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15th AUGUST

RYTHU SWARAJYAM in TELANGANA

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Climate-resilient crops

CHANGING monsoon patterns, deadlier heatwaves, rising sea levels and intense storms pose an acute risk to the agriculture sector in India, a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned last month. Climate change is predicted to drastically reduce agriculture cover and crop yields in the absence of mitigation strategies. The impact will be more pronounced for small-scale producers who are highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Climate-resilient crops are intended to maintain or increase yields under stressful conditions. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research started its project on innovations in climate-resilient farming in 2011. The launch of several high-yielding, climate-resilient crop varieties by the Prime Minister is a continuation of such endeavours. The government says its target to increase the paddy area with climate-resistant seeds this year follows the success of such seeds in the bumper wheat harvest. Indigenous solutions need consistent support, including by incentivising private sector participation. There is no dearth of national programmes that have been activated for climate change adaptation. They range from promoting judicious management of available resources and water conservation to protecting forest cover and the Soil Health Card scheme that aims to curb the overuse of urea fertilisers. The progress of crop diversification is slow, even as several states are promoting organic farming on a wider scale. Technology demonstration alone cannot ensure optimum adoption. Equally significant is the farmers' access to scientific inputs and the effectiveness of outreach services. Amid the debate on what's best for the farmer, building a broad consensus on adopting climate-friendly agriculture practices would be in order. As would be assured support for exhaustive empirical studies on their efficiency.

Kolkata woman doctor rape-murder: Protesting doctors to suspend emergency services as well from today, seek fast-track judicial inquiry

GNS News Agency, August 14

Protesting resident doctors in West Bengal on Sunday night demanded a fast-track judicial inquiry into the alleged rape and murder of a woman doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, the resignation of the principal, dean and other authorities, proper compensation to the victim's family and an apology from the Kolkata police. Scaling up the protest, they also announced they would suspend emergency services as well from Monday onwards. Earlier, doctors and junior doctors observed cease work for non-emergency services in state-run medical college hospitals on Sunday. The new move is expected to paralyse state-run hospitals.

The statement issued by the 'Representatives of All the Resident Doctors of West Bengal' on Sunday night after a meeting said the doctors were "disgusted and heartbroken" by the alleged rape and murder of the 31-year-old postgraduate student who was found dead in the seminar hall at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital on Friday. The police arrested a civic volunteer, Sanjay Roy, in connection with the crime and the government removed hospital superintendent Sanjay Vashisth. On Monday morning, principal of R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, Professor Sandip Ghosh, submitted his resignation. His removal was one of the demands by agitating doctors. Their other demands include: A fast-track judicial inquiry with "exemplary punishment" to all the perpetrators. A proper and transparent investigation, as the doctors have questioned the sanctity of the ongoing investigation. The resignation of all responsible authorities, including the medical superintendent cum vice-principal (MSVP), dean, head of the pulmonary medicine department, and assistant commissioner of police of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital police outpost, who failed to fulfil their duty of protecting the dignity and life of a woman. An immediate apology from the Kolkata police for their alleged brutal assault on protesting students on Saturday in front of the hospital. Adequate compensation to the victim's family. Ensure adequate workplace security measures in all the medical colleges in the state. The statement also outlined a plan of action, which said the doctors would observe a cease-work protest (both emergency and non-emergency services) in all West Bengal medical colleges until their demands were met. According to the statement, resident doctors at K M Hospital, Calcutta Medical College and Hospital, Midnapore Medical College Hospital, R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, and Nilratan Sarkar Medical College and Hospital will be among those who will observe the cease-work protest. It also said a mass citizens' rally will be held from 4 pm on Monday from College Square to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Woxsen University concludes pre-induction programme

GNS News Agency, August 14

Hyderabad: Woxsen University's Trade Tower here recently concluded its inaugural pre-incubation programme, designed to propel innovation and entrepreneurship. The 10-day intensive programme equipped aspiring entrepreneurs with essential tools, knowledge, resources, and mentorship needed to transform innovative ideas into growth-driven businesses. With over 237 applications, the programme selected 10 startups across diverse sectors such as edutech, EV technology, food processing, and emerging technologies to participate. Guided by 15 expert resource persons, the startups delved into a wide range of critical topics, from idea validation and design thinking & innovation to business model canvas, digital marketing strategies, basics of finance, AI Tools for startups, AI audit for startups, entrepreneurial skill assessment, legal responsibilities & intellectual property rights, and fundraising.

Upper caste farmer, son 'thrash' Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh, booked

GNS News Agency, August 14

Uttar Pradesh Dalit violence: The accused have been identified as Rajendra Singh, also known as Badelala, and his son Jitendra Pratap Singh, residents of Sikauhula village. The police booked an upper caste farmer and his son for allegedly beating and subjecting a Dalit woman to casteist abuse for collecting water from their tubewell in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district. The police said the Dalit woman works as an agricultural labourer. Moni Nishad, Station House Officer, Jaspura police station (Banda), said the case was filed based on the complaint of the victim, Sita Devi, 36. She added that no arrests have been made yet and a probe is underway.

The accused have been identified as Rajendra Singh, also known as Badelala, and his son Jitendra Pratap Singh, residents of Sikauhula village. The incident reportedly took place on August 6, but the police registered the FIR on Saturday. When asked about the delay in filing the FIR, Sita Devi's husband, Puttu Sonkar, 43, said he had been making rounds of the police station for several days trying to get the case registered. "I also lodged a complaint about the incident with the police control room. The police finally lodged the case on Au-

gust 10," said Sonkar, who does odd jobs for a living. Sonkar further said that his wife and others were working in the field of Chandra Shekhar, the cousin of the accused Rajendra Singh, on August 6. But around 2 pm, his wife felt thirsty and went to a nearby tubewell belonging to Rajendra Singh. "Chandra Shekhar's and Rajendra Singh's fields are located next to each other. My wife saw a pot lying near the tubewell and picked it up to collect water. In the meantime, Rajendra Singh and his son Jitendra Pratap arrived and started abusing her for picking up the pot," Sonkar said. "They used casteist remarks, telling her, 'You belong to a low caste; don't drink water from here.' When she responded, 'Okay, we are of a low caste; we will go elsewhere to drink water. But don't abuse me,' they began to slap her," the victim's husband recounted. Other women working in the field rushed to the spot and intervened, after which the father and the son left the scene, he added. The FIR has been lodged under Sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The police have also invoked the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against the accused.

Amid attacks on Bengali migrants, Mamata seeks Odisha CM Mohan Majhi's 'intervention'



GNS News Agency, August 14

Bengal workers: According to sources at the West Bengal secretariat Nabanna, Majhi has assured her such incidents "would not be repeated". Amid reports of attacks on Bengali migrant workers in Odisha, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee dialled her Odisha counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi's number to seek his intervention. The Indian Express has learnt. The attacks come at a time of a political crisis in the neighbouring Bangladesh, sparking fears of illegal immigration in India. According to sources at the West Bengal secretariat Nabanna, Majhi has as-

sured her such incidents "would not be repeated". The state government is stated to be keen on bringing these migrants back, with sources quoting the CM as "promising them employment" in the state.

The latest phone call between the chief ministers of West Bengal and Odisha comes at a time when a widely circulated video purportedly shows a Bengali-speaking vendor being assaulted in Odisha. In the video, the vendor is assaulted when he fails to produce his Aadhaar card. According to the sources, several Bengali migrant workers living in Odisha have been "harassed" on suspicion of being Bangladeshi immigrants. Last week, at least 20 such workers from Murshidabad district who were allegedly beaten up in Odisha were rescued and brought back to the state. Migrant workers' association Parijaye Shramik Aikya Mancha has flagged their concerns to the state's migrant workers welfare board. "It's unfortunate that somebody who talks in Bengali is being branded a Bangladeshi. I have raised this matter earlier in Parliament too. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has herself intervened in this matter," Samirul Islam, the board chairman and a Rajya Sabha MP from Bqanerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC), told The Indian Express, adding that it was a person's "constitutional right" to take up employment in any part of the country.

Modi Govt should increase overall reservation beyond 50% ceiling, we'll extend support: Sharad Pawar



GNS News Agency, August 14

A day after his convoy was blocked and black flags were waved at him by Maratha quota protesters, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Monday that if the Central Government decided to increase reservation beyond the 50 per cent ceiling, all parties in Maharashtra would support the Centre on the issue. The Central Government has the power to cross the 50 per cent ceiling on reservation... If the Modi Government decides to provide reservation to the Maratha community, we will extend support to it," Pawar said at a press conference in Pune.

all-party meeting on the reservation issue, Pawar said, "I have in the past held discussion with the chief minister regarding the reservation issue. I now want to urge the chief minister to convene an all-party meeting. He can invite whoever he wants. We as the Opposition will remain present at the meeting. I have already told him that we will take a stand to support the Government. I hope the CM will hold such a meeting and invite representatives of key national parties." Pawar said the chief minister should also invite Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil and OBC leaders like Chhagan Bhujbal, among others. "At that meeting we should discuss the reservation issue and try to find a way to resolve it," he said.

Pawar said one problem that could emerge was the 50 per cent ceiling on reservation imposed by the Supreme Court. "When the Tamil Nadu government had given 73 per cent reservation, it was upheld by the court. However, after all subsequent decisions, the courts have upheld the reservation ceiling of 50 per cent. This policy should change. The right to change the policy lies with the Modi Government. All the political parties in Maharashtra will sink their differences and support the Modi Government if it decides to change the policy. We will cooperate and stand by the Government in this respect," he said.

Delhi High Court grants ex-IAS trainee officer Puja Khedkar protection from arrest until August 21



GNS News Agency, August 14

The Delhi High Court on Monday granted former IAS trainee officer Puja Khedkar protection from arrest until August 21 as it added UPSC as a respondent party to Khedkar's plea seeking anticipatory bail and issued notice to the authorities. The authorities are expected to file its reply by August 21, specifically regarding the court's query as to why her custody is required and why she should not be granted anticipatory bail as sought by her.

Service Commission. Responding to the Delhi High Court's query, UPSC called her "manipulative" and "influential". "The way she got into the system speaks volumes of how she is... Divorce of her parents) is used for manipulating the system," said the Commission. The Delhi High Court on Monday recorded Puja Khedkar will not be arrested until the next date of hearing, now scheduled for August 21.

The bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad asked respondent authorities why is her custody required when so far involvement of anybody else has not been found and the case primarily appears to be one of misrepresentation of facts. Taking into account that UPSC has already suspended her candidature, Justice Prasad said, "She is not in the system to tamper with the system... Unfortunately, the trial court is bogged (down) by the offence and not why bail should not be granted." On August 1, a Delhi court dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of Khedkar, who has been accused of fraudulently clearing the Civil Services Examination held by the Union Public

Telangana's annual energy demand to touch 82,316 MU during current fiscal

GNS News Agency, August 14

Hyderabad: The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has forecasted Telangana's annual energy demand to touch 82,316 million units during the financial year 2024-25, a 6.21 percent growth over the last financial year. Similarly, the peak demand of the State is likely to touch 16,877 megawatt against last year's 15,704 MW, a 7.47 percent growth over the last financial year. As per the Resource Adequacy Study Report released by the CEA recently, the energy demand of the State was likely to touch 87,414 MU in 2025-26, 92,967 MU in 2026-27, 98,578 MU in 2027-28, 104,383 MU in 2028-29, 110,971 MU in 2029-30, 115,862 MU in 2030-31 and 120,549 MU in 2031-32. Similarly, the peak demand is likely to touch 18,138 MW in 2025-26 and 27,059 MW in 2031-32.

