

INDIAN CHRONICLE

4 July, 2024 | Thursday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:123 Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

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GHMC Commissioner Amrapali Kata makes surprise inspection on sanitation in Hyd

Hyderabad: Amrapali Kata, who recently took over as Commissioner, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), made a surprise visit to several areas of the city on Wednesday to inspect sanitation.

The Commissioner inspected sanitation at Narayanguda cross-road and directed the zonal commissioner to complete the process of allotment of spaces at the market building constructed there. During the visit, Amrapali spoke to the driver of the RFC vehicle at Shankar Mutt and inquired the details on the garbage removal and interacted with a student and explained the need to keep the surroundings neat and clean.

Forty inspectors working in Hyderabad Commissionerate limits transferred

Hyderabad: Forty inspectors working in the Hyderabad Commissionerate limits were transferred by Commissioner of Police Hyderabad, K Sreenivasa Reddy on Wednesday.

A few inspectors with their new postings are Mohd Asif (SHO Kalapather), K Chandrakumar (SHO Kachiguda), S Raghavendra (Inspector Task Force), P Chukkappally (SHO Masab Tank), Raju Madiga (SHO Chaderghat), M Appalla Naidu (SHO Nampally), and M Shankar (SHO Tukaramgate).

Judicial custody of Kavitha, Sisodia extended till July 25



GNS News Agency, July 3

New Delhi: A court on Wednesday extended till July 25 the judicial custody of AAP leader Manish Sisodia and BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended their custody after they were produced before the court through video conference on the expiry of a court on Wednesday extended till July 25 the judicial custody of AAP leader Manish Sisodia and BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended their custody after they were produced before the court through video conference on the expiry of their judicial custody granted earlier.

KTR demands immediate release of AEE (civil) exam selection list

GNS News Agency, July 3

Hyderabad: Questioning the delay in announcing the selection list of AEE (Civil) examination that was conducted during the BRS regime in the State, BRS working president K T Rama Rao on Wednesday called it a case of deliberate neglect. He recalled that the notification for this exam was issued almost 22 months ago and certificate verification was also completed by September last year. The release of the final list of candidates was kept on hold because of the election code that came into effect before the assembly elections. Though seven months have passed since the formation of the Congress government, the list of the successful candidates has not been released so far. Demanding that the government announce the list immediately, he said the delay has created a sort of confusion among those who appeared for the examination. Sharing the concern of the candidates, he assured a delegation of the aspirants who met him at the Nandinar residence on Wednesday, of all his support in the issue. He also spoke to TGPSO chairman M Mahender Reddy over phone and requested him to expedite the process for release of the list of selected candidates immediately.

Zika cases rise to 8, Centre issues advisory of surveillance

GNS News Agency, July 3

New Delhi: Amid the rise in Zika virus cases in Pune, the Centre, on Wednesday, issued an advisory to all states asking them to step up vigil. Zika virus disease (ZVD) is a mosquito-borne disease transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. While it is usually mild to moderate disease in adults and requires no specific treatment, in pregnant women, it may cause microcephaly, a condition in which the head is significantly smaller due to abnormal brain development, in the foetus. Maharashtra has reported eight cases of Zika virus till July 2. Of these, six are from Pune, one each from Kolhapur and Sangamner, and 2 are pregnant women.

"In view of some reported cases of Zika virus from Maharashtra, Dr Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services (DGHS), has issued an advisory to states highlighting the need for maintaining a state of constant vigil over the Zika virus situation in the country," the Health Ministry said. The ministry urged states "to instruct the health facilities in the affected areas or those catering cases from affected areas to screen the pregnant women for Zika virus infection." The health workers must also "monitor the growth of the foetus" of Zika-positive women and "act as per Central government guidelines," the ministry said. It also asked health facilities and hospitals to identify a nodal officer to monitor and act to keep the premises free of Aedes mosquitoes. Besides, the advisory called on states to "strengthen entomological surveillance and intensive vector control activities in residential areas, workplaces, schools, construction sites, institutions, and health facilities." Currently, Zika testing facilities are available at the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune; the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi; and a few selected virus research and diagnostic laboratories of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The ministry will continue to monitor the situation closely, the advisory noted.

PM Modi schools Opposition on Samvidhaan, says 'Congress is biggest opponent of Constitution'

GNS News Agency, July 3

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, replying to the Motion of Thanks on President's address, came down heavily on the Congress-led Opposition over its multiple incidents of making mockery of democracy during its rule and then lecturing the NDA government, claiming threat to Constitution. PM Modi raked up multiple incidents, pertaining to UPA I and UPA II regimes and said that it is the Congress party which is the biggest opponent of the Constitution. PM Modi's sharp re-tort came in the backdrop of the grand old party's claims that Samvidhaan (Constitution) is under



threat in the Modi government.

Citing multiple incidents of how Congress mocked the Samvidhaan, PM Modi asked: "Who gave the power to National Advisory Council (NAC) to overrule the Prime Minister post? Who allowed the PM's chair to be

those times of Cong rule. Recalling the tragic times of Emergency, PM Modi said: "Democracy was trampled upon, common people were harassed, many were jailed and tortured inside prisons." He said that despite the dark history of oppression and suppression during its rule, Congress today makes tall claims about protection of Constitution and tries to hide its dark deeds by waving a copy of Samvidhaan. PM Modi reiterated the 'Parjeevi Congress' charge and said that the party has no standing of its own and relies on its allies for public support. However, it doesn't have anything substantial other than canards and lies to woo the electorate.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren resigns; Hemant stakes claim to form government

GNS News Agency, July 3

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader and former Chief Minister Hemant Soren met Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan in Ranchi on July 3 and staked his claim to form a government after the incumbent Chief Minister Champai Soren tendered his resignation. "We've done all procedures (to form government)," Mr. Hemant Soren told the media outside Raj Bhawan. Mr. Champai Soren said, "Our alliance decided to elect Hemant Soren as leader and I've decided to resign on my own." Mr. Hemant Soren was elected as leader of the ruling Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc parties in the Assembly and is set to return as the 13th Chief Minister of the State. In an alleged land scam case, Mr. Soren was sent to jail in January, after which he resigned from the post. Mr. Champai Soren, alliance partner Congress in-charge of the State Ghulam Ahmad Mir, State Congress president Rajesh Thakur and all leaders and legislators of INDIA bloc allies were present in the marathon meeting in Ranchi on Wednesday. The ruling alliance MLAs are said to have reached a consensus over the change of guard and making Mr. Soren Chief Minister of the State again. Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren tenders resignation to Governor C P Radhakrishnan. Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren tenders resignation to Governor C P Radhakrishnan. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

"A decision was taken at the meeting that Hemant Soren will be the Chief Minister of the State again," said Congress MLA from Jamtara Irfan Ansari to local media persons in Ranchi and sped away citing toothache as the reason. Earlier on January 31, Mr. Soren was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case linked to alleged land scam. "Yes, we want Mr. Soren to take oath as CM of the State sooner than later but, it all depends on the Governor for the invitation", a JMM MLA told The Hindu over the phone, preferring anonymity. Mr. Soren would take oath as Chief Minister of Jharkhand for the third time after July 2013 and December 2019. It was, however, for the first

BJD joins Opposition walkout in Rajya Sabha, YSRCP lends support to BJP

GNS News Agency, July 3

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which supported the BJP on many occasions in Parliament earlier, on Wednesday joined the Opposition as they staged a walkout over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address. However, the BJP found support from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which condemned the Opposition for disruptions during PM's speech. Both YSRCP and the BJD stayed away from any national-level alliance during the recently concluded Lok Sabha election and Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. While both parties saw a dismal turnout in the general election, they also lost power in their respective states -- YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh and BJD in Odisha. On Wednesday, the Opposition MPs raised slogans during PM Modi's speech in Rajya Sabha after the Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to intervene during the address. BJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra led his party colleagues in walking out of the Rajya Sabha, along with the opposition INDIA bloc parties. "It was just another, same routine reply from the Prime Minister, counting the same achievements of his government. It makes no sense to sit through another deliberation when the aspirations and demands of the people of Odisha find no presence," Patra was quoted as saying by news agency PTI outside Parliament. Patra also said there was no mention of



time since Mr. Soren's release from Jail on June 28, that he had called an all-party meeting of MLAs of alliance partners. Current Chief Minister Champai Soren, who is set to be "upset" over the move, is likely to be given a new responsibility as the chairman of the INDIA bloc coordination committee in the State or, executive president of the JMM. In the total 81-member Jharkhand State Assembly, the JMM-led INDIA bloc strength, after the recently held Lok Sabha poll, has become 45 from 47 (JMM-27, Congress-17 and RJD-1). The BJP's strength in the State Assembly is 24 as two of its legislators Dhulu Mahto (Baghmara in Dhanbad) and Manish Jaiswal (Hazaribagh) were elected as party MPs.

After Mr. Soren was sent to jail, his wife Kalpana Soren plunged into politics and became party MLA from Gandey constituency defeating BJP candidate Dilip Kumar Verma in a by-poll by over 26,000 votes. Gandey Assembly seat in Giridih district of the State had fallen vacant following resignation of JMM MLA Sarfaraj Ahmad. Ahead of the meeting of INDIA bloc allies MLAs on Wednesday, All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary and Jharkhand in-charge of the party Ghulam Ahmad Mir and State Congress President Rajesh Thakur met Mr. Soren for some time. "The alliance partner legislators and leaders elected Hemant Soren for the third term of CM for a unified command ahead of the upcoming State elections in October this year," a JMM leader said.



Odisha and their longstanding demand for special category status in the speeches of President Droupadi Murmu and PM Modi. He further said that there was also no reflection of his party's demand for an increase in coal royalty, and highway, railway and telecom presence in the eastern state. The YSRCP, meanwhile, kept away from such protests. V Vijayasai Reddy, the YSRCP leader in the Rajya Sabha, condemned the Opposition's protests in Lok Sabha when the Prime Minister spoke there on Tuesday. "It has to be condemned," Reddy said, adding that PM Modi's speech should have been heard patiently as he was only responding to questions raised by different MPs."

Punjab authorities review security arrangements for Amarnath Yatra



GNS News Agency, July 3

Chandigarh: To ensure smooth and safe passage to devotees going for the Shri Amarnath Yatra, Punjab's Special Director General of Police (Law and Order) Arpit Shukla on Wednesday chaired a meeting of security agencies to take stock of the arrangements. The meeting, which was held in Pathankot, focused on strategic preparations for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra, encompassing diverse aspects such as police deployment, security measures, traffic management, and disaster management.

The review also focused on recent incidents involving sightings of armed suspects in Kot Bhattian village and an encounter with an armed suspect in Kathua district. The meeting was attended by senior officers from the Punjab Police, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Himachal Pradesh Police, the Army, the Air Force, the Border Security Force and other Central agencies. Shukla deliberated on securing the international border and ensuring the safety of the devotees going for the Shri Amarnath Yatra. He said the Punjab Police has boosted the security with the deployment of 550 personnel, sniper detachments, bomb disposal and other commando units. A high alert has been sounded with an eight second line of defence checkpoints established by the police. He said the route has been divided into five sectors for effective management and four companies of CAPF have been stationed along the route. Special security arrangements have been made at 'langar' sites.

Chandrababu releases white paper on Amaravati, says it is a largest Land Acquisition Project

GNS News Agency, July 3

In a media conference organized at the Secretariat, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu declared that Amaravati is the largest land acquisition project in the world. He released a white paper on the capital city, highlighting its significance and the efforts put into its development. Naidu recounted the history of Amaravati, a city of great importance in the past, and revealed that the decision to name the capital after it was unanimously accepted by the Cabinet. He also mentioned the symbolic gestures made during the construction of the capital, including bringing mud water from every village and incorporating water and soil from various sacred places. The Chief Minister emphasized the strategic location of Amaravati, stating that it is the most equidistant region in the state and a crucial factor for the future development of Andhra Pradesh. Naidu drew parallels with his experience in developing Hyderabad and highlighted the contributions made by the farmers who willingly gave their land for the capital project. Taking a swipe at the opposition leader, Naidu criticized Jagan for going back on his earlier stance regarding the location of the capital. He touted the unique advantages of Amaravati, such as its extensive riverfront and the presence of both the Godavari and Krishna rivers.

Delhi HC to hear Arvind Kejriwal's bail plea in corruption case on Friday

GNS News Agency, July 3

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it would hear on July 5 Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea seeking bail in the corruption case registered by the CBI in connection with the alleged excise policy scam. The counsel for Kejriwal mentioned the matter for urgent listing before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela which said it would be heard on Friday.

Advocate Rajat Bhardwaj, appearing for Kejriwal, asserted that the applicant was taken into illegal custody without following the due procedure of law and he has filed a bail plea. As the counsel insisted on fixing the plea for hearing on Thursday, Justice Manmohan said, "Let the learned judge go through the papers. We will have it day after." The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener was arrested by the CBI on June 26 from Tihar Jail, where he is still lodged in judicial custody in a connected money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Manufacturing push

THE resurgence of India's manufacturing sector in June, as reflected by the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rising to 58.3 from May's 57.5, is a testament to the robust demand driving the economy forward. This uptick underscores the resilience and potential of India, which remains the fastest-growing major economy globally. The PMI data indicates a vigorous expansion in manufacturing activities, bolstered by domestic demand and sustained government spending on infrastructure. The manufacturing sector ended the June quarter on a stronger footing as new orders and output drove the PMI to nearly five points above its long-term average. Despite a slight dip in the future output index to a three-month low, it remains above historical norms, suggesting continued optimism in the sector. One of the standout aspects of the latest PMI report is the record pace of job creation. Hiring surged for the fourth consecutive month, reaching the highest rate since the survey began in 2005. This is a crucial development for the ruling BJP, which has faced political challenges, including a loss of parliamentary majority. The increase in manufacturing jobs could offer relief to the party. Emphasising the government's role in furthering this growth trajectory, the positive performance of the manufacturing sector is likely to be a focal point in Nirmala Sitharaman's upcoming Budget. However, the sector's growth comes amid persistent inflationary pressures. While input cost inflation slightly moderated in June, prices charged to customers rose at the fastest pace in two years. This indicates that manufacturers were able to pass on higher costs to consumers, leveraging the strong demand to maintain profit margins. However, inflation is expected to average around the Reserve Bank of India's target of four per cent, with a leeway of two percentage points on either side, providing some stability.

