a single Olympic Games. This achievement follows her earlier success, where she secured a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol event, marking a significant milestone for Indian shooting.

Gadwal MLA set to return to BRS, meets KTR



GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: Gadwal MLA B Krishna Mohan Reddy who had recently switched over to Congress has decided to return back to the BRS party. In a significant development on Tuesday, the MLA called on BRS working president K T Rama Rao in the Assembly to express his resolve to return back to the party fold. The MLA who will be formally returning to the BRS will also be meeting BRS chief K Chandrasekhara Rao shortly. This development comes within a month of his defection to the Congress, in presence of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. After the MLA's ghar wapsi the number of defected MLAs from BRS to Congress will drop to single digit. The decision by Gadwal MLA is considered to be set back to Congress, which in a phased manner have begun poaching MLAs, particularly after Revanth affirmed that the party has 'opened gates' for defections from other parties.

Telangana Assembly sets record with 16-hour Budget discussion till 2 am

GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Legislative Assembly set a record of sorts with a marathon session of more than 16 hours on Monday. The discussion on the annual State Budget, which began at 10 am on Monday, went on till 2.15 am on Tuesday. After the State formation, this is said to be the longest working day for the State Assembly with the previous one lasting for more than 10 hours during the previous BRS regime. Leaders from both the ruling and opposition parties took turns to represent their parties in the Assembly throughout the day. On the first day of voting on Demands for Grants for 2024-25, the Assembly discussed and passed about 19 demands tabled by the Chief Minister and five other Ministers.

Two more gates lifted at Srisailem

Hyderabad: The Srisailem project continued to receive a big inflow of flood waters for the fifth consecutive day on Tuesday. Over 2.25 lakh cusecs of flood water is being discharged from the project by opening two more gates in addition to the three gates that were already kept open to manage the outflows. The flood levels in Krishna were being monitored closely as the present storage had touched 203 TMC as against the gross storage capacity of 215 TMC. The reservoir level reached 882 feet (close to the FRL of 885 feet). This situation is crucial for Nagarjuna Sagar, a downstream project which will benefit from its outflows. Present storage in Nagarjuna Sagar has touched 141 TMC as against the Gross storage capacity of 312 TMC. The reservoir level is at 514 feet as against the FRL of 590.

Senior medical faculty criticise Telangana health dept for ignoring in general transfers

Hyderabad: Senior faculty of state-run medical colleges posted in peripheral regions of Telangana State continue to protest for being ignored in the recently held general transfers in the health department.

While a majority of senior faculty from teaching hospitals in Hyderabad, including Superintendents who were discharging their duties for a long time in the State's Capital have been transferred to the districts, the senior faculty from peripheral medical colleges, however, did not get an opportunity to take part in the counselling process of general transfers.

PM at CII Post-Budget Conference: Global investors looking at India, don't miss this 'golden chance'

GNS News Agency, July 30

Mr. Modi said investors from across the world are keenly looking at India and the domestic industry must rise and seize this 'golden chance' to play its role in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Addressing the conference titled 'Journey Towards Viksit Bharat', he said, the Modi government does not lack political will and will take all decisions keeping in mind 'nation first approach'.



India is growing at 8% and the day is not far when the country will become the third largest economy globally from the current fifth position, he said. The

prime minister exuded confidence that this feat of becoming the third largest economy will be achieved in his ongoing third term. He also recalled various measures announced in the Budget, especially for promoting the MSME sector which creates crores of jobs. "Today, the whole world is looking at India and you. The policies of the government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development. Investors across the world are keen to come to India. World leaders are filled with positivity for India. This is the golden chance for the Indian industry and we should not lose this opportunity," Mr. Modi said.

Justice Madan Bhim Rao Lokur Appointed as New Chairman of power inquiry commission



GNS News Agency, July 30

In a significant development, Justice Madan Bhim Rao Lokur has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Electricity Inquiry Commission in Telangana. This appointment comes as part of an order issued by the Supreme Court, following a petition filed by former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) challenging the

formation and impartiality of the previous chairman, Justice Narasimha Reddy. Justice Lokur, who has an esteemed legal career that includes serving as the Chief Justice of the High Court and later as a Judge of the Supreme Court in the Commonwealth of Nations, now takes on the responsibility of leading the inquiry commission. The commission was established by the Revanth Reddy government to investigate decisions made by the previous government regarding the purchase of electricity.

The Supreme Court bench, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, directed the change of the commission's chairman while refraining from addressing KCR's request to nullify the notification for the commission's establishment. Following these developments, Justice Narasimha Reddy has submitted his resignation from the chairmanship position through his lawyer. The new commission under Justice Lokur aims to conduct a thorough inquiry into the controversial electricity procurement decisions, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process.

TMC to move motion on 'conspiracy to divide Bengal' in Assembly on August 5

GNS News Agency, July 30

Kolkata: The Trinamool Congress will move a special motion to condemn the alleged ongoing "conspiracies to divide West Bengal" on the floor of the Assembly on August 5, which will be the last day of the Monsoon Session. State Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Sovande Chattopadhyay, said the decision to move the motion was taken at a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee in the Assembly on Tuesday. "The BJP seems confused and divided on this issue. While one group is for the division of Bengal, the other group is against it. So we are bringing this motion so that the BJP legislators can participate in the debate on it and express their views," Chattopadhyay said. The decision to move the motion on this issue comes a day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during her address in the House on Monday said that the Trinamool Congress will resist all attempts to divide West Bengal.

Her comments came in the wake of a recent observation made by a BJP Lok Sabha member from Jharkhand, Nishikant Dubey demanding formation of a new Union Territory through the bifurcation of certain districts of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, which was seconded by BJP legislator from Murshidabad Assembly constituency Gouri Sankar Ghosh. It is learnt that the Chief Minister will be present in the Assembly on August 5 when the motion is moved and discussions sought. Party insiders said that with the Chief Minister being present in the House on that



day, it is natural that she will be the principal speaker on behalf of the Treasury Benches. Although the BJP's Chief Whip in West Bengal Assembly, Shankar Ghosh, described the proposed motion as a move to create political controversy over the issue, the party's legislators will still participate in the debate so that their views can be highlighted and recorded. Meanwhile, speaking on the decision by the BJP to move a No Confidence Motion against the Speaker on Monday, Chattopadhyay said that anyone has the right to do that. "However, there is a procedure for submitting that motion," Chattopadhyay said, referring to the development that instead of moving it on the floor of the House, the BJP MLAs submitted the proposal on the No Confidence Motion to the office of Assembly Secretary Sukumar Roy.

Wayanad landslide toll touches 106; CM Vijayan describes it as worst disaster to hit Kerala

GNS News Agency, July 30

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday described the Wayanad landslide disaster as one of the worst-ever witnessed in the state as the death toll touched 106 and 98 missing, is expected to go higher with many injured, buried or missing. The worst affected areas include Churalpara, Velarimala, Mundakayil and Pothukalu and the locals from these areas who managed to escape are shattered as hundreds of homes have been totally destroyed. "The figure of the dead is not the final one as rescue operations are continuing. Till now 34 bodies have been identified and 18 have been handed over to relatives. The rescue operations will stop after dark. As many as 128 people have been injured and a few areas have been completely washed away as there were heavy rains in the affected areas for the last few days," said CM Vijayan. "It's a tragedy which one cannot ever think of. Just imagine these people, including children, went to sleep last night and

tragedy struck and many were swept away by nature's fury. "In Malappuram District 16 bodies were found floating in the Chaliyar River. Dismembered body parts have also been taken out of the river. "A team led by a Lieutenant Colonel has rescued people trapped in the Mundakayil market area using a ropeway which the Army set up," added CM Vijayan. "The first landslide occurred at 2 A.M. and then again at 4.10 A.M. The road connecting Mundakayil to Churalpara has been washed away. The river which was flowing in the affected area has branched out and is flowing in two directions, flooding homes," said Vijayan. "There will be more people trapped in the area and a massive rescue effort is presently on, in which numerous agencies including the three Defence forces, NDRF, the fire department and the police are doing their best and it will continue," added Vijayan. "After the tragedy struck, I received calls from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister .

Revanth Reddy launches second phase of crop loan waiver scheme in Assembly



GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: The second phase of the crop loan waiver was launched by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy from the Assembly here on Tuesday, by transferring the waived amounts into bank accounts of farmers. Alleging that the previous BRS government waived farm loans barely to the tune of Rs.25,000 crore, Revanth Reddy said six lakh farmers would benefit from the second phase of the farm loan waiver scheme, for which Rs.6,198 crore was mobilized. Farm loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh were waived within a month while those up to Rs 2 lakh would be waived by August, he said. Claiming that no State in the country had so far waived farmers' loans on such a large scale, that too within one month, he said Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka had paid Rs 43,000 crore as interest on debts incurred by the previous government in six months and still managed to mobilize Rs.12,000 crores for the loan waiver within 12 days, he said.

Telangana DPH asks people not to believe in rumors on 'Norovirus' outbreak in Hyderabad's Old City

GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: Senior public health officials in Hyderabad have urged people, especially residents of Old City not to panic over reports of outbreak of Norovirus, a common and yet contagious virus that causes stomach flu also known as viral gastroenteritis with symptoms like vomiting, nausea and diarrhoea. Director of Public Health (DPH), Telangana State, Dr B Ravinder Nayak urged people not to get carried away or believe rumors about Norovirus and panic. "So far not a single person in Old City has tested positive for Norovirus, although the symptoms are similar. I urge families of Old City not to believe rumors that there is an outbreak and that this ailment is fatal," Dr Nayak said. The most common cause of viral gastroenteritis is by Rotovirus or Norovirus with similar symptoms among adults and children. The DPH pointed out that the months of monsoons are ideal for all kinds of such infections with bacterial and viral origin. "There are many bacterial and viral infections during monsoons that spread through close contact, consuming contaminated food or touching infected surfaces. All these ailments are treatable and people recover within three days. We were informed that some private hospitals in Old city reported Norovirus. However, all these are suspected cases and nobody is confirmed," says Dr Nayak. As a matter of precaution, for the past one week or so, the local District Medical and Health Officers (DMHO) have been conducting several health camps in parts of the old city. "People should realize that most of such infections are self-limiting, which means the illness runs its course of three days and the patient recovers," Dr Nayak pointed out.

UP Assembly passes amendment bill enhancing punishment under Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act

GNS News Agency, July 30

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly on July 30 passed the U.P. Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which provides for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment, making the law stricter in cases of fraudulent or forced conversion. Earlier the maximum punishment provided for those found guilty of marrying a woman by deceiving her and converting her religion was 10 years with a fine of ₹50,000. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna introduced the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the House on July 29. It has been proposed that if a person threatens, attacks, marries or promises to marry or conspires for it, or traffics a woman, minor or anyone with the intention of conversion, then his crime will be placed in the most serious category. In such cases, there is a provision of 20 years imprisonment or life imprisonment. Under the amended provisions, any person can register an FIR in conversion cases. Earlier, to give information or a complaint, the presence of the victim, her parents, or siblings was necessary. It has been proposed that such cases will not be heard by any court below the Sessions Court and along with this, the bail plea will not be considered without giving an opportunity to the public prosecutor.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A tragedy in Delhi

THERE is a sense of desperation about the action taken by authorities following the shocking death of three students, who drowned in the flooded basement of a coaching centre in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar on Saturday. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has terminated the services of a junior engineer and suspended an assistant engineer, besides carrying out an anti-encroachment drive and sealing the premises of several illegal coaching centres in the area. Ironically, it was just six months ago that the Union Ministry of Education had come up with a set of guidelines for the regulation of coaching centres across the country. The guidelines encompass key aspects, including infrastructure prerequisites, such as fire safety codes, building safety codes and other standards. Are various states and UTs taking these norms seriously? As per 2022 estimates, the coaching industry in India is a huge money-spinner — it is worth Rs 58,000 crore and projected to reach Rs 1.3 lakh crore by 2028. It is not uncommon for operators to make compromises to cut down costs. In the Rajya Sabha, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said coaching centres had become no less than gas chambers. The AAP government in Delhi is accusing the Centre-nominated L-G of turning a blind eye to the city's mess and the BJP is returning the compliment. Perhaps, then it's time to ask the 'What if' question. What if these children were your own, or those of an influential politician? Would the inquiry have unfolded differently and different lessons be learnt? The thought of how these three young people — Shreya Yadav from UP, Tanya Soni from Telangana and Nevin Dalvin from Kerala — could drown in the heart of a congested city is horrifying.

Starting September, Kala Ghoda streets to become pedestrian-only during weekends

GNS News Agency, July 30

COME SEPTEMBER, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is eyeing to make the internal streets at Kala Ghoda 'pedestrian-only', restricting vehicular movement, during the weekends. While the plan seeks to subsequently 'pedestrianise' the lanes and bar vehicles permanently, senior civic officials said the project will be implemented on a trial-basis during the weekends in a bid to gauge public response and familiarise visitors with the concept.

According to BMC officials, the civil work on the beautification plans is also slated to commence after the monsoon. Home to popular eateries, shops, art galleries and iconic structures, including the Rhythm House, Kala Ghoda is a crucial art precinct in the city.

It gains the moniker of 'Kala Ghoda' from the granite 'The Prince of Wales Equestrian' statue, situated along the Mahatma Gandhi road, which once formed the beating heart of the lively area until it was relocated inside the Byculla zoo in 1965. Donated by Jewish businessman Sir Albert Sassoon to commemorate King Edward VII's visit to Bombay in 1875, the statue had been designed by London-based sculptor Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm. Earlier this year, the civic body had charted plans to beautify five internal roads in the art precinct and pave them with cobblestones in a bid to make the Kala Ghoda pathways 'pedestrian-only'. Starting from the Rhythm House, five internal streets, including Forbes Street, Rope Walk lane, Saibaba road, Rutherford Street and B Bharucha road, have been earmarked for the project. In what will make the swathes exclusive to walkers, vehicles will not be allowed to ply on these streets upon the execution of the project.

Now, setting the ball rolling on the proposal, the internal streets of the art precinct are slated to become 'pedestrian-only' on Saturdays and Sundays, starting September 1. "Initially, when we begin in September, the streets will be made 'pedestrian only' during the weekends. The idea is to understand the public reaction, see their response and understand the issues. Besides this, we also want to familiarise people with the concept before making the streets exclusive to pedestrians throughout the week. Currently, pedestrians can park their vehicles in the existing parking space and explore the area on Saturdays and Sundays," an official associated with the project told. Meanwhile, senior officials added that the civil work on the beautification project will commence from October, following the withdrawal of the monsoon.