Muslim community members protest outside Uddhav Thackeray's residence, question Shiv Sena (UBT)'s silence over Waqf Bill



GNS News Agency, August 14

A group of Muslim community members protested outside Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray's residence in Bandra East on Sunday over the Waqf (Amendment) Bill. The protesters reportedly raised slogans against Thackeray and called him a "cheater". They said his party had yet to raise its voice against the Bill, which seeks to amend the 1995 Waqf Act and proposes sweeping changes to how Waqf Boards are governed and regulated. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint parliamentary panel after a heated debate. The Centre asserted that the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques, while the Opposition termed it anti-Muslim and an attack on the Constitution.

However, Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sanjay Raut claimed that those protesting in front of Matoshree, Thackeray's residence, were workers of the rival faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Raut said people were obtaining contracts from "Delhi Ahmad Shah Abdali", an oblique reference to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and inciting chaos in the state. "Yesterday's protest by some people was a part of that contract. The Bill regarding Waqf Boards has not yet been discussed in Parliament. No one's opinion is known. Telugu Desam (Party) has opposed it. A ruckus was created outside Matoshree. Half of them (protesters) were criminals. The 10 to 12 people raising slogans outside Matoshree were all the chief minister's people," Raut said, showing purported pictures of some of the protesters with CM Shinde.

Kejriwal moves Supreme Court seeking bail in CBI's excise policy case



GNS News Agency, August 14

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Monday approached the Supreme Court seeking bail in the case registered by the CBI against him in connection with the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy. The development comes days after his deputy Manish Sisodia was granted bail in the case.

Senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal, communicated the same to a Bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, who in turn asked him to send an email request. He also assured he would look into it. Dismissing his bail plea on August 5, the Delhi High Court had said that CBI's arrest of Kejriwal "cannot be said to be without justifiable reasons or as illegal". Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI on June 26, though the FIR had been registered in August 2022, but without naming him as an accused. The CBI arrest came weeks after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21 in connection with a money laundering case related to the excise policy. Kejriwal had earlier argued before the High Court that the CBI arrest was an "insurance arrest" to ensure that he stayed in prison.

Man killed after catching wife and her lover 'red-handed' in Bengaluru: police

GNS News Agency, August 14

After getting caught spending private moments together, a 32-year-old woman and her lover allegedly killed her husband in Bengaluru's Whitefield area. They were eventually arrested. The victim has been identified as Mahesh, 36, an autorickshaw driver who lived at Hagadur, and the accused as his wife Tejaswini and her lover Gajendra Babu, a 34-year-old resident of Indiranagar. According to the Whitefield police, Tejaswini and Babu used a USB cable to strangle Mahesh between 3.30 pm and 4 pm on August 9. After he lost consciousness, they rushed him to a hospital and the police were alerted to Mahesh's death later that evening. Tejaswini initially told the police that Mahesh had often argued with her over trivial matters and that during a heated argument at home, she had pushed him, causing him to fall unconscious. However, the police discovered strangulation marks on Mahesh's throat. After thorough interrogation, Tejaswini and Babu confessed to the murder, according to the police. In his police complaint, Mahesh's brother Ramesh alleged the murder had taken place in front of the victim's son. Mahesh and Tejaswini had been married for several years, having fallen in love during their college days. They have two children: a 14-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter. Before becoming an autorickshaw driver, Mahesh, originally from Hassan district, used to sell rangoli.

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Har Ghar Tiranga 3.0 Campaign at Cyberabad CPO

In commemoration of the 78th Independence Day and as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga 3.0 campaign, the Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Hyderabad City Division, C. Ramakrishna, directed the presentation of the national flag to the Commissioner of Police, Cyberabad, Avinash Mohanty, IPS., The flag was ceremoniously handed over by Karthik, Marketing Executive of Hyderabad City Division, along with B. Narsiah Postmaster of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU).The "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign, being observed nationwide from August 13 to 15, aims to ignite a sense of patriotism in every citizen.

Army captain killed, civilian injured in encounter with militants in Doda's Assar area



GNS News Agency, August 14

An Army captain was killed and a civilian was injured in the ongoing encounter with militants in Assar forests area of Doda, in Jammu and Kashmir, on Wednesday. One militant is suspected to have been injured in the encounter. A rifle and ammunition were seized from the encounter site.

The militants were engaged in a firefight on Tuesday (August 13, 2024) evening. Meanwhile, the search operation is continuing in the area. The encounter broke out in a thickly forested area during a cordon and search operation (CASO) launched by a joint team to track down a group of foreign terrorists hiding in the Shivgarh-Assar belt, they said. A civilian was also injured in the gunbattle that came a day ahead of Independence Day. Four blood-soaked rucksacks were recovered from the site. M-4 carbines were also found, the officials said. The terrorists are holed up near a river in Assar, an official said. The terrorists crossed into Doda from a forest near Patnitop in adjacent Udhampur district after a brief exchange of fire between security forces and terrorists there, they said.

According to officials, security forces established contact with the terrorists around 6 p.m. in Udhampur on Tuesday. The encounter began about half an hour later and continued intermittently until both sides paused. A cordon was established overnight. Security forces across Jammu and Kashmir have been placed on high alert ahead of Independence Day to ensure public safety. On Saturday (August 10, 2024), two Army soldiers lost their lives in an encounter. In recent months, Jammu has seen an increase in terror attacks, including an assault on an army convoy in Kathua and skirmishes in Doda and Udhampur.

CBI team to probe RG Kar Hospital rape and murder case reaches Kolkata



GNS News Agency, August 14

A team of senior CBI officers, who reached Kolkata on Wednesday (August 14, 2024) morning, began its investigation into the rape and murder of a woman doctor at a State-run hospital in West Bengal, officials said. The CBI team, which comprises medical and forensic experts, will visit the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's seminar hall where the body of the trainee doctor was found on August 9, they said. Three groups of CBI officers have been formed to investigate the matter, a central agency official said. "One group will visit the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and talk to the witnesses and the doctors who were on duty on that night. Another team will take the arrested civic volunteer to a local court after medical tests and plea for his custody, while another will coordinate with the Kolkata Police sleuths who were conducting the investigation," he told PTI. The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday ordered the transfer of the probe from the Kolkata Police to the central agency. A source in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that the agency has filed an FIR under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in New Delhi in connection with the alleged rape and murder of the doctor. "Today, our officers will seek the call details of the deceased woman and those on duty on that day. They may submit the FIR in a local court," another central agency source said. The Kolkata Police handed over Sanjoy Roy, who was arrested in connection with the case, to the CBI at the CGO Complex here after his medical tests were conducted at the state-run SSKM Hospital. Two CBI officers on Tuesday evening went to the Tala Police Station here and took documents related to the Kolkata Police's investigation. The court had on Tuesday directed the city police to hand over the case diary to the central probe agency by the evening, and all other documents by 10 am on August 14.

How PM 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative gave rise to a new women-led industry, explains Culture Secretary

GNS News Agency, August 14

New Delhi: The 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, which kicked off in 2022 as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', has ushered in a new women-led industry and today, women Self Help Groups (SHGs) have become the backbone of the national flag production industry. Govind Mohan, the Union Culture Secretary, explains the journey of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign and how it gave rise to the new women-led industry. The campaign was envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a 'Jan Andolan', urging citizens to hoist the national flag at their homes, workplaces and institutions to promote patriotism and unity. The campaign has become an annual tradition and is celebrated every year as part of Independence Day celebrations. "While it evolved into a large people's movement, it also created new employment opportunities for thou-



sands of women across the country.

This initiative gave birth to an entirely new industry driven by women at the grassroots level, reducing reliance on large vendors. Today, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become the primary producers of the national flag," explains Govind Mohan, Secretary, Culture Ministry, which coordinates the campaign. Govind Mohan further recalls that when the campaign was first launched in 2022, there was a significant challenge

dropped to around 2.5 crore, as women's SHGs increasingly took over the flag production. A notable example is Uttar Pradesh, which purchased 4.5 crore flags from the government in 2022 but did not buy any in 2023, thanks to the self-sufficiency of its SHGs in flag production," reveals Govind Mohan. In 2024, the demand for Central government-supplied flags further decreased to just 20 lakhs, with SHGs becoming the primary producers. Across India, approximately 25 crore flags are needed annually, one for every home. This shift from large vendors to SHGs has transformed these groups into a thriving industry. These SHGs now produce and sell flags for Rs 15-20 each, generating substantial earnings and creating jobs during the programme period. PM Modi's Har Ghar Tiranga campaign has not only ensured 'Jan Bhagidari' but also generated significant economic opportunities for women across the country.

Attempt to save accused: Rahul Gandhi on Kolkata hospital rape-murder



GNS News Agency, August 14

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday slammed the conduct of the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata and local authorities over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor, alleging there was an "attempt to save the accused". In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "The entire country is shocked by the gruesome incident of rape and murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata. The way the layers of the cruel and inhuman act against her are being revealed, there is an atmosphere of insecurity among the doctors' community and women."

"The attempt to save the accused instead of providing justice to the victim raises serious questions on the hospital and the local administration," he added. The Raebareilly MP said every party and section of society will have to hold serious discussions and take concrete steps on the continuously increasing incidents against women "from Hathras to Unnao, and from Kathua to Kolkata". "This incident has forced us to think that if doctors are not safe in a place like a medical college, then how can parents send their daughters outside for studies? Why are even the strict laws made after the Nirbhaya case unsuccessful in preventing such crimes?" he asked.

The body of the woman postgraduate trainee was found in a seminar hall at Kolkata's RG Kar Hospital on August 9 morning. Her postmortem report revealed that she was raped and throttled to death. The report also mentioned that the woman was bleeding from both eyes, mouth and private parts. The report said the wounds in her private parts were caused by "perverted sexuality" and "genital torture". A civic volunteer with Kolkata Police, Sanjay Roy, was arrested in connection with the case. He confessed to the police about raping and murdering the trainee doctor.

Villages, towns face decline under Indiramma rule: KTR



GNS News Agency, August 14

Hyderabad: In a scathing attack, BRS working president KT Rama Rao attributed the deteriorating living conditions in both villages and towns, to the Congress government's incompetence and failures. He said the local bodies administration has collapsed even as the State is grappling with severe challenges in managing essential services and infrastructure, under the Indiramma rule promised by the Congress.

In a statement, the BRS working president pointed out that the villages and towns, which had thrived under BRS's ten-year rule, are now facing unprecedented challenges. He accused the Congress government of failing to maintain the momentum of development, leading to a complete collapse in governance, particularly in rural areas where panchayats are struggling due to a lack of funds. The situation has become dire, with sanitation and drainage systems taking a hit due to lack of funds and

leading to a surge in diseases like dengue and malaria. He lashed out at the government for not providing necessary funds to gram panchayats, which has left former sarpanches in debt, unable to pay bills for completed works over the past eight months.

Rama Rao reminded that during the BRS rule, Rs 275 crore was released every month to gram panchayats, a practice that has ceased since the Congress came to power and led to a severe financial crunch. He also questioned the delay in disbursing Rs 500 crore received from the 15th Finance Commission to gram panchayats and the diversion of Rs 2,100 crore from Central funds meant for MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) and NRHM (National Rural Health Mission). "Instead of releasing funds, the State government is harassing former sarpanches who were illegally detained, for merely asking for clearance of the pending bills," he said. He also sought explanation about the accumulated electricity dues amounting to Rs 4,305 crore in 12,769 panchayats. He criticised the Congress leaders for their neglect of villages, which are considered the backbone of the nation. Turning his attention to urban areas, the former Municipal Administration Minister described the situation in Telangana's towns and cities as a "great crisis." He called out complete financial paralysis of urban local bodies due to lack of funds, with not even most urgent repairs being carried out. He remarked that 12 corporations and 129 municipalities, along with GHMC, are struggling to pay wages to sanitation workers, with development projects halted due to insufficient funds. He slammed the government for neglecting urban infrastructure, leaving roads battered and drainage systems overflowing, especially during the rainy season. He cautioned about the spreading of viral diseases due to poor sanitation and lack of fogging.