Woman arrested for selling her 3-month-old baby for Rs 1.60 lakh, in Gujarat

Mumbai crime branch had caught a single mother of six children from Valsad district's Vapi, in South Gujarat, for allegedly selling her 3-month-old child to another woman in Visakhapatnam in December 2023. Four among six of her children have been sent to Mumbai's Child Welfare Committee and two, who are below 2 years old, are with her. The accused identified as Gudiya Khan, 37, allegedly sold her child to Visakhapatnam's Vishala Venkatesh through an arrested agent, Reena.

The crime branch officials reached Visakhapatnam and got custody of the girl child. The police also took Vishala's statements which led to the people involved in the racket. Through technical surveillance, the crime branch including the female police officers reached Vaishali bridge, Vapi, in search of Gudiya Khan. The suspect was identified in one of the temporary tents where the officers went and distributed the biscuits in a bid to gain access inside all temporary tents, sources said.

After Gudiya was caught Tuesday and taken to Mumbai, a DNA test was carried out between Gudiya Khan and the rescued child which turned out to be a match, Mumbai crime branch police inspector Dilip Tejanekar told The Indian Express. "Gudiya was produced before the Court Wednesday and is under police remand period till 29th June," he said. According to him, though Gudiya claimed all six children are her, DNA tests of all the other children will be carried out in the coming days. Further, Tejanekar said that Gudiya stayed at different places in Vapi in temporary tents after divorcing two of her husbands, and made her children beg for survival. Gudiya came in contact with Reena during her visit to Mumbai in November 2023. Claiming that the Gudiya was financially challenged, on Reena's advice she agreed to sell her child for Rs 1.60 lakh. "We have started a drive against interstate child trafficking and caught 5 women child traffickers from Mumbai and others linked with rackets till date," he added.

Teaching staff recruitment in Telangana Universities hit roadblock

Hyderabad: Teaching staff recruitment in the State universities has hit a roadblock with the fate of Telangana Universities Common Recruitment Board Bill 2022 hanging in balance. The Bill referred by the then Governor Tamiliasa Soundararajan to President for 'Consideration and Approval' last year is yet to receive either assent or rejection. The Congress government, which initially planned to withdraw the bill, is yet to take call on the same. "The bill has been forwarded to the President and is still there. For the bill to be withdrawn, the State cabinet has to take a decision," said a senior High Education department official. Presently, each university takes up its own recruitment that on several occasions in the past got into legal tangles, delaying filling up of vacancies. To bring transparency and accountability, the previous BRS government had passed Telangana State Common Recruitment Board Bill 2022 for centralized staff recruitment. The bill was sent to the Raj Bhavan for assent but after seeking clarifications from the then Education Minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy, Tamiliasa Soundararajan forwarded the bill to the President citing certain issues. Failing to take a decision on the bill has further delayed the teachers' recruitment in the universities, which are already grappling with dearth of faculty members particularly at professor level. This shortage of teachers is not just impacting regular teaching work but research and funding from various central funding agencies. Out of 2,825 teaching posts sanctioned in 11 universities, there are close to 2,000 vacancies. While there are a total of 1,267 sanctioned posts in 53 departments of Osmania University, close to 900 teaching staff positions are vacant. Several departments have been running classes with regular associate and assistant professors besides contractual staff, while some departments like Archaeology, French and German run only by the academic consultants, who are employed on contractual basis.

Karnataka HC permits media footage to be used by murder accused for defence



GNS News Agency, July 3

The Karnataka High Court permitted a murder accused to use footage, including media interviews, as part of his defence in a trial. The order was passed on June 25 by a bench consisting of Justice Nagaprasanna. The complainant in this case had filed a case of murder after her husband was killed in an alleged property dispute.

The petitioner in this case, one of the accused, had requested the trial court to allow him to confront witnesses with video footage. The accused argued that the victim had been brought injured to the hospital, while the prosecution argued that he had been brought dead. The ac-

cused had argued that certain statements had been made there in the presence of police officers to the media. While the trial court had refused to allow media interviews to be used as defence, the petitioner moved the High Court. The accused's counsel argued that he should be given all opportunities to prove his case. He added that call records had not been provided to the accused in entirety and further that the video footage would defeat the prosecution case.

The bench stated, "It is a settled principle that every criminal trial is a journey or a voyage towards discovery of truth, as conviction alone is not the object of criminal trial... It is an undeniable fact that a fair investigation followed by a fair trial is the very heart and soul of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, a right to life. It is also not the duty of the prosecution to merely secure conviction of the accused at all costs... the order of the concerned Court holding that it would not be a previous statement and the DVD/DVR/video footage cannot be permitted to be played, is rendered unsustainable. If it leads to discovery of truth and the discovery of truth leads to innocence of the accused, it should be permitted to come on record." The court permitted the accused to use the footage to confront the witness in accordance with law, provided that the cross examination is completed in a single day and not used as a ruse to drag on the proceedings.

It's early Diwali for waste pickers who took on and won against the richest corporation of Asia

GNS News Agency, July 3

A few days back, Shital Girmakar (40), a waste picker from Kalewadi area of Pimpri Chinchwad, managed to clear her home loan and get back the ownership of her house—something which Girmakar had almost given up on. "This was possible only because the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Commission (PCMC) at last paid our long pending dues, though we had to fight a long and hard battle to get what should have been legally ours," said Girmakar. The victory though came at a price—32 waste pickers had died while waiting for their dues to be paid.

The case had its genesis in 2016, when Kagad Kaach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) moved the court of the deputy labour commissioner due to non-payment of minimum wages. Aditya Vyas, secretary of the union, had explained how between December 2012 and May 2013, and between June 2013 and June 2015, a total of 310 waste pickers were not paid as per the Minimum Wages Act. The accumulative dues in both the cases came to be about Rs 7.5 crores. Vyas said the union had decided to move the court of the deputy labour commissioner to fight this case. The deputy labour commissioner had ruled in the favour of the union in 2023.

PCMC has outsourced the work of door-to-door waste collection to another agency who in turn employs the waste pickers of KKPKP. But Vyas explained that as the principal employer, it was the duty of the PCMC to ensure minimum wages are paid and also the dues be credited to their accounts. Vijaya Ashok Chavan, one of the waste pickers, had regularly attended the hearing for the case which was filed in 2013. Chavan, who is a waste picker herself, said she had to go for a hearing once a month or twice a month even if it meant being absent for work. "We were asked questions about the nature of our work, about payment we got and we answered them. The verdict proved that our stance was correct," she said. Two separate cases were filed—one in 2013 and the other in 2017. Both verdicts came in favour of the waste pickers in



2023.

But it took one whole year for the corporation to start releasing the money. "Our members had started planning on what they would do with the money—but administrative delays at various levels saw the process of transfer being delayed," said Vyas. The standing committee of the corporation (which now functions without any public representative as the time frame of the body had lapsed two years back) had given the green signal for the transfer of money in February but actual dispersal started only last month. Till date, Rs 6.7 crores have been transferred to the accounts of waste pickers. Like Girmakar, Rekha Sapkal (30) also got dues worth Rs 2.7 lakh. Sapkal has paid off her dues with Rs 1 lakh and the rest she has converted into a fixed deposit with the union. Pallavi Naikwadi (40) being the legal nominee of Vishwanath got Rs 2.5 lakh as unpaid dues.

A resident of the Nigdi, Vishwanath was a victim of the Covid-19 pandemic. "My husband had made plans to clear off the loan but before he could see the battle reaching fruition, he passed away," she said. As waste pickers now rejoice at this hard battle won, they do spare a thought for the 32 waste pickers who did not survive the long struggle against PCMC, also known as the richest municipal corporation of Asia, thanks to the concentration of industries within its limits.

Boney Kapoor-led firm signs agreement, work on film city near Noida airport 'to begin in 4-5 months'

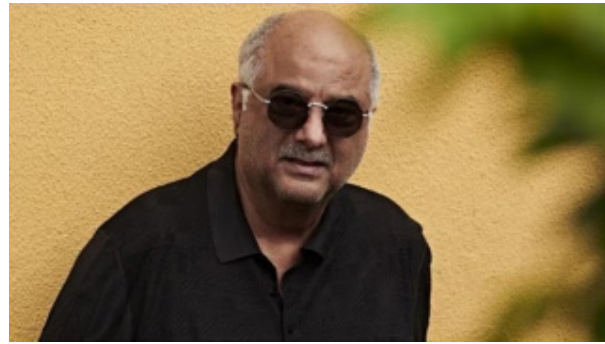
GNS News Agency, July 3

In a major step towards the development of an International Film City near Jewar Airport, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) and Bayview Bhutani Film City Private Limited, a newly formed special purpose vehicle (SPV) led by producer Boney Kapoor and construction giant Bhutani Group, signed a concession agreement

With this, Kapoor said, the construction on the project will start in 4-5 months and the film city will be made functional in three years. The film city will come up in YEIDA's Sector-21, along the Yamuna Expressway and around 4 km from the upcoming Noida International Airport in Jewar. Dr Arun Vir Singh, CEO, YEIDA, said it is a big day for the residents of Uttar Pradesh. "It was envisioned two-and-a-half-years ago and is coming to fruition today. Film city is an integral part of the all-round development of the area, which will also have an airport, Indian Railways, Metro, Expressway, Pod Taxi, Rapid Rail and Orbit Rail. There is also a dedicated freight corridor here. There could not have been a more suitable place for Film City. There is a complete ecosystem here," said Singh after signing the agreement. "Recently, during visits to London and Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to inspect numerous studios and observe the latest technological advancements in their construction. Our endeavour will be to begin the shooting of the film after building one floor only, so that we feel that the film city has started. This will show the world that the film city has commenced. Our effort will be to give more than what we take," he said while addressing the media along with Ashish Bhutani, the CEO of Bhutani group, after signing the agreement. On January 30, 2024, Bayview Projects LLP, a firm backed by Kapoor along with the consortium of two other firms — Parmesh Construction Company Limited (Bhutani Group) and Noida Cyberpark Private Limited — won the bid for the development of International Film City, leaving behind a company backed by actor Akshay Kumar and production giant T-Series. Bayview provided YEIDA with 18% gross revenue share, which was the highest financial bid among the four companies.

The letter of award was issued to the successful bidder on March 11 after which the consortium formed the SPV for the project. While the project will be developed by the company, YEIDA will be the nodal authority. On September 29, 2023, the authority had issued a global e-tender for the third time to develop the film city on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis.

Under the Phase-1 of the project, a total of 230 acres will be developed, which will include 75 acres (33%) of commercial and 155 acres (67%) of filming component.



The estimated project cost is Rs 1,510 crore and the construction period has been set at three years. A total of 1,000 acres have been identified for the complete project, out of which 220 acres is for commercial use while 780 acres is for industrial use. The project will have filming facilities, studios, a film institute, an amusement park/family recreation centre, hotels and restaurants, retail shops, a shopping mall, serviced residences, and commercial offices besides other filming and supporting assets. It will also have facilities for music production, dubbing, editing, VFX and special effects, film festival and premiere arenas. Officials said that an amount of Rs 832.91 crore will cover filming components such as studio backlots and open sets whereas Rs 373.93 crore will be allocated for hospitality, Rs 315.07 crore for service accommodation, Rs 109.60 crore for offices, and Rs 76.44 crore for infrastructure enhancements. Out of 230 acres, 135 acres will be designated for filming facilities, and an additional 21 acres will be allocated for a film institute.

Dispute over funds release for water scheme in Kothagudem

GNS News Agency, July 3

Kothagudem: BJP and BSP leaders here were objecting to Kothagudem MLA K Sambasiva Rao's efforts to take credit for the funds sanctioned during BRS regime for a drinking water supply improvement scheme in the district headquarters.

BSP State general secretary Yerra Kamesh told the media here that Rs 124.48 crore was sanctioned on September 29, 2023 during the BRS regime under the Central government's Amrut-2.0 for improving water supply in Kothagudem town.

6 held for brutally thrashing woman in public in Meghalaya: Police



GNS News Agency, July 3

Shillong: The Meghalaya Police have arrested six people allegedly involved in the brutal assault of a woman in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills (WGH) after a video of several men assaulting a woman on the premises of a school surfaced on social media.

According to the police, the incident took place in Lower Teksagre under Damal Asim Police Station in Dadenggre, WGH, on Tuesday. The viral video showed a woman being beaten up by a group of men armed with thick sticks, who accused her of having an extra-marital affair. The video further showed several people being mute spectators and not attempting to save the woman. The police said they identified the accused by scrutinising the viral video of the incident, which was being shared on social media platforms and booked six people. WGH superintendent of police (SP) told HT over the phone that six men have been arrested, and a case has been registered at the Tura Women Police Station. "The accused have been booked under sections 324/326/34 IPC (Indian Penal Code), and investigation is ongoing," the SP said. The incident was condemned by local MLA Rupa M Marak, who also sought a detailed report in this regard.

Beautification of Race Course land in Mumbai



GNS News Agency, July 3

Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar Thursday urged Chief Minister Ekanth Shinde to order a probe to find out if there was any "ploy" to hand over the vacant plot adjoining the Coastal Road to builders during the tenure of the MVA government-led Uddhav Thackeray.

The vacant plot between the Race Course and the Coastal Road is a 300-acre open space, which the state government has decided to beautify and recreate for Mumbaiers instead of coming up with any commercial construction on it. A central park has been proposed on the 120-acre land on Mahalaxmi Race Course. Also, on the 180-acre of reclaimed land, trees will be planted, both for beautification and to help the environment.

While seeking permission for the Coastal Road project, the Union Environment Ministry had asked the state government to give a written guarantee that the reclaimed land will not be used for any commercial activity nor will there be any kind of construction on this 180-acre reclaimed land. Shelar said, "At that time, Uddhav Thackeray's government was in power in the state while his son Aaditya Thackeray was the environment minister. Why did they not submit a written guarantee to the central environment department at that time?" He added, "Even CAG had drawn attention and criticized the former government for the same. Why did the then environment minister not submit an affidavit despite the central ministry asking for it? Was there any vested interest behind it? Was there a conspiracy to hand it over to builders?... CM must order an investigate into the matter."