"Earlier, the idea was to introduce the concept in July. However, the plan had to be postponed owing to the monsoon. Likewise, the beautification project had also been stalled owing to multiple reasons like elections, followed by the monsoon etc. Since no civil work is executed during the monsoon months, we will commence work in October," the official said. Having already appointed Urban Design & Architecture Initiative (UDAI) as the urban designers for the project, the consultants have chalked plans to upgrade the existing internal roads with cobble pathways, to make them more pedestrian friendly. Furthermore, the project also entails landscaping works as well as wall painting and illumination works in three pockets.

Senior officials from A ward confirmed that the contractor who will execute the designs has also been finalised. At present, a major chunk of the existing streets are occupied by vehicles that belong to business owners and people working in and around the area. To address the issue, the civic body is developing plans for alternative parking spaces for the legally parked vehicles.

With the project enabling pedestrians to freely access and explore the heritage structures in the area, the civic body is aiming to develop the space as an art avenue where events are organised round the year, and not just during the Kala Ghoda art festival. For the record, Mumbai is not alien to the idea of a pedestrian-only Kala Ghoda. It was in 2016 that the civic body had rolled out a similar project in the precinct on Sundays when the roads were closed for vehicular traffic from 9 am to 7 pm. During this period, 21 box spaces were rented out to artistes to showcase their talent. However, the plan fizzled out as it drew lukewarm response from the public.

Sudha Murty of Infosys to be conferred with Lokmanya Tilak National Award



GNS News Agency, July 30

Infosys co-founder Sudha MurthySudha Murty, co-founder of Infosys Foundation, has significantly contributed to various social sectors. After running into a political controversy last year when the prestigious award was conferred upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lokmanya Tilak National Award this year has been announced for social activist, writer and Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty. Last year, the award stirred up a controversy when it was given to PM Modi by the trust which has Congress leaders as trustees. The award, presented by Lokmanya Tilak Smarak Trust, recognises Murty's contribution in rural development, literature and social work. Trustees of Tilak Smarak Trust selected Murty unanimously, highlighting that her efforts aligned with Lokmanya Tilak's principles of 'swadeshi' and human development.

Rohit Tilak, one of the trustees, announced the

award on Saturday. The ceremony will be held on August 1, the 104th death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak, at Maharashtra Sadan in New Delhi. Sharad Pawar, president of the Nationalist Congress Party (S-P), Congress MP Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj and former Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala will be present on the occasion. This year marks the 42nd presentation of Lokmanya Tilak National Award, which includes a memento and a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh. Since 1983, the Lokmanya Tilak National Award has been conferred on individuals for their selfless services to the nation. Socialist SM Joshi was the first recipient of this award. Many renowned personalities across several fields have been honoured with this award which includes PM Modi, former PMs Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, scientist G Madhavan Nair, industrialists Baba Kalyani, Rahul Bajaj, Cyrus Poonawala, social workers Vikas and Prakash Amte who received the award last year. Sudha Murty, co-founder of Infosys Foundation, has significantly contributed to various social sectors. She has been instrumental in rural development, literature, and social work. Murty was born on August 19, 1950, in Shigaon, Karnataka. She is married to NR Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys. Sudha holds a BE in Electrical Engineering, a gold medalist and a PG in Computer Science from Indian Institute of Science. She began her career as an engineer, becoming the first woman to work for Tata Motors. Her notable social initiatives include establishing libraries in Karnataka schools, creating the Murty Classical Library of India at Harvard University, and constructing around 10,000 toilets in rural Karnataka.

Bharuch reports first suspected Chandipura virus death

GNS News Agency, July 30

After Bharuch recently recorded two suspected cases of Chandipura Viral Encephalitis (CHPV) at Ghanikhut village, the district on Friday reported the death of a patient who had shown symptoms of the virus. The deceased, a 4-year-old boy from Khareta village in Netrang taluka, died at the GMERS Medical College in Vadodara's Gotri. Bharuch District Health Officer Dr J S Dhulera said, "The tribal boy was suffering from high-grade fever, convulsion and was in a semi-conscious state. He was initially taken to the Netrang community health centre on Wednesday, from where he was shifted to the Rajpipla Civil hospital on Friday. Later in the day, he was shifted to GMERS hospital, where he breathed his last in the evening."

Blood sample of the boy has been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune and the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar for testing. Earlier, samples of the two other patients, both minors, with suspected CHPV, had been sent for testing. "Of three samples sent to GBRC and NIV, the report of the first suspected patient, a four-year-old boy from Ghanikhut village, turned up to be negative on Friday. The reports of the other two samples are awaited," Dhulera said. Health department officials, meanwhile, visited the deceased's house at Khareta village on Friday evening.



"We have cleaned the village and also held an awareness campaign in the village about symptoms of Chandipura virus. The sarpanches of villages have been told to immediately contact the district health authorities if they come across any patient suffering from high-grade fever, convulsions and vomiting," Dhulera said. Speaking to The Indian Express, Bharuch Collector Dr Tushar Sumera said, "...We have instructed an entomologist to visit both Khareta and Ghanikhut villages to carry out an inspection." This was after health department officials from Bharuch met Sumera on Friday to request him that an entomologist from Bharuch Agriculture University should visit Ghanikhut and Khareta villages.

State treasury has no money, says Sharad Pawar on Ladki Bahin scheme even as Ajit puts a brave face



GNS News Agency, July 30

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Saturday the state treasury has no money even as Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who also holds the finance and planning portfolio, said money will never be a problem to implement the Mahayuti government's ambitious Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme. "The state treasury has no money... It is possible that one or two instalments will be given before the Assembly elections to turn public opinion in their favour," said Sharad Pawar while talking at a book release at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on Saturday.

Sharad Pawar's jibe comes at a time when his estranged nephew is rejecting reports about his department's negative note to implement the Ladki Bahin scheme, citing financial burden. "Some media outlets are spreading news about the finance department's opposi-

tion to the Chief Minister 'Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme. Such news is baseless, inconsistent with facts, and politically motivated. The media should stop spreading such news," he said. Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme was presented in the Maharashtra Budget for the fiscal 2024-25. Ajit Pawar clarified that the announcement of this scheme was made in the state's budget only after obtaining approval from finance and planning, all concerned departments, and the state cabinet.

"In the current financial year, the entire amount of ₹35,000 crores required for the scheme has been provisioned in this year's budget. Thus, the question of where the money will come from for this scheme does not arise," said Ajit Pawar adding that a financially prosperous state like Maharashtra can spend such an amount. His uncle and veteran politician however said people feel that the money allotted for this scheme will be given only before the election. "There is also a discussion on why such scheme was not launched by the government before," he said. Maharashtra will go to the assembly polls in coming two to three months. The announcement of these sops is seen as an attempt by the ruling coalition government to appease women voters by transferring Rs 1,500 per month into their bank accounts. Sharad Pawar also said in a bid to bring out a result like Lok Sabha elections, where the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi won 31 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra, the alliance must be seen on ground. "Failing to do so, the present ruling side may lose but we won't be able to hand them a defeat as sounding as the Lok Sabha elections," he said.

20-year-old Navi Mumbai woman killed, her body found in bushes near railway station

GNS News Agency, July 30

A 20-year-old woman was stabbed to death by an unknown person in Navi Mumbai's Uran and her remains were found dumped inside the bushes near the railway station late on Friday. The police suspect that her jilted lover, who is currently on the run, has murdered her. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Yashshri Shinde who lived with her family in Uran. She worked in a company in Belapur. An officer said, "The woman had gone missing on Thursday morning after leaving home for the office." When the family members could not get in touch with her, they started looking for her and when they failed, they reported a missing complaint at the Uran police station late on Thursday. While the search was on, the police said they received a call at 2am on Saturday informing them that a dead body of a woman was found in the bushes near the railway station.

A team was sent to the spot and subsequently, the remains were rushed to the hospital. "The woman was identified by her family at the hospital following which a

case of murder was registered," said an officer from the Uran police station. Speaking with the media persons, Shinde's father Surendra Kumar said that a person identified as Dawood Shaikh killed his daughter. The police said that the murder could be a case of a one-sided love affair gone wrong. A senior police officer said, "The body has not been chopped into pieces but we have found multiple stab injuries on her stomach and back. We have registered a case of murder and if medical reports reveal that she was raped before being killed, we will add appropriate sections to the FIR." The Uran police said that seven teams have been formed to locate the suspect and the crime branch is conducting a parallel investigation. During the course of investigation, the police have learnt that the woman who had gone to work, had worked only for half a day. "We suspect that the incident of murder took place at around 3.30 or 4pm on Thursday. We are checking CCTV footage to ascertain the facts," said Deputy Commissioner of police Vivek Pansare. "We have got the location of the suspect and have dispatched a team to trace him," an officer added.

Woman posing as IAS officer held for illegal money lending



GNS News Agency, July 30

Pune city police have arrested a woman for allegedly posing as an IAS officer and conducting an illegal money lending business. Police have identified the accused as Renuka Ishwar Karnure (32), resident of Siddhivinayak Society in Wadki. A 31-year-old woman, who is also a resident of Wadki, lodged the first information report (FIR) in this case at Loni Kalbhori police station.

Police said the complainant is a housewife, while the accused residing in her neighbourhood is a UPSC aspirant, but falsely claimed she was an IAS officer. The FIR stated that her WhatsApp profile picture was the Indian national emblem with "IAS" mentioned on it. According to the FIR, the complainant took loans from the accused every now and then since February 2022, which added up to Rs 2.58 lakh with a 10 per cent rate of interest per month. The complainant has till now returned Rs 8,08,650 to the accused. However, the accused allegedly demanded an additional amount of Rs 4,55,598 from the complainant and threatened to kill her husband if the money was not paid, the FIR stated. The FIR also mentioned that the accused claimed to be an IAS officer and warned she will move the entire system if the complainant failed to give the money. Police booked the accused under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 205 (posing as a public servant with fraudulent intent), 352 (Offence of insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), 351 (1) (Criminal Intimidation) and sections of the Maharashtra Money Lending (Regulation) Act.

Senior police inspector Shashikant Chavan said the accused Renuka Karnure is married and her husband works in the transport business. Police said that she claimed to be a UPSC aspirant, but a probe was launched to find out if she cheated people by posing as an IAS officer. Police produced her before the court of judicial magistrate (first class) Y D Koinkar on Saturday and sought her custody for five days to investigate the case further. Assistant public prosecutor Yogesh Kadam said custodial interrogation of the accused was required to probe her financial transactions, phone call details and seize the money she had allegedly taken from the complainant. The court remanded her to police custody till July 29.

Former Tamil Nadu BJP MP Master Mathan dead

GNS News Agency, July 30

former Tamil Nadu BJP MP dies Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was pained by the demise of Master Mathan. BJP leader and former Nilgiris MP, M Master Mathan passed away on Friday and the party hailed his contributions for the betterment of the society and upliftment of the marginalised people. He was 91 years old and passed away on the night of July 26 at his Coimbatore residence due to age-related ailments, his family said. A noted leader of the backward Badaga community, who are natives of the Nilgiris district, Mathan is survived by wife, two sons and a daughter. He was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1998 from the Nilgiris constituency and reelected in 1999 from the same segment. A former Tamil Nadu BJP vice-president, he has served as a member of Parliamentary committees including one on agriculture. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was pained by the demise of Master Mathan.

In a post on X, Modi said: "He will be remembered for his efforts to serve society and work for the downtrodden. He also played a commendable role in strengthening our party in Tamil Nadu. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti." BJP president J P Nadda said: "Deeply saddened to learn about the passing of former BJP MP Thiru Master Mathan Ji. He dedicated his life to the betterment of society and the upliftment of the underprivileged. His contributions to strengthening the party's roots and ideology in Tamil Nadu will always be remembered. His demise is an irreparable loss to the party. My deepest condolences go out to his family and supporters. Om Shanti." Conveying his condolences to Master Mathan's family and friends, Tamil Nadu BJP President K Annamalai said his passing is a big loss to the party. Mathan worked hard and he was a model for the young people, he said.

Telangana CM assures Metro connectivity to Old City by 2029

GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy vowed to complete the Hyderabad Metro Rail (HMR) connectivity to the Old City within the next four years. He said the State government had proposed to float a joint venture company in association with the Centre to fund the HMR Phase-II expansion for a stretch of 78 km, to benefit a larger section of the city population.

Participating in the discussion on the State budget in the Assembly on Saturday, Revanth Reddy stated that the proposals for the HMR expansion have been already submitted to the union government. Under the joint venture, the State government proposed to bear 35 per cent of expenditure and urged the Centre to provide 15 per cent of funds. Of the remaining, 45 per cent would be pooled through loan and another five per cent would be contributed through PPP (public-private partnership) model. "Soon after coming to power, we have changed the Phase-II expansion designs and routes proposed by the previous BRS government. The foundation stone has been laid at Chandrayangutta and tenders have been invited for a 33 km stretch to provide Airport connectivity.

Haryana Police Housing Corporation to deploy integrated system of drones, IoT sensors at construction sites



GNS News Agency, July 30

The Haryana Police Housing Corporation (HPHC) is all set to deploy an integrated system of drones, IoT (Internet of Things) sensors, and real-time data analytics for continuous oversight of construction sites across the state, enabling timely interventions and informed decision-making. IoT sensors are electronic chipsets or modules that sense the ambient or system conditions and transmit that data to the Internet through a gateway. Projects undertaken by the HPHC including the construction of 2,000 new houses, a high-security jail in Rohtak, and the Kalpana Chawla Government Medical College Phase-II will use these technologies to do away with the requirement of any physical inspection.

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) O P Singh, who recently took over as the managing director

of the HPHC, said, "This comprehensive plan is required to enhance project efficiency and transparency through the adoption of advanced remote monitoring technologies. This tech-driven approach will facilitate remote monitoring of multiple sites, reducing the need for frequent physical inspections and enhancing the overall management of construction activities."

"These technologies are of utmost importance in today's time to minimise delays, for optimising resource use, and maintaining high standards of quality and safety. This tech-driven approach will facilitate remote monitoring of multiple sites, reducing the need for frequent physical inspections and enhancing the overall management of construction activities. For instance, if the chief minister requires to see progress of a specific construction site, he does not need to ask any officer or any department; he can simply monitor or review the progress with the click of a button through this technology," Singh told The Indian Express. In his inaugural address to the engineers of the HPHC, ADGP Singh laid out a forward-thinking agenda focused on the incorporation of green building practices and the utilisation of advanced technology for project monitoring.