Parking fees to be introduced at Hyderabad Metro Stations

Hyderabad: L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited will be introducing parking fees starting August 25 at Nagole Metro Station and September 1 at Miyapur Metro Station. As a part of the pilot run to test the functioning and efficiency of various systems, a trial was conducted at Nagole parking facility on Wednesday.

The parking facilities will ensure organized parking with clear demarcation for two-wheelers and four-wheelers improved amenities such as bio-toilets, 24/7 CCTV surveillance and on-ground security and convenient payment with app-based (QR code) options.

Warm Welcome to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in Hyd



GNS News Agency, August 14

Hyderabad, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has returned to Hyderabad following a successful trip to the United States and South Korea. The Chief Minister's visit was a strategic effort aimed at attracting foreign investments to Telangana, and the results are expected to have a remarkable positive impact on the state's economy. A Warm Homecoming: Upon landing at Shamshabad Airport, Chief Minister Reddy was greeted with a warm and enthusiastic reception. MPs, MLAs, and party members were on hand to welcome him back. Goals of the Foreign Visit: The primary aim of Chief Minister Reddy's visit was to bring more foreign investment to Telangana. In South Korea as well, the Chief Minister continued his investment drive, engaging with industrialists and officials with KoAntis biggest firms.

Paris Olympics medalist Aman Sehrawat made brand ambassador of New Delhi Municipal Council



GNS News Agency, August 14

Wrestler Aman Sehrawat who has bagged bronze medal at the Paris Olympics has been made the brand ambassador of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). Sehrawat, who scripted history by becoming India's youngest Olympic medalist, was felicitated by Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Sukhdev Raj who is a sports teacher at the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) school in Sultan Puri has been selected as the technical officer of Taekwondo for the Paralympic Games to be held in Paris from August 28. Taekwondo players trained under Raj had participated in 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, 2022 Asian Games Hangzhou, 2024 Paralympic Games Paris and other international events.

Raj is being sent to the Paralympics by the Cerebral Palsy Sport Federation of India. The civic body said that the experience of participating in the Olympics will be useful for Raj in not just training the MCD students in Taekwondo but also in case India gets to host the Ability Sport Games. "This is a matter of pride for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi because Sukhdev Raj is the only and first Taekwondo coach whose trained players have participated in 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, 2022 Asian Games Hangzhou, 2024 Paralympic Games Paris and other Asian Championships and World Championships," the MCD said in a statement. The MCD's education department is taking advantage of Raj's expertise and has also started giving training in Taekwondo to its students. "With the efforts of the education department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the students of the MCD schools will participate in the International Kids Taekwondo Competition to be held in November. This initiative of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi will create interest in sports among the students and will also help in preparing future Olympic medalists," the civic body said.

Tiranga Yatras witnessed across states ahead of Independence Day

GNS News Agency, August 14

Ahead of India's 78th Independence Day, Tiranga Yatras were witnessed on Wednesday across states as part of the BJP's 'Har ghar tiranga' campaign from August 9 to 15. Through the campaign, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government aims to evoke cultural nationalism. The yatras aimed to ensure maximum people across hoist the tricolour on their residences, commercial establishments and public places to celebrate the Independence Day on August 15. In Ahmedabad, Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah flagged off the BJP's 'Tiranga Yatra,' urging the youth to contribute towards making India a developed nation by 2047.

How NGO is helping change the cleanliness landscape in Abohar



GNS News Agency, August 14

Many are doing their bit to make their areas clean and educating people to keep their surroundings litter-free. In Abohar, too, the cleanliness landscape is changing, thanks to an NGO which is showing the way forward on clean and green environment. With volunteers in the age group of 7 to 70, "Apna Abohar Apni Aabha" — an NGO — has taken this issue out to the streets to make citizens realise the importance of clean surroundings. Every Saturday the NGO volunteers look for any dirty corner in the town and clean the area. The NGO was floated in September 2021 by Sandeep Jakhar, who in 2022 became MLA of Abohar after he won the assembly elections on a Congress ticket. In June 2022 he was suspended from the Congress after his uncle Sunil Jakhar switched to the BJP and he (Sandeep Jakhar) removed the Congress flag from the rooftop of his house.

"The NGO has over 70 dedicated volunteers — from rickshaw pullers to doctors, lawyers, small shopkeepers to wholesale businessmen. We select pockets of the city and clean that area on Saturdays and people of that area also join us. Apart from picking up garbage and litter, we also engage school and college students in painting walls on roadsides (depicting importance of a clean and green environment). These days we have also been planting saplings on Hanumangarh road," said Abohar MLA Sandeep Jakhar. The youngest volunteer of this NGO is seven-year-old Reyansh Yadav who has been accompanying his father for the past one year, while the oldest one is 62-year-old Jagdish Khod. Abohar cleanliness drive Residents paint walls to draw people's attention to cleanliness. (Express Photo)

"Ab Kachra uthana bura nahi lagta (now we don't feel bad in picking up garbage)," said Vikas Singla, a businessman and volunteer of the NGO told The Indian Express. "The volunteers wear gloves, masks and use their garden tools while planting saplings during the plan-

tation drive. They carry dustbins while picking up garbage, which are loaded in a vehicle and disposed of at a common solid waste management site of the city," said Singla. Most of the funds are arranged by Jakhar and at times a few volunteers contribute voluntarily, revealed information. "All this started from 2021 onwards and now we can see clean corners at many parts of the city. If we find any dirty corner, we reach at that site on Saturdays and clear the mess," Jakhar added. Volunteer Sonu Chhabra, who was a rickshaw puller in 2021, too chips in with his mite. Today he has switched to e-rickshaw. He regularly visits the cleaning drive spot on weekends and does his bit to keep the city clean, revealed information. No doubt waterlogging is an issue after every downpour in Abohar, but information from Abohar Municipal Corporation revealed that now the water gets drained out within a few hours of the rain which earlier used to take a day or even more at a few locations. Though municipal corporation authorities too have door-to-door collection of garbage now, volunteers of the NGO say, "Drains get choked by plastics thrown by people. As plastic items and bottles are picked up in the NGO's cleanliness drive, they don't clog up the drains anymore. This is perhaps one reason that the rainwater is drained out in a few hours from the waterlogged roads," Jakhar said. Divya Jyoti Sansthan (another NGO) arranges tea and snacks for the volunteers on second and fourth Saturdays, Jakhar added.

In 2017, Abohar was ranked the second dirtiest city in the country in Swachh Survekshan (cleanliness survey) conducted by the Centre and it was at the bottom of the heap in Punjab. Its rank was 278 in 2018, followed by 232 in 2019. In 2020, it slipped to 380 at national level. The watershed year was 2021 when the urban local body (ULB) got 105th rank nationally and stood fifth in the state. "Apna Abohar Apni Aabha drive was started in 2021. In 2022, we had our best performance. We were the number 1 ULB in Punjab in 2022 and 78th in India. We have come a long way from being the dirtiest city to being among the cleanest, and I am happy about it. Our mite is bearing fruit," said Jakhar. In 2023, Abohar was the second-cleanest ULB after Mohali with a national rank of 105. "We are there at the top in terms of cleanliness and hope to improve further in 2024." Abohar is a ULB among the cities having 1-10 lakh population. Apart from this, Abohar is also witnessing marathons (10 km and 5 km) twice a year which are organised by the Jakhar Trust for raising awareness about health and sports. This was started in 2022 when 1,500 people took part in the marathons. In 2023, the number rose to 8,500 which saw participation from both urban and rural people. This year's marathon will be in October, Jakhar said.

Task at hand for 32 government officers: Mentoring schools that are faring poorly

GNS News Agency, August 14

Eyeing an improvement in the overall academic performance of 67 government schools in Delhi where Class 9 and Class 11 students fared the worst in the last academic session, the Directorate of Education (DoE) has handed a task to 32 district-level officers in the Education Department — mentoring the schools. These government officers have been asked to adopt the assigned schools and keep a tab on overall performance for the current academic session, according to a DoE circular. At least once every two weeks, the officers will have to fill out the 'Adopted Inspection Report' regularly after a visit to the assigned school, as per the circular issued on August 9. The list of government schools has been prepared by the Exam Branch.

"As a mentor, we are in touch with the schools. We identify the challenges, and our objective is to facilitate improvement. Every area has unique challenges. For instance, some schools may be in densely populated areas, so there is overcrowding. After identifying the challenge, we come up with a strategy. There will be varying degrees of success because the challenges are different everywhere," said an official on condition of anonymity. He added that this practice has been a norm for years and it has consistently shown the desired outcome. In general, two schools are assigned to each officer but due to the non-availability of officers, three schools have been allotted to Deputy Director of Education (DDE) West A, DDE Zone 14, and DDE Zone 15.

The officers are also expected to record points of observation for Class 9 to Class 12, which include a count of guest and permanent faculty, evaluation of skill subjects, support material provided, and attendance of the students. "The academic performance of Class 9 students declined considerably this time and the worst-affected were students in North East government schools because



of lack of attention on the quality of the education in those schools," said a government teacher who did not wish to be named. Insufficient infrastructure, a disproportionate student-classroom ratio, staff shortage, a high number of first-time learners and young boys trying to fill in the shoes of the bread-earner, late provision of textbooks and supporting material from the department, improper parental counselling — these were among the factors that led to poor results, the teacher said. A government official further highlighted that the unique challenges faced by the students in the geographic area include the "problem of space crunch" and "inadequate educational environment in homes". Additionally, the stakeholders give a passive response, claimed the teacher.

When asked about the overall performance, a DDE Exam Branch official said, "Approximately 97% or more have cleared compartment examinations of Class 10 and more than 98% have passed the compartment of Class 12." However, the results of Class 9 in the academic session 2023-24 were dismal with only around 64% of students clearing the compartment examinations and in Class 11, 17,308 students could not clear the compartment examinations,

Delhi govt nod to new court complex at Rouse Avenue

GNS News Agency, August 14

new district court complex, Rouse Avenue court complex, Atishi, pendency in court cases, delhi pending cases, indian express news Delhi Minister Atishi addresses a press conference, in New Delhi, Friday, Finance Minister Atishi has approved the construction of a new district court complex, in a move that is aimed at eventually reducing pendency in court cases in the capital.

To be constructed at a cost of Rs 427 crore, the new complex with 55 courtrooms will soon come up at Rouse Avenue, according to a statement from Delhi government. "In the meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee, Finance Minister Atishi approved this project. She said that speedy and accessible justice is the fundamental right of every Indian and this is possible only when adequate infrastructure is available in the courts," the government stated. At present, she said, there is a huge burden of pending cases on judges and courts across the country, due to which there is unnecessary delay in the disposal of cases. "This is a very important project towards enhancing the judicial infrastructure of Delhi and after its completion, it will be of great help in disposal of judicial cases quickly. In this project, better public facilities will also be created keeping in mind the convenience of judges, lawyers and citizens," she further said.