School textbooks found in scrap shop in Nagarkurnool



GNS News Agency, July 3

Nagarkurnool: Several bundles of school textbooks that were meant to be distributed among students surfaced in a scrap shop in Achampet in the district, leaving parents and the education department shocked. The books pertaining to Classes 6 to 10 from last academic year were found in the scrap shop near a lake in Achampet. The English medium book bundles remained intact.

Soon after detecting the books in the shop, a few parents alerted the police. About 45 bundles of books were shifted to the police station. An official from the District Tribal Development Office allegedly supplied the books to the scrap shop owner, according to reports. After conducting an inquiry, DTDO Kamalakhar Reddy suspended two workers involved in the supply of books to the shop and a show cause notice was served to godown incharge Tirupataiah, according to reports.



Expensive prepaid autos at Pune Airport receives lukewarm responses from passengers



GNS News Agency, July 3

Despite being allotted a prominent spot at Pune Airport's multi-level parking in Aeromall, the prepaid autorickshaw service has been receiving a lukewarm response from flyers. The reason being that the fares fixed for the service are much higher than regular autorickshaw fares. They are even higher than cabs that can be booked on apps like Ola and Uber, which are their main competitors at the facility. In addition to this, unauthorised auto-rickshaws operating near the arrival gate "poach" a considerable number of flyers before they even reach the Aeromall. Only 150-200 rides are booked from the prepaid booth every day, which is negligible considering that about 12,000 passengers get down at Pune Airport every day and thousands of rides are booked via apps from the same facility.

Prakash Rajguru, secretary of the auto union that operated the booth, said the fares at the pre-paid booth are slightly higher because it has to pay for logistical expenses that include Rs 1.2 lakh every month to Aeromall, the salaries of the booking clerks employed, as well as a Rs 10 entry-exit fee that's paid for every ride. "There are 140 of us who operate in two shifts. Since the customer flow is low, people have to wait for 3-4 hours to get a customer. If a driver is getting just 2 or 3 rides per shift, then he must also get enough earnings. If we could

get more rides, then perhaps the fares could be reduced," said Rajguru. He said that the main hurdle in getting more passengers are the unauthorised auto-rickshaw drivers that operate at the arrival gate of the airport. "They have no permission to operate from there. These drivers fleece customers by charging exorbitant amounts. We have approached the police as well as airport authorities against this, but these people have not been curbed," said Rajguru.

When contacted, Pune Airport director Santosh Dhoke confirmed that some auto-rickshaws ply unauthorisedly from outside Aeromall. "We conduct campaigns time to time to take action against these auto-rickshaws that may seek passengers from within our premises. However, if they operate from outside the airport premise, it's outside our jurisdiction." He said that the Aeromall is operated by a private entity under the PPP model and the airport administration has no control over the pricing of the services including the pre-paid auto booth.

Tushar Sable (27), a resident of Sinhagad Road, who returned to Pune after a visit to Bangalore and was waiting for his Ola cab to arrive, said, "I have been waiting for the cab for 25 minutes. The rickshaws are available, but they are expensive. I think they are fleecing the customers," he said. Colonel Yashwant, on the other hand, came straight to the pre-paid booth to book his ride to Mohammadwadi. "I chose the pre-paid rickshaw because it's reliable and will be quick in traffic as compared to a cab. It may be slightly expensive but that's okay," he said. Rajendra Pol, one of the auto drivers at the booth said he has to go down to the arrival gate to look for customers. "As there are not many customers, it's almost compulsory for every driver to fetch one customer by walking to the arrival gate. We are competing with unauthorised autos as well as cabs and if we are to get at least three customers a day we have to take extra efforts," said Pol.

Pune factory worker's DNA matched with flesh found in Malad doctor's ice-cream

GNS News Agency, July 3

The DNA report of the finger flesh found in the ice-cream that a doctor had ordered in Mumbai has confirmed that the flesh belonged to a worker at a Pune factory. A police official at Malad police station investigating the case said the DNA report sent by Kalina Forensic Science Lab to Malad police on Thursday confirmed the matching of the DNA of flesh piece with that of the sample collected from the Pune factory worker. Police will now proceed with the investigation and ascertain the culpability of the worker, his supervisor and other concerned officials.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (zone 11) Anand Bhoite confirmed that the flesh found in the ice-cream is of Pune factory worker Omkar Pote (24). Pote works at the factory of Fortune Dairy Industries Pvt Ltd at Indapur in Pune. He had met with an accident during work and had lost part of his finger. Earlier, Pote admitted before police that on May 11, he got his finger cut while he was working at the scotch crushing machine. Pote has, however, told police that the injury was not major. Pote got it treated from a private doctor and had informed his superiors, the police said.

Ideally, the manufacturer should have discarded the entire batch of the ice-cream when Pote met with an accident to prevent any kind of health risk arising from the spread of infected blood spilled on other ice-cream cones when the accident occurred, Bhoite said. But the manufacturer avoided doing so. "Fortunately, as we carried out the medical examination of Pote, doctors cleared him saying he does not have any infectious disease," said Ravi Adane, senior inspector at Malad police station. On June 12, 26-year-old Brandon Ferrao, a Malad-based doctor, while having Yummo's butterscotch ice-cream in the afternoon, discovered a piece of a nail in it. "Initially I thought it's a nut but when I carefully examined it, I found that it was flesh with a broken nail attached to it," said Ferrao. Ferrao's sister had ordered the ice-cream online from Zepto. Ferrao filed a complaint with Mumbai's Malad police. On his complaint, the Malad police registered a case against the unidentified employee of Yummo under



Sections 272 (adulteration of food article), 273 (selling food or drink that has become noxious), and 336 (rash and dangerous act endangering human life) of the IPC.

According to the police, while tracking the supply chain of the ice-cream company using the batch of the ice-cream, the police team found that the Malad-based distributor received the ice-cream from Bhiwandi. The Bhiwandi godown received the ice-cream batch from a storage godown down in Sakinaka, where it had come Pune's Hadapsar. The Hadapsar godown had received the ice-cream from a third party manufacturer's factory in Indapur. "Now that it has been confirmed that it was flesh of Pote's finger in the ice-cream, action will be taken against him and his supervisor for negligence," the senior police officer added. Earlier, Yummo Ice Cream company, in their statement, said, "We are taking this incident very seriously. We have stopped manufacturing at this third-party manufacturing facility. We have isolated the said product at the facility, our warehouses and in process to do the same at the market level."

Delhi HC seeks NTA's response over 'out-of-syllabus' question in NEET plea



GNS News Agency, July 3

The Delhi High Court has sought a response from the National Testing Agency (NTA) after a petition was moved by a candidate who appeared for the National Entrance cum Eligibility Test (Undergraduate) or NEET (UG) exam. In his plea, the petitioner claimed that there was an "out-of-syllabus question" in the medical entrance exam. A single-judge bench of Justice Dharmesh Sharma in its June 24 order granted two weeks to the counsel appearing for the NTA, Centre or Union of India (UoI), and the National Medical Commission (NMC) to file their respective affidavits. "Learned counsels for respondents No. 1 to 3 (NTA, NMC and UoI) are present on advance notice and a request is made to grant time to file a short affidavit. Let the same be filed within two weeks from today," the High Court said.

Even as the petitioner is a "successful candidate", the plea claims, the student was compelled to approach the High Court as his overall ranking has been adversely affected. The plea claims that one question in the Physics section of the paper was based on radioactivity, which is not part of the new syllabus (NEET-2024). An out-of-syllabus question "should be dropped or bonus marks (+4)

should have been given so that no one is unduly benefited," read the plea. With respect to another question, the plea has sought a direction to declare that only one of the options was correct and candidates marking another option should not be given marks.

Drop in sale of residential units: Hyderabad real estate losing charm?

Hyderabad: The charm for a slice of property in Hyderabad seems to have been impacted with the residential supplies and absorption slipping drastically in the second quarter of the year 2024. In its latest research data, Anarock reveals that Hyderabad added just about 13,750 residential units in Q2 2024 as against around 22,960 units added in the first quarter. This drop in the number of residential units added translates to roughly about 40 per cent! Not just new launches and absorption, Hyderabad also appears to be dropping out of realty radar with a drastic drop in sales, which Anarock data puts at 23 per cent. In the second quarter, the city recorded sales of approximate 15,085 as against 19,660 units sold in the previous quarter. The data collated by Anarock in fact has Hyderabad being the biggest loser, with a 23 per cent drop in residential units sales, among the top seven cities of Kolkata (-18%), Chennai (-9%), Pune (-8%), Bengaluru (-8%), MMR (-3%) and NCR (6%). The Anarock report states "the bull run in residential sales across the top 7 cities tamed down marginally in the second quarter of 2024, to the backdrop of increasing property prices and a high base record of the previous quarter (Q1 2024)."

Karnataka tribal corporation scam: BJP to lay siege to deputy commissioner offices in statewide stir



GNS News Agency, July 3

The Karnataka BJP has called on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take responsibility for the alleged financial irregularities at the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation (KMSTDC). It plans to lay siege to the offices of deputy commissioners at all district centres on Friday, June 28. At a press conference in Delhi on Wednesday, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra reiterated the party's claim that the funds were diverted to benami companies to finance Lok Sabha elections in Telangana. The scam involves the alleged diversion of funds from the KMSTDC bank account to other accounts in Telangana.

A special Investigation Team (SIT) is investigating

this case. So far, 11 people have been arrested for swindling approximately Rs 94 crore. "The SIT is formed to investigate the case as per the state government's convenience. It is trying to fool the people," he said. Pointing out that the finance department was being handled by CM Siddaramaiah, Vijayendra questioned how such a large amount was transferred without his knowledge. "Funds meant for Scheduled Tribes were misused and looted by the Congress government," he added. The row led to Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister B Nagendra's resignation earlier this month (<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/lok-sabha-elections-results-karnataka-congress-nagendra-resigns-scam-9376718/>). The BJP also demanded the removal of Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil and KMSTDC Chairman Basangouda Daddal, alleging their involvement in the irregularities. The issue came to light in the last week of May, when Chandrashekar P, superintendent at the Corporation, died by suicide. (<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/tribal-corporation-employee-suicide-karnataka-bjp-minister-corruption-congress-9356489/>) He left a death note alleging that senior officials had forced him to open a parallel account to divert money from the KMSTDC primary account, based on "oral instructions by a minister". The amount was transferred from one Union Bank of India account to another allegedly at the behest of J G Padmanabha, the former managing director of the Corporation and an accused in the case.

'Haribhanga' mangoes, hilsa and roshogolla: Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina responds to Tripura's gift of 500 kg queen pineapples

GNS News Agency, July 3

Four days after Tripura made a friendly gift of 500 kg of its 'state fruit' queen pineapple to neighbouring Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Bangladeshi premier on Thursday sent a return gift of 400 kg of its delicious 'Haribhanga' mangoes, native to the Dinajpur and Rangpur region of Bangladesh. She also sent 50 kg of its iconic Hilsa fish and 50 kg roshogolla (sweets). Officials from the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission (AHC) in Agartala received the gifts sent by the Bangladesh Prime Minister at the Agartala-Akhaura Integrated Check Post (ICP), close to the Agartala city, to be handed over to the Chief Minister's Office.

Meanwhile, officials said Saha is away from Agartala on a series of courtesy meetings and discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and others at New Delhi. Saha's gift of queen pineapples was a symbolic gesture to underscore the commitment of both leaders to enhance bilateral relations and promote regional cooperation and a continuation of a long history of cordial diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Tripura. The queen pineapple, famous for its exquisite taste and high nutritional value, is a testament to the state's rich agricultural heritage and has got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag last year.

Many of the previous Tripura Chief Ministers like former CM Biplab Kumar Deb, had sent pineapples to the Bangladesh Prime Minister, who in turn, reciprocated with delicious mangoes. Tripura has also exported its pineapples to Dubai, Qatar, Bangladesh, different European nations and several states of the country, facilitating growing horticulture-based industry and impetus to pineapple



growers. Tripura grows an estimated 1.28 lakh MT of pineapples every year across 8,800 hectare orchards in different districts. Some of these orchards are run by the government but most of them are privately owned. Over 4,000 pineapple growers are directly connected to the cultivation of the fruit here. Tripura shares a very cordial relation with Bangladesh, ever since the birth of the Bengali nation in 1971. The tiny northeast state played a crucial role in the nine-month long Bangladesh Liberation war against the Pakistani forces which concluded after the Mukti Bahini led by Sheikh Mujibar Rahman declared independence on March 26 in 1971. Tripura now shares an 856 km of international border with Bangladesh, including land-based and riverine border patches. As per a government statement in 2022, Tripura's trade volume with Bangladesh increased by 158 per cent in the three previous years and the trade volume with Bangladesh was estimated to be around Rs 1,008.40 crore.

Medical student ragged to the point of hospitalisation and dialysis, FIR against 7 seniors in Rajasthan

GNS News Agency, July 3

Ragging, ragging in Rajasthan, ragging in Durgapur, ragging FIR against students, ragging incident, ragging in medical college, ragging at Government Medical College Durgapur, senior students ragging, medical college ragging, student safety, anti-ragging measures, indian express. On the delay between the alleged ragging and the complaint to the National Medical Commission (NMC), the father said that the family came to know about it later, only through the doctors. Police in Rajasthan's Durgapur have lodged an FIR against seven students for ragging after a first-year medical student suffered an infection in his liver and kidney and had to undergo dialysis due to injuries from alleged excessive ragging, officials said.