"Embracing green building practices is not just an option; it is our responsibility. These new technology initiatives will include the use of energy-efficient materials, implementation of rainwater harvesting systems, and incorporation of renewable energy sources to reduce the carbon footprint of police infrastructure. Recent projects, such as the Haryana Renewable Energy Development Agency (HAREDA) building in Panchkula, which received a five-star GRIHA rating, and the State Vigilance Bureau building recognised by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), serve as a testament to HPHC's dedication to green construction," ADGP Singh said. During his address to HPHC's engineers, ADGP Singh said, "Our objective is to ensure that every project is executed with precision, accountability, and within the stipulated time frame."

Women, if they are to speak up, often stand to lose out due to inherent hierarchy in academia, says researcher Gita Chadha



GNS News Agency, July 30

The inherent hierarchy in academia is such that women often stand to lose out if they are to speak up - lose out on progress they have made in their field of research, support from their mentors, and even their entire careers, she indicated. The inherent hierarchy in academia is such that women often stand to lose out if they are to speak up - lose out on progress they have made in their field of research, support from their mentors, and even their entire careers, she indicated. Many women in science shun the feminist label and prefer being called a biologist and not a feminist biologist, in an effort to preserve the apolitical appearances of science, said Professor Gita Chadha, the Obaid Siddiqi Chair in the History and Culture of Science Archives at the National Centre of Biological Sciences, here on Friday. "Visibilising all contributions of women, whether those women are feminists or not, is a feminist act," Prof Chadha said in a lecture titled 'STEMinism and Feminism, Archiving Women in Science' held at the Banga-

lore International Centre.

The inherent hierarchy in academia is such that women often stand to lose out if they are to speak up - lose out on progress they have made in their field of research, support from their mentors, and even their entire careers, she indicated. Prof Chadha has conducted extensive research on women in science and through her interviews of several men and women in science has tried to understand the culture in and around science. According to her, the narrative around women in science or the lack of women in science earlier looked at the dual role of women. "How do disciplines get gendered?" she asked.

She said the gendering of sciences like Biology, Psychology and Sociology as soft or feminine as opposed to the more macho Physics and Mathematics has led to the formation of a glass ceiling in science disciplines. "Science has always been gendered - from the 'Virtuvian Man' by Da Vinci to early scientists who only studied the female reproductive organs and never the brain," Prof Chadha said. In her lecture Prof Chadha also spoke about other themes she has noticed around gender, science and their intersectionality, including sexual harassment at workplace. Citing the #MeToo movement, she asks, "Why were men in science not called out? Are they not harassers?" Prof. Chadha mentioned toxicity at workplace based on the experiences of her interviewees. Women, if assertive, become unlikeable and as a consequence women in STEM have had to devise ways in which they come off as "suggestive, not instructive." Prof. Gita Chadha has worked previously at the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai, and her expertise lies in the areas of science studies, visual cultures and pedagogy.

'Road Pothole Attention': Bengaluru gets a new app for reporting potholes

GNS News Agency, July 30

In a bid to streamline road maintenance and ensure timely repairs, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar, along with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), on Saturday launched the 'Road Pothole Attention' mobile application. This app utilises advanced technology to accurately identify and repair potholes across Bengaluru's extensive road network, promising transparency and efficiency. Shivakumar last week had claimed that 96 per cent of the road potholes in Bengaluru have been fixed.

He was replying to a question by Jayanagar MLA CK Ramamurthy on the initiatives undertaken under the Brand Bengaluru project during the ongoing assembly session. In his response, Shivakumar stated that from April 1 to June 30, 16,202 road potholes in BBMP limits were identified out of which 15,686 (96 per cent) potholes have been fixed and 516 of them are yet to be repaired. Bengaluru boasts a road network of about 12,878 km, with 1,344.84 km comprising arterial and sub-arterial roads and 11,533.16 km consisting of zonal roads. These roads often suffer damages due to the installation of various utilities, including BESCO cables, water supply and drainage pipes, GAIL gas lines, KPTCL high-capacity cables, and OFC cables, leading to frequent pothole formations. The new application employs GPS technology to map all roads under the jurisdiction of the civic body. It accurately identifies potholes by their latitude and longitude, records their dimensions, and generates specific orders for their repair. This system is designed to make the entire process of pothole identification and repair transparent, allowing for effective monitoring of repair costs by the concerned authorities. For the fiscal year 2024-25, the corporation has allocated Rs 15 lakh per



ward, amounting to a total of Rs 33.75 crore for 225 wards.

The 'Road Pothole Attention' app is not only accessible to the BBMP officials and Bangalore Traffic Police Department officials but also to the general public. BBMP officials said that this inclusive approach ensures that anyone can report potholes, enhancing the efficiency of the repair process. Users can download the 'Raste Gundi Gamana' or 'Road Pothole Attention' application on their mobile devices. The app is available in Kannada and English, allowing users to select their preferred language. Users can then enter their mobile number and receive a One-Time Password (OTP) via SMS to register. The app automatically displays the user's current location and users can then describe the issue and submit a complaint to receive a docket number. The information is then sent to the relevant authorities, who are required to address the complaint within a stipulated time frame. Users can also monitor the status of their complaints through the app. The application, available for Android devices, requires a one-time login and can be downloaded from the Google Play Store.

Renaming Ramanagara district to utilise 'Brand Bengaluru' for development: Karnataka Deputy CM

GNS News Agency, July 30

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday said the government's decision to rename Ramanagara district as 'Bengaluru South' was to utilise the brand of the capital city to give a new direction to next generation and bring development to the region. Noting that the government was not changing the name of the district headquarter town Ramanagara, he said only that of the district will be changed, which comprises four Taluks - Ramanagara, Channapatna, Kanakapura and Magadi. "We are not touching Ramanagara (town). Bengaluru is our district. Those living in Ramanagara Taluk, Channapatna Taluk, Kanakapura Taluk and Magadi Taluk are our people. Ours is Bengaluru, not Ramanagara," Shivakumar, who is Kanakapura Congress MLA, told reporters here. The Karnataka cabinet on Friday approved changing the name of Ramanagara as Bengaluru South district. "Today Bengaluru is famous worldwide. Why should we spoil the name given by our forefathers?" Shivakumar pointed out.

The Deputy CM insisted that Ramanagara will remain the headquarters of the proposed Bengaluru South district. Explaining the reason behind the change of name, he said, "We are thinking about our next generation to give them a new direction, good thoughts, new ideas and their development." On Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy's statements against the decision, Shivakumar said Kumaraswamy's politics revolved around wishing for his downfall. "He (Kumaraswamy) sleeps and gets up thinking of our down-



fall even though we do good to him. I am aware of his actions, behaviour, sentiments, conduct and thoughts. Kumaraswamy has slammed the state government's decision to rename Ramanagara as Bengaluru South. Kumaraswamy was the CM when Ramanagara district was carved out in August 2007 from four Taluks of Bengaluru. The Union Minister said, "Shivakumar was an MLA (of Kanakapura constituency) from the same district when the district was formed. Why didn't he protest in 2007 (when the name was changed). It was done unanimously and no one protested in the Vidhana Soudha." Responding to remarks of Kumaraswamy that the name of the district will be changed again when the Congress loses in the next election, Shivakumar said, "It's not in his destiny. Congress will return to power in 2028."

Karnataka CID probes role of gold company in laundering over Rs 1 crore of Income Tax refund

GNS News Agency, July 30

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Karnataka Police is investigating the role of a gold company and its officials in the alleged laundering of Income Tax Refunds (ITR) that were illegally diverted to the accounts of a serial ITR fund fraud offender. The CID is probing the role of the Attica gold company after Rs 1.41 crore of Income Tax Refunds of a Bengaluru family were diverted to a Dharwad bank account by a serial offender identified as Dilip Rajegowda, 34, and used to purchase gold in the 2022-2023 period. The case pertains to a 2023 cybercrime complaint filed by Bengaluru resident Tom Mathew who alleged that his brother Timmy Joseph - who authorised his Chartered Accountant to file Income Tax Returns on December 30, 2022 - found out in March 2023 that an IT Refund amount of Rs 65.91 lakh was diverted to a bank account that did not belong to his brother.

The complaint also alleged that Tom Mathew's father Joseph Thomas was also similarly cheated when a Rs 75.92 lakh IT Refund on IT Returns filed through the same CA in the 2022-23 period was found to have been diverted to a bank account that did not belong to his father. The CID cybercrime unit that began the probe into the ITR fraud case in 2023 soon after the complaint about the financial loss of Rs 1.41 crore was registered, arrested suspect Dilip Rajegowda on April 28, 2023, by following the trail of a Dharwad account where the stolen ITR funds were deposited. The probe found that the main accused, Dilip Rajegowda, purchased gold jewels in the form of gold bars, coins, and ornaments by using the stolen ITR funds and later converted the gold into cash by selling the gold at the Dharwad branch of the Attica gold company.

The gold bought with the stolen funds is alleged to have been purchased by the firm on the basis of instructions issued by an official identified as Ismitha Jain. The CID has issued notices to the Attica gold company and Ismitha Jain to appear for questioning over the crime. A special court in Bengaluru granted anticipatory bail to Ismitha Jain on July 20 in the case. The main accused in the case, Dilip Rajegowda, who carried out the fraud is alleged to have laundered the stolen ITR fund through cryptocurrency and gold purchases. At least two similar offences were recorded against Dilip Rajegowda in the 2022-23 period. In one case, he is accused of creating a fake UCO Bank account in the name of Vinod Ganglany, and a Rs 77 lakh Income Tax Refund is alleged to have been illegally transferred to this account before being diverted to multiple other accounts. A case was registered



in 2022 with the Bengaluru North CEN police by Naresh Ganglany stating that his mother and brother sold joint properties at Sadashivanagar in March 2020 and applied for a tax refund of Rs 77 lakh each. While his mother received the Rs 77 lakh refund in September 2022, his brother did not receive the amount and it was later found to have been deposited in an unknown bank account with an address in Goa, and the funds were later siphoned to other accounts. The police investigation in the case led to the arrest in 2023 of Dilip Rajegowda who was already in the custody of the Bengaluru police for a fraud case registered by the Vijaynagar police. Rajegowda has been released in all the cases on bail.

Human Rights Forum objects to mandatory police permission, writes to DGP

GNS News Agency, July 30

Hyderabad: Objecting to the orders by Chikkadpally police mandating prior permission to conduct events at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, the Human Rights Forum (HRF) has written to the Director General of Police, Telangana, Dr. Jitender. The organisation called the move controversial and asked authorities to do away with the rule. Every year in October, HRF conducts a day-long seminar in memory of late human rights crusader K. Balagopal. When members went to make bookings this year, the auditorium management informed them that the Station House Officer of Chikkadpally station issued a letter to not allow booking without prior police permission.

Adhir Rajan Chowdhury writes to President, alleges Bengal in 'anarchic condition'

GNS News Agency, July 30

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Saturday wrote to President Droupadi Murmu, alleging that West Bengal is in an "anarchic condition" and sought her intervention to "restore law and order" in the state. Chowdhury, the president of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, referred to poll-related violence and alleged attacks on party workers during this year's general elections.

"I wish to seek your kind intervention in restoring civility and law and order in public life in West Bengal. For me, at a personal level, it is not only disturbing but also deeply anguishing to see the anarchic condition in the state owing to the ruthless approach of the ruling party on the workers, sympathisers, and supporters of the opposition," Chowdhury wrote in the two-page letter. As a result, many innocent persons have lost their lives, and have been jailed or taken into custody, he alleged.

"There are also several cases of people not affiliated to the ruling party and inclined favourably to the opposition parties in the state have lost their jobs or means of livelihood because of the strongarm tactics of ruling dispensation in the state," Chowdhury said. He also referred to the 'Sandeshkali incident' and clashes in Murshidabad district before the Lok Sabha elections and alleged that these were done "in order to polarise the voters." "While the Opposition party members and workers of all hues suffered immensely before the Lok Sabha Polls due to the 'terror' unleashed by the ruling party in West Bengal, what is of immediate and very deep concern, and that requires immediate attention is the continued post-poll violence and intimidation of the Opposition workers by the ruling party in West Bengal," he said. The senior Congress leader also referred to the killing of a party worker in Jalpaiguri last week and alleged that there is "absolutely no 'space' for the opposition in the state." "In effect, in the present times, it is 'definitely' a situation of undeclared emergency that is prevalent in the state, where exercising Fundamental Rights remains a fairy tale.

"Considering the facts of the situation prevalent in West Bengal, I would sincerely plead with you, as the Head of the Nation, to ensure justice to the people. Earnestly look ahead to your kind intervention in restoring order in West Bengal," he added.

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Ladki Bahin scheme announced after all approvals, asserts DY CM Pawar



GNS News Agency, July 30

Maharashtra to bear the expenditure. In a statement, Pawar, who holds the finance and planning portfolio in the Eknath Shinde government, said he introduced Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme in the supplementary budget of the state for the year 2024-25 after "approval of finance and planning, all concerned departments as well as the state cabinet." "The entire amount of Rs 35,000 crore required for the scheme in the current financial year has been provided in this year's budget itself. So, the question about where the money for the scheme will come from does not arise. It is possible for a financially prosperous state like Maharashtra to spend such amount," Pawar said. The state government is ready to spend this amount for economic independence, self-reliance, nutrition and all-round empowerment of mothers-sisters-daughters, to increase honour and self-respect, the NCP leader said. "There is no reason for anyone in this state to oppose the scheme. Reports of the finance department's opposition to the scheme, which have been published in some media outlets, are fanciful, inconsistent with facts, and politically motivated," the senior Nationalist Congress Party leader said. Under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, women in the 21-65 years age group with a family income of less than Rs 2.5 lakh will be given Rs 1,500 per month. While announcing the scheme in the budget, Pawar had said the scheme will entail an annual expenditure of Rs 46,000 crore.

Ajit Pawar Ladki bahin yojana The state government is ready to spend this amount for economic independence, self-reliance, nutrition and all-round empowerment of mothers-sisters-daughters, to increase honour and self-respect, the NCP leader said. The Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana was announced after the approval of the finance and planning as well as other concerned departments apart from the state cabinet, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said on Saturday. Amid criticism from the opposition about the financial burden on the exchequer due to the scheme, under which women will get monthly financial aid, Pawar asserted it was possible for a prosperous state like

West Bengal govt gears up to move motion against Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita in state Assembly

GNS News Agency, July 30

The Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government is preparing to move a new motion on the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita at the state legislative Assembly under Rule 169 on July 30, Tuesday, sources informed on Saturday. Earlier, during the monsoon session of the Assembly, the government introduced two motions under Rule 169 — one on the 2024 NEET UG paper leak scam and the other on the Indo-Bhutan water distribution.