According to the Delhi government, two blocks will be constructed as part of the project, the first of which will have 11 storeys, including three basements. The other block will consist of 55 courtrooms across 17 storeys,



"In the meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee, Finance Minister Atishi approved this project. She said that speedy and accessible justice is the fundamental right of every Indian and this is possible only when adequate infrastructure is available in the courts," the government stated.

including three basements; 815 lawyer chambers will be built in both building blocks that will be connected by a skywalk. Atishi has ordered the departments concerned to prepare a detailed timeline of the project and work towards completing it quickly, the government

DTC ridership still lower than pre-Covid levels, official points to service gap, rise in Metro footfall



GNS News Agency, August 14

Delhi DTC bus, DTC ridership, pre-Covid levels, Metro footfall, metro footfall increases, DMRC daily footfall, DTC chief Shilpa Shinde, Delhi Transport Corporation, Indian express news Buses parked at Hasanpur Bus Depot, Patparganj, DTC bus drivers on contract staged a strike today on Monday. Express Photo by Abhinav Saha. 29.10.2018. An increase in metro footfall in Delhi and unreliable bus services are believed to be among the factors that contributed to the fall in the ridership of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), according to Shilpa Shinde, Managing Director, DTC.

Even as the bus fleet expanded, the ridership of the main public transport operator of the national capital fell to a whopping 91 crore in 2022-23 as compared to the pre-pandemic numbers — 121 crore in 2019-20. In the year 2023-24, however, the figure recovered slightly to 95.10 crore. The total traffic revenue fell from approximately Rs 735 crore before the pandemic to Rs 683 crore in 2022-23. It increased to Rs 709.11 crore last year. Meanwhile, the daily metro ridership shot up to 46.2 lakh in 2022-23 from roughly 28 lakh before the pandemic in 2019-20, according to the Delhi Economic Survey 2023-24. This year, the daily passenger journeys hit a record 71.09 lakh in February, as compared to around

60 lakh in October 2023. "Unreliable services of buses is the primary reason for the fall in number. The increase in metro ridership has come at the cost of DTC ridership," Shinde said, pointing to the expanding metro network. The rise in the use of private transport could also be linked to the decline in DTC ridership, which was "concerning", Shinde further said as she highlighted an "unusual congestion on Delhi's roads in the last five years."

Roughly three public buses broke down every day in July, according to updates posted on X, formerly Twitter, by the Delhi Traffic Police, triggering traffic snarls across the capital. In total, the Delhi Traffic Police stalled about more than 90 breakdowns of public buses, which include DTC as well as cluster buses. A majority of these buses are said to have reached the end of their life cycle (15 years of operation or 10 lakh kilometres). A DTC official pointed to more frequent breakdowns of the buses running on CNG, which make up most of DTC's fleet. Officials estimate that all CNG buses will be off the roads by 2026 when they will hit the 15-year limit. According to experts, these buses should've been replaced after eight years, considering the rough conditions they operate in. To offset the loss of CNG buses, the government is adding electric buses to the fleet. With the introduction of 320 new electric buses last month, the number of electric buses in DTC's fleet has shot up to 1,570. Shinde also pointed to measures such as using technology to ensure timely bus arrivals and keeping buses clean to attract passengers to DTC buses. The average number of passengers ferried daily by the DTC buses fell from 33.29 lakhs in 2019-20 to around 25 lakhs after the pandemic, according to Delhi's Economic Survey 2023-24. The alarming fall in the DTC bus ridership was also highlighted in the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) annual report this year. It pointed to a massive 48.5% drop in bus ridership from 2017-18. High wait time and poor service were some of the reasons linked to the drop despite the introduction of modern buses, according to the report.

Manish Sisodia to begin padyatra on Aug 14 as re-energised AAP gets into election mode

GNS News Agency, August 14

A padyatra (footmarch) is on the cards for former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who was released on bail Friday after remaining in jail for 17 months in the excise policy case. The padyatra is a departure for Sisodia, who has always been seen as more of a policy and organisational leader. But now, with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in jail, it is Sisodia who will hit the ground. This was among the several decisions taken during his meeting with senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders at his former official residence at Mathura Road. While the padyatra will start on Wednesday, Sisodia will meet Delhi MLAs and councillors on Monday and Tuesday. "It may seem like the Assembly polls are still a long way off, but we need to start campaigning as soon as possible. While we are confident that we will win, Manish ji's return is only going to strengthen us further. We also know that the CM will get bail soon but we want to start preparing in earnest," a senior party leader said.

Talking about Sisodia's role and his importance, another leader said, "For several years, we have seen him mostly running the government even if the CM was busy with political campaigns. The situation has almost been reversed now. The ministers are in touch with the CM at Tihar jail and can discuss issues of governance, while Manish ji will go door-to-door," he said. Sunday's meeting saw Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak; Ministers Gopal Rai (who is also AAP's Delhi State Convener), Saurabh Bharadwaj, Atishi and Imran Hussain; National Secretary Pankaj Gupta, MLA Durgesh Pathak, and senior leader Jasmine Shah, among others, in attendance. "... (he) held a detailed discussion on strategies to defeat the BJP... The leaders' suggestions were carefully considered, and a consensus was reached on how to proceed strategically based on the prevailing circumstances," a statement issued by the party



said. "It is now clear to the people of this country that the only agenda of BJP and PM Narendra Modi is to somehow stop the work of the people of Delhi and break the AAP. Despite so many adverse circumstances, today the AAP is standing tall and doing good work. Also, our party is moving forward in every state. We have come out of these difficulties stronger. Manish Sisodia will go among the people and meet them. The blessings of the people remain with us. We will continue to work hard for Delhi in the future too," Sandeep Pathak said. Another thing that was discussed is the way forward in Haryana, which goes to polls before Delhi. Sunita Kejriwal, wife of CM Kejriwal, has been holding public meetings in this regard.

"It has been decided that she will continue campaigning in Haryana with Singh and other leaders and Manish ji will stick to Delhi for the time being. The organisation in Delhi has suffered a lot over the past three-four months. There are some MLAs who have found getting any work done extremely difficult and are now facing a situation where the public sentiment is turning negative. We are sure that with the direct intervention from the top, the cadre will be re-energised," another leader said.

UP international trade show in Greater Noida from Sep 25 to 29; CM reviews preparations

GNS News Agency, August 14

The state government will organise the second edition of the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Exhibition from September 25 to 29 at the India Exhibition Mart in Greater Noida. The theme for this year's exhibition has been titled "Unique Platform of Sourcing." The event is aimed at showcasing the state's "craft, cuisine, and culture" to a global audience, drawing entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and traders from around the world, officials said.

Reviewing the preparations, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasised that the show will once again bring global attention to the "remarkable craft, cuisine, and culture of Uttar Pradesh and that the event will serve as a vital platform for entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and exporters across sectors, including IT/ITES, MSMEs, startups, education, agriculture, health, tourism, culture, energy, and the ODOP (One District, One Product) initiative. The Chief Minister has called for extensive preparations to ensure that the event is grand and impactful, underscoring its importance in providing a global stage for Uttar Pradesh's diverse industries and cultural heritage.

Expressing satisfaction over the registration of more than 2,500 exhibitors in the trade show so far, the CM said the expected cooperation is being received from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Department of Industrial Promotion and Internal Trade and Ministry of MSME of the Government of India for the successful organisation of the trade show. The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of maintaining communication with Indian ambassadors and high commissioners in various countries to invite more foreign buyers, entrepreneurs, and companies. He said this multi-sectoral trade show will play a significant role in providing a global platform for local entrepreneurs, products, and crafts.

Adityanath was informed that Vietnam is participating as a partner country in this year's trade show. A del-



egation from Vietnam will be present, showcasing high-quality Vietnamese products. Additionally, a cultural troupe from Vietnam will perform, and visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy both Vietnamese and Indian cuisines. The CM called for the organisation of daily knowledge sessions during the five-day trade show, each focusing on a specific theme. He further said that a khadi-centric fashion show will also be organised during the event. Cultural presentations will also be organised on all five days showcasing the art and culture of Uttar Pradesh while special stalls will be set up to introduce everyone to the dishes of the state, he said.

Roadshows may be held in different states to ensure a wide publicity of the event, he said, directing that arrangements be made for students from higher educational institutions to visit the trade show. He also directed the Gautam Buddha Nagar District Magistrate, Police Commissioner and the Greater Noida Industrial Authority chief executive officer (CEO) to make all arrangements for the movement, security and other facilities of dignitaries, guests, entrepreneurs and craftsmen. The inaugural edition of the show was held from September 21 to 25 last year, attracting over 3 lakh attendees, including 2,000 exhibitors and more than 500 participants from 60 countries.

As Gurgaon reels under garbage crisis, meet the workers toiling hard to keep it clean



GNS News Agency, August 14

Before the dawn breaks in Gurgaon, Rajarani, a 45-year-old Dalit woman, like a ritual, begins her work day from her own home. She cooks for her family and then cleans the house — a single-room set-up she owns in sector 42. At 7 am, she sets out, walking seven kilometres to arrive at the Sector 44 parking lot. In a white salwar suit, she heads to the electricity department office — a place to safely store brooms. Soon, a group of 23 sanitation workers gather around their supervisor Jitender, who sends them away in clusters. In their rigorous eight-hour shift, there is no scope — or place — to take a break. The workers sit on rocks under a tree when it gets too hot. "We don't even have toilet facilities. Sometimes, we have to go in the parking lot, in the open area behind cars, so no one can see us," says Rajarani.

Gurgaon has a garbage crisis. Though the government has already declared a "Solid Waste Exigency", little seems to have changed on the ground. The city, with a population of around 30 lakh, according to a 2022 Health department survey, produces 1,200 tonnes of waste every day. To clean it, the Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG) has 3,010 sanitation workers and a budget of Rs 500 crore. Last year, it spent Rs 254 crore — less than half its allocation. There are over 8,000 bulk waste generators (BWG) in Gurgaon. According to revised guidelines, BWGs are those set-ups that produce more than 100 kg of waste every day. At Rs 5 lakh per person, the city has one of the three highest per capita incomes in the country. It also has 6.4 lakh taxpayers, up from 5.9 in March last year, according to the Income Tax department. With Rs 42,244 crore collected in tax last year, Gurgaon contributes up to 3.7% of income tax in the country. The city is home to offices of half of Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, IBM, and Amazon. It also hosts several unicorn companies including Shiprocket and Cars24. Rajarani's group cleans the mounds of garbage in front of 152 office buildings, shops, roads, a parking lot, and surrounding areas in Sector 44. Her job has left Rajarani with a tanned face and swollen feet. She sweeps and shovels the garbage into a tractor-trolley parked a few metres away. By the end of her shift at 3.30 pm, fresh bags of waste appear. "It is tiring. There is so much garbage and so few of us, it is impossible," she says. Despite her gruelling shift, she has to cover the distance back home on foot. "Taking an auto costs me Rs 50 and buses are very few, so I walk most days," she says. Of the 3,010 workers, only 175 (about 5%) are regular employees who get dearness, housing rent, petrol, mobile, and uniform allowances. The rest are simply paid Rs 16,900 every month. Some are also provided brooms, oil and soap allowances, totalling Rs 568, apart from a sanitation allowance of Rs 1,000. There is no insurance to cover them in case of an emergency. Even as the likes of Rajarani toil away, complaints continue to pour in at the Municipal Corporation's redressal cell. So far in July, the cell has received 1,956 sanitation-related complaints. Sanitation inspectors field at least 10 calls every hour with grievances regarding door-to-door collection of waste. "Waste has not been lifted from our homes for three days" seems to be a common refrain.