The 20-year-old student told police that he and about 50-70 other first-year medical students at Government Medical College, Durgapur were taken to a hill about one and a half kilometers from the college last month. At the hill, they were allegedly ragged by seniors. The student's father said that the alleged incident took place on the evening of May 15. Terming it an "inhuman act", he said that the students were



taken to the hill with the temperature touching 48 degrees Celsius and once there, the seniors made his son do 300-350 sit-ups while some others had to do even more. He said that due to the intense strain, his son's muscles were damaged, which led to infection in the kidney and liver. "He didn't tell us anything about the ragging, but when he complained about pain, we had some tests conducted, first on May 18, and then again on May 22," the father told The Indian Express. When the test results flagged issues, the family rushed him to a hospital in Ahmedabad on May 22 following a recommendation by doctors. "The doctors said that we brought him just in time and any further delay could

have been dangerous," the father said. At the hospital, the student was admitted for nine days beginning May 22 and almost a month and a half later, has recovered, after undergoing dialysis four times. On the delay between the alleged ragging and the complaint to the National Medical Commission (NMC), the father said that the family came to know about it later, only through the doctors. Moreover, the student didn't want his exams, which were completed only on June 26, to be disturbed because of the complaint. GMC principal Dr Balamuruganvelu S said they received a complaint via the NMC website. "We formed a committee within 24 hours and investigated (the case). We sus-

pending seven students who were involved in the ragging and also lodged an FIR at the local police station." Girdhari Singh, SHO of Durgapur's Sadar police station, said the police have recorded the statements of five students who were allegedly ragged. As for action against the seven accused, he said that the investigation is still on. He said that the FIR was lodged on June 24, following a complaint given by the college administration, under IPC sections 143 (unlawful assembly), 147 (rioting), 149 (member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 352

Sam Pitroda's reappointment implies Cong endorses his 'unsavoury' remarks: BJP



GNS News Agency, July 3

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday attacked the Congress for its decision to appoint Sam Pitroda as chairman of the Congress' overseas unit, saying it implied that the party endorsed all the "objectionable and unsavoury" remarks made by Pitroda in the past. "With his reappointment, it is now very clear that the Congress subscribes to and endorses all the unsavoury, objectionable and inciting comments made by Sam Pitroda about Indians, Lord Ram, Ram Navami, Sikh genocide, Pulwama terror attack," BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said on Thursday.

Poonawalla's remarks come a day after Pitroda was

re-appointed to the position nearly two months after he resigned after triggering a controversy in May this year by referring to Chinese, Arabs, white people and Africans to describe the looks of people in India's east, west, north and south, respectively. Pitroda's comments in an online interaction – while trying to describe the importance of India's diversity – had exposed the Congress to sharp attacks by the BJP including PM Narendra Modi. "My country will not tolerate the disrespect of my countrymen on the basis of their skin colour. Modi will never tolerate this," PM Modi said at a rally in Warangal on May 8.

The Congress had distanced the party from Pitroda's comments. "The analogies given by Mr Sam Pitroda in a recent podcast to illustrate India's diversity are most unfortunate and completely unacceptable. The Indian National Congress rejects these analogies," Congress's communications chief Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. Poonawalla said it was clear that the Congress had distanced itself from Pitroda's remarks "just to fool and mislead the people" of the country as his comments were "politically inconvenient" for the party during the elections. "As soon as the elections are over and Rahul Gandhi is made the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the Congress reappointed Sam Pitroda as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress as he is Rahul Gandhi's mentor, advisor and 'guru,'" Poonawalla said

Assam DGP orders suspension of cops allegedly involved in assaulting civilians

GNS News Agency, July 3

Silchar: The Director General of Police (DGP), Gyanendra Pratap Singh, on Thursday ordered the suspension of four police personnel allegedly involved in the assault of civilians in Guwahati. Singh said that he had instructed the Guwahati police commissioner to put all the accused police personnel under suspension. Police have identified the four accused cops as Parag Jyoti Barman, Tirtha Deka, Dhyanjyoti Tamuli, and constable Kalpajyoti Neog.

They have been accused of misbehaving and assaulting civilians, including a woman, in a drunken state on Monday (June 24) in the Basistha area of Guwahati. Police said a case was registered following a complaint from several people, according to whom the four cops, who were not on duty at the time, had consumed alcohol and assaulted them for no reason.

"We were walking by the street when they charged us," said Ratul Nath, a victim. Rina Khakhlary, another complainant, said she saw the incident and went to stop the harassment but the men, who addressed themselves as police officers, pushed her and she fell to the ground. "They kept using abusive language while threatening me,"



she said. Following the incident, the DGP on Tuesday (June 25) ordered an inquiry into the alleged incident. "An enquiry has been ordered. If true, firm lawful & departmental action would be taken. Such misdemeanour, if true, is unacceptable whatsoever may be the provocation & reason," he wrote on X. According to the people familiar with the matter, the deputy commissioner of police (East), Mrinal Deka, has been asked to investigate the incident and also submit the investigation report in seven days. A case has been registered against them and they are going through interrogations, said police.

70 feet in 72 hours: Indian army constructs bailey bridge in Sikkim, restores connectivity in the state after landslide

GNS News Agency, July 3

Army engineers constructed a 70-foot bailey bridge on Dikchu-Sanklang road in Sikkim's capital Gangtok within 72 hours to restore connectivity lost due to recent floods in the state. Trishakti Corps Army engineers started construction work on June 23, according to PRO Defence, Guwahati, reported news agency ANI.

PRO Defence also credited Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and local administration for their efforts to restore connectivity and bring back normalcy to the isolated flood-stricken areas. The bridge constructed at Dett Khola on Dikchu-Sanklang road is a significant link to "enable vehicular traffic from Dikchu to Sanklang towards Chungthang", said PRO Defence. In Mangan, which lies near the Teesta River, 1200 tourists were stuck as of June 16, reported PTI. The bridge would aid in bringing basic necessities such as critical healthcare for the affected people, added PRO Defence. "The bridge is an important link to enable vehicular traffic from Dikchu to Sanklang towards Chungthang. The bridge will assist in providing basic necessities including critical medical aid for the affected people of Mangan district," as per the PRO Defence, reported ANI. Sikkim's minister of forest and environment Pintso Namgyal Lepcha visited the site



on June 27 and appreciated the efforts of the Indian Army in completing the bridge at such pace, added PRO Defence. incessant rains in North Sikkim have caused multiple landslides and breaches affecting the road connectivity in the area. Roads leading to North Sikkim such as Dikchu-Sanklang-Toong, Mangan-Sanklang, Singtham-Rangrang, and Rangrang-Toong were all affected by the rains since June 11. The Indian Army engineers from Trishakti Corps constructed a 150-foot suspension bridge earlier on June 23 to restore connectivity in border villages in North Sikkim, reported

Karnataka CID files chargesheet against ex-CM BS Yediyurappa in POCSO case



After the Sadashivanagar police in Bengaluru registered a case of molestation in March this year against the BJP stalwart, Karnataka Director General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

GNS News Agency, July 3

Karnataka CID on Thursday filed a chargesheet against former chief minister and BJP leader BS Yediyurappa over allegations of sexually assaulting a minor girl. The chargesheet was filed in the special court dealing with POCSO cases by the Crime Investigation Department of the state. After the Sadashivanagar police in Bengaluru registered a case of molestation in March this year against the BJP stalwart, Karnataka Director General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

The POCSO case against the former CM was regis-

tered based on an FIR by a 54-year-old woman, who alleged that he molested her 17-year-old daughter during a meeting in February this year, at his residence in Bengaluru's Dollar Colony. Yediyurappa denied all the allegations against him. While denying the charge filed against him, the BJP leader said that "people would teach a lesson to those indulging in conspiracies against me." The CID questioned Yediyurappa for about three hours on June 17 in connection with the case. The Karnataka High Court had earlier passed orders restraining the CID from arresting Yediyurappa in the case.

The victim's mother, who filed the sexual assault against Yediyurappa, died at a private hospital in Bengaluru last month, due to lung cancer. According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and Section 354 A (Sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) based on the molestation complaint.

Earlier this month, the victim's brother filed a petition in court alleging that no progress has been made despite the FIR being filed three months ago. The petitioner prayed that Yediyurappa should be arrested and interrogated. The allegations against the BJP leader sparked a major political controversy, with many opposition party leaders slamming the party for not taking strict action against the former CM. Mehbooba Mufti, former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, criticised the Karnataka High Court's decision to stay Yediyurappa's arrest. She said that the decision exposed selective justice, contrasting Yediyurappa's treatment with that of former chief ministers Hemant Soren and Arvind Kejriwal, both of whom were arrested on what she described as lesser charges.

Jaishankar assures MK Stalin of action for release of Tamil Nadu fishermen from Sri Lanka



GNS News Agency, July 3

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar mentioned that the NDA government has endeavoured to address the livelihood interests of the fishing community. Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar on Thursday responded to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, assuring proactive action by the Centre for the release of detained fishermen in Sri Lanka. He said 34 Indian fishermen are currently under judicial remand in Sri Lanka, and six others have been convicted and are serving sentences there. He also mentioned that the NDA government has endeavoured to address the livelihood interests of the fishing community.

"The Indian High Commission in Colombo and the

Consulate in Jaffna have been expeditiously and consistently taking up such cases for early release of those detained. You are also aware that the genesis of this issue goes back to 1974, following an understanding between the then Union Government and the State Government," wrote Jaishankar. "After coming to office in 2014, the NDA government has endeavoured to address the livelihood interests of our fishing community and its humanitarian aspects. These efforts continue in their multiple dimensions, including through engaging the Government of Sri Lanka. You may be assured that we give the utmost priority to the welfare and security of Indian fishermen and will always do so," he added.

The Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin had earlier written three letters to External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar on June 19, 24 and 25, urging him to secure the immediate release of all the fishermen and their fishing boats apprehended by Sri Lanka. "I wish to draw your attention to the apprehension of four fishermen from Tamil Nadu on June 18, 2024 by the Sri Lankan Navy. These fishermen, who set out from the Kottaipattinam fishing harbour in Pudukottai District, on their mechanised fishing boat, were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy," Stalin had written in his letter. He had also mentioned that "these incidents not only disrupt the livelihoods of the fishermen but also instil a sense of fear and uncertainty among their families and the entire coastal communities."

Opposition to bring adjournment motions on NEET in both houses of parliament

GNS News Agency, July 3

The Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is under fire from the opposition over allegations of irregularities in examinations. The opposition INDIA alliance on Thursday said it will bring adjournment motions on NEET row in both houses of Parliament on Friday. The decision was taken at the meeting of INDIA alliance parties at the residence of Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge.

The opposition will raise issues on NEET, inflation, unemployment, alleged misuse of CBI, ED, and the governor's office during debate on President Droupadi Murmu's address. The Opposition members will assemble at the Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex on Monday. "Several issues were discussed today in the meeting... There will be a debate on all the issues in the Parliament whether the President's address or the election of the speaker," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said after the meeting. "Whether it is competitive examinations or government recruitment, there should be no reason for any hindrance. This process requires complete transparency and probity. Regarding the recent instances of paper leak in some examinations, my



government is committed to a fair investigation and ensuring strict punishment to the culprits," the President had said. Responding to the President's address, Kharge had said, "Modi Government cannot run away from its responsibility by just simply saying that 'we should rise above partisan politics'. The youth is demanding justice. Union Education Minister will have to take responsibility for this. Every second youth in the country is unemployed, and no concrete policy to eliminate unemployment has emerged from this speech."

'Never faced political pressure in 24 years as a judge': CJI Chandrachud

GNS News Agency, July 3

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, has refuted claims of political interference in the judiciary throughout his 24-year tenure as a judge. He shared his thoughts in a discussion at the Oxford Union earlier this month, reported Live Law. His response came after he was asked about political pressure on the judiciary, especially in recent years. "In the 24 years I have been a judge, I have never faced political pressure from the government. In India, judges live a life isolated from the political arm of the government," he was quoted by Live Law as saying.

However, he acknowledged that judges are often aware of the political implications of their decisions. The CJI said that judges must consider the impact of their decisions on the polity at large when deciding Constitutional cases. "This is not political pressure but an understanding of the likely impact of the decision," he said. CJI Chandrachud also spoke about "social pressure," noting that judges think about the societal impact of their judgments.

"Many of the cases we decide involve intense societal impacts. As judges, I believe it is our duty to be cognizant of the impact of our decisions on the social ordering which we are ultimately going to affect," Live Law quoted him as saying. Speaking on how judiciary can balance independence, social justice, and minority rights in a "politically charged atmosphere," he said that trained judges decide disputes based on settled traditions and Constitutional precepts, not the passions of the moment. The CJI also answered various questions about judicial activism, public confidence in the judiciary, case pendency, and social media pressure.

When judges interpret the law to uphold Constitu-



tional values, they are not being 'activists,' he said. "It is their plain duty to interpret the Constitution and the law." Addressing case pendency, CJI Chandrachud pointed out the need for more judges. "Judge to population ratio in India is amongst the lowest in the world. We simply need more judges. We are engaging with the government to increase the strength of the judiciary at all levels," he said. "The large number of cases filed in Indian courts indicates public trust in the judiciary, but more needs to be done to increase this trust, he admitted. The best way to achieve this is through increased transparency and accountability. "We can do a lot more and we are trying to do a lot more to entrench public confidence in the judiciary. The best way is for the Courts to be transparent and accountable to the people. We are not accountable in that sense to democratically elected institutions like Parliament. We can do a lot more to be transparent which we are trying to do and we can add a lot more to our accountability," he added.

Cong students' wing NSUI's members storm NTA office in Delhi, demand closure of exam body

GNS News Agency, July 3

The NEET-UG was conducted by the NTA on May 5 with around 24 lakh candidates taking part in it. The exam was marred with allegations of irregularities. The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET-UG was conducted by the NTA on May 5 with around 24 lakh candidates taking part in it.

The results were announced on June 4, but they were followed by allegations of question paper leaks in states such as Bihar, besides other irregularities. The NSUI protests are held on the day President Droupadi Murmu asserted that the Narendra Modi-led NDA government at the Centre is committed to a fair probe in the recent incidents of paper leaks. "Whether it is competitive examinations or government recruitment, there should be no reason for any hindrance. This process requires complete transparency and probity. Regarding the recent instances of paper leak in some examinations, my government is committed to a fair investigation and ensuring strict punishment to the culprits," the President said in her address to joint session of parliament earlier in the day.



The National Testing Agency (NTA) is facing massive criticism over the cancellations and allegations of irregularities in competitive examination. Last week, the government replaced the NTA director general Subodh Kumar Singh and appointed Pradeep Singh Kharola in his place. The government has also set up a seven-member panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Radhakrishnan to look into exam reforms and review the functioning of the testing agency.