A senior TMC leader said, "We are bringing in this motion on Tuesday because before starting the new criminal laws, the Central Government should give more time, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee feels. They (Centre) basically forced all the states. This is an anti-federalism attitude." According to sources in the TMC, the motion will urge the Central Government to take more time before implementing the three laws. "All states need more time before implementing such a huge Act," a source added. Banerjee has already constructed a committee to review the three new criminal laws — The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023, and The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 — which were implemented in the entire country on July 1. The committee will be headed by retired judge Ashim Kumar Roy. The committee has been constructed under the Home department of West Bengal. Banerjee has already written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last week of June asking him to postpone the implementation of the three new criminal laws. She also asked him to place the laws on the floor of the Parliament for "fresh deliberation and scrutiny". She had also urged PM Modi to "halt and review the whole subject anew". "I write to you with grave concern regarding the impending — implementation of three crucial laws, namely The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita



(BNS) 2023, The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) 2023, and The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023," the letter read.

However, on the construction of the committee, Governor C V Ananda Bose said, "West Bengal cannot be a state within a state or turned into a banana republic." A statement issued by the Raj Bhawan said, "Governor has called upon Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to furnish an immediate report on the objectives of the Committee for review of the amended CrPC, IPC and Evidence Act. Governor wants specific report on whether the West Bengal Govt. has responded to the proposal on time when asked for by the Govt of India." Reacting to the motion, a BJP leader said, "This government is acting like a separate country. They are not ready to obey any law of the Central Government. They are bringing in motion on those subjects which are not a state subject. Water distribution between two countries can never be the subject of a state. But they introduced a motion on water distribution with Bhutan which is an international subject and only two countries can solve it."

Stalemate in Bengali cinema: Directors threaten to boycott work as technicians remain absent in Rahoil Mukherjee's first-day shoot

GNS News Agency, July 30

Controversy over Bengali film director Rahoil Mukherjee escalated on Saturday, with technicians remaining absent on the first day of the shoot of his unnamed film in Tollygunge studio in Kolkata — an act which the film directors termed "insulting" to the entire Bengali film industry. Apart from Mukherjee, the actors in the project — Prosenjit Chatterjee, Anirban Bhattacharya, Aparajita Addy, among others — had turned up at the studio for the shoot. Miffed by the technicians' behaviour towards Mukherjee, who is facing a three-month ban by the Federation of Cine Technicians' Workers of Eastern India (FCTWEI), the directors too have threatened to boycott film shoots on Monday. Extending support to Mukherjee, film director and Trinamool Congress legislator Raj Chakraborty has said that "we directors have given two days' time to the Federation to reconsider their decision". Mukherjee courted controversy in connection with the filming of Bangladeshi series 'Lohu' using technicians from that country that went against the norms of FCTWEI. "Through a lot of hardship I am trying to make a film. I request everyone to allow me to shoot the film peacefully," Rahoil Mukherjee told reporters.

Raj Chakraborty termed the development an insult just to Rahoil but to all directors. "The Directors Guild allowed him to work. But his work was stopped. Technicians are like family to us. If technicians decide that they will not turn up if directors are on the floor, I will ask the Federation to take time and decide. We directors have given them two days to think... Can work continue if we directors remain absent?" he asked reporters. Saturday's development comes amid FCTWEI's clarification that Mukherjee can continue as creative producer of the film. Directors and actors from the industry, including Raj Chakraborty, Kaushik Gangopadhyay, and Arindam Sil reached the studio and held discussions with Mukherjee and expressed their dissent over the stand of the technicians.

The filmmaker planned to start shooting on Saturday as the directors in West Bengal under 'Directors Association of Eastern India (Film and TV)' in a statement extended support to Mukherjee "who could not be blamed" on the matter. Prosenjit Chatterjee who is part of the project also expressed dismay on coming to know that the shoot will not happen. "I have been suffering from a mental problem since the past nine days. We actors prepare at night and then act in the day. For the past nine days I am reading the scenes and then in the morning I am hearing the shoot will not happen. There should be love and respect towards each other. I have been work-



ing for 49 years. Let us create things with love," he told reporters. Dipak Adhikari, better known as Dev actor and also a Trinamool Congress MP said requested the media from to refrain from giving a political colour to this issue. "I want it to be resolved peacefully through dialogue with technicians. We want work to start soon," he said. Film director Kaushik Gangopadhyay who was also present on the spot, questioned the attitude of the technicians. "When the directors guild (Directors Association of Eastern India) has allowed him to shoot, why is this happening? This is so insulting to directors," he remarked. The production on Lohu, a show on Bangladesh's OTT platform Chorki, had to be suspended last year after FCTWEI alleged that Mukherjee had bypassed their regulation regarding foreign productions. However, Mukherjee continued the shoot with Bangladeshi technicians.

Woman, 22, held for 'killing' 9-day-old daughter; didn't want girl child, say police

A 22-year-old woman was arrested in West Delhi's Tikri Friday for allegedly killing her nine-day-old daughter, police said. During questioning, the woman confessed that she killed the infant because she did not wish to have a girl child, said Jimmy Chiram, DCP, Outer district. The murder came to light Thursday when the woman's husband filed a complaint against his wife to the police, reporting that he had come home from work to find his daughter's lifeless body. The couple had shifted to Delhi in 2019 with the husband's brother and mother. The father of the child works at a shoe factory in Bahadurgarh as a labourer and the couple has a two-year-old son.

West Bengal CM spoke her full time, mic was not switched off for her, says FM Sitharaman



GNS News Agency, July 30

The controversy erupted when Mamata walked out of the meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and claimed that she was unfairly stopped midway in her speech despite being the sole representative of the opposition. Soon after her claims, the Centre issued a rebuttal saying that her statement was "misleading".

Sitharaman, who was present in the meeting, in a post on X said, "She (Mamata) spoke her full time. The screen in front of our tables kept showing the time. A few other CMs spoke beyond their allotted time. On their own request, extra time was allowed without any fuss. Mikes were not switched off, not for anybody, particularly, not for CM, WB. Mamata ji has chosen to spread falsehood. I was happy she attended. "Was happier when she said she is speaking for Bengal and in fact for the entire opposition. I may agree or disagree with what she had to say.

But now with her saying baseless things outside, I can only conclude that she is making an effort to keep I.N.D.I alliance happy." Sitharaman said in response to a post by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh who backed Mamata's assertions and said the NITI Aayog "muzzles all divergent and dissenting viewpoints".

Earlier in the day, Mamata, said "I have come out and boycotted the meeting. (Andhra Pradesh CM) Chandababu Naidu spoke for 20 minutes. The chief ministers of Assam, Goa, and Chhattisgarh spoke for 10 to 12 minutes. But I was stopped 5 minutes into my speech. I said this is unfair. I am the only one from the opposition attending the meeting. I did it for the greater interest as I believe cooperative federalism should be strengthened." In support of Mamata, Jairam Ramesh in a social media post said, since it was established ten years ago, NITI Aayog has been an attached office of the PMO and has functioned as a drumbeater for the "non-biological" Prime Minister. "It has not advanced the cause of cooperative federalism in any manner. Its functioning has been blatantly ritsan, and it is anything but professional and independent. It muzzles all divergent and dissenting viewpoints, which are the very essence of an open democracy. Its meetings are a farce to be reckoned with. Its treatment of the West Bengal CM today, although typical of the NITI Aayog, is unacceptable." Ramesh said in a post on X. Chief Ministers of the Congress-ruled states and other INDI alliance partners boycotted the 9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

'Hit and run' speeches, personal attacks concerning, says V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar

GNS News Agency, July 30

While terming disruptions in the House an attack on the spirit of democracy, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said it was concerning that some members make their speeches and leave to give bytes to the media outside, without hearing out other MPs. Dhankhar, speaking at the orientation programme for newly-elected Rajya Sabha MPs at Parliament, said no topic was off limits for discussion, but the procedures must be followed. He expressed concern over some MPs adopting a "hit and run strategy". "You come, make a point, leave, don't listen to others, go and give a byte. There can be no greater divisive activity than this," he said.

He said it was not as per Parliamentary practice to ignore the point of view of others. He added that there was a growing tendency of MPs to make personal attacks instead of engaging on issues. Speaking about the frequent disruptions seen in the House, he said: "There can be no greater danger to democracy than imparting an impression that disturbance and disruption are political weapons to score political mileage at the cost of prestige of Parliament and the nation." He rejected allegations that he was biased towards any particular side, instead saying he was biased towards the Constitution and the law. Giving the example of the suspension of Aam Aadmi Party MP Raghav Chadha last year, Dhankhar



said Parliament was supreme when it comes to its procedure, though Chadha had moved court against the suspension. Chadha was suspended on August 11 for breach of privilege for not taking consent of some MPs before giving their names as members of a select committee. He moved the Supreme Court and the suspension was eventually revoked by the Rajya Sabha in December. "Parliament is supreme for its procedure, for its proceedings. Any proceeding in the House, in the Parliament is beyond review, either of the executive or any other authority... Mr Chadha was convicted, he was sentenced for a misconduct which I could not countenance because that was outrageous to the rules," Dhankhar said.

Kerala Governor says he welcomes court orders on staying formation of search committees for VCs

GNS News Agency, July 30

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, who had recently received a major setback in the wake of orders from the state High Court and the Supreme Court over various matters including those related to universities, on Saturday said he appreciated the orders and welcomed it. The Supreme Court had yesterday issued notice to Khan and the West Bengal Governor over the inordinate delay in granting assent to various Bills. The state High Court had recently in multiple orders stayed Khan's decision to constitute search committees for the appointment of Vice Chancellors to various universities in the state. Talking to the media here, Khan said anyone aggrieved by an executive order can approach a court anytime as it was a right enshrined in the Constitution. "I have already said, everybody has a right to feel aggrieved against any executive action and if you feel aggrieved, the constitution provides the remedy. You can always go to the court. That should be welcomed and appreciated. What is not acceptable is that you indulge in street violence.

"If somebody goes challenging the executive action and the court stays it, that means they were exercising their constitutional rights which we must respect," Khan said. He said let the matters be scrutinised by the court. "I am trying to have regular Vice Chancellors for the universities. There are people who are obstructing that process and don't want the universities to have regular VCs. As long as they use the legal option, there is no problem," Khan said. Let the court take a decision, he added. The High Court had on Friday stayed the formation of search committees for the Kerala Agricultural University and the Sree Narayana Guru Open University. The court had ear-



lier stayed the order of Khan forming search committees for Kerala University, Mahatma Gandhi University, Malayalam University and the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies. Khan had in June constituted search committees for the selection of vice-chancellors for six universities in the state and said that he was doing his duty but there was a willful omission on part of the university authorities despite reminders from his office. The government had moved against his action. According to separate notifications for the six universities, the Governor took the decision using his power as the chancellor conferred by the provisions of the University Act, and in compliance with the judgement of the Kerala High Court dated December 8, 2022. The committees were directed to make their recommendations within a period of three months from the date of the notification. The Governor's move came amidst an ongoing tussle between the Raj Bhavan and the Left government in Kerala over various matters related to the administration of universities in the state.

J&K Doda attack: Cops releases sketches of 3 terrorists, announce Rs 15 lakh reward



Jammu, Kashmir Police on Saturday released sketches of the three terrorists responsible for the recent killing of four soldiers, including a captain in Doda district, and announced a cash reward of Rs 15 lakh on their heads. Doda in Jammu region has been rocked by several terror incidents since June, which is

being seen by security agencies as an attempt by Pakistan-based terror handlers to revive terrorism in the hilly district. Releasing the sketches of three terrorists, a police spokesman in Doda said they are moving in the upper reaches of the district especially in Dassa forest where an army captain and three soldiers were killed in a gunfight during an anti-terror operation on July 16. J&K Police announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh on each of these three terrorists, the spokesperson said, appealing to the general public to provide information about them and assured that the identity of the informer will be kept a secret. Police shared over a dozen phone and mobile numbers, including that of senior police officers and control room for people to reach out. Besides the deadly encounter in Dassa forest, at least 10 security personnel have been injured in separate terror attacks at Chattergalla pass, Gandoh, Kastigarh, Ghadi Bagwah forest between June 12 and July 18. Three terrorists were killed in a day-long operation in the Gandoh area of the district on June 26.

30 dead in Israeli strike on school housing displaced people, Gaza officials say



GNS News Agency, July 30

At least 30 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike on a school that had been housing displaced people in Gaza on Saturday, Palestinian health officials said, while Israel's military said it had struck a Hamas command centre in the school complex. Fifteen children and eight women were among those killed in the strike on the school in the central town of Deir Al-Balah, the Hamas-run government media office said. The media office and the Gaza health ministry said more than 100 people were wounded. The Israeli military said in a statement it had targeted a "Hamas command and control centre inside the Khadija school compound in central Gaza".

The statement said the school was being used to launch attacks against troops and as a weapons cache and that it warned civilians before the strike. At Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, ambulances raced wounded Palestinians into the medical facility. Some of the wounded also arrived on foot, their clothes stained with blood. Reuters footage showed people returning to the site of the bombing to check on their belongings, and fires burning in the area. Walls were blasted and debris scattered in the schoolyard, where some cars were damaged.

Um Hasan Ali, a displaced woman living at the school, said it had only been a couple of months since she returned to Gaza from Egypt with her daughter who had been taken there for medical treatment, and now her daughter had been wounded in the strike and taken to hospital. Another woman, Ibtihal Ahmed, told Reuters she was sitting in a neighbour's tent when she heard heavy strikes. "I started running, my daughter was one place and I was at another, I saw people running towards the place that was struck. The people sheltering in Khadija school

are all wounded people, they are innocent and this should not happen to them," she said. In previous such strikes that have hit civilian infrastructure, Israel's military has blamed the militant Islamist group Hamas for putting civilians in harm's way, accusing it of operating within densely populated neighbourhoods, schools and hospitals as cover. Hamas denies this. KAHN YOUNIS FIGHTING Earlier on Saturday, Palestinian official media said that at least 14 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks since dawn in the southern city of Khan Younis and that their bodies were brought to Nasser Medical Complex.

The Israeli military told Palestinians to temporarily evacuate southern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis so it could "forcefully operate" there, telling them to relocate to a humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi, a military statement said. The military said its calls to evacuate were communicated to the population via several mediums to mitigate danger to civilians.