Apart from sanitation workers, there is a complex machinery comprising a contractor with 354 trucks that collects waste door-to-door from 75,000 households. The streets, parking lots, footpaths and other public spaces are cleaned by workers, while earth movers, trucks, tractors and trolleys do the heavy lifting. Six contractors have also been hired by the MCG for additional labour and machinery across four zones that include all villages and stretches of the city — from Ambience Island to Rajeev Chowk. A senior officer says that around 3,000 people have been employed by these contractors for Rs 10,500 per month. Most of the complaints that MCG has been grappling with come from Zone 3, where Rajarani works. In July alone, of around 2,000 sanitation-related complaints the civic body received, 692 were from Zone 3. The highest number of complaints — 219 — are from Ward 29 housing the most elite addresses in Gurugram: Malibu Town, Mayfield Garden, and Sushant Lok 2 and 3, among others in sectors 46, 47, 38, 62, 57, and 51. Most of the sanitation workers hail from Gurgaon, within a 10-km radius of their workplace such as Nathupur and Sikandarapur, while less than 500 are migrants. As much as 80% of them, union leader Kailash says, are Dalits. "The lack of funds and facilities for us make us feel like we are animals. No one listens to our concerns," he says.

The waste the city generates comes in all shapes, sizes, and colours: plastic gunny sacks, bags of dog excrement, unsegregated food waste, plastic cups and plates, footwear, bathtubs, milk wrappers, discarded packets of chips, even ceramic utensils, and mattresses. "And

lots of cigarette butts," Rajarani says. The first stop for the garbage is one of many collection points before it all moves to the Bandhwari landfill — known as the "carcinogenic garbage mountain". While the workforce includes those who came to the region before it was a city, Rajarani is a local resident who had to give up her house for Gurgaon's expansion. "I had a house at Sikandarapur, but it was demolished without intimation for the Yellow Line of the Delhi Metro. Seven years later, the government gave us 52 gajj in exchange for the 150 gajj they took. Even now, the land is vacant and a wine shop stands near it," she says. She now lives in Sector 42. A small house with two cots and a kitchen pushed into a corner, the bathroom in the same hall — her family of four made it home in 2017. "I worked hard to ensure my children are in a good line of work," says Rajarani, who has been working for 14 years as a sweeper, the first four under a private contractor and later under the MCG. Rajarani's two sons, ages 22 and 26, are B Tech graduates. Before joining MCG, she would stitch clothes and earn a living. "Around the time our house was demolished, I had to undergo surgery following a brain haemorrhage. This impeded my vision and hand-eye coordination and I had to take up the sweeper position," she says.

As she sits down for a break, a rat scurries off from a mound near her. "There are too many pests and we have to work with no safety gear, and sometimes manually segregate waste. This is not our job. Besides, the roads in front of office spaces are the hardest to clean due to cigarette butts. It is as if the entire city is smoking," says Rajarani whose mother was a sanitation worker with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). "Things have improved now; my younger son was a Mensa scholar and now has a job. My children insist that I quit, but I will wait till they get married," Rajarani says. Last year, the garbage crisis deteriorated. The MCG's move to hire new contractors for sanitation work had led to a months-long strike, as the services of 3,480 workers under private contractors were terminated and the new contractors did not hire them. The crisis was reflected in the Swachh Survekshan ranking 2023 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; Gurgaon ranked 140 in the category of cities with more than 1 lakh population. This was when neighbouring New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) secured the seventh rank and Noida, 14th. In 2022, the city came 19th in the list of cities with a population of 1-10 lakh. Another corporate hub, Navi Mumbai, came third in 2023. Among the workers are those who have seen the city rise from scratch. Such as Amal Ali who left West Bengal's Malda 20 years ago. Now 40, he lives with his wife, also a sanitation worker, and four children. "I dropped out of school before Class 10 and left for Delhi with my uncle. I navigated the Delhi roads as an autorickshaw driver, but after two months, I called my father to ask for money to return. I was unhappy and returned to Malda, but after five years I came back, this time to Gurgaon," he says. But it was a different city back then. "Fewer people and less garbage."

In 2010, Ali started working for a contractor hired by the MCG. "My wife joined me later. My son works as a sanitation worker at a private company and earns Rs 9,000. He is just a teenager but has ended up like me," says Ali. He says the life in Malda was better, as were his neighbours. "People here hurt abuses at me and ask me to clean their waste," he says. Sikandarapur, where he lives, is one of the areas worst affected by the garbage crisis. The situation on the ground has not improved even after the government declared that a ward that maintains cleanliness standards for two consecutive months will get a reward of Rs 1 crore. The MCG workers say six contractors have not deployed enough labourers and machines, adding to their workload.

According to MCG's Chief Accounts Officer Vijay Singla, the budget allotted to the sanitation department last year was Rs 500 crore of which only Rs 245 crore was used. This year, Rs 375 crore has been allotted and Rs 80 crore has been spent so far, he says. Narhari Singh Banger, the MCG Commissioner, says that funds for various projects, including a waste to energy and C&D (construction and demolition) waste plants, were allocated but the projects did not take off, owing to which funds lapsed. "In other areas, we have cut costs and saved, which is why there is less expenditure," he says. Jitender (38), the supervisor, says he has not been regularised for 10 years and still gets Rs 16,900 a month — exactly the same amount as the workers under him. "We are unable to make the authorities listen to us. After the termination of 25 workers for protesting last year, our union, too, has become weak," he says. Jitender belongs to the Valmiki community; his mother was also a sanitation worker. "She was on the MCG rolls but has not received her share of PF (Provident Fund) yet owing to a mistake the clerk made while entering her gender," he says. Additional Commissioner, MCG, Balpreet Singh says the administration is looking at ways to resolve the crisis. "We will seek alternate methods if the demands are not met soon by the new garbage collection agency, Vimalraj Pvt Ltd. We are also in touch with other private vendors," he says. Singh also says that they have sought funds to develop sites to process waste. "We have approached five companies to pick up C&D waste from roads," he says. As Rajarani rises to resume work, a traffic police officer, who had been sitting in a chair under a shed and listening to her, chimes in, "It is not a difficult line of work. Dalits traditionally get into this line..." Rajarani retorts: "I won't let my sons do this."

Elon Musk to interview Donald Trump on X Spaces



GNS News Agency, August 14

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk is due to interview Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on the X social media network on Tuesday in an event that could inject more surprises into the turbulent U.S. presidential election. The interview, scheduled for 8 p.m. Eastern Time today (5.30 a.m. Tuesday IST), could provide the former president an opportunity to seize the limelight at a time when his campaign is seen as sagging. His Democratic rival for the November 5 election, Vice President Kamala Harris, has erased Mr. Trump's lead in opinion polls and energised Democratic voters with a series of high-energy rallies. The interview on Mr. Musk's social media platform could allow Mr. Trump to reach a different audience than the conservative faithful who attend his rallies and watch his interviews on Fox News. However, similar events on the platform have been plagued by tech-

nical problems. "Am going to do some system scaling tests tonight and tomorrow in advance of the conversation," Mr. Musk wrote on the platform, formerly known as Twitter. The interview will be hosted live using Mr. Trump's official X account, his campaign said on Sunday. Mr. Trump's access to his account, @realDonaldTrump, was restored a month into Mr. Musk's ownership of X after being suspended by the platform's previous owners following the January 6, 2021, attack on Congress by his supporters. Mr. Trump frequently posts on his Truth Social social media platform, which was launched in February 2022. He has returned to X only once since his access was restored with a post in August 2023 appealing for donations and showing his Fulton County jail mugshot. Mr. Musk could prove to be an unusual interviewer. The world's richest person backed Democratic President Joe Biden in 2020 but has tacked rightward since and endorsed the Republican following the attempted assassination of Mr. Trump in July. Mr. Musk, who heads electric car company Tesla Inc, also started a fundraising organisation to support Mr. Trump's campaign. The political action committee is now under investigation in Michigan for possible violations of state laws on gathering voter information. Mr. Trump, a longstanding critic of electric vehicles, shifted gears after Mr. Musk's endorsement.

"I'm for electric cars. I have to be, because Elon endorsed me very strongly. So I have no choice," Mr. Trump said at an early August rally. United Auto Workers President Shawn Fein, campaigning in support of Ms. Harris, called Mr. Trump a "sellout."

Hong Kong's top court upholds convictions of 7 prominent pro-democracy activists over 2019 protest

GNS News Agency, August 14

Hong Kong's top court on Monday (August 12, 2024) upheld the convictions of seven of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy activists over their roles in one of the biggest anti-government protests in 2019. Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper; Martin Lee, the founding chairman of the city's Democratic Party; and five former pro-democracy lawmakers were found guilty in 2021 of organizing and participating in an unauthorized assembly. Their convictions dealt a blow to the city's flagging pro-democracy movement during a political crackdown on dissidents following the protests.

Last year, the activists partially won their appeal at a lower court, with their convictions quashed over the charge of organizing an unauthorized assembly. But their convictions over taking part in the assembly were upheld and they continued their legal battle at the city's top court. On Monday, judges at the Court of Final Appeal unanimously ruled against their appeal over the remaining convictions. The defendants previously argued that the trial judge had failed to conduct an "operational proportionality" assessment when convicting them and quoted two non-binding decisions set out by the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. The defense also suggested the judge should have taken into account that the prosecution did not become violent.

But Chief Justice Andrew Cheung and Justice Roberto Ribeiro said in their written judgment that the two British cases should not be adopted in the city's courts because the frameworks for human rights challenges in the two jurisdictions are different. They ruled that the defendants' proposition was "unsustainable" and "is contrary to all established principles governing constitutional challenges in Hong Kong."

"A separate proportionality inquiry in relation to arrest, prosecution, conviction and sentence is inappropriate and un-called for," they wrote. After the court handed down its decision, barrister Margaret Ng, one of the defendants, declined to comment before reading the judgment. "We just want to take this occasion to thank our legal teams, and all the people who have been supporting us all the time," she said. The convictions were linked to their involvement in a rally in August 2019 that drew an

estimated 1.7 million people onto Hong Kong's streets to call for greater police accountability and democracy. The march was relatively peaceful compared to other protests that often morphed into violent clashes between police and protesters that year. Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to China in 1997. Its mini-constitution, the Basic Law, guarantees its people freedom of assembly. When sentencing the seven activists in 2021, the trial judge at the District Court ruled that the right to such freedom is not absolute and is subject to restrictions ruled constitutional. She ordered Lai, Lee Cheuk-yan, Leung Kwok-hung and Cyd Ho to be jailed between eight and 18 months. Martin Lee, Ng and Albert Ho were given suspended jail sentences.

When the appellate court partially overturned their convictions in 2023, it quashed part of the sentences for the four who were given jail terms on the record. The decision was made after they already served out their sentences. Mr. Lai, Mr. Lee Cheuk-yan, Mr. Leung and Albert Ho still remained in custody as they were also prosecuted or convicted under a Beijing-imposed national security law, which critics said has all but wiped out public dissent. Lai was also serving a prison term for a separate fraud case. The Beijing and Hong Kong governments said the security law was necessary to bring back stability to the city following the protests. The movement five years ago was the city's most concerted challenge to the Hong Kong government since the 1997 handover. It waned with massive arrests and exiles of democracy activists, the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of the security law.

Two Deputy Governors of Bangladesh Bank resign after Hasina's exit

GNS News Agency, August 14

Days after the resignation of the Bangladesh Bank Governor, two Deputy Governors and the head of the Financial Intelligence Unit (BFUI) have resigned following the directives from the interim government, a media report said on Monday. Additionally, an adviser to the central bank has also submitted his resignation to the Governor, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

On Friday (August 9, 2024), Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder tendered his resignation, citing personal reasons. His resignation was part of a broader wave of departures from various institutions of the country following the recent fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government. It was reported that the Ministry of Finance informed them on Sunday (August 11, 2024) that they must submit their resignation letters by 1 pm on Monday, the report said. Following this directive, deputy governors Kazi



Saidur Rahman and Md Khurshid Alam submitted their resignation letters in the morning. Masud Biswas, the head of the BFUI, the government agency responsible for investigating money laundering and suspicious transactions, also submitted his resignation to the secretary.