Looking forward to the results of India's inquiry into Pannun case, says U.S.

nation attempt on a U.S. citizen on U.S. soil.

Following the allegations, India appointed a high-level inquiry committee to look into the inputs provided by the U.S. on the plot. Mr. Miller said, "We will respond to those members privately as we always do. I won't speak to that here. But as pertains to the other issue, when this issue first arose, we made clear that we had raised it with the government of India and told them that we expected there to be a full investigation." During a virtual media briefing on Wednesday on his and U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's visit to India last week, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said, the U.S. has consistently pressed India for updates on the Indian investigation into the alleged foiled plot to kill Sikh separatist Pannun and made it clear that it seeks accountability in the case. "We have had constructive dialogue with India on this topic and I would say that they have been responsive to our concerns," he said. "We've made clear that we seek accountability from the Government of India and we have consistently asked for updates on the Indian committee of inquiry's investigations," Campbell said. "And I would just simply say that we raised this issue directly with the Indian government...at the most senior levels between our two sides," he said. He was replying to a question on whether the 'murder-for-hire' plot targeting Pannun was raised during meetings that he and Sullivan held with their Indian counterparts. Responding to another question on the Lok Sabha elections in India, Miller said, "When it comes to the Indian elections, we have been quite clear on behalf of the United States government that we celebrate what was the largest exercise of democracy in the history of the world." "It was an extraordinary achievement. And then when it comes to the outcome of the election, we obviously take no side. That's a question for the people of India to decide," Mr. Miller said.

GNS News Agency, July 3

The U.S. has said it is looking forward to the results of the Indian inquiry into the allegations that an Indian official was involved in an alleged plot to assassinate Sikh separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on American soil. In November last year, U.S. federal prosecutors charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta of working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun in New York. Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, holds dual citizenship of the U.S. and Canada. Gupta, who was arrested in the Czech Republic in June last year, was extradited to the U.S. on June 14.

"They (Indian officials) have announced that they are conducting an inquiry, and we will look forward to the results of that inquiry," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters at his daily news conference on Wednesday. He was responding to a question on members of the Foreign Senate Foreign Relations Committee writing a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken calling for a strong diplomatic response on the Indian government's involvement in an alleged assassi-

Biden - Trump Presidential debate: When and Where to watch the first general election presidential debate



GNS News Agency, July 3

The first general election debate of the 2024 election season is here, and it's a historic moment no matter what happens on stage. President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are taking part in June 27 night's debate in Atlanta. Not only is it the first-ever matchup between a sitting president and a former one, but it's also the first debate for either candidate in this year's election. And it's happening so early in the general election campaign cycle that neither man will have accepted their party's formal nomination yet.

Here's how to watch the debate:

What time is the debate? The debate will start at 9 p.m. ET Thursday. It's being moderated by CNN's Jake Tapper and Dana Bash. What channel is the debate on? CNN is carrying the debate live on its broadcast network, as well as on CNN International, CNN en Español and CNN Max. Viewers can also stream it without a log in on CNN's website. Several networks have also agreed to carry the event live. CNN signage is seen outside of the McCamish Pavilion on the Georgia Institute of Technology campus one day ahead of the first 2024 presidential debate between US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 26, 2024.

CNN signage is seen outside of the McCamish Pavilion on the Georgia Institute of Technology campus one day ahead of the first 2024 presidential debate between US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, in Atlanta, Georgia, "Where is the debate? The setting for the first general election debate is CNN's studios in Atlanta. Unlike the Republican primary debates, no audience will be present. Once a Republican stronghold, Georgia was a pivotal battleground in 2020. Both parties are preparing for another closely contested race in the state this year. Trump also faces an indictment in Georgia for his push to "find 11,780 votes" and overturn Biden's victory based on false or unproven theories of

voter fraud.

Which candidates will be on stage? Two candidates — Joe Biden and Donald Trump — will be on stage. For a time, it seemed like they wouldn't be meeting up at all. Biden's campaign had proposed excluding third-party candidates, such as Robert F. Kennedy Jr., from the debates outright. Under the debate commission's rules, Kennedy or other third-party candidates could qualify if they secured ballot access sufficient to claim 270 Electoral Votes and polled at 15% or higher in a selection of national surveys. Both CNN and ABC announced the same qualification threshold, saying candidates will need to reach at least 15% in four separate national polls of registered or likely voters that meet their standards, between March 13 and a week ahead of Thursday's match up. Last week, CNN announced that Kennedy hadn't met those markers. Trump didn't take part in any of the GOP primary debates, so this is his first time on stage this cycle. Biden didn't debate any of the Democrats challenging him, either. Last month, Biden announced that he would not participate in fall presidential debates sponsored by the nonpartisan commission that has organized them for more than three decades. Instead, his campaign proposed that media outlets directly organize the debates between the presumptive Democratic and Republican nominees. Hours later, Biden said he had accepted an invitation from CNN, adding, "Over to you, Donald." Trump, who had insisted he would debate Biden anytime and anywhere, said on Truth Social he'd be there, too, adding, "Let's get ready to Rumble!!!" Soon after that, they agreed to a second debate. What's up next? ABC will host the second debate on Sept. 10. The network has not offered details on where its event would be held, only that it would be moderated by anchors David Muir and Linsey Davis. And don't forget about the running mates. Trump hasn't named his yet, but Vice President Kamala Harris has accepted an invitation from CBS News to debate her eventual rival in studio on either July 23 or Aug. 13. (AP) AMS

Haj deaths show challenge of shielding pilgrims from scorching climate

GNS News Agency, July 3

Hundreds of the pilgrims who died in fierce heat at this year's haj were not officially registered with the Saudi authorities, with the result that many had no access to vital services like air-conditioned buses and cool-off tents. The deaths highlight a looming challenge for organisers as climate change takes hold in the region: the practice of requiring official permits for such services is stirring concern that unregistered pilgrims could increasingly be exposed to life-threatening temperatures. At the same time, high prices for official haj packages are driving some Muslims to take cheaper unofficial routes to the ritual, even though these lack the crucial permits, and to exploit an easing of curbs on some other kinds of Saudi visas. The unregistered pilgrims' lack of a permit made it difficult to provide them with services and care, the security spokesman for Saudi's Ministry of Interior, Colonel Talal bin Shalhoub, said in an interview on Saudi TV channel al-Arabiya. Critics of the government say all pilgrims, whatever their status, should be protected from heat, and allege the authorities this year cracked down

on unauthorised attendees. "This focus on registered visit versus unregistered is a red herring ... If you are there and you need help, you should get access to it," said Khalid al-Jabri, a physician who worked for the Saudi security agency that oversees haj and is currently part of the Saudi opposition in exile. Saudi Arabia's international media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Saudi Arabia's health minister, Fahad Al-Jalajel said in a statement that health authorities provided services to unregistered pilgrims on 141,000 occasions during the haj. Heat stroke risk but he acknowledged that unregistered pilgrims "walked long distances under direct sunlight without adequate shelter or comfort", and added that 83% of the 1,301 fatalities were among unregistered pilgrims. Pilgrims said those without permits had to walk at times in temperatures above 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit), while most registered pilgrims were able to make much of the journey by air-conditioned bus. A Reuters witness said he saw thousands walking on the highway near Mina, a vast tent city on the way to Mecca, rather than using buses like most registered pil-

Iran presses on with crackdown over headscarf ahead of Presidential polls



GNS News Agency, July 3

Almost every afternoon in Iran's capital, police vans rush to major Tehran squares and intersections to search for women with loose headscarves and those who dare not to wear them at all. The renewed crackdown comes barely two years since mass protests over the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini who was detained for not wearing a scarf to the authorities' liking.

Amini's death in September 2022 sparked months of protests and a security crackdown that killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained, and for a time morality police disappeared from the streets. Now, hardliners within Iran's theocracy have pressed forward with a crackdown. Videos are emerging of women being physically forced into vans by police as lawmakers continue to push for harsher penalties. Meanwhile, authorities have seized thousands of cars over women having their hair uncovered while also targeting businesses that serve them. The renewed hijab push, which police are calling the Noor (light) Plan, began before former President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash, and whoever wins a vote to replace the hard-line cleric on Friday will have an influence over just how intense it becomes — and how Iran responds to any further unrest. The Noor plan "An intervention ... under the Noor Plan will take us into darkness," reformist presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian recently told a group of female supporters.

Enforcement began ramping up in April, with videos spreading online showing women having violent encounters with female enforcers dressed in the all-encompassing black chador alongside uniformed police officers. While police haven't published arrest numbers about the crackdown and media haven't given it major attention, it's widely discussed in Iran. But still, many women continue to wear their hijabs loosely or leave them draped around their shoulders while walking in Tehran.

On a recent afternoon in northern Tehran, women sat in cafes and other public places, as a police officer in his 50s told those passing by: "Please cover yourselves, ladies," and then muttered audibly: "My God, I am fed up repeating this without getting any attention." "We know the police are not eager to fight women, but they are under pressure to," said Fatemeh, a 34-year-old maths teacher who gave only her first name for fear of reprisal. "Sooner or later, the authorities will realise that it would

serve their interests better to pull back." Hijab remains mandatory in Iran, Afghanistan

Iran and neighbouring Taliban-controlled Afghanistan are the only countries where the hijab remains mandatory — even conservative Saudi Arabia has dialled back on its morality patrols. While women attend school, work and can manage their own lives in Iran, hardliners insist that the hijab must be enforced. The garment has long been entwined with politics in Iran. Former ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi banned it in 1936, part of his efforts to mirror the West. The ban lasted only five years, but many middle and upper-class Iranian women chose not to wear it. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, some of the women who helped overthrow the Shah embraced the even more conservative chador. But others protested a decision by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to order women to wear hijabs in public. In 1983, it became law, enforced with penalties including fines and up to two months in prison.

The government's insistence on enforcing the hijab also reflects its conspiratorial view of the world. Iran's national police chief, Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan, has alleged without providing evidence that the country's enemies plan to transform the nation's culture by encouraging women to avoid the veil. Already, "tens of thousands of women have had their cars arbitrarily confiscated as punishment for defying Iran's veiling laws," Amnesty International said in March. "Others have been prosecuted and sentenced to flogging or prison terms or faced other penalties such as fines or being forced to attend 'morality' classes." On Saturday, police said they would release some 8,000 vehicles held over women not wearing the hijab in them for the Eid al-Ghadir holiday marked by Shias. "The Islamic Republic is using the distraction of its presidential 'election' to go after its women activists and cow them into silence through imprisonment and abuse," said Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran. The centre said at least 12 women activists have been sentenced to prison since Raisi's deaths for their work. But there are signs that Iran's government, and 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, know there are risks to escalating enforcement. A Bill passed by Iran's parliament that could impose 10-year prison sentences for hijab violations has yet to be approved by the country's Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Mr. Khamenei. So far among the presidential candidates, only Mr. Pezeshkian has criticised the hijab law. Others, including current parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, asked for the law to be implemented in a softer way. Candidate Mostafa Pourmohammadi, a Shia cleric, criticised the use of violence against women, saying police should use "the language of trust and gratitude" rather than the baton. Meanwhile, the imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, a prominent women's rights activist, has issued a call from prison urging a boycott of the presidential vote, saying it only supports "a regime that believes in repression, terror and violence."

Women's rights will be raised at UN meeting being attended by Taliban: UN official

GNS News Agency, July 3

The United Nations (UN) political chief who will chair the first meeting between Afghanistan's Taliban rulers and envoys from about 25 countries answered sharp criticism that Afghan women have been excluded, saying on June 26 that women's rights will be raised at every session. Undersecretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo stressed to a small group of reporters that the two-day meeting starting on Sunday is an initial engagement aimed at initiating a step-by-step process with the goal of seeing the Taliban "at peace with itself and its neighbours and adhering to international law," the UN Charter and human rights.

This is the third UN meeting with Afghan envoys in Qatar's capital, Doha, but the first that the Taliban are attending. They weren't invited to the first and refused to attend the second. Other attendees include envoys from the European Union, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the United States, Russia, China and several of Afghanistan's neighbours, DiCarlo said. The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021 as United States and NATO forces withdrew following two decades of war. No country officially recognises them as Afghanistan's government, and the UN has said that recognition is almost impossible while bans on female education and employment remain in place and women can't go out without a male guardian.

When Ms. DiCarlo met with senior Taliban officials in Kabul in May, she said she made clear that the international community is concerned about four things: the lack of an inclusive government, the denial of human rights especially for women and girls, and the need to combat terrorism and the narcotics trade. "The issue of inclusive governance, women's rights, human rights writ large, will be a part of every single session," she said. "This is important, and we will hear it again and again, I'm sure from quite a number of us."

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International criticised the United Nations for not having Afghan women



and civil society representatives at the table with the Taliban. Ms. DiCarlo described the meeting as a process. "This is not an inter-Afghan dialogue," she stressed. "I would hope we could get to that someday, but we're not there." The Taliban's Foreign Ministry on June 26 reiterated the concerns they want to raise — restrictions on Afghanistan's financial and banking system, development of the private sector and countering drug trafficking. Ms. DiCarlo said they also raised Afghanistan's vulnerability to climate change. She said discussions on the first day of the Doha meeting on Sunday will focus on how the world would engage with the Taliban to achieve the objectives of peace and its adherence to international law and human rights. The assessment calls for a step-by-step process, where each side would respond to actions taken by the other.

On the second day, the participants will discuss the private sector, including getting more women into the workforce through microfinance projects, as well as counter-narcotics efforts, such as alternative livelihoods and support for drug addicts, she said. "Hopefully, it will achieve some progress, but it will be slow," Ms. DiCarlo said. She stressed that the meeting isn't about the Taliban and doesn't signify any recognition of Afghan's rulers as the country's official government. "That's not in the cards," she said.

wants to expand the numbers of religious tourists, aiming to welcome 30 million pilgrims for haj and the year-round pilgrimage umra annually by 2030, as part of its broader strategy to wean the economy off oil. In 2019, Saudi Arabia earned about \$12 billion annually from haj and umra, according to official data. Haj tours can cost from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per person, and the price is part of the reason many take unofficial packages.