In Al-Bureij refugee camp, five Palestinians were killed earlier in an Israeli air strike on a house, while four others were killed in another strike on a house in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, medics said. UN and humanitarian officials accuse Israel of using disproportionate force in the war and of failing to ensure civilians have safe places to go, which it denies. On Friday the military said troops battled Palestinian fighters in Khan Younis, and destroyed tunnels and other infrastructure, as they sought to suppress small militant units that have continued to hit troops with mortar fire. The fighting, more than nine months after the start of Israel's invasion of Gaza following the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attack, underlined the difficulty the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) has in eliminating fighters of the group amid continued resistance. In Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, blamed the escalating Israeli attacks on the support of the United States. More than 39,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli strikes in the enclave since the war began, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not distinguish between fighters and non-combatants. Israeli officials estimate that some 14,000 fighters from militant groups including Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been killed or taken prisoner, out of a force they estimated to number more than 25,000 at the start of the war. Around 1,200 people were killed and 250 were taken hostage in the Oct. 7 raid on southern Israel, according to Israeli tallies.

First time in 68 years, an Olympic event is scheduled 16,000 kms from host city

GNS News Agency, July 30

For the first time in 68 years, an Olympic event is being held far away from the host city as a surfing event is scheduled to be conducted on French Polynesia Island. The location is 15,715 kilometres (9,765 miles) from Paris. Amid much fanfare, the 2024 Olympics Games were opened on Friday with the fashion capital of the world, Paris, as the host city.

Of note in this edition of the Summer Games is that, for the first time in 68 years, an Olympic event is being conducted as far as 15,715 kilometres (9,765 miles) from the host city. The 48 best surfers will take on the crests of the world's most terrifying waves off the coast of Teahupo'o, a small village on the French Polynesia island of Tahiti. Along with surfing, sailing events and football matches will be held, respectively, in Marseilles and Bordeaux -- away from Paris. While the two venues for sailing events and football matches are some hundreds of kilometres away from the host city, the surfing event will still be the farthest from the French capital. The last time the International Olympic Committee held the Games away from the host country was when Melbourne hosted the 1956 Games. The equestrian competition was conducted in Sweden's Stockholm, far away from the Trans-Tasmanian region. This was due to Australia's equine quarantine policies, which forced the IOC to slate the competition to an equine-friendly country. For the 2024 Summer Games, the Paris officials reportedly said that hosting the surfing event on Tahiti Island aligns with the intention of "spreading the Games across France." Tahiti, in the midst of the massive Pacific Ocean, won the host-



ing rights of surfing back in 2020, even before the sport made its debut in the Summer Games in Tokyo Olympics 2021. This year the sport will witness a first-of-its-kind floating Olympic village as a cruise ship with state-of-the-art amenities has been given as a venue to accommodate the Olympian surfers.

48 Surfers -- 24 men and 24 women -- will be divided into eight heats, with three surfers in each heat. In surfing, a "heat" is a competitive round in which surfers compete against each other to score the highest points for their wave riding. During a heat, surfers take turns catching waves within a set time frame, typically ranging from 20 to 30 minutes. Winners of the first round will reach the Round of 16 while the losers will contest in the head-to-head elimination round. The Round of 16 has eight heats with two surfers in each heat facing each other. The winners will march into quarterfinals, semis and then finals. However, the losers in the semis will take on each other to vie for the bronze medal.

Raid on suspected military training camp in South Africa, 95 Libyans arrested

GNS News Agency, July 30

South African police arrested 95 Libyan nationals in Mpumalanga province during a raid on a suspected secret military training camp. Investigations are ongoing to uncover potential additional illegal bases. South African police arrested 95 Libyan nationals in a raid on a suspected secret military training camp on Friday and authorities said they were investigating whether there were more illegal bases in other parts of the country. The camp was discovered at a farm in White River in the Mpumalanga province, about 360 kilometres (220 miles) northeast of Johannesburg, police said. National police spokesperson Athlenda Mathe said in a post on the social media site X that the Libyans stated they had entered the country on study visas to train as security guards, but police investigations suggest they have received military training.

The Newzroom Afrika TV news channel broadcast pictures of the site of the arrests, showing a military-style camp with large green and khaki tents set up in a row. Dozens of men were seen lining up as they were arrested. They were wearing civilian clothing. Local government official Jackie Macie said investigations were ongoing and the owner of the farm would be questioned. He said authorities received information that there were similar secret camps near two other towns in Mpumalanga province.

The province borders neighbouring countries Mozambique and Swaziland and is an area of concern for South African authorities with regards to illegal immigration. Police and authorities have not said whether the camps are suspected of being connected to a particular group or conflict. Macie said investigations would establish if there was a network of camps in South Africa and show "why they are here doing military training in our country." Police said the men may be linked to crimes reported in communities close to the farm in recent



months. "We have serious cases which have been opened with the police, including cases of rape and armed robberies, which complainants claim were committed by unknown foreigners who seem to be of Asian descent," said police spokesman Donald Mdhlu. "We take what we have found here today very seriously because we don't know who was training them, what they were being trained for and why that training is happening here in South Africa. It may be a threat not only to South Africa but also to the entire southern African region." Police said the operation to arrest the Libyans and close down the camp began two days ago. Macie said the Libyan nationals had been in the country since at least April. "The 95 individuals taken into custody are all Libyan nationals and are currently being questioned by the relevant authorities," Mpumalanga acting provincial police commissioner Maj. Gen. Zeph Mkhwanazi said in a statement. Mdhlu, the police spokesman, said the country's security regulator had confirmed that the kind of training that appears to have been taking place at the camp was well beyond the scope of training for security guards. The kind of equipment we found here shows that there was intense military training taking place here. This was basically a military base."

Typhoon Gaemi weakens into tropical storm after ripping through Taiwan, China



GNS News Agency, July 30

Tropical storm Gaemi has moved inland in China after making landfall at typhoon strength on the country's east coast on Thursday. In Taiwan, eight people died due to the storm. Tropical storm Gaemi brought rain to central China on Saturday as it moved inland after making landfall at typhoon strength on the country's east coast Thursday night. The storm felled trees, flooded streets and damaged crops in China but there were no reports of casualties or major damage. Eight people died in Taiwan, which Gaemi crossed at typhoon strength before heading over open waters to China. The worst loss of life, however, was in a country that Gaemi earlier passed by but didn't strike directly: the Philippines. A steadily climbing death toll has reached 34, authorities there said Friday. The typhoon exacerbated seasonal monsoon rains in the Southeast Asian country, causing landslides and severe flooding that stranded people on rooftops as waters rose around them. Gaemi weakened to a tropical storm since coming ashore Thursday evening in coastal Fujian province, but it is still expected to bring heavy rains in the coming days as it moves northwest to Jiangxi, Hubei and Henan provinces. About 85 hectares (210 acres) of crops were damaged in Fujian province and economic losses were estimated at 11.5 million yuan (\$1.6 million), according to Chinese media reports. More than 290,000

people were relocated because of the storm. Elsewhere in China, several days of heavy rains this week in Gansu province left one dead and three missing in the country's northwest, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Residents and business owners swept out mud and mopped up water Friday after serious flooding that sent cars and scooters floating down streets in parts of southern and central Taiwan. Some towns remained inundated with waist-deep water.

Eight people died, several of them struck by falling trees and one by a landslide hitting their house. More than 850 people were injured and one person was missing, the emergency operations center said. Visiting hard-hit Kaohsiung in the south Friday, President Lai Ching-te commended the city's efforts to improve flood control since a 2009 typhoon that brought a similar amount of rain and killed 681 people, Taiwan's Central News Agency reported. Lai announced that cash payments of \$20,000 New Taiwan Dollars (\$610) would be given to households in severely flooded areas. A cargo ship sank off the coast near Kaohsiung Harbor during the typhoon, and the captain's body was later pulled from the water, the Central News Agency said. A handful of other ships were beached by the storm. Philippines At least 34 people died in the Philippines, mostly because of flooding and landslides triggered by days of monsoon rains that intensified when the typhoon -- called Carina in the Philippines -- passed by the archipelago's east coast. The victims included 11 people in the Manila metro area, where widespread flooding trapped people on the roofs and upper floors of their houses, police said. Some drowned or were electrocuted in their flooded communities. Earlier in the week, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered authorities to speed up efforts in delivering food and other aid to isolated rural villages, saying people may not have eaten for days. The bodies of a pregnant woman and three children were dug out Wednesday after a landslide buried a shanty in the rural mountainside town of Agoncillo in Batangas province.

European Union transfers \$1.6 billion raised from frozen Russian assets to Ukraine



GNS News Agency, July 30

The European Union announced that it had transferred 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion), the first tranche of money generated from profits on frozen Russian assets, to support Ukraine. The European Union announced Friday it had made 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) available to support Ukraine, the first tranche of money generated from profits on frozen Russian assets.

In May, the EU's 27 member states reached an agreement to use the interest earned on some 210 billion euros (\$225 billion) in Russian central bank assets for military support for Ukraine and rebuilding efforts in the war-torn country. The money, most of which is held in Belgium, was frozen as part of sanctions packages in retaliation for Moscow's full-scale invasion. Brussels estimates that the interest on those assets could provide around 3 billion euros each year. "The EU stands with Ukraine. Today we transfer 1.5 billion euros in proceeds

from immobilised Russian assets to the defence and reconstruction of Ukraine. There is no better symbol or use for the Kremlin's money than to make Ukraine and all of Europe a safer place to live," European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement. The move comes days after Moscow announced it had recaptured two villages in Eastern Ukraine. A recent push by Kremlin forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made incremental gains and Kyiv is worried that without financial support, Russia may advance further. EU headquarters said that 90 per cent of the money would be put into a special fund known as the European Peace Facility that many EU countries already use to get reimbursed for arms and ammunition they send to Ukraine. The other 10% would be put into the EU budget. The programs that this money funds would help to bolster Ukraine's defense industry or to help with reconstruction, should some countries object to their share being used for military purposes.

JD Vance defends 'childless cat ladies' remark amid row, calls it 'sarcastic'

GNS News Agency, July 30

In an interview on The Megyn Kelly Show, JD Vance said his remark was aimed at the Democratic Party's alleged shift away from family-oriented values. Amid a huge backlash over his old 'childless cat ladies' remark against Democratic politicians, including Kamala Harris, Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance said it was a sarcastic comment. In an interview on The Megyn Kelly Show, Vance defended his remark and reaffirmed his belief that having children provides a different perspective on societal issues.

"Obviously, it was a sarcastic comment. I have got nothing against cats, I have got nothing against dogs. I have got one dog at home and I love him," Vance, who was recently announced as Donald Trump's running mate, said. "People are focusing so much on the sarcasm and not on the substance of what I actually said," he further said. In 2021, when he was running for the Senate, Vance questioned why some leading politicians did not have children and singled out Vice President Kamala Harris. In an interview with Fox News, Vance said those without offspring, especially "childless cat ladies", had no "direct stake" in the country. A clip of his interview started circulating again, prompting backlash and sexism charges. Kamala Harris has two stepchildren with her husband, Doug Emhoff.

'REMARKS AGAINST DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOR BECOMING ANTI-FAMILY' In 'The Megan Kelly Show', Vance, who has three children, said he was not criticising people who do not have children. "This is about criticising the Democratic Party for becoming anti-family and anti-children," he said. The Ohio Senator clarified his comments were aimed at the Democratic Party's alleged shift



"Obviously, it was a sarcastic comment. I have got nothing against cats, I have got nothing against dogs. I have got one dog at home and I love him," Vance, who was recently announced as Donald Trump's running mate, said.

away from family-oriented values. "What I was basically saying is that we were effectively run in this country - via the Democrats, via our corporate oligarchs - by a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives," Vance asserted. Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston, who has come out about her fertility struggles, was among those who criticised Vance over his comments. "I truly can't believe that this is coming from a potential VP of the United States," she said earlier this week. "Vance, I pray that your daughter is fortunate enough to bear children of her own one day. I hope she will not need to turn to IVF as a second option. Because you are trying to take that away from her, too," Aniston wrote on social media.

Crop insurance coverage declines in FY24 as four top insurers cut exposure



EMS News Agency, July 11

General insurance companies reduced their exposure to crop insurance under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) during FY24 despite the government's push to expand the insurance coverage in the farm sector. Gross direct premium underwritten by insurers declined by 4.17 per cent to Rs 30,677 crore during the fiscal as against Rs 32,011 crore in the previous year even as farmers faced crop losses due to floods, unseasonal rains and heatwaves.

The decline is mainly due to the 32 per cent fall in premium income underwritten by state-owned Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC) to Rs 9,890 crore during FY24 from Rs 14,619 crore a year ago, according to data released by the General Insurance Council. AIC is the leading crop insurer in the country. Four government-controlled insurers — AIC, New India Assurance, Oriental Insurance and SBI General — reduced their exposure to crop insurance in FY24. What's interesting is that AIC paid claims to the tune of Rs 12,353 crore under PMFBY during the year. State-owned Oriental Insurance Company also reduced its exposure to just Rs 8.94 crore in FY24 from Rs 1,752 crore a year ago. SBI General Insurance also reduced its exposure. New India Assurance Company, the largest insurer in the country, reported a negative premium underwritten at Rs 34.41 crore as against Rs 11.38 crore last year. "Four insurers controlled by the government directly or indirectly reported a decline in crop insurance coverage. The farm sector is a vital sector of the economy. Public sector entities should have been in the forefront of providing cover to the farmers who are facing the risk of losses due to floods, heatwaves and unseasonal rains," said an official of an insurance firm. FY24 was a nightmare for farmers as they faced crop losses due to a host of factors, leading to a rise in inflation levels.

However, general insurers overall reported a 19.5

per cent rise in premium income underwritten from Rs 17,391 crore a year ago to Rs 20,786 crore. As many as eight general insurers kept away from crop insurance during the year. The PMFBY scheme, which is currently integrated with multiple stakeholders on a single platform, has covered nearly 4 crore farmers with more than 50 different crops in FY24 under the insurance coverage. More than 55 per cent of the insured farmers in the year are under non-loanee farmer category and are majorly enrolled through CSCs (common service centres) as a channel partner wherein the channel has registered an impressive 4 crore farmer applications, with 2.5 crore and 1.5 crore enrolments in Kharif and Rabi seasons, respectively. PMFBY provides a comprehensive insurance cover against failure of the crop, thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers and encourage them for adoption of innovative practices. The scheme is compulsory for loanee farmer obtaining crop loan or kisan credit card (KCC) account for notified crops. However, it's voluntary for other/ non-loanee farmers who have insurable interest in the insured crop. The maximum premium payable by the farmers will be 2 per cent for all Kharif food and oilseeds crops, 1.5 per cent for rabi food and oilseeds crops and 5 per cent for annual commercial or horticultural crops. To expand coverage of PMFBY, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare launched AIDE (App for Intermediary Enrolment), which allows intermediaries to enrol non-loanee farmers from Kharif 2023 onwards. This initiative successfully engaged insurance brokers and resulted in 71 per cent of farmer enrolments through Point of Salespersons (PoSPs), totalling 6.88 lakh farmer applications with more than 4.15 lakh hectares of area under insurance across 11 States and 12 insurers, the Ministry said in a note to the CEOs of insurance companies and broking firms, it said. "Utilising such extensive network of over 12 lakh PoSPs via insurance brokers offers a substantial opportunity to increase non-loanee farmer enrolments. This strategy significantly enhances the enrolment of non-loanee farmers while simultaneously expanding their access to a diverse range of retail insurance products," the Ministry said. As per the service level agreement (SLA), insurance intermediaries should provide enrolment services to non-loanee farmer through the AIDE (mobile and web platform) developed by Ministry of Agriculture. Following the successful submission of the application on AIDE and the issuance of an acknowledgment to the non-loanee farmer, the premium will be collected and remitted to the insurance companies in accordance with the timeline specified in the applicable operational guidelines of PMFBY and RWBCIS, as amended from time to time.