Similarly, Bangladesh Bank's adviser, Abu Farah Md Nasser, submitted his resignation to the Governor. After the ouster of Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5 following wide-

spread protests over a controversial quota system in jobs, a group of agitated officials and employees demanded the resignation of the central bank's Governor, four Deputy Governors and the head of the BFUI during a protest march last week. At one point, the protesters entered the Governor's floor in the central bank's main building and forced one of the deputy governors to sign on a blank sheet of paper, the newspaper reported. The others were forced to leave.

Since then, they have

not returned to the bank. On Monday (August 12, 2024), they officially submitted their resignation letters to the government, the report said. The protesting officials claimed that these top officials of Bangladesh Bank were responsible for irregularities and corruption in the banking sector. Last Thursday (August 8, 2024), Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the head of an interim government replacing Hasina. A 16-member council of advisers was announced to assist Yunus in running the state's affairs.

Tripura school teacher facing molestation charge dies after mob lynching

GNS News Agency, August 14

Agartala: Accusing a school teacher in Tripura's Gomati district of molesting a minor girl student, a mob assaulted him leading to his death two days later, a police officer said on Sunday. The police have registered an FIR in this connection, but no arrest was made. It is alleged that the man, who was in his 40s, molested the girl during a private tuition session in Udaipur town. Following this, local people severely beat up the government school teacher on Thursday. "After a severe assault, local people took him to RK Pur police station on August 8 night in presence of his wife and lodged a molestation case against him. On doctor's advice, the accused stayed the night at a local health centre," Assistant Inspector General of Police (Law & Order) Ananta Das said. He was arrested and subsequently secured bail from a local court on Friday. Das said the teacher fell ill after returning home and was admitted to the GBP Hospital in Agartala. He died during treatment on Saturday. The police started an investigation into the case, the officer said. Finance Min-



ister Pranajit Singha Roy, the local MLA, condemned the attack on the "reputed English teacher." "There may be allegations against anybody but taking the law into one's hands is a crime. Chief Minister Manik Saha came to know about the brutal murder of the teacher. The police will take legal action against those involved in the crime," he told reporters.

Thermal plants fire up coal as capacity addition lags, private sector interest wanes

Could men be getting birth control soon? Know all about the possible newest offering showing promise



A growing demand-supply mismatch in the power market, triggered by a slowdown in the pace of new capacity addition of coal-fired power plants at a time when the lack of effective storage options to counterbalance the variability of the surging renewable capacities, has increased the pressure on the country's grid managers. With soaring temperatures forcing power demand to surge, failure to augment baseload capacity is compounding problems posed by the variability of renewable energy.

India's coal-fired thermal capacity grew to 218 GW in FY24 from 205 GW in FY20, a 6 per cent growth, data on NITI Aayog's energy dashboard showed. At the same time, generation by coal-fired thermal plants grew by 34 per cent from 960 billion units (BU) to 1,290 billion units (BU) and the average plant load factor (PLF), or capacity utilisation, jumped from 53 per cent to 68 per cent. In April, the average PLF of coal-fired thermal plants stood at 76 per cent and is likely to be higher in May given that peak demand met touched 250 GW on May 30, against the anticipated peak demand of 235 GW for the month of May. In contrast, solar capacity has more than doubled to 81 GW whereas average capacity utilisation has decreased slightly from 17 per cent to 16 per cent. Wind capacity also grew by 22 per cent to 46 GW, while capacity utilisation grew slightly from 20 per cent to 21 per cent. The mismatch between growth in generation and capacity addition comes at a time when the Ministry of Power has been increasingly relying on thermal plants to meet demand in peak hours, like late evenings, when renewable sources like solar do not generate electricity. For instance, over the last few weeks, it instructed fifteen imported coal-fired and all gas-based thermal plants to be operational during the summer months, with temperatures hitting record highs. Thermal capacity targets not met over the last five year, though, against the government's own targets, thermal capacity addition has seen an average annual shortfall of 54 per cent. Notably, the private sector, which has a better track record at setting up new projects within timelines, accounted for just 7 per cent of all new capacity added in the same period. With healthy growth in power demand and minimal storage infrastructure for renewable energy, India is increasingly relying on thermal power to meet peak demand in summer months. Despite significant renewable energy capacity added over the last five financial years, the share of coal-fired power generation increased to 75 per cent of total power generated from all sources in FY24 from 71 per cent in FY20. While the government aims to add another 80 GW thermal capacity over the next eight years, experts point to the possibility of the slow pace of capacity addition and an underwhelming response from the private sector leading to more shortfalls, which in turn can stress existing thermal capacity, especially as utility-scale adoption of energy storage systems is expected to take some more years. RK Singh, the Union power minister, in November 2023, told industry stakeholders that the government plans to add 80 GW thermal power capacity by FY32. "Power demand of the country has increased at an unprecedented rate due to rapid growth of the economy. India needs 24x7 availability of power for its economic growth; and we are not going to compromise on availability of power for our growth. This power cannot be achieved by renewable energy sources alone. Since nuclear capacity cannot be added at a rapid pace, we have to add coal-based thermal capacity for meeting our energy needs," Singh said at a stakeholder interaction in November. Still, going by the government's own targets for thermal capacity addition, the annual shortfall has averaged 54 per cent over the latest five financial years. According to data with the Central Electricity Au-

thority (CEA), nearly 24 GW of thermal capacity was added against a target of 50 GW. In FY24, 6.2 GW was added against a target of 14.7 GW, a shortfall of 58 per cent. The most capacity added in the last five years was in FY20, which was 6.8 GW with a shortfall of 34 per cent.

Private sector takes a backseat The contribution of the private sector over the last five years was just 1.7 GW, or 7 per cent of the total thermal capacity added. In FY21 and FY23, the private sector added zero thermal capacity. The absence of the private sector is also apparent in capacity that is currently under-construction—of the total 29.4 GW distributed across 22 projects, private capacity under-construction is just 1.6 GW held by one project owned by a subsidiary of Adani Power Limited. A total of 26 private projects with a capacity of almost 24 GW are currently either on hold or not likely to be commissioned.

R Shankar Raman, CFO of Larsen & Toubro Limited, India's largest construction company that also builds power plants, in a recent earnings call said that "all the power investment has ceased because all the power producers, the private capital who backed it, are all in NCLT in different forms". In addition to insolvency proceedings plaguing the private sector, the estimated capital cost for setting up of new coal-fired thermal capacity has also gone up to Rs 8.34 crore per MW. For contrast, the cost for setting up 1 MW of solar power can be half as much. "The cost of putting up a power plant has definitely gone up because we have seen a lot of international banks walk away from financing coal-fired projects. When you borrow from international banks, the interest rate is much lower but when you borrow from local institutions, then the interest rate can go up to double digits. That means that you're really not able to finance your project at the cheaper level. But countries like China continue to add huge capacities. In the last couple of years, China has added almost 218 GW coal-fired capacities, which is half of India's current total power generation," Deepak Kannan, Global Head of Coal Pricing at S&P Global Commodity Insights, told The Indian Express. "I don't blame anybody for sticking to coal because that is the only way out from a policy perspective. For the industries, you still have to rely on coal for 24x7 power supply, especially in developing economies. It makes more sense for the government to promote solar power in villages where they don't run motors throughout the day or in homes where you run a few appliances but require less battery capacities," Kannan added. Leading private companies in the power sector have thus far sent mixed signals. In addition to the under-construction capacity of 1.6 GW in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, Adani Power also plans to add 1.6 GW more in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh. Tata Power Company Limited, on the other hand, does not plan any greenfield investment in thermal capacity in the next 2 to 3 years, executives confirmed in the QY4FY24 earnings call.

"Well, as you know, we have seen the FDRE (firm and dispatchable renewable energy) projects are going to be the new future. And the number of bids that are expected are very large, where you get a certainty of getting renewable power. There is huge pressure. It is not only about supply, but there is a huge pressure from the customer side also that they want to transition to clean energy, whether it is industry or commercial or even residential consumer," Praveer Sinha, CEO of Tata Power, said in the earnings call on May 8. The future of FDRE, which employs energy storage systems to consistently supply renewable power to consumers, is yet to be settled with industry leaders sharing varied views on the economic feasibility of battery energy storage systems (BESS). Many see utility-scale adoption of BESS only from 2030 onwards. "The sharp growth in electricity demand is necessitating a rethink from the Government on thermal capacity addition, with push for investments in new thermal power projects including by the private sector, with the target of adding 80 GW of new thermal power capacity by 2032 to meet the growing energy needs. Given the long gestation period, it is imperative for the power generation companies to initiate work on these projects over the next 18 to 24 months to meet the 2032 timeline," ICRA noted in a power sector update late last year. The growth in generation and capacity addition mismatch comes at a time when the Power Ministry has been increasingly relying on thermal plants to meet demand in peak hours when renewable sources like solar do not generate electricity. Over the last few weeks, it instructed 15 imported coal-fired and all gas-based thermal plants to be operational during the summer months, with temperatures hitting record highs.



For decades, men's birth control options have been limited. But exciting news is emerging! Researchers are making significant progress on a long-acting and reversible birth control method specifically for men. This experimental product takes the form of a once-daily hormonal gel applied to the shoulders. Similar to birth control pills for women, the gel disrupts sperm production in the testes. It contains two key ingredients: nesterone, a progestin, and testosterone, the male sex hormone. Nesterone works by suppressing the natural production of testosterone within the testes, thereby hindering sperm development, explained Dr Priyanka Suhag, Consultant, Dept of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi

However, testosterone plays a crucial role in various bodily functions, including muscle maintenance and libido. To ensure men's health, the gel provides just enough testosterone to maintain normalcy while effectively limiting sperm production. Since 2005, researchers have been meticulously refining the gel's dosage and concentration. Recent trials involving over 300 couples

appear to have yielded the optimal formula. A healthy sperm count typically falls between 15 million and 200 million per millilitre of semen. Studies have shown that counts below 1 million are sufficient to prevent pregnancy. Encouragingly, the trial demonstrated that 86% of participants achieved this desired low sperm count within 15 weeks of using the gel. For some men, it worked even faster, suppressing sperm production within just 4-8 weeks. "Daily application to the shoulders and upper arms allows the gel to be absorbed through the skin, making it a convenient and non-invasive treatment option. This method of contraception aims to provide men with a reliable and reversible means of preventing pregnancy, offering a potential alternative to traditional male contraceptive methods," Dr Suhag explained in an interaction with indianexpress.com.

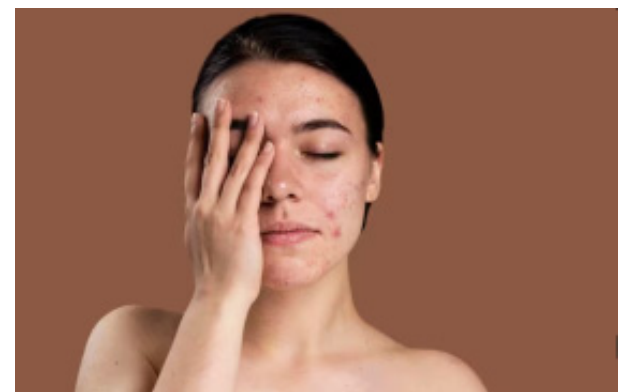
Why should making male birth control be a priority?

For the longest time, birth control and family planning have been the sole responsibility of women, especially in low-income households, but with the ushering in of male birth control, shared responsibility can be promoted. Dr Suhag noted that it also increases the number of available contraceptive options, so couples can choose the method they prefer. Many women face health issues or side effects that make hormonal birth control unsuitable, highlighting the need for alternative options like male birth control, she added. Compared to female contraceptives, male birth control, such as the topical Nesterone-Testosterone gel, is less invasive. While methods like IUDs and hormonal implants involve significant hormonal adjustments or invasive procedures, the gel is non-invasive, with fewer systemic side effects, according to Dr Suhag, making it a more straightforward and potentially more acceptable option for many men.