"Finances are...a huge factor," said Khaled El Sherbini, the owner of an Egypt-based tour agency. He said an Egyptian could do haj "unregistered" for 30,000 or 40,000 EGP (\$622-\$829), a fraction of an official package costing about 300,000 EGP (\$6,222.78). In 2018 a haj package would have cost about \$3,000. The kingdom is determined to protect official haj packages. Ahead of the pilgrimage, its interior ministry said those caught transporting an unregistered pilgrim would face up to six months in prison and a fine of up to 50,000 riyals (\$13,000). An Egyptian crisis unit tasked with investigating the deaths of Egyptian pilgrims said on Saturday it suspended licences of 16 tourism companies and referred them for prosecution.

worrying climate projections, Saudi Arabia has said it

Banks could weather even extreme economic tumult, Fed finds



through economic recessions, high unemployment, drops in housing prices and other scenarios.

Real estate has been a particular pressure point for banks, as many large lenders have been dumping loans tied to office buildings, among other areas, in an era of higher interest rates and low occupancy for commercial spaces. Even so, the Fed found all the banks held enough capital, or the money they are required to maintain to ensure stability and provide a financial cushion against losses. The analysis is likely to be welcomed among Wall Street's largest banks, which have united to oppose an international effort to raise their capital requirements, which they argue will crimp their ability to lend and ultimately raise costs on consumers. The finalization of that plan, known as "Basel III endgame," has long been delayed, and Fed officials have said they expect to modify it further before it is adopted. It took only nine minutes after the release of this year's test for the Financial Services Forum, a bank lobbying group, to release a statement saying the results demonstrated that the hike in capital requirements was not warranted, because the largest US lenders "remain capable of supporting the economy in the face of a severe economic downturn." A Fed official, speaking to reporters Wednesday afternoon on condition of anonymity, said the new results did not change the Basel III plans. Given that banks clear the bar so routinely, the usefulness of the stress tests themselves has come under question. This week, the left-leaning advocacy group Better Markets, which generally favors more regulation, derided the examinations as "stressless" and insufficiently challenging. Separately, Daniel K. Tarullo, a former Federal Reserve governor, said last month that the regulator should consider using less predictable testing.

The largest banks in America could survive even those dire economic scenarios, according to an analysis released by the Federal Reserve. The results are particularly noteworthy, because in addition to the Fed's annual bank stress tests, this year, for the first time, the industry's main regulator put big lenders through an enhanced hypothetical gantlet that mirrored and amplified some news events — including the unwinding of an investment fund that ultimately contributed to the fall of Swiss banking giant Credit Suisse.

The industry cleared the higher bars, with as close to a clean bill of health as its leaders might have hoped. "The banking system is able to withstand a funding stress under the moderate and severe economic conditions included in the exploratory analysis," the Fed concluded. Some 31 banks — all with more than \$100 billion in assets — also passed the more routine annual stress tests, as has become common in recent years since the metrics were put in place after the 2008 financial crisis. Those tests measure banks' projected performance

Jio to raise mobile services rates by 12-27% from July 3, limits free 5G access

Earlier, Jio had raised mobile service rates in December 2021 along with Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. Earlier, Jio had raised mobile service rates in December 2021 along with Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. The country's top telecom operator Jio will increase mobile services rates by 12-27 per cent from July 3 and at the same time restrict the access of unlimited free 5G services for customers, according to a company statement.

This is the first hike in mobile services rates by Jio after a gap of about two-and-a-half years. Jio has over 47 crore mobile subscribers accounting for about 41 per cent market share. The hike comes immediately after the spectrum auction as per the anticipation of sector experts. Industry experts believe that Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea may also increase their mobile services rates soon. "The introduction of new plans is a step in the direction of furthering industry innovation and driving sustainable growth through investments in 5G and AI technology," Reliance Jio Infocomm Chairman, Akash M Ambani said in the statement. The company has raised mobile services rates across almost all plans. Price of the lowest recharge is being raised to Rs 19, about 27 per cent higher than Rs 15 for 1 GB data add-on-pack.

The 75 GB postpaid data plan will now cost Rs 449 as against Rs 399. Jio has also raised the price of the popular Rs 666 unlimited plan with 84-day validity by about 20 per cent to Rs 799. Prices of the annual recharge plans will be increased by 20-21 per cent from Rs 1,559 to Rs 1,899 and from Rs 2,999 to Rs 3,599. The hike across the medium range mobile service plans will be 19-21 per cent. "Unlimited 5G data will be available on all 2GB per



day and above plans... The new plans will be made effective on July 3, 2024 and can be opted from all existing touchpoints and channels," the statement said. As of now, subscribers availing plans priced above Rs 239 are able to access unlimited free 5G service and the rest of the customers have to top up their plan with a Rs 61 voucher for availing unlimited 5G service.

Earlier, Jio had raised mobile service rates in December 2021 along with Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. Airtel had raised the entry level mobile services plan by about 56 per cent to Rs 155 from Rs 99 earlier. Besides hike in mobile services rates, Jio introduced two apps — Jio Safe and JioTranslate — which it provides absolutely free to its customers for a period of one year. Priced at Rs 199 per month, JioSafe — Quantum-secure communication app can be used for calling, messaging, file transfer etc. AI-enabled JioTranslate is a multilingual communication app for translating voice call, voice message, text and image.

Infosys' CEO Parekh settles insider trading case with Sebi; pays Rs 25 lakh



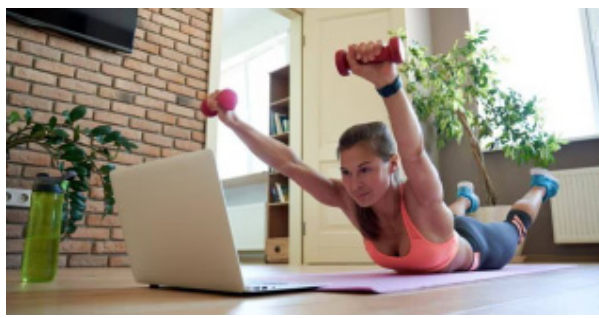
place an adequate and effective system of internal control to ensure compliance for preventing insider trading. In its order, Sebi noted that Salil Parekh was the CEO and MD of Infosys at the time of the announcement of the strategic partnership between Infosys and Vanguard and Sebi's investigation concluded that by not complying with the rule, Parekh allegedly violated insider trading rules. In September 2021, the Sebi passed an interim order in September 2021 against two entities for prima facie violation of the provisions of insider trading rules in the context of alleged insider trading in the scrip of Infosys. Following this, a confirmatory order was passed in December 2021.

Value Gold launches Telangana's first mobile gold buying services for rural areas



Hyderabad: Value Gold, a unit of Caps Gold has launched Telangana's first mobile gold buying services vehicle for rural areas, an innovative solution to leverage gold with great ease for emergencies or financial needs. Actor Anasuya Bharadwaj, influencers, bloggers along with prominent guests participated in the launch. Value Gold also launched its 5th branch at Chintal and has branches at Uppal, Kukatpally, Banjara Hills and Secunderabad. Value Gold has introduced retail gold and silver coins at all branches and now are available for purchase. The first tour of mobile gold buying services now starting from Karimnagar followed by Pedapally, Huzurabad, Sircilla and Siddipet.

Lancet study says Indians engaged in 'insufficient levels of physical activity in 2022'; here's what it means



Almost 50 per cent of Indians were engaged in "insufficient levels of physical activity in 2022", according to a recent Lancet report. The study, which included World Health Organization (WHO) experts, noted that far more women in India (57 percent) were found to be insufficiently physically active compared to men (42 per cent) such that the disparity was reported to be 14 per cent higher among women.

It further stated that the South Asian region ranked second highest globally for adults not meeting recommended physical activity levels, following the high-income Asia Pacific region.

What denotes "insufficient levels of physical activity"?

Neurologist Dr Sudhir Kumar, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, shared that insufficient physical activity is defined as not doing 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination per week, according to

WHO. "Some examples of moderate physical activities include sweeping the floor, walking briskly, slow dancing, vacuuming, washing windows, or shooting a basketball. Examples of vigorous physical activities include running (faster than 8 km per hour), swimming, playing soccer, jumping rope, cycling, and carrying heavy loads (for example, bricks)," Dr Kumar told indianexpress.com. Staying physically active can help you improve muscle strength and also boost your endurance, said Dr Anup Khatri, senior consultant, orthopedics, Gleneagles Hospital, Parel, Mumbai. According to Dr Khatri, high-intensity activities like sprinting can help build muscle, increase stamina, and also improve your cardiovascular health. "Sprinting can also help in burning calories and easily lose weight especially fat from the body," said Dr Khatri. Dr Khatri also mentioned that it's important to maintain a consistent workout regime for better results "as taking frequent breaks can disrupt the entire process making your muscles shrink back to their natural form". Tips to spread your physical activity requirement throughout the day. This physical activity requirement can be spread out over 7 days; or if the person doesn't get adequate time during weekdays, he/she can complete the recommended physical activity during weekends (they are referred to as weekend warriors). "Another point to note is that on the same day too, the physical activity can be done in parts. For example, 20 minutes of brisk walk in the morning, and another session of 30 minutes brisk walk in the evening can be counted as 50 minutes of moderate physical activity for the day," said Dr Kumar.

Bombay Blood Group: Only 1 in 10,000 Indians have this, can be stored only for about 40 days; know all about it

In 2003, the delivery of a pregnant woman was delayed for nearly 15 days at Christian Medical College, Vellore because a donor could not be found for the woman's rare blood group — the Bombay Blood Group (BBG), characterised by the absence of the H antigen. The woman was lucky to find a donor in Amitabh Kumar, who happened to be at the same hospital for his mother's treatment. "I learned about the requirement while roaming around in the blood bank. I donated immediately," said Kumar, who is originally from Jamshedpur.

Kumar learned about his rare blood group in 1996 after volunteering to donate blood. "Jamshedpur Blood Bank informed me about this blood group. They motivated me to become a volunteer donor. Then I gathered more information around the uniqueness of this blood group," Kumar recalled in an interview with indianexpress.com. Now 45, Kumar has donated blood 35 times already. "I was so happy that both the mother and the child were safe after delivery and I could make that small contribution towards it," Kumar said. "Small" but not insignificant. Unlike other blood groups, BBG can only receive and donate to the same blood group. According to the National Institutes of Health, only one in 10,000 Indians has it, and four in a million people worldwide.

What is the Bombay Blood Group all about?

As the name suggests, this rare blood type was first discovered in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, in 1952. Also known as 'hh' or 'Oh' blood group, this lacks the H antigen, the precursor to the A and B antigens found in the more common ABO blood group system. As a result, they cannot form A or B antigens, regardless of their genetic makeup, for the ABO blood group system.

"BBG individuals produce anti-H antibodies that react against red blood cells with the H antigen, making transfusions challenging. They can only receive blood from other BBG individuals, as transfusions from any other group, including O, can cause severe reactions," said Dr Ashish Dixit, consultant at Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru. The Bombay phenotype is inherited in an "autosomal recessive manner," requiring two copies of the hh allele from each parent to exhibit the BBG phenotype. Dixit explained that specific blood typing tests are needed to identify BBG, as standard ABO methods may not detect it. While extremely rare globally, BBG is more common in India and among individuals of Indian descent. blood BBG is extremely rare globally "but is more commonly found in certain populations, particularly in India "Finding matching blood for BBG patients heavily relies on local blood banks, which may have limited supplies," said Dr Brunda M S, consultant, internal medicine, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore.

Delays in finding compatible blood can significantly impact patient outcomes. "In critical situations, every minute counts," said Brunda. Without a centralised database, identifying potential donors for rare blood groups, including BBG, is challenging. "Donors with rare blood types may be scattered across different regions, making



it difficult to find a match quickly without a national repository," said Dixit. This delay can result in life-threatening complications for patients requiring urgent transfusions, increasing risks of adverse health outcomes or even mortality.

Hyderabad-based retired scientist Satish Mahesekar, who has donated blood over 40 times, experienced this firsthand when he needed blood during a dengue infection in 2004-05 but couldn't find a donor. "I am fully aware that this blood group is so rare that I may not easily get it on time if I need it again," Mahesekar said, noting that he has donated blood to terminally-ill patients, knowing they might not survive. He discovered his rare blood group when he had to donate to his sister during her delivery. Any blood has a shelf life of a maximum of 35-42 days depending on the blood bank maintenance. Managing the supply and demand of rare blood types is "inefficient, leading to potential wastage of donated blood and shortages when it is critically needed", noted Dixit. Medical experts urge the creation of a national registry to connect donors across the country, significantly increasing the chance of a timely match. Dixit said that a national repository would improve the recruitment, retention, and coordination of rare blood donors. Without it, efforts to maintain an adequate donor pool are fragmented and less effective. Establishing a national repository for rare blood groups would provide a centralised, efficient, and reliable system for managing and locating rare blood donors, thereby improving patient outcomes and healthcare efficiency. Blood banks and the National Institute of Immunohaematology help, as do individuals like Vinay Shetty through his NGO Life Blood Council, which arranges for rare blood groups. Efforts to build a national registry of rare blood groups are underway, led by Mumbai-based Shetty in collaboration with the Government of India's National Institute of Immunohaematology (KEM Hospital). Shetty, who has been maintaining a database since the 2000s, said there are over 400 people with this rare type, mostly in Maharashtra and southern states. "The North and East (of India) are still unorganised. We have appealed to all state governments to inform us of any person with this rare blood group as a routine practice. We want blood banks across the country to adopt this practice and increase testing to enlist such donors," Shetty said.

Starbucks launches iconic Stanley cups in India

Having taken the globe by storm recently, Stanley + Starbucks have joined hands to debut in India. The Stanley + Starbucks ash green collection, a pinnacle of luxury drinkware launching in select stores across India from June 26. This exclusive collection combines Stanley + Starbucks renowned craftsmanship and functionality in the merchandise space offering discerning connoisseurs two iconic pieces: the Stanley + Starbucks Quencher and Tumbler.

Designed to elevate your beverage experience, the Stanley + Starbucks



ash green collection effortlessly blends functionality with opulent style. Whether keeping your drinks hot or cold for extended durations or gracing any occasion

with its sleek ash green allure, each piece ensures you make a style statement effortlessly throughout the year. The collection is available in select stores

across India. The centrepiece of the collection is Stanley + Starbucks Quencher, designed for those who demand excellence.