Central Asia, Vietnam new buzzing destinations on Indian tourist map

Social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube are brimming with posts from Indians travelling to Silk Road countries such as Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia, and Southeast Asia's latest tourism hotspot, Vietnam. Before the pandemic, these destinations largely attracted more discerning travellers from India. But now, with a combination of enhanced direct flight connectivity, swift and hassle-free visa regimes, and relatively more affordable prices than the conventional tourist destinations, these countries are drawing price-sensitive Indian travellers in droves. Consider this: Passenger traffic on direct flights from India to Azerbaijan in October-March (H2) 2023-24 (FY24) jumped by a whopping 750 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), while for Georgia, it shot up by nearly 200 per cent, as per The Indian Express's analysis of international air traffic data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The jump was around 115 per cent in the case of Uzbekistan, 108 per cent for Vietnam, and 70 per cent for Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, India's total outbound passenger traffic on international flights in H2 of FY24 grew 16.5 per cent y-o-y, the DGCA data shows. Besides simple visa rules and easy connectivity, these countries have an added allure: they cost nearly as much or only moderately higher than a holiday at a popular domestic destination. And Indian airlines are taking notice of the demand, increasing routes as well as frequency. In the case of countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, all of which were part of the erstwhile Soviet Union, the jump in traffic came on a low base and was largely due to the introduction of direct flights from India by the country's largest airline IndiGo in 2023. The airline felt that these markets were underserved and also saw an opportunity to stimulate demand further. Before IndiGo's flights to Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia, most of these markets were served from India by their respective state carriers, essentially making them monopoly routes. Central

Asia, Vietnam new buzzing destinations on Indian tourist map. The other option was to travel via a hub airport in a third country. While that would have served existing demand, it was unlikely to have significantly stimulated demand and grown the market. There is no publicly available official data on the number of travellers from India who flew to overseas destinations via a third country. All these countries have a sizable number of Indian students, mainly those pursuing medicine. This provides a base demand, which is now being augmented by rapidly growing leisure travel. IndiGo's entry, industry watchers say, has brought in competition on these routes, made fares competitive, and provided more options to passengers, which, along with other factors, have led to demand creation. IndiGo's announcement last month that it will run daily flights to Tashkent, Almaty and Tbilisi from August, instead of the earlier frequency of three to four a week, is being seen as a testament to the strong demand the airline is seeing in these markets. IndiGo is already operating a daily service to Azerbaijan's capital Baku. The fact that some of these destinations offer a near-European experience — at a fraction of the cost and without the hassle of obtaining a Schengen visa — while still being off the beaten path, adds to their allure. Indian passport holders currently do not require a visa for Kazakhstan for a stay of up to 14 days. For Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia, electronic visas (e-visas) can be obtained easily in under a week for reasonable prices without going through a third-party or a travel agent. In fact, in some cases, travelling to these countries might cost nearly as much or only moderately higher than a holiday at a popular domestic destination, thanks to costly domestic airfares, according to industry insiders. An opportunity to travel to another country by shelling out as much as one would for a holiday in Kerala, Ladakh or Goa is a hard-to-ignore value proposition for many travel bugs itching to take off.

Ola Electric to launch IPO next week, valuation seen at around \$4.4 billion

Ola Electric's IPO, a first for an Indian EV maker, is also one of India's biggest in a year where the country's equities markets have scaled multiple record highs and also overtaken Hong Kong to become the world's fourth-largest bourse. SoftBank-backed Ola Electric's IPO will open for retail subscription on Aug. 2, the Indian electric scooter maker said on Saturday, a stock offering that according to two sources will value the company between \$4.2 billion to \$4.4 billion.

The issue, which will open for institutional investors a day earlier on Thursday, will close for retail subscriptions on Aug. 6, the final IPO prospectus filing showed. Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal will offload 37.9 million shares in the IPO, around 20%



lower than estimated in the draft IPO prospectus. Ola's expected valuation is about 18.5% to 22% lower than in its last funding round in September, which was led by Singapore's investment firm Temasek and valued the country's largest e-scooter maker at \$5.4 billion.

"Some marquee investors are being offered the IPO at the lower end of the \$4.2 billion-\$4.4 billion valuation," said one of the sources with direct knowledge of IPO planning. Ola is planning the IPO at a lower valuation to ensure higher participation from investors bidding for the IPO shares, the two sources said. Ola Electric's IPO, a first for an Indian EV maker, is also one of India's biggest in a year where the country's equities markets have scaled multiple record highs and also overtaken Hong Kong to become the world's fourth-largest bourse.

Xiaomi is launching 5 new products in India on July iiFull list of launches, how to watch it live



Celebrating its 10th anniversary in India, Xiaomi is set to launch 5 new products in India, including a smartphone, power banks and earbuds. Xiaomi is celebrating its 10 years in India. Xiaomi first entered the Indian market in July 2014. Marking its decade-long presence, the company is hosting an event in Bengaluru on July 9. At the event, the company has confirmed that it will launch 5 new products, including a smartphone, a couple of power banks, earbuds, and more. Xiaomi India will unveil the 5G Star-Redmi 13 5G, the Redmi Buds 5C, Xiaomi Robot Vacuum Cleaner X10, and Xiaomi Pocket Power Bank 10000mAh and Xiaomi Power Bank 4i 10000mAh. The launch event will be livestreamed on YouTube and on the company's official Indian website.

In typical Xiaomi fashion, the company snuck in a little fun for its fans at the event. The company has announced that there will be hidden coupons on mi.com, which will make users eligible to win 10 products every day, and vouchers worth Rs 10 Crore. Coming back to the launches at the event on Tuesday, we already have a lot

of details here and there about the products that will be unveiled.

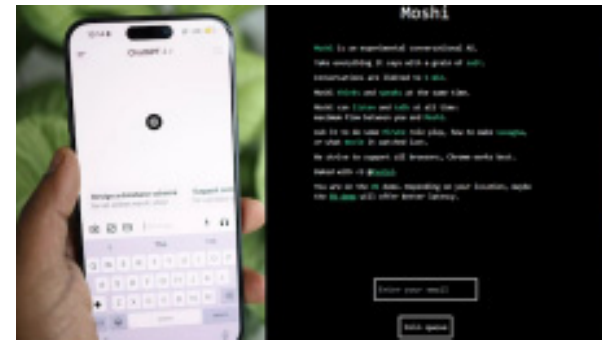
The Redmi 13 5G is confirmed to be powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 4 Gen 2 AE processor. The device will come with a dual-glass body and Crystal Glass Design. It will feature a 6.7-inch FHD+ display with a 120Hz AdaptiveSync refresh rate, making it a notable device in the sub-15K segment. Additionally, the phone includes a ring flash for convenient flash notifications for incoming calls and alarms. The Redmi 13 5G will be available in three colours: Hawaiian Blue, Orchid Pink, and Black Diamond. Redmi Buds 5C The Redmi Buds 5C are already confirmed to come with 40dB Hybrid Active Noise Cancellation, which effectively reduces ambient noise. They are equipped with 12.4mm Dynamic Titanium drivers. The earbuds have a Quad-Mic Setup with AI ENC. The Redmi Buds 5C will be available in three colours: Acoustic Black, Symphony Blue, and Bass White. Xiaomi Robot Vacuum Cleaner X10

After launching the Robot Vacuum Cleaner S10 at the Smarter Living event, Xiaomi is set to launch the RVC X10 in India. It features LDS Laser Navigation for precise mapping and navigation. With 4000Pa suction power, the RVC X10 will be able to effectively remove dirt and debris from various surfaces. The device includes an Automatic Cleaning Station with 17000Pa suction power for efficient dustbin emptying and a 2.5L disposable bag capable of storing up to 60 full cleaning sessions. The RVC X10 is powered by a 5200mAh battery, offering up to 180 minutes of continuous cleaning on a single charge. Xiaomi Power Bank 4i 22.5W Fast Charge & Pocket Power Bank 10,000mAh Xiaomi's new power banks, the Pocket Power Bank and the 4i 22.5W Fast Charge, combine functionality with aesthetics. Both models come with a 9-layer safety protection system, 22.5W rapid charging, Power Delivery, and Quick Charge 3.0.

ChatGPT gets new competitor, say hello to Moshi which can understand the tone of your voice

Moshi, an AI voice assistant developed by a French company, can understand the tone of your voice and answer your questions in real time. Just a couple of days back, OpenAI was making headlines for delaying ChatGPT's much-awaited voice mode. The company had said that it had to address technical issues and ensure a high standard of quality. This came as a disappointment of sorts to all those who had been looking forward to talking to the AI chatbot. However, what if we tell you that there is another chatbot in town which can not only talk to you, but understand your tone of voice as well? Say hello to Moshi, developed by a French AI company called Kyutai. Say hello to Moshi

Moshi is an AI voice assistant that is designed to offer lifelike conversations similar to Amazon's Alexa or Google Assistant, leveraging the powerful Helium 7B language model. The new chatbot stands out with its ability to speak in various accents and employs 70 different emotional and speaking styles. It can also understand the tone of your voice as you speak to it. Also, Moshi can handle two audio streams simultaneously, allowing it to listen and respond at the same time. The voice assistant's launch was streamed live recently and has been making headlines ever since. According to a report in Tech Radar, the development of Moshi involved an extensive fine-tuning process, utilising over 100,000 synthetic dialogues created through Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology. To enhance the chatbot's voice quality, Kyutai collaborated with a professional voice artist, ensuring that Moshi's responses sound natural and engaging. "This new type of technology makes it possible for the first time to communicate in a smooth, natural and expressive way with an AI," the company said in a statement according to Toms Guide. Available for use starting now You can try out Moshi for yourself starting now as a demo version is available. All you need to do is head over to us.moshi.chat and follow instructions. For now, you can talk to the AI voice assistant for a maximum of 5 minutes. Before you start interacting with Moshi, you will come across a message that reads, "Moshi is an experimental conversational AI. Take everything it says with a grain of salt. Conversations



are limited to 5 min. Moshi thinks and speaks at the same time. Moshi can listen and talk at all time: maximum flow between you and Moshi. Ask it to do some Pirate role play, how to make Lasagna, or what movie it watched last. We strive to support all browsers, Chrome works best. Baked with <3 @Kyutai. You are on the US demo. Depending on your location, maybe the EU demo will offer better latency."

What's next?

Kyutai is committed to making Moshi an open-source project. By sharing the model's code and framework, the company aims to encourage innovation and address ethical concerns surrounding AI development. This open-source strategy is backed by prominent supporters, including French billionaire Xavier Niel. Looking ahead, Kyutai plans to integrate advanced features into Moshi, such as AI audio identification, watermarking, and signature tracking systems. These additions will help ensure accountability and traceability for AI-generated audio, promoting transparency in AI technology. If Moshi gains traction, it could serve as a catalyst for other voice-enabled AI assistants and accelerate the adoption of large language models in existing systems like Alexa. The impressive capabilities showcased by Moshi suggest a promising future for voice AI technology.

Study shows ChatGPT fails to solve newer coding problems, cannot replace human programmers just yet

Ever since ChatGPT was unveiled in 2022, there has been a lot of talk about how the AI chatbot has the potential to replace human beings at some jobs. While some tech experts believe that the AI chatbot will take over some human jobs like coding, others have argued that the technology can never be as smart as humans and will just help them be better at their work. Some tech bigwigs have also said in the past that years from now, human programmers will not be needed at all as AI will take care of coding. But is that really the case? A recent study says not necessarily.

The research, published in the June issue of IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering, compared the code produced by ChatGPT with that written by human programmers, focusing on functionality, complexity, and security. The study found that ChatGPT's success rate in producing functional code varied widely. Depending on the task's difficulty, the programming language used, and other factors, the AI's success ranged from as low as 0.66 percent to as high as 89 percent. This wide range indicates that while ChatGPT can sometimes match or even surpass human programmers, it also has significant limitations.

Yutian Tang, a lecturer at the University of Glasgow involved in the study, noted that AI-based code generation could boost productivity and automate some software development tasks. However, it is crucial to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of these AI models. Tang emphasised the need for a comprehensive analysis to identify potential issues and improve AI-generated code techniques. To delve deeper into these limitations, the research team tested GPT-3.5's ability to solve 728 coding problems from the LeetCode platform across five programming languages: C, C++, Java, JavaScript, and Python. The study revealed that ChatGPT was fairly proficient at solving pre-2021 coding problems on LeetCode, achieving success rates of approximately 89 percent for easy problems, 71 percent for medium problems, and 40 percent for hard problems. However, the AI's performance declined significantly when dealing



with coding problems introduced after 2021. For example, ChatGPT's success rate for easy problems dropped from 89 percent to 52 percent. For hard problems, the success rate plummeted from 40 percent to a mere 0.66 percent. This suggests that ChatGPT struggles with newer coding problems, potentially due to its training data not including these more recent challenges.

Tang proposed a reasonable hypothesis for ChatGPT's varying performance. He suggested that the AI performs better with algorithm problems from before 2021 because these problems are more likely to be included in its training dataset.

As coding evolves, ChatGPT has not been exposed to new problems and solutions, lacking the critical thinking skills of a human programmer. This limitation means that while ChatGPT can effectively address problems it has previously encountered, it struggles with newer, unfamiliar issues.

The study's findings suggest that while AI models like ChatGPT hold promise for enhancing productivity and automating certain coding tasks, they are not yet a substitute for human programmers. The AI's inability to solve newer coding problems highlights the need for ongoing development and training to keep up with the ever-evolving field of software engineering.

'Kareena Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan's house has no separate food for staff, everyone eats together,' says Taimur's nurse Lalita DSilva



said about Saif and Kareena, "They are such simple people. The morning routine is such that the staff, and Kareena and Saif, we all eat the same food. There's no such thing that there will separate food for the staff. Same food and same quality." She added that on so many occasions, they would all eat together. "So many times we have all eaten together," she said.