Pay attention to these signs on your face; here's what they can indicate about your health

Did you know that your face can reveal a lot about your overall health? From changes in skin colour and texture to the appearance of new lines or spots, these signs might be more than just cosmetic concerns. In this article, we'll explore how certain facial features can indicate various health conditions and why it's important to pay attention to these signals. Dr Ajay Rana, dermatologist, aesthetic physician and founder director of ILAMED says, "Subtle changes in facial features or skin condition can serve as external indicators of internal health problems because the skin is a visible organ that can reflect physiological imbalances." Common facial signs that may suggest specific health conditions "Several facial signs can suggest specific health conditions," says Dr. Charu Sharma, Head of Dermatology at Cureskin. However, she reminds us that they are not definitive diagnostic tools on their own.

Yellowing of skin and eyes: Could be a sign of serious liver problems like hepatitis or cirrhosis. Puffy face: Might indicate issues with your kidneys, heart, or thyroid gland. Dark circles: Tiredness, allergies, or anemia could be the reason behind those dark circles under your eyes. Acne and oily skin: Hormonal imbalances or PCOS might be causing these breakouts. Dry, flaky skin: This dryness could be due to thyroid problems or simply not drinking enough water. Poor nutrition can lead to deficiencies that affect skin health, such as lack of vitamins and minerals causing dry skin, acne, or pale complexion. Dr Sharma agrees that several emerging technologies are enhancing our ability to diagnose health concerns through facial analysis. "Advanced imaging techniques, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning algorithms are being developed to analyse facial features and skin conditions more accurately," she informs. For instance, she continues, AI can detect patterns and anomalies in skin texture, colour, and elasticity that might be overlooked by the human eye. Telemedicine platforms are also integrating these technologies, allowing for remote diagnosis and monitoring of patients. These



advancements hold great promise for early detection and personalised healthcare. She notes, "These technologies are still under development and require further research before widespread use. Hence, a doctor's advice is primitive to confirm or rule out any of the skin and health-related concerns."

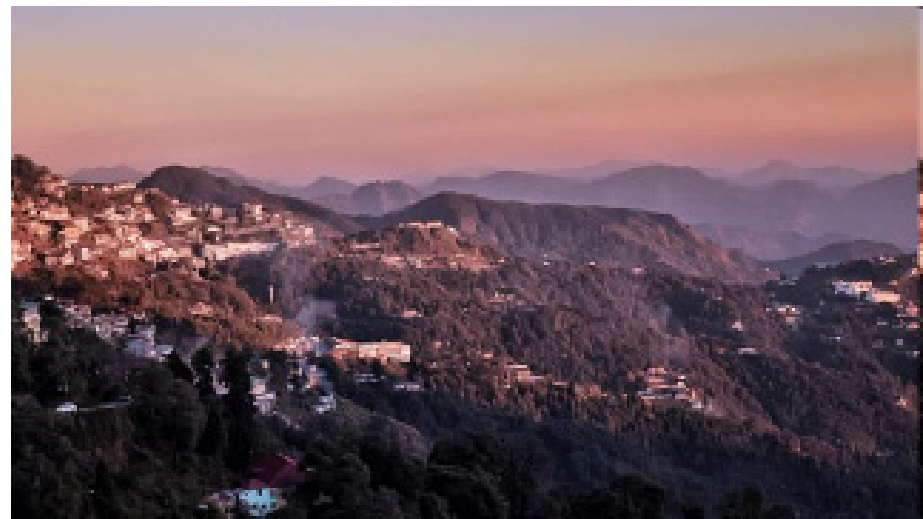
Lifestyle factors that significantly impact the appearance of our face Lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, and sleep play a significant role in the appearance of our face and can signal health concerns, according to Dr Rana. Diet: Poor nutrition can lead to deficiencies that affect skin health, such as lack of vitamins and minerals causing dry skin, acne, or pale complexion. Conversely, a balanced diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals promotes healthy skin and can improve complexion. Exercise: Regular physical activity improves blood circulation, which nourishes skin cells and helps remove toxins, contributing to a healthier, more vibrant appearance. Lack of exercise, on the other hand, can lead to poor circulation and a dull complexion. Sleep: Adequate sleep is crucial for skin repair and regeneration. Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to dark circles, puffiness, and a sallow complexion, signaling stress and potential health issues.

After Swiss Alps, this unique phenomenon occurs only in Mussoorie

Mussoorie, the Queen of Hills, is a popular tourist destination renowned for its breathtaking views and serene atmosphere. But during the winter months, the skies above Mussoorie transform into an artist's canvas, showcasing a mesmerising phenomenon called the Winterline. Do you know the hill station is the only place in the world where this phenomenon occurs other than the Swiss Alps? For those who don't know, the Winterline is a distinct horizontal line that appears in the sky at dusk. It's formed due to a unique combination of atmospheric conditions. Here's the science behind it:

Temperature Inversion: During winter, warm air gets trapped below colder air in the valleys surrounding Mussoorie. This creates a temperature inversion, where the temperature increases with altitude instead of the usual decrease.

Dust and Refraction: Dust particles suspended in the colder air act as a barrier, bending the light rays from the setting sun. The result? A dramatic visual effect. As the sun dips below the horizon, its rays refract through the layers of air with different temperatures. This



For those who don't know, the Winterline is a distinct horizontal line that appears in the sky at dusk. It's formed due to a unique combination of atmospheric conditions. Here's the science behind it:

creates a visible demarcation line in the sky – the Winterline. The area above the line appears a lighter blue, while the region below, containing the dust particles, takes on a darker, more greyish hue.

When and where to witness the winterline

The winterline is a seasonal spectacle, typically gracing the skies of Mussoorie from late October to February. However, the exact timing can vary depending on weather conditions. The best chance of witnessing this

phenomenon is on clear evenings with minimal cloud cover.

Due to its dependence on atmospheric conditions, the visibility of the winterline can vary across locations. However, some vantage points in Mussoorie offer a better chance of experiencing this celestial magic. Here are a few suggestions: Mall Road: The bustling heart of Mussoorie provides a central location to witness the winterline. Lal Tibba: The highest point in Mussoorie, Lal Tibba offers panoramic

views, making it an ideal spot to observe the phenomenon. Gandhi Chowk: This popular square is another option, especially if you're exploring the town centre. The winterline is a fleeting yet captivating spectacle that adds to the charm of Mussoorie during winters. If you're planning a trip to this hill station during the winter months, keep your eyes peeled for the dramatic display of nature's artistry in the sky. You might just be rewarded with a glimpse of the mesmerizing winterline.

Regulator has reacted, govt has nothing further to add: Finance Ministry on Hindenburg report on Sebi

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said there is "nothing further to add" by the government on the issue as both the regulator and the concerned person have given the statements. Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said there is "nothing further to add" by the government on the issue as both the regulator and the concerned person have given the statements.

In the first official reaction from the Ministry of Finance on the Hindenburg revelations against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said there is "nothing further to add" by the government on the issue as both the regulator and the concerned person have given the statements. "SEBI has given a statement. The concerned person has given a statement. I have nothing further to add," Seth told reporters outside North Block. Seth, as the Department of Economic Affairs Secretary, holds the posi-



tion of part-time member in the SEBI board. A detailed query sent by The Indian Express to the DEA Secretary did not elicit a response. When asked about whether SEBI Chairperson will step aside from the case, Seth reiterated, "Both of them, the concerned person as well as the regulator, have made the statements and there is nothing further to be added by the government." After the US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research on Saturday made a series of allegations against SEBI

Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Sebi on Sunday came out in Buch's defence and said the regulator has adequate internal mechanisms to address issues related to conflict of interest, which include disclosure framework and provision for recusal. Relevant disclosures required in terms of holdings of securities and their transfers have been made by the Chairperson from time to time, SEBI said on Sunday.

On Saturday, the US-based Hindenburg Research, in a post on X (for-

merly Twitter) alleged that Buch and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal. The short-seller alleged that the couple invested in Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund (GDOF), in which Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani, had invested. This report by Hindenburg Research comes almost 18 months after it had first kicked up a political storm in January 2023, alleging the Adani Group of "brazen stock market manipulation" and "accounting fraud".

‘Mukesh Bhatt didn’t want to take the risk of casting me as the hero, it shook my belief; Mahesh Bhatt scrapped the film’



Long before the lead actors' best friends such as Circuit (Arshad Warsi) in *Munna Bhai MBBS*, Bittu (Aparshakti Khurana) in *Stree* and *Stree 2*, Kamli (Vicky Kaushal) in *Sanju*, and Avi (Aditya Roy Kapur) in *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, Deepak Tijori carved out a niche for himself as Hindi cinema's quintessential "best friend". In *Aashiqui* as Balu, *Khiladi* as Bonny, and *Sadak* as Gotya, Deepak has been more than just a sidekick; he added depth and often a touch of humour and emotional resonance to the hero's journey, making those characters his own. He stood out even when the spotlight wasn't solely on him. Similarly, in *Jo Jeeta Wahi Sikandar* as Shekhar Malhotra and in *Kabhi Haa Kabhi Na* as Chris, Deepak showcased his ability to shine in diverse roles. While he excelled in supporting roles in *Anjaam* and *Afsana Pyaar Ka*, the only film where he played the hero, *Pehla Nasha*, received a lukewarm response. Directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, *Pehla Nasha* — despite featuring Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Saif Ali Khan in a scene together with Rahul Roy and Sudesh Berry — failed at the box office.

Deepak often questioned why he rarely got the chance to play the hero compared to many of his contemporaries. He tells *Indianexpress.com*, "Once, I asked this question to Bhatt saab (Mahesh Bhatt), as he would cast me in supporting but strong roles, which helped me carve that niche. He promptly said to me, 'That's because you are a very good friend in real life (as I was very close to his daughter Pooja Bhatt; we were BFFs then and now, thankfully), and that shows on screen, which helps you convince people in the audience.' I thought he just wanted to shoo me off, I didn't argue, as I was happy to achieve the success that those roles in *Aashiqui*, *Sadak*, *Naaajayaz*, and even just a song — "Galyan Sakli Sonyachi" in *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin* — gave me. So, I think if I have to blame anyone for that, it would be just me." Deepak Tijori, Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Pooja Bhatt, Raveena Tandon and others at the screening of *Pehla Nasha* (Photo: Deepak Tijori)

Following his popularity after *Aashiqui* and *Sadak*, Deepak came close to playing a lead role in an emotional film titled *Adhure Log*, which was supposed to be helmed by Mahesh Bhatt. The film would have seen Deepak play an usher who guides the audience to their seats once they are in the auditorium. In the '90s, the multiplex culture wasn't prevalent, so theatergoers had ushers guiding them to their seats with torches in their hands. Bhatt had the story about an usher in his mind for a while and saw that character in Deepak. "To my excitement, I was finally feeling the taste of playing a lead role in a film directed by my dream director, Mahesh Bhatt. I was walking two feet above the ground, as Bhatt saab also did a photo shoot with me in an empty cinema hall. Seeing those pictures, he was even more convinced that I would be the right choice, the only choice, to play that character. I can say that convincingly now, as he never replaced me with anyone else to play that role but scrapped the whole film," Deepak laments, noting that his dream of being seen as a 'hero' in a film directed by Bhatt, remained incomplete as it was hard for producers to believe that someone who was loved as a supporting actor could be accepted as the lead.