'Amitabh Bachchan is a charmer, Shah Rukh Khan plays part of big brother, Salman Khan-Aishwarya Rai are stars': Jameel Khan



of Salman or Aishwarya. We were just doing our thing and having fun."

He added, "And they were very nice to us. I am sure Sanjay must have told them about us. And we too did have conversations with them about our work and stuff, so they were well aware of the fact that we weren't random actors, that they are good." Jameel also had an opportunity of working with Amitabh Bachchan and Tabu in the 2007 film Cheeni Kum. Talking about the megastar, Jameel told indianexpress.com, "He is a legend."

"Bachchan sahab is a legend. We have grown up watching him. I have idealised him and we also happen to be from the same school. So I share a deep connection with him. He is a charmer and has got a wonderful memory. You cannot but love him and obviously there is awe and respect for that man from all quarters. And he walks into a set and there is a different buzz. And he has earned it, he is a legend. Unki kya hi baat karu, chota mooh badi baat (what can I say about him)," said the Gullak star. Jameel who worked with Shah Rukh Khan in the 2003 film Chalte Chalte, said, "Shah Rukh is another person who is a great artist. Has total respect and passion for his work. He respects all his co-actors and his crew all the more when he is producing it and when he is not, he still takes care of the entire unit. He plays the part of big brother."

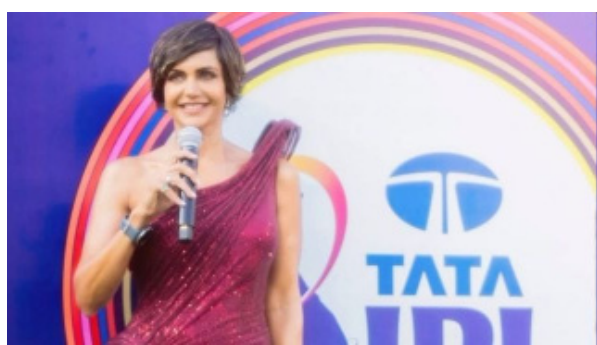
While, lately, there have been many coming forward and talking about star tantrums on set and unrealistic demands, Jameel said, "In my entire journey, I am yet to meet a star who has misbehaved with me or has been curt. They have all been fantastic with me. Maybe I am blessed."

Jameel Khan, who is winning hearts as Santosh Mishra from Gullak, has also been part of several Bollywood films starring Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan in the lead roles. Jameel, who is originally a theatre artist, recently recalled working with these stars. Jameel's first encounter was with Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan when he collaborated with them for his first film Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (1999). Jameel's first film was Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. In a conversation with the indianexpress.com, Jameel recalled working with the lead stars of the film. He said, "Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai, what do I say, it was long time ago that I worked with them. They are both good actors, they are stars. But, the good thing is the family that was in the film, we were all theatre actors. We had our own group. Despite being new and not fresh in front of the camera, maybe we were not aware of the technicalities of filmmaking but the confidence was there as an actor. So we weren't unnerved due to the presence

Mandira Bedi recalls being harshly criticised for her cricket hosting skills, says she was forbidden from reading comments about herself

Mandira Bedi, who starred in the first-ever Indian daily soap Shanti (1994), is just as well-known as a cricket presenter. The 52-year-old actor recently revealed how she landed the anchoring gig. "A lot of things in my life happened because I was at the right place at the right time," she said in a new interview, as she recalled the negative impact that turning sports presenter had on her acting career.

In an interview with Curly Tales, Mandira Bedi recalled, "In 2002, India beat England and made it to semi-finals of a tournament called the Champions Trophy... Now, because I love cricket, I decided to travel to Sri Lanka to watch the match. So, I booked a ticket for myself and reached there..." She said that people from Sony saw her there and were curious to know why she'd spent her own money to attend the tournament. "At that time, they were flying down celebrities to watch the cricket, and I came but bought my own ticket. They just had me at the back of their mind as someone who really likes cricket." She continued, "So, when they wanted a female anchor for the 2003 World Cup, they just called me randomly. As soon as I reached there, I had a bunch of people shooting cricket questions at me, I was like, 'What's going on?' They asked me, 'Would you be interested in hosting the cricket World Cup?' I was like, 'Would I be interested? Yes!' But it wasn't as easy as that. There were three auditions, and over thousand other women auditioned for this gig." Mandira said that she eventually became so popular as a host that she stopped getting acting offers. She said, "After that, I was only getting offers



for anchoring jobs and MC jobs and everybody forgot that I was an actor, and that I'd done eight years of acting before. After the gig, even if I got any acting role, it would always be about being an anchor and to play a cricket commentator and to play a cricket presenter, and I was like, 'You have forgotten, but I know acting, I am an actor. I started my career as an actor.' "In addition to acting roles drying up, she had a difficult time as a host as well. "We didn't have social media, where you could see people's comments at that time. We did have internet, but not like now. Sony kept me away from all this. They said, 'You are not allowed to know what people are saying.' They shut all that out for me. What I did learn from the cricket time is that there'll be people who like you in life and then there will be people in life who won't like you. So the ones who like you, be grateful about them and the ones who don't, don't try and please them," she said.

Mithun Chakraborty caused 'stampede' on Om Shanti Om set, his fans turned Shah Rukh Khan into their photographer: Farah Khan



Director Farah Khan's Om Shanti Om remains one of the most iconic Hindi films of recent times, and what is more iconic than the song 'Deewangi Deewangi', which featured many of the biggest names of the Hindi film industry. In a recent interaction, Farah recalled how, despite presence of various A-list stars, there was a 'stampede' on set when Mithun Chakraborty came by to shoot his portion. She revealed that the frenzy was so intense that even Shah Rukh Khan was sidelined for some time.

Speaking on Radio Nasha, Farah recounted, "People went crazy for Mithun da, and even I couldn't believe it. There was a stampede on the set. Mithun da also came after a long time, so light boys and everybody came on the set. I think he was the president of some association and had done a lot for workers. They were literally giving

their phones to Shah Rukh to click their photos with Mithun da." Composed by Vishal-Shekhar with lyrics by Javed Akhtar,

'Deewangi Deewangi' featured cameos by 31 actors from the Hindi film industry, including Dharmendra, Salman Khan, Dino Morea, Rani Mukerji, Preity Zinta, Sanjay Dutt, Lara Dutta, Shilpa Shetty, Priyanka Chopra, Kajol, Juhi Chawla, Karisma Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan, Rekha, Shabana Azmi, and Tabu, among others. In an earlier interview on IFTDA Official's YouTube channel, Farah revealed how Shah Rukh Khan, who was also the producer of Om Shanti Om, gifted goodie bags worth Rs 1 lakh to all the actors who attended the shoot of the song. The female actors got to keep the costumes, designed by Manish Malhotra.

Lakshmi Manchu denies calling dad Mohan Babu a 'roadblock' in her career: 'He was a strict father'



Lakshmi Manchu, who recently made headlines for allegedly calling her father Mohan Babu a "roadblock" in her career, spoke to the indianexpress.com and denied making any such remarks. Lakshmi, who has been working as an actor since childhood, spoke about the hardships she had to go through despite her dad being a superstar. She said that her statement was twisted. "I love him and he loves me", she said. The Yakshini star said, "That was such a wrong headline. If you look at the rest of the interview, there was nothing like the headline. The journalist did a great job in getting eyeballs onto his article, but we are nobody without my dad, and he will always be my first and my ultimate hero... What I spoke doesn't takes that away. Yes, that's the way the society is today."

Lakshmi said that she would be doing a disservice to the women who've paved the path for her, and the women who will follow in her footsteps, if she doesn't speak up when she feels she must. "Yes, there is trouble, it is tough, but the tough gets you going," she said. Talking about her dad, and how he never let his stardom affect his parenting, Lakshmi said, "I didn't know my dad was a famous man until my 10th grade. We all lived in Chennai, we went to pre-view theatres, we never went to regular theatres... It was in my 11th grade that I realised my dad is a superstar. They were all like, 'She is Mohan Babu's daughter'. I was like, 'Why is this such a big deal?' And that's the beauty of my father, he never brought home that he is a superstar." "He was a strict dad, he made sure we maintained a handwriting book, before he went to shooting he would write how many pages we had to finish even in summer holidays. So if my dad wasn't an actor, I think he should have been in the military," she added.

After working as a child actor, she later travelled to the United States for work. She said that it wasn't easy for her to convince her superstar dad and her family to accept her career choices. She credited her mother for supporting her, also clarifying that her dad wasn't against her choices, but was worried for her. "It was my mom. I think even when I was in my 20s, she knew, but even she was scared that how people will see it. It was not just about my dad, it was also about how the society will perceive us. There were other star kids too who were wanting to get into acting, and receiving severe backlash from the public. So that was definitely in my dad's mind... And if it wasn't for my mom, I don't think I would have ever found that strength", Manchu recalled.

She said that the industry has changed in the last few years. She cited the example of her brother's kids, as well as Mahesh Babu and Namrata

Shirodkar's daughter. She said, "I think this has completely changed with our generation. My brother's kids, one of them wants to be a singer, his son, who is six-year-old, is acting in a movie. That is completely changed this generation. Also, you have to know Mahesh Babu's wife is Namrata Shirodkar, who is from Bollywood, so that has had an influence in terms of making them understand. I don't know if it was a South Indian mother what it would have been. It's so hard. In our subconscious mind only, we have to make sure we are not spotted outside. It was a very close knit community when we were in Chennai. Now, it's so different and open." A few days ago, in an interview with Free Press Journal, Lakshmi Manchu was asked about the 'roadblocks' she experienced while moving to Mumbai from Hyderabad. She said, "There was only one roadblock, my family. They didn't let me move for the longest time. We are a very close-knit family. They told me, 'Why do you have to be a small fish in a big pond?' They had their own qualms. I used to stay at my best friend Rakul Preet's house. She kept insisting that I move to Mumbai." Describing herself as a 'victim of patriarchy', she added, "Men down South aren't okay with heroes' sisters or daughters being actresses. They step back from casting people like us. Prakash introduced me to the movies, but my dad and his dad tried to get this idea out of our heads."

Gashmeer Mahajani calls his 'few bad projects' a Gunaah: 'You have to do them sometimes'

Actor Gashmeer Mahajani has been quite a popular name on television and Marathi cinema, is getting accolades for his OTT project with Disney Plus Hotstar titled Gunaah. Other than this web series with Surbhi Jyoti and Zayn Ibad Khan, Gashmeer will also be seen participating in Khatron Ke Khiladi 14. While he is shooting in Romania, the actor exclusively spoke to Indianexpress.com about his latest web show. He even revealed how unprofessionalism ticks him off and that a few bad projects in his career feel like a sin. In the show, Gashmeer plays a grey character who has been wronged by the woman he dearly loves. While he believes that despite its negative traits, it is quite a loveable character, the show's major premise is revenge. So when we asked Gashmeer if he believes in taking revenge if someone wrongs him, he said, "If you are happy with what you have in your life, the success you achieve is the best revenge. I do feel a lot of times when you are hard-working, people around you don't wish you well, and that bothers me. Sometimes they cross you, and don't want good things to happen to you. Success is the best revenge because seeing you happy makes them feel bad."

When asked on the professional front what would be a 'Gunaah', Gashmeer feels he has done a few. "A few bad projects that I have done feel like a Gunaah, but that's okay. Those projects paid quite well, so I am very grateful. But while I was shooting for them, it felt like what was I doing? It was something I didn't want to do, but sometimes you do make small sins like these in your career. You have to do them sometimes."

With the ongoing debate about TV actors complaining of not getting paid and working extra hours, Gashmeer said that he is very clear about these things. "I am very clear when it comes to professionalism and payments, those who work with me also understand this in a few



days. I tell them that I will deliver what I have committed and they should do the same, if that doesn't happen, I will request once or twice. If it still doesn't happen I will stop working. I am very clear about this, and my producers understand it," says Gashmeer. He continued, "In the beginning, a few people would have thought that I am very arrogant and don't adjust, but if the shift is to start at 9 am, I am on set by 8:30, and ready to shoot at 9 with make-up, hair, and costume. I am sitting there, no matter whether you start or not. I leave on time also, I usually have a 12-hour shift. Obviously I consider if the delay is due to a natural calamity or a technical glitch. Due to me, the entire shoot gets disciplined." When asked what is the one thing that is unpardonable for Gashmeer, the actor shared, "Not being sincere and lack of commitment. Those who are disloyal towards their work are unpardonable because today there is so much competition, there are so many people in line to work, and if you steal them that opportunity and not give your 100 percent that is a big Gunaah. I see people who take their work lightly and are not committed. I have come across people at work from various departments, not just actors."

Ranvir Shorey on equation with ex-wife Konkona Sen Sharma, says they only converse about their son

Bollywood actor Ranvir Shorey is among the Bigg Boss OTT 3 participants but is yet to win any brownie points for his behaviour on the show. In the very first week, he has had some major fights with other contestants. In last night's episode, Ranvir Shorey had a major showdown with actress Sana Makbul, and things escalated to an extent where both passed derogatory remarks about one another. After the task concluded on the show, Ranvir was also seen opening up about his personal life to Armaan Malik. The film actor was seen talking about his ex-wife Konkona Sen Sharma and his son.

In the live feed, Ranvir and Armaan were seen talking where the former told him, "Ghar par toh akela main he hoon, matlab mera beta aadha time mere saath hota hai aur adha time apni maa ke saath (I am all alone at home, half of the time my son lives with me, and half of the time he lives with his mother)." When Armaan asked Ranvir about the equation he shares with his ex-wife Konkona Sen Sharma, he said, "Matlab bacche ke liye joh hota hai utna he (We only talk about things about our child)."

In the last entire week, Ranvir has been seen mentioning many times that he has only come on the show because he had no other work. In an interview with Indianexpress.com, Ranvir shared that he was offered



the show every year. "I get a call from Bigg Boss every year, but due to some reasons, I was unable to participate. But this year my son is going to the US to spend his summer vacations and I had no major work. The second reason I think is I badly needed a detox from screens. This year everything clicked and fell into place. My family and friends understood my reasons for doing it at this moment and also that I'm old enough to own up to decisions and consequences." Ranvir Shorey's journey on the show has not been very smooth, now it will be interesting to see the feedback he receives from host Anil Kapoor over the weekend.