In an earlier chat during Express Adda, Kareena had said the same thing and mentioned that it is the "rule of the house" that the kids' nannies sit with them and eat. "My boys' nannies are eating with them because that's just the way both Saif and I have addressed it, because Taimur has asked and Jeh is already asking, 'Why are you sitting there? Sit here,'" she said. Lalita also said that Saif is a fantastic cook and he would often cook when they went to Pataudi. "Saif sir likes to cook. He cooks very well. I don't have non-vegetarian food but he cooks very good Laal Maas. He also cooks very good spaghetti, pasta, Italian food," she said.

Lalita was also asked about her remuneration at the Khan household, and if she was actually paid Rs 2.5 lakh per month for her job. Lalita laughed it off and said, "Rs 2.5 lakh? I wish. Aapke mooh mein ghee shakkar. These are all rumours." She added that when these rumours started doing the rounds she would joke with Kareena if she was actually going to get paid this much, to which Kareena said, "These are all jokes sister. Don't take it all seriously."

Talking to a YouTube channel Hindi Rush, Lalita

Lalita said that Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor make sure that their house serves the same food to them and their staff members. Lalita said that Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor make sure that their house serves the same food to them and their staff members. Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan's son, Taimur, became an internet celebrity soon after he was born, and along with him, his nurse became instantly recognisable as well. Lalita DSilva recently shared in an interview that Kareena and Saif were generous employers. She also spoke about how their household functioned in an inclusive manner, where the staff was served the same food that was cooked for the actors. She also addressed rumours of her reported salary of Rs 2.5 lakh per month.

Samir Soni recalls his love story with Neelam, says a tarot card reader predicted their union: 'I don't know if she paid him'



tion to Neelam's photos in the papers, but they never really started talking.

"At her time, and she still is, one of the prettiest actresses. And my friends would say she is out of your league, don't even think about it," he said, and added that one and a half years later, he was at a Diwali party where Neelam was also present, and he finally told Ekta that he was attracted to her. "Ekta introduced us," he said. "I told Neelam I normally don't say this but I think you are very cute. Then I said I will call you and I left. I didn't even have her number. After this another year or so passed," he recalled.

Samir said that this happened a couple of times, and every time he would say the same thing. Ultimately, three years after she had first seen him, Samir called her. "I asked myself, why am I doing this? I should just talk to her. I called her but she didn't pick up. It was 3 am. Then next morning my ego kicked in and I texted her. 'You don't believe in returning calls,' and she texted back, 'How do I know it is you?'" Samir said that they were very clear that they were looking for a potential spouse in each other. "If we are together, we will marry, so that's how we looked at each other from the beginning," he said. The couple tied the knot in 2011, and are parents to a daughter, Ahana. Neelam is one of the celebrities on Netflix's Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives, and Samir also occasionally appears on the show with her.

When former actor Neelam saw actor Samir Soni for the first time, she called him "cute," and a year and a half later, when they spoke for the first time, he said the same thing to her. Neelam and Samir, who have now been married for 13 years, didn't actually start going out until three years after they first became attracted to each other. In a recent interview, Samir recalled how their love story first started and said that even a tarot card reader had hinted that Neelam would be the woman in his life. Talking to Ujjawal Tridevi on his YouTube channel, Samir said that he was attending with Mandira Bedi when Neelam saw him for the first time. She was there with her friend, producer Ekta Kapoor, and found him "cute." Ekta shared this with another friend and through the grapevine, Samir got to know about it. Neelam was one of the most popular actors of the 1980s and early 1990s and getting a compliment from her boosted his self-confidence. "I felt good, but that was it," he said.

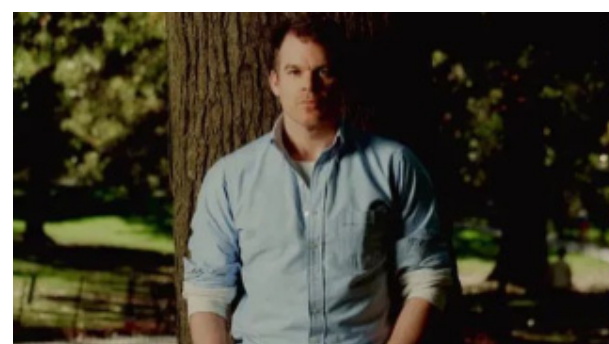
Samir said that soon after this, he met a tarot card reader who told him about a potential life partner, and it was as if he was describing Neelam. "I met someone who was a tarot card reader. I don't know if she paid him. That person told me that there will be a woman in my life whose name starts with an N and she would be working in jewellery," he said. At that moment, Samir had a fleeting thought about Neelam, but felt that this was "too much of a coincidence." After this, Samir started paying atten-

Michael C Hall returns to Dexter universe with Resurrection and Original Sin, says 'amazing' to be back

The OG Dexter is back, and he is ready to kill. Actor Michael C Hall is set to return to the Dexter universe with two new series in different capacities. He will be serving as a narrator on Dexter: Original Sin and is also set to star in Dexter: Resurrection.

Deadline reported that the announcement was made at Comic Con, where Hall was joined by actor Patrick Gibson, who plays the younger version of the former's character in the prequel series Dexter: Original Sin. The 90s-set series will premiere in December and follows Dexter (Gibson), a student refining his 'killer' skills with the help and support of his adoptive father Harry. Dexter: Resurrection is set in present day and is a follow up to the 2021 Dexter: New Blood. The show will arrive next summer. After receiving a standing ovation at Comic Con, Hall said he was having "flashbacks" of the first time he came to Comic-Con and was in the same hall. "That was ... 75 years ago?" he joked. The actor added, "It's amazing to still be alive. I cannot wait to watch this show. To a certain degree, I have a sense of what is coming. I've spent so much time with this character and to go back to have those sort of imaginative blanks filled in this technicolor show ... It's amazing."

The Showtime series followed Hall as Dexter Morgan, a forensic technician specialising in bloodstain pattern analysis, who leads a secret parallel life as a vigilante serial killer, hunting down murderers who have not



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been adequately punished by the justice system. Dexter first premiered in 2006 and continues to be a popular show, steadily gaining more popularity on streaming platform. Dexter: Resurrection will begin production in January.

Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor's fights traumatised Ranbir Kapoor to the point that he still cannot handle loud noises: 'I was always on the edge'



Ranbir Kapoor, who recently became a parent himself, reflected on his troubled relationship with his dad, Rishi Kapoor. While speaking highly of his late father, Ranbir also confessed that there was always a distance between them, and that Rishi never really expressed his love for him. In a recent interview, the Animal star recalled a time when his parents were going through a rough patch, and Ranbir would often sit on the staircase of their bungalow and listen to them fight. "I have never seen the colour of his eyes, I was extremely scared," said the actor.

In a recent interview with entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath on his YouTube channel, Ranbir Kapoor revealed how, despite hailing from a privileged background, he was never given an extra dollar when he was studying in the states. He also recalled how his father took away his car when he returned to India, because he wanted him to be grounded. When asked if his father did what he did for Ranbir's benefit or his own, the actor said, "I believe my father was a short-tempered man, but he was a good man. He was somebody who loved his family, work, food, and alcohol. He was a very open person. He could speak up his mind."

Expressing his fear for his father, Ranbir Kapoor confessed that he has never seen the colour of his eyes. "I always bowed down before him and said yes to everything he said. I was very scared." When Nikhil asked if his life mirrored what was shown in the film Animal, the actor clarified that in Animal his character was obsessed with his father, but in real life, he was rather scared of his dad. "He never shouted at us, never raised his hand at us, but just because around us his temperament was so volatile that it always scared me." Ranbir also recalled having to deal with his parents' troubled relationship on his own, because his sister had left home for further studies. "Anybody who speaks in a louder tone, it disturbs me, since

childhood." He explained his reason behind the same, and said, "My parents went through a lot of fights. We lived in a bungalow, so I have spent most of my childhood on the staircases, hearing them fight. I was always scared and on the edge."

He added, "I think they were both going through a rough patch. My sister wasn't around, so I kind of felt responsible. My mother used to talk about her feelings to me. But, my father wasn't that expressive. I never understood or heard his point of view." Ranbir also revealed how his parents eventually worked through their differences, and developed a warmth for each other when Rishi was diagnosed with cancer. "I saw the selfless service my mother was doing for him and that kind of love was something which I probably at that time couldn't have imagined," said Ranbir.

Asked if the culture of his dad's era influenced his behaviours, Ranbir said, "I think that generation of men are scared of vulnerability. He never even expressed his love to me. He could never hold my hand. He did hug me, but it had more of pat than a real hug. Maybe I am blaming... it's his generation, but I don't know. He was very distant. I knew he loved me a lot and cared for me a lot but there was a distance." Rishi Kapoor did regret not sharing a closer bond with Ranbir, he had once shared. In his biography, Khullam Khulla: Rishi Kapoor Uncensored, the actor wrote, "The distance that exists between us is similar to the one between my father and me. Ranbir and I see each other through this space but can't feel each other. At least, I can't. There are times when I feel I've missed out on being a friend to my son." In the book, Rishi Kapoor justified his strict attitude, and said "I was brought up to believe that's how father should be." Ranbir Kapoor is married to his Brahmastra Part One: Shiva co-star Alia Bhatt. The couple welcomed their daughter Raha in 2022.

Riddhima Kapoor says daughter Samara's presence on Instagram worries her because of the 'not so nice' comments:

Entrepreneur Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, who is the sister of actor Ranbir Kapoor, says her daughter Samara being active on Instagram often makes her watch out for her, as the teenage is vulnerable to vicious comments of trolls online. Riddhima said she has asked her daughter that if she wants to be on Instagram, she has to make her account private but the teenager refuses to do so as she wants to get more "followers".

"At times it worries me, because she is (active) a lot on social media, she posts pictures and videos of hers almost every day," Riddhima opened about her daughter in an interview with UK-based radio jockey Anushka Arora. "I told her that if she wants to be on Instagram, she needs to go private. But that's a challenge. I didn't want her to be on social media because of all the trolling and she is your typical 13-year-old. She tends to read comments and obviously it plays in the back of your mind when people write not-so-nice things about her. I told her she needs to go private or get off social media. But she says if she goes private, she won't get followers!"

As of now, Samara's Instagram account is private. Riddhima said her daughter is a "people's person" and



called her a "naughty, but obedient" child. "I try very hard to discipline her, but my husband spoils her! I do everything in my stride to get some discipline. At least I try. It is a different generation though," she added. In the same interview, Riddhima had revealed how she had attended Taylor Swift's concert with her in London and dubbed the mother-daughter duo as "certified Swifties".

Rajeev Khandelwal says Ekta Kapoor was 'upset' with him when he quit Kahiin To Hoga, Jeetendra told him he was 'making a mistake'

Rajeev Khandelwal became one of the country's most popular television actors thanks to Ekta Kapoor's Kahiin To Hoga, but after a few years on that show, he decided that it was time to move on. His decision was met with a lot of opposition, and even Ekta Kapoor, who was considered as the 'queen of fiction television' in those days, was quite upset with him. In a recent interview, Rajeev spoke about that phase, and said that most people around him discouraged him from exiting Kahiin To Hoga.

Talking to Siddharth Kannan on his YouTube channel, Rajeev recalled that he was told, "Pagal hai tu? Tu kisse pange le raha hai? (Are you mad? Who are you messing with)" These people were talking about Ekta, who was the most powerful television producer of the time. "It was Ekta, people said why are you messing with Balaji? They said buy a house, make more money," he recalled.

At this point, Rajeev wondered that the greed could become endless, but he wasn't really enjoying what he was doing, and that is what mattered to him. "I had bought

one house, and I felt that this greed would never end, and it is very, very important to actually enjoy that success because you feel that you deserve it," he said. When asked if Ekta was "upset" with him, Rajeev said, "Obviously." He continued, "The show was a success for the channel, for everyone, so it was valid that she was upset. It was very justified." Rajeev said that many people saw this as a "daring" move, but he was actually very "nervous" before taking the leap. Ekta's father, veteran actor Jeetendra, also spoke to Rajeev and told him that he was making a mistake. "Even Jeetu ji told me, 'You are making a mistake. Why are you doing it? You are not realising what you are doing,'" he said.

Rajeev said that he just wanted to prove that he wasn't the "product of just one show," and was curious to see if he could recreate the success outside of Balaji. "I was very inquisitive to see if I will be able to recreate it on my own. I wanted them to take this channel and this machinery away from me and take me on a smaller channel, which was SAB TV at the time, as it had much lesser rating. That was the reason I did Left Right Left," he said.

Football is replete with spying episodes, Canada's drone disaster at Paris Olympics just the latest incident



GNS News Agency, July 30

Flying a drone over the opponents' training session to gather information is perhaps the most indiscreet piece of espionage carried out in recent sporting history. The buzzing saucers with spidery limbs are spotted everywhere, from weddings and funerals to political rallies and warfronts, underwater and in outer space too. So it was not a piece of improvised spying when some members of the Canadian women's football employed drones to peep into New Zealand's training session before their counter. The price they paid for the brain-fade was too costly — six points were penalised, FIFA banned coach Bev Priestman and two other officials, the Canadian football association were fined 200,000 Swiss francs, and beyond all tangibles, the credibility and integrity of the reigning football champions in Olympics stood tarnished.

Some of them would be wondering whether droning was worth all these. For, how much more valuable information would they have gathered about a team that they already possess a mine of details. In this day and age, there is an inexhaustible amount of data at any team's disposal, so long as you have a stable internet connection and the knowhow of entering the correct address to extract the details you want. From formations and footage, from statistics and pattern of play, there is nothing secretive about any team. Canada team celebrates their side's 2-1 win at the end of the women's Group A soccer match between Canada and France at Geoffroy-Guichard stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympic. (AP) Canada team celebrates their side's 2-1 win at the end of the women's Group A soccer match between Canada and France at Geoffroy-Guichard stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympic. (AP)

A couple of observations the day before a group match between teams ranked eighth (Canada) and 28th (New Zealand), wouldn't make a decisive difference. Maybe, you could note down a peculiar set-piece drill, or an unusual formation, or the general spirit, or find out about injuries. Any revelations wouldn't have changed their own methods or approach dramatically. In the end, it comes across as an act of naivety or maybe cowardice. Then, it is a mistake far bigger teams than Canada and far revered coaches than Priestman have stooped to. The most famous spy-gate episode involved the most celebrated modern-day manager, the Argentine ideologue of attacking football Marcelo Bielsa. During his time at Leeds United, The police confiscated a backroom staff, in disguise, with pliers, binoculars and cameras in tow,

outside Derby County's training ground in 2019. The two clubs were then locked in an intense race for promotion. He immediately rang his counterpart Frank Lampard, but instead of an apology, he defended his staff's act. The next day, he walked into the media room and stirred one of the longest press conferences in the history of the league. It lasted 66 minutes and included a powerpoint presentation on his preparations for a match. "I don't need to watch a training session to know where and how they play. Why do I go? Because it's not forbidden, I didn't know it would create such a reaction, and even though going and watching an opponent is not useful, it allows me to keep my anxiety low," he explained, adding that it's a common practice in Argentina. Bielsa never did clandestine training sessions either. "Everyone could watch what I am doing. I never made a fuss of it," he further defended himself.

For him, and several others raised in the pre-digital era, it was just a habit of the past that they can't kick off despite the leap of technologic faith. Lampard's mentor Jose Mourinho often deputed his assistant and later the successor at Chelsea Andres Villas-Boas to watch the opponents' before every game to observe their "mental and physical state". Lampard, though, made a fuss of Bielsa's "unsporting" methods. In his next game, he brought a pile of notes and told the journalists that "they too prepare" in a dig at Bielsa. A year before the EPL's spygate, a newspaper revealed that Werder Bremen used a drone to spy on Hoffenheim. But the latter's then manager Julian Nagelsmann, whose father was an undercover agent in real life, took the incident on a lighter vein. "I'm not really angry at the analyst doing his job. I am happy in a sense that a strong opponent is really worried that they are spying on us," he would say. Bremen's management, while admitting that a scout of theirs was operating the drone from a car parked 500 metres outside the training ground, said they had "unmasked" several spies from trees, autograph hunters and among the press contingent.

Before the use of extensive data analysis, it was common for teams to snoop around their opponents. Managers, players and support staff used to be wary of potential covert operations. Former England manager Graham Taylor was so finicky about eavesdroppers that he even refused security at the training ground during practice. So it was understandable that he changed the team's training base at the last minute before a World Cup qualifier against Norway in 1993. The venue was nondescript, but coincidentally it shared the fence with the sports editor of a leading daily. On the morning of the match, he wrote a detailed piece on England's tactics, and as fate had it, Norway beat England 2-0, England failed to qualify and Taylor duly met the axe. In a similar bout of paranoia, Chile were convinced that Colombia had a secret gaze on them through a drone. The police shot it down, only to realise that it belonged to their telecommunication department, and ended up paying them a compensation of \$5000. The history does not absolve Canada of their misadventure, but in this advanced age of technology sending a drone over their opponent's training ground was naive, if not utterly foolish. And it clearly was not worth this risk, money or time.

Why Lakshya Sen's Paris Olympics win over Kevin Cordon was 'deleted'

GNS News Agency, July 30

India's Lakshya Sen in action during the men's singles Round-of-16 match of the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2023 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on Thursday, January 19, 2023. India's Lakshya Sen in action during the men's singles Round-of-16 match of the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2023 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. Lakshya Sen's victory over Guatemalan player Kevin Cordon has been "deleted" from consideration for final standings, the Badminton World Federation announced on Sunday evening.

The decision was made because Cordon has withdrawn from the Paris 2024 Olympics due to a left elbow injury. Lakshya had defeated Cordon in straight games in the first group stage match by an imperious 21-8, 22-20 scoreline. This, despite the fact that Cordon had stunned everyone by reaching the semifinal at the Tokyo Olympics held three years ago. Lakshya is playing at his first Olympic Games. The match against Cordon saw him take a 11-3 lead at one stage against the hapless Guatemalan player. While Lakshya had appeared to ease off his intensity as the match wore on, he managed to defeat his opponent without needing a decider.

The withdrawal of the Guatemalan men's singles player Cordon means that his remaining Group L matches against Indonesia's Jonatan Christie (on Monday) and Julien Carraggi of Belgium (on Wednesday) will not be played. BWF said that matches on these courts in each respective session have been rescheduled.

As per BWF General Competition Regulations for group stage play, the results of all matches played, or yet to be played, involving Cordon in Group L are now con-



sidered deleted. The specific rule pertaining to this (rule no 16.2.5) states: "If illness, injury, disqualification or other unavoidable hindrance prevents a Player / pair completing all the group matches, all the results of that Player / pair shall be deleted. Retiring during a match shall be considered to be not completing all group matches." This means that Lakshya will have zero points on the board in the standings. Lakshya Sen was in tricky group. Lakshya was placed in Group L, where he had an extra match to play as the Indian shuttler had found himself in one of the two groups out of 13 that has 4 shuttlers. The group also had tricky opponents, including Indonesia's Jonatan Christie. Lakshya was also expected to run into compatriot HS Prannoy in Round of 16 if he made it through from Group L. If he managed to emerge victorious from that as well, the Japanese shuttler Kodai Naraoka awaited him in quarters. It must be pointed out that Indonesia's Christie had stuttered his way to beating perhaps the easiest opponent of this group, Julien Carraggi, who he could defeat only in three games.

Same old collapse story for Lanka, India wrap series



GNS News Agency, July 30

SYNOPSIS: In a rain-curtailed fixture at Pallekele, Sri Lanka's batting collapses for a second successive night as India make full use of it to wrap up the series with a match to go.

Three balls into India's chase of 162 — which was definitely below par on the flat deck at Pallekele — Sri Lanka had a rain break to thank. The nearly hour-long break after a 40-minute delayed start meant, instead of going at 8 runs an over in their chase, the revised DLS target (78 off 8 overs) meant India needed to go at 10 runs an over. When Sanju Samson was dismissed for a first-ball zero soon after the break ended, it seemed as if the capacity crowd had a game on hand. But India didn't even flinch. With Yashasvi Jaiswal and Suryakumar Yadav leading the charge before Hardik Pandya gave the finishing touches, India crossed the line with nine deliveries to spare. They lost three wickets in the chase, but given the risk they had to take, it was acceptable. As skipper Suryakumar said, this may be a team with a new captain and head coach, but the train is very much the same. In bilateral fixtures, they have had a habit of demolishing opponents, and this was another resounding win. The only chance Sri Lanka had in defending the total was if they picked wickets at regular intervals. But India's batting line-up was never conceding an inch.

After losing 9 wickets for 30 runs in the first match, batting first on Sunday, Sri Lanka's innings took a similar route. With Pathum Nissanka and Kusal Perera giving a blistering start after the loss of Kusal Mendis in the fourth over, India were short of answers. Sans Jasprit Bumrah and Kuldeep Yadav Sri Lanka's batting has shown what better teams can do to this Indian attack. After a 40-minute delayed start because of rain, on a flat deck India's attack bowled well in the powerplay, before Perera joined Nissanka. Like his idol Sanath Jayasuriya, who is currently Sri Lanka's interim head coach, Perera is strong off his legs and puts his wrists to good use and is strong on either side of the square. With the left-right duo in the middle, it didn't help India a great deal either. The 54-run stand was broken only through a half-hearted appeal from Ravi Bishnoi whose googly managed to strike Nissanka's pad first as he attempted a cut. Then in company of Kamindu Mendis, who struggled for fluency, Perera still managed to get 50 runs in the next five overs. On a flat deck, with a wet outfield to account for, at 130/2 with five overs left, a total of 200 remained within Sri Lanka's reach.

But out of nowhere, just like he did it in Barbados a month back, Pandya ejected both the settled batsmen in the same over, with Rinku Singh taking their catches at deep square-leg. The twin strikes brought India back into the game, and in no time they would take full control. Leading that charge after Pandya's impact was Bishnoi — one who was unlucky to miss the T20 World Cup bus — as his skiddy, quick deliveries fetched him the wickets of Dasun Shanaka and Wanindu Hasaranga off successive balls in the next over. In the space of 10 deliveries, Sri Lanka lost four wickets and the slide would continue thereafter with their skipper Charith Asalanka too unable to provide any fireworks. Brief scores: Sri Lanka 161/9 in 20 overs (Kusal Perera 53, Pathum Nissanka 32, Ravi Bishnoi 3/26, Hardik Pandya 2/23) lost to India 81/3 in 6.3 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 30) by DLS method.

Nikhat Zareen goes into the zone after slow start to win opening round; Manika, Sreeja progress in TT



GNS News Agency, July 30

Paris 2024 Olympics: Nikhat Zareen and Manika Batra. Nikhat Zareen throws a punch during her bout against Germany's Maxi Carina, Manika Batra plays against Britain's Anna Hursey during a women's singles round of 64 table tennis game at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Sunday, July 28, 2024, in Paris, France. There would be no nerves on her debut for Nikhat Zareen. Well, maybe some when she lost the first round on the judges' scorecard 2-3. But as soon as that little blip occurred, she went into the zone and emerged with a unanimous 5-0 win in her opening round against Germany's Maxi Carina on Sunday.

It took a while for the 28-year-old to get to this stage and the start reflected that. Zareen, masterful at maintaining range, wasn't dealing well with Carina charging forward. It led to situations where she was open and got dealt with a few crisp right hooks. It was a tough round to score for the judges and three out of five went the way of the European boxer. But the second round was where Zareen came alive. She had to because boxing scorecards are untrustworthy and the cleaner the punches you land, the tougher it is for judges to give the bout away to the other boxer. The Nizamabad native landed two clear-as-day hooks clean on Carina. That shot continued to come in handy as every exchange between the two would end with Zareen exiting with that shot out of range. Carina tried to force what worked for her in the first but the Indian had figured her range out and was landing at will. The judge took a point from each for landing blows at the



back of the head, but once the scorecards were in, each of the judges unanimously agreed that the two-time Zareen had taken that round. In the last round, she experienced clinching, a ploy others could use against her. Towards the middle of the round, she would attempt to move on the inside of Zareen. The strategy was sound — tired arms equal powered-down punches. But towards the end, Zareen managed to still connect a few of her shots and got a 10-9 on all five cards.

Zareen next faces Yu on Thursday. The current Women's 50 kg World Champion against the current Women's 54 kg World Champion promises to be the first possibly three more tough bouts for the Indian. Since Wu has made the step down to the 50kg category, there have not been many challengers to her. She beat Chuthamat Rakst at the 2023 Asian Games — after the Thai boxer had taken Zareen down in the semi-final. In table tennis, Sreeja Akula and Manika Batra came through their round of 64 clashes unscathed. Batra scored a 4-1 win over Anna Hursey while Akula defeated Christina Kallberg 4-0 on an impressive debut showing. It's the first time India will have two players in the TT women's singles round of 32 at the Olympics. But in a major upset, veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal went down fighting against Deni Kozul of Slovenia, to bow out of singles contention. After a back-and-forth battle, Sharath was leading by 6 points in the sixth game looking to force a decider, but the Slovenian fought back to take it to tiebreaks where errors by Sharath cost him dearly. In archery, there was hope, but then there was disappointment. The women's team of Deepika

Back with a bang, Simone Biles rises above ankle & calf niggles to steal the show in gymnastics

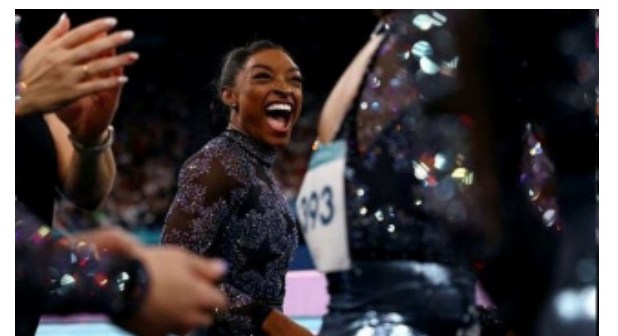
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Simone Biles has five elements — two each on Vault and Floor exercise and one on Beam — named after her. There's a very good chance that the city of Paris cedes its title rights to these Games, and turns 2024 altogether into the Simone Biles Olympics. The start to this high-style takeover, on Sunday, was sensational. Olympic medals never come easy, extracting every ounce of fight from an athlete. So, Simone limped at one point after a dodgy landing during the All-Around team championships qualification. And then she crawled towards her teammates on her hands and knees till she found strength in her niggling ankle and calf. They talk of the glamour and grandeur of her superhuman feats in the air, but Simone was all grit in her Paris opening, as she went from limp-crawl to fly, a 0 to 100, on the cue of a start. A sporting career that's underpinned with the biggest bounce-back from trauma, saw her literally rise from that crawl, and hit the apparatus routines, as she took flight. The usual bounce looked greatly clipped, but Simone Biles is rock solid even when warding off a prowling injury.

She must've been in pain, but didn't wince. On her crawl, she literally laughed. For someone who battled twisters at Tokyo, and testified representing hundreds of victims of abuse, a tweaked calf was not going to stop her march. So she just landed at the four rotations, and put on a show that made her the human model of the air-water-fire-earth ambigram, combining energy and balance of nature itself as she launched herself into orbit. On her singularly difficult Yurchenko double pike vault, Simone garnered a humongous score of 15.800, including 9.4/10 for execution, despite a step-back. That double pike through air is called Biles II, and she owns it. In past tense, and present continuous, at every big event. On the Balance Beam, considered the toughest apparatus, she soared and landed without a wobble. A small part of the Biles charm is in picking the toughest routines to crunch them and make them look easy. Her ankle was heavily taped before she started on the floor. But once she hit the first line, there was no flinching from her Biles I — which has a double layout with a half twist, nor Biles II — that's even more bonkers: a triple-double with three twists and

two back flips.

She finished Day 1 leading America to three points clear of next-placed Italy, herself tallying 59.566, while leading in vault and floor. Her coach casually remarked she could do better, even as the USA led 1-2 with Suni Lee. Italy, China and Brazil are all stunningly strong teams, but Simone is determined to become the oldest woman at 27 to win an Olympic All-Around, and regain gold after Tokyo where, despite everything, they won silver. The last time anyone older won the gold was 72 years ago, when it last rained at the opening ceremony at Helsinki. On her widely-roared comeback on Sunday with the tall stadium filled to the rafters, gymnastics' GOAT, for once, got the United States and the rest of the world properly distracted from swimming. Tom Cruise and Greta Gerwig were in attendance as celebrities lined up to cheer for the USA. More of Hollywood is expected to fly in, and head straight to the gymnastics on Tuesday. The injury concerns add another chapter to Simone's story as she looks to add to her four gold medals, as does a brand new element she unveils in the city of stylistic innovation.



Legend had left Tokyo Games with 'twisters', then testified against a serial abuser, but comes back to lead USA's charge for a big golden haul

The Olympics have always needed the Bolts and the Phelps. Paris though might've lucked out big time — they have the flesh-&-bones human VFX motherboard of all time, and she goes by the name, Her Royal Airness Simone Biles.