Hockey India League returns with bigger player purse, two venues but no Pakistani players



GNS News Agency, July 3

More than 1,000 domestic male and female players in the fray for auctions. Approximately 500 international stars who have expressed interest – a number that could rise after the Paris Olympics. Close to 30 corporates, keen on buying teams. And no players from Pakistan. The revamped Hockey India League (HIL) is set to return this year with many new things – a bigger player purse, stricter franchise norms and just two venues instead of the usual home-and-away format. One aspect, though, will remain the same – the non-participation of Pakistani players. According to a Hockey India official, only those international players whose countries are ranked in the top 15 of the world at present will be allowed to register for the auction, which will take place after the Paris Olympics ends in August.

Pakistan, as per the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) latest rankings, are placed 16th in the world. A Hockey India official claimed keeping Pakistan out 'wasn't intentional'. "We didn't even know that Pakistan wasn't in the world's top 15 when we formed the rule. Initially, we were thinking of allowing only those players whose countries were in the top 10 of the world to make sure the quality was high. But after much deliberation, we decided to make it top-15," the official said. Nine

players from Pakistan featured in the first edition of the HIL, back in 2013. However, they were sent back in the middle of the league following political protests against them over the killing of Indian soldiers in Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, no Pakistani players featured in the HIL, which – despite being hugely beneficial for Indian men's hockey – was discontinued in 2017 due to the financial burden it put on the team owners.

As the repackaged league returns – the FIH has sanctioned a window from the last week of December to the first week of February – it is learnt that Hockey India's commercial and marketing partners, Big Bang Media Ventures, have held conversations with more than 30 potential owners. Among those who have expressed interest in buying franchises include companies that have teams in the Indian Premier League, Indian Super League and partner chess academies. Some of them are Adani, Jindal Sports, Westbridge – who partner Viswanathan Anand's chess academy – GMR (co-owners of the Delhi Capitals in IPL), SG Sports, whose CEO is Mahesh Bhupathi, Shracchi Sports – who sponsor East Bengal's cricket and hockey teams – and JK Cements, among others.

The franchise owners, who will have to pay a fee of Rs 7 crore per year for men's teams and Rs 3 crore annually for women's, are set to be finalised in the coming weeks. The initial contract will be for 10 years, sources said. To make it cost-efficient for the investors, the first two seasons of the HIL are likely to be held only at two venues – Ranchi and Rourkela. The men's and the women's leagues, meanwhile, are likely to take place simultaneously. Once the franchise contracts are signed, the process for players' auction will be set into motion. "The interest from international players, especially, has been overwhelming. More than 500 players have registered for the auctions and a few countries have requested us to extend the deadline until after the Olympics," the source said.

Rahul Dravid's farewell dressing room speech after T20 World Cup win: You will not remember your career but moments like this



GNS News Agency, July 3

Rahul Dravid's tenure at the helm of team India ended on a high with the T20 World Cup triumph over South Africa at the Kensington Oval in Barbados. The former India captain who took over as head coach in November 2021, finally had his hands on an ICC trophy having failed to clinch a title during his playing days. Dravid's last stint as ODI captain had ended in a group-stage exit for India during the 2007 World Cup in West Indies. The title marked Dravid's most significant title as India's head coach over a nearly three-year tenure where the team had finished runners-up in the 2023 World Test Championship final and the 2023 ODI World Cup at home. "I am really short of words but all I want to say is thank you to everyone for making me a part of what is an incredible memory," Dravid said in the India dressing room shortly after the final. "I think all of you will remember this moments. It's not about the runs, the wickets, you will not remember your career. But you will remember moments like these. I cannot be more prouder of you guys. To come back the way you did, the way you fought. The way we worked as a team. The resilience," Dravid said in a video shared by the BCCI. "There have been a few disappointments over the years where we have come close but we have not been able to cross the line. But what this bunch of boys has done, everyone in the support staff has done. The whole country is proud of each and every one of you on what you have achieved. There are so many sacrifices each of you have made. To see your families here today and so many of your families back home, think of all the sacrifices every one of them

have made since the time you were kids. For you to be here in the dressing room today, your parents, wives, children, brothers, your coaches. So many people have made so many sacrifices for you to enjoy this memory, this moment," Dravid added. Dravid also thanked skipper Rohit Sharma for encouraging him to extend his tenure as coach after India's ODI World Cup final defeat to Australia in Ahmedabad last November. "Thank you very much, Ro (Rohit), for making that call in November and asking me to continue. It's been such a privilege and a pleasure to work with each and every one of you, but also with Ro. Thank you for your time. I know as captain and coach, there are a lot of times we have to chat. We have to agree; we have to disagree. It's been brilliant to know each and every one of you," Dravid remarked. India are set to see a major overhaul in the T20I side with Rohit, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja also announcing their retirements. Earlier on Monday, BCCI secretary Jay Shah had revealed that Dravid did not intend to seek another term as head coach due to family commitments. "He told me that due to family commitments he wants to quit and we respect his decision. I didn't forced him to extend," Shah told reporters in Barbados. "Rahul bhai has served Indian cricket for the past five and half years. He was director of the National Cricket Academy for three years and then for the past two and half years, he served as head coach of Team India. Rahul Dravid's role is as important as Rohit Sharma in this T20 World Cup title triumph. He is a man, who took the team to the 2023 ODI World Cup final and didn't wanted to leave because he wanted to finish the job," Shah added.

'Stay in your crease, you should be aware as a player': Root laments Bairstow's Ashes 2023 stumping dismissal

GNS News Agency, July 3

Jonny Bairstow's stumping dismissal by Alex Carey of the Lord's Test proved to be fatal in England's 43-run defeat to Australia. (AP) Jonny Bairstow's stumping dismissal by Alex Carey of the Lord's Test proved to be fatal in England's 43-run defeat to Australia. Exactly a year from the infamous dismissal during England's 371-run chase on Day 5 against Australia, Bairstow was stumped by wicket-keeper Alex Carey as he walked out from the crease after a delivery from Cameron Green. Root expressed his views in an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) documentary titled 'The Ashes 2023 | Our Take', released on the anniversary of Bairstow's appalling dismissal. "Initially I was quite angry, but I think when you're involved in the game it's very difficult to put yourself in the other position," Root said. "So I'd like to say I would have dealt with it differently, but I could very easily have done the same thing. At the end of the day, it's within the laws of the game. You should be aware as a player. Jonny will hate me saying this, but if you stay in your crease you can't get given out can you?" Chasing 371, England had entered stumps on day 4 at 114 for four. "Look I can't wait for tomorrow," Bairstow said that night as he addressed his teammates.



Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was handed a life ban and two MCC members were suspended in the aftermath of clashes with the Australian side. Bairstow's teammate Moeen Ali also commented on the former's tendency to leave the crease prematurely after a ball is bowled. "I always felt Jonny leaves his crease so early, he leaves the ball and just walks straight down, and I always felt he leaves early," Moeen said. Bairstow, however, does not take a definitive stance in an interview for the documentary. "Who knows whether it was right or wrong, or anything in between. We're out there representing ourselves, and as long as you can go home and be all right with yourself then so be it." The result would push England 0-2 down in the five-match Test series before Ben Stokes' remarkably fought back to level the series 2-2. The 34-year-old Bairstow had an underwhelming run during England's T20 World Cup campaign in the Caribbean and was recently dropped from the Test squad to take on West Indies at home in July.

Captain Rohit told us, he can't climb this mountain alone... he will need everyone's oxygen: Suryakumar Yadav

GNS News Agency, July 3

It has not even been 24 hours since India's much-awaited T20 World Cup win and Suryakumar Yadav is amused by the contrast in the curfew-like view of the street below his team hotel at Barbados and the videos of mass celebrations that he has been getting from back home. Suryakumar had returned from a post-win party, where the entire team danced till the wee hours, to find 1,014 Whatsapp congratulatory messages on his phone. But ask him about the game and his sleep-deprived mind comes alive as he recalls the riveting speech captain Rohit Sharma gave at the team huddle, minutes before the final against the South Africans.

Talking to The Indian Express from Barbados, Surya, whose spell-binding catch on the ropes to dismiss David Miller turned the match on its head, says, "He told us to keep it simple but said, 'I can't climb this mountain alone. If I have to reach the peak, I will need everyone's oxygen'. He also said, 'Joh bhi hai, paon mein, dimag mein, dil mein (Whatever you have in your legs, mind and heart), just bring everything to the game. If that happens, we will not regret the night'. We all were moved. If Rohit moved with his action and words, coach Rahul Dravid, Suryakumar recalls, set the mood with a simple slide presentation that made them realise that they would have to rise to the occasion. Suryakumar Yadav interview after India's T20 World Cup win India's Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup second semifinal cricket match between England and India at the Guyana National Stadium in Providence, Guyana, Thursday, June 27, 2024. (AP/PTI) He showed a graph of the number of T20 games the entire Indian team had played — from Virat bhai to Yashasvi Jaiswal (the most junior member). That number was 800-plus," says Surya. "And then he showed a second slide that had the number of games that the entire coaching staff, including Rahul bhai, had played — that number was 1. He said to us,

"You are the best judge here to make the right call at the right time. So leave every other thing to us, go out there and enjoy your game."

Suryakumar says the team had a motto that was followed all through the campaign. "Before the start, we decided that we won't talk about what lies ahead in the tournament. Nobody thought about Super 8 and the same was true for the finals in Barbados. Our mind has to be where our feet are — that was our motto," he says.

On Rohit's leadership style, Suryakumar says, "He connects with the players. Off the field, be it in a hotel room, or on the beach, he connects with everyone. So when a crunch situation comes, players know that he (Rohit) will back us. One feels I have to deliver for this man for the confidence and respect he gives to everyone." Surya says the team's never-quit spirit, which came in handy during key moments in the tournament — be it in the game against Pakistan, where India came back late in the game, or the final, when they rallied together to fight despite South Africa needing just 26 runs from 24 balls with six wickets intact — stems from a deep self-belief. "Everyone, starting from the captain, was relaxed because we knew that one magical thing will happen and we will be back in the game. And the way Bumrah and Arshdeep bowled was remarkable." He says he will remember the final not just for his catch, but for two moments, which, he says, will stay with him for years to come. One of these is of the acutely self-conscious Dravid letting himself go when Kohli thrust the trophy into his hand. "That 30-second clip, when he took the trophy in his hand and screamed... that moment when he expressed his happiness. I think I will save that clip for life," Suryakumar says. Suryakumar Yadav 6 India vs Afghanistan India's Suryakumar Yadav watches the ball after playing a shot during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between Afghanistan and India at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados.

I want to live this moment, each minute, each second that is passing by: Rohit Sharma

GNS News Agency, July 3

Rohit Sharma says all his reaction after India won the T20 World Cup final against South Africa on Sunday were all "instinctive" and the feeling of winning the cup has still not sink in yet. "Nothing was scripted. It was all coming instinctively. I was feeling the moment," Rohit said in a video posted by the BCCI. "When I went to the pitch, that pitch gave us this trophy. I will remember that ground forever in my life and that pitch as well. I wanted to have a piece of it with me. Those moments are very special, the place where all our dreams came true and I wanted something of it," said Rohit. Rohit has also explained the feelings and how he doesn't care about his sleep. "The feeling actually is surreal. It hasn't sunk in yet," he said. "It's been a great moment right from the time the game got over to till now. It feels like a dream. It feels like it hasn't happened. Although it has happened but it feels like it hasn't happened... (laughs). T20 World Cup Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma with T20 World Cup 2024. (Agencies) That's the emotions and feelings you have. We have dreamt about this for such a long period of time, we worked hard as a unit for such a long period of time and to see this (the trophy) with us it feels quite relieved as well. When you worked hard for something and eventually at the end you get it, feels really really nice. Last night we had a good time, we had a blast with the teammates till the early morning. I would say I didn't sleep properly but that's



absolutely fine by me. There is lot of time for me to go back and sleep. I am going to catch up on that. I want to live this moment, each minute, each second that is passing by and will try to make the most out of it," he said. Barely an hour after guiding India to a thrilling seven-run victory over South Africa in the final, Rohit Sharma joined Virat Kohli in announcing his retirement from international T20 matches. Rohit Sharma, 37, is the format's highest scorer with 4231 runs in 159 matches for India, with five centuries. Saturday's breakthrough win was his second T20 World Cup success after winning the inaugural tournament in 2007. He has played in every T20 World Cup tournament since, with only Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan doing likewise.

Sudharsan, Jitesh and Harshit replace Samson, Dube and Jaiswal for the first two T20Is

GNS News Agency, July 3

The men's selection committee has named opener Sai Sudharsan, wicketkeeper-batsman Jitesh Sharma and pacer Harshit Rana as replacements for Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube and Yashasvi Jaiswal for the first two T20Is against Zimbabwe. This is a maiden call-up for Delhi pacer Harshit Rana, who has had an excellent IPL season with Kolkata Knight Riders. The trio of Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube and Yashasvi Jaiswal, who were originally slated to join the Zimbabwe-bound squad for the upcoming five-match T20I series starting July 6, will travel to India first with the rest of the ICC T20 World Cup-winning Indian squad before departing for Harare.

The series also handed a maiden senior national call-up for young IPL stars Abhishek Sharma, Dhruv Jurel, Riyan Parag and Tushar Deshpande. All-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy who was initially named in the squad was withdrawn due to an injury, with the BCCI naming Dube as his replacement. With Rahul Dravid relinquishing as head coach, VVS Laxman will travel with the team to Zimbabwe as the interim replacement. All matches of the series will be played at the Harare Sports Club in Harare. India's squad for 1st & 2nd T20I against Zimbabwe: Shubman Gill (Captain), Rituraj Gaikwad, Abhishek



Sharma, Rinku Singh, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande, Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Harshit Rana Zimbabwe squad: Sikandar Raza (captain), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Tendai Chatara, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Antum Naqvi, Richard Ngarava, Milton Shumba.