Back then, Bhatt's brother, Mukesh Bhatt, one of the major decision-makers at Vishesh Films, denied Deepak the lead role. "He told Bhatt saab: 'Deepak ko sabne as a supporting character pasand kiya hai, so I don't think I can risk giving him the lead role. Agar aapko ye kahaani banaani hai, toh take a new boy but not Deepak,'" recalls Deepak, stressing that Mukesh's statement "almost killed" him. "It shook my belief from within, as I grew up reading and believing what I had read about Amitabh Bachchan and Mithun Chakraborty, who started with smaller roles but became superstars. Sure, they didn't have a Mukesh Bhatt in their lives to crucify their future, was my feeling

then," he rues. Interestingly, 23 years later, when *Aashiqui* was being remade, the makers cast Aditya Roy Kapur—who started with supporting roles — as lead.

Despite the setbacks in his youth, Deepak is not ready to give up and is hopeful that his upcoming Diwali release, *Ittarr*, will help change perceptions. He has managed to grab a lead role in the *Veena Bakshi* directorial. "So, I guess, yes, in the past, I may have blamed others as I was just learning the lessons of life. But now that I am of that age and experience, I don't blame anyone — not even Mukesh Bhatt, as he did what was right for him back then. No hard feelings for anyone, and I am looking forward to a new innings with my new look," clarifies Deepak, who is excited about his new innings in films.

Deepak, who played supporting roles in *Mridyudaata* and portrayed characters in Aamir Khan-starrer *Ghulam* and *Baadshah*, where he featured as an undercover CBI agent, believes that the narrative around and depiction of an actor's friend/supporting role has evolved in the present time, with OTT bringing in a significant shift. Deepak shares, "Unlike in the past, where it was challenging to transition a supporting actor into a lead character, the advent of the OTT culture has dramatically changed the landscape. Today, supporting actors are often elevated to lead roles on digital platforms, while traditional silver screen leads continue to dominate. This shift means there is space for everyone, and the notion of a supporting actor has become more fluid. You never know which actor might emerge as a lead on a streaming platform, which is a wonderful boon. This change has allowed exceptional talents like Jaideep Ahlawat, Manoj Bajpai, and Kay Kay Menon—actors who have been outstanding for decades—to get the recognition they deserved." The *Vaastav*: The Reality actor calls the current period in the industry "a golden era for actors and technicians." Speaking about the challenges independent filmmakers and smaller films face, he adds, "Indie producers, in particular, face a tough time navigating the release of smaller films, as the market is increasingly dominated by larger projects. As with any evolution, there are pros and cons, but the current state of the industry offers new opportunities and possibilities for many." *Aashiqui* was one of the milestones of Deepak's career in many ways as the film helped him stay afloat in the industry. Decades later, *Aashiqui 2* was made with Aditya and Shradha Kapoor, and the makers announced *Aashiqui 3* with Kartik Aaryan. Deepak, who earlier expressed his desire to be cast in *Aashiqui 2*, a sequel to the 1990 hit *Aashiqui*, has says he didn't envision that the original would become this successful and attain cult status over the decade. "Well, truly speaking, we never anticipated that *Aashiqui* would become a milestone. I'm glad it did! It brought me back into this field when I was about to give up on playing minuscule roles in insipid films. *Aashiqui* was a turning point, marking my continued journey in this industry. I'm now looking forward to more milestones with my new salt-and-pepper look, much like my legend Sanjeev Kumar did in his later years," he says.

The actor, unlike his co-star Rahul Roy, who was evidently not happy with the 2013 film, seems open to the idea of sequels and remakes. "Regarding the making of *Aashiqui 2* and now *Aashiqui 3*, it's always wonderful to know that a piece of your work is still considered memorable and worth remaking with new talent. It's natural for time to bring changes, but it's been an honour then and it feels elating to know that the legacy still continues. I hope this legacy continues until kingdom come," he adds. Despite not working on a film together after *Aashiqui*, Deepak and Rahul continue to remain friends and share a great bond. "Rahul has always been close to my heart. We remain in touch regularly, and I make it a point to check in on him from time to time," says the *Pippsy* director, adding "Although we haven't yet found a common ground for collaboration, he will always hold a special place in my life. Our bond is enduring, and I cherish the connection we share." In an earlier interview with us Deepak had spoken about the challenges of preparing for the role of Shekhar Malhotra in *Jo Jeeta Wahi Sikandar* as his role demanded him to be physically fit. Sharing one of the anecdotes from the film, Deepak revealed that the shoot location of the film required them to travel seven hours. "The hotel we stayed at was in Ooty, and our shooting location was on an even higher plateau, which meant a daily drive of 3 to 3.5 hours one way. So, back and forth, it would be a 7-hour travel just to shoot one day in the Western Catchment, a place where we could see clouds below us. The oxygen levels were really low, and even cycling for 20 meters would leave us gasping. Now, thinking back, it's funny, but at the time, it was torturous!" he told us before signing off.

Meenakshi Seshadri says she only agreed to controversial kiss in Vijay due to Yash Chopra, Anil Kapoor; recalls her kissing scene with Sunny Deol being cut by censors

Meenakshi Seshadri recently commented on her controversial kissing scene with Anil Kapoor in Yash Chopra's *Vijay*, as well as the one with Sunny Deol in *Dacait*, which was later removed. Yesteryear actor Meenakshi Seshadri with her frequent collaborators Anil Kapoor and Sunny Deol. (Express Archive photos)

Though her stint in Bollywood was relatively short, Meenakshi Seshadri left an indelible mark on both audiences and the industry. Hence, nearly three decades after her last film, she remains a beloved figure among fans. After making her debut in 1983 with *Painter Babu* and achieving tremendous success with her follow-up film *Hero* (1983), Seshadri quickly became one of the most prominent female actors of her era. Her final appearance was in director Rajkumar Santoshi's action thriller *Ghatak*: *Lethal*, where she starred alongside Sunny Deol.

Recently, the actor took a trip down memory lane and recalled working with some of her frequent collaborators like Anil Kapoor and Sunny Deol. During a chat with *Lehren Retro*, she noted that she acted alongside Kapoor more than any other actor and commented on the controversial kissing scene with him in director Yash Chopra's *Vijay* (1988). "I could do it (only) because of Yashji and Anil. They were both very professional, laid back and relaxed. And, I kind of knew that on screen it



was going to look well-managed and not perverted, weird or sleazy." She also recalled working on director Rahul Rawail's *Dacait* (1987), written by Javed Akhtar, in which Deol and Seshadri played the lead roles. "The same happened with Sunny... We had a kissing scene in *Dacait*, but the censors (Censor Board aka Central Board of Film Certification — CBFC) cut it. So, the audience never got to know (that there was supposed to be such a scene). I think, my major successes are with Sunny. Even today, my fans keep requesting me to do a film with Sunny," she added. In addition to *Dacait* and *Ghatak*, Deol and Seshadri also collaborated on films like *Inteqam*, *Joshilaay*, *Ghayaal*, *Kshatriya* and *Damini*. Born Shashikala Seshadri, she married US-based entrepreneur Harish Mysore in 1995, at the peak of her career.

From a six-year-old to a six-in-one generational talent, the rise and rise of 'Kamalism'



In a special show celebrating the golden jubilee of Kamal Haasan's cinematic career in 2009, Rajinikanth heaped praise on his long-time friend and competitor, "The goddess of art held on to the hands of actors like Mammooty, Mohanlal, Amitabh Bachchan, Venkatesh, me, etc... and guided us through the world. However, she held Kamal Haasan close to her bosom because he is an actor who has been wanting to act for many births together. He has been born as an assistant director, a musician, a dance master, a film distributor, a producer, a writer, and now, an actor." Now, this might seem like unnecessarily high praise that is only told to get the applause of an audience. However, look at the actor's stellar body of work, and Rajinikanth's honest demeanour during his speeches, it is clear that Kamal is indeed a six-in-one generational talent, who lives up to the moniker of 'Ulaganayagan' — The Universal Star.

The world is celebrating '65 Years of Kamalism' as his debut film, *Kalathur Kannamma* steps into the 65th year of its existence. To take inspiration from Rajinikanth's speech, let's look at six of those facets of Kamal Haasan, and give an example or two to understand why the Superstar felt *Ulaganayagan* was blessed by the Goddess of Art.

Some what may, it is the actor in Kamal Haasan that allowed him the freedom to explore other facets of cinema. Of course, there can be debates if the other skills in his repertoire are often overlooked for the standards he has set as an actor. But nevertheless, there can be no doubts that he is one of the finest actors in Indian cinema. He has received enough testimonials from the who's who of Cinema to warrant that tag. To name even a few of his best performances is tough, but to choose one or two is tougher. Taking up that unenviable task, here's listing two out of his innumerable top-tier performances that have stood the test of time.

After a point, when he wasn't always able to do the cinema he truly wanted to do, Kamal Haasan chose to write them on his own. Imagine knowing all your strengths, and using it to tell a story that you believe needs to be told. Just seven years after he made his debut as a lead actor as an adult, Kamal decided to write films for himself. He has since written almost 25 films, with his latest being *Mani Ratnam's Thug Life*. It isn't easy to pick favourites at all, but anyways... The talented polyglot with a voice that has the ability to reach extreme ends of the musical scale, Kamal Haasan has always been a revelation behind the mic. Having started his singing career in parallel with his acting career, his quest for learning never stopped. He has been a disciple of the late Padma Vibhushan M Balamuralikrishna. Kamal has sung for the most prolific composers of his time, including the likes of MS Viswanathan, Ilaiyaraaja, AR Rahman, Yuvan Shankar Raja, and Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy. But the songs that the combo of Ilaiyaraaja and Kamal conjured up time and

again is nothing short of magic. And that is why it gets extremely tough to pick a couple of songs from an eclectic discography. Considering his proclivity for poetry and the love for the written word, it is his lyric-writing skills that haven't been utilised to the fullest. Just like he never shied away from singing for other actors like Ajith Kumar (Ullasam), Dhanush (Pudhupetta), Madhavan (Nala Damayanthi), and Pankaj Kapoor (Happi), probably writing songs for other actors could have given us a different Kamal Haasan after all. It is clear that he preferred quality over quantity, and every song written for himself oozes that quality like it is nobody's business. But he is slowly getting there with a song for Ghibran in an independent album, and the recent *Inimel*, which he wrote for Shruti Haasan. Just like how writing for his own films gave him a sense of independence, producing his own movies instilled a similar feeling in Kamal Haasan. He wasn't bound by the market forces because he found a foolproof way of circumventing that problem. One film for the market, and one film for inner peace. This became the Kamal Haasan strategy, and it worked wonders for cementing his legacy without compromising on the commercial requirements. You say *Hey Ram* was an experimental film? It was bookended by *Kadhala Kadhala* and *Thenali*. You say his *Mumbai Xpress* was too whimsical and experimental? It was bookended by *Vettaiyaadu Vilaiyaadu* and *Vasool Raja*. Of course, this method also led to heartbreaks with multiple projects being left in developmental hell due to unforeseen reasons including procuring the right funds. But one thing was sure, Kamal never stopped trying.

And he was bolstered by the power of producing his own films. But it is also the movies he produced for other actors that tell a story about the kind of legacy he could leave behind. A legacy that allows other talented actors and technicians to be recognised and platformed. That is why my choices for films produced by Kamal Haasan are... Well, instead of going on and on about the way he writes the scenes, stages them, gets the performance from other actors, delivers a masterclass in performance himself, has a wonderful penchant for using music in his films, and takes up stories that are rooted, and hence, global, let me just succinctly put it in one sentence. Now, there are other facets of Kamal Haasan that are worth mentioning, including his dancing skills that were best exemplified in *K Vishwanath's Sagara Sangamam* (1983), and his linguistic abilities that were showcased in films like *Marocharithra* (1978), *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981), *Panchathanthiram* (2002), and *Sathya* (1988). As it is often said by his contemporaries and peers cutting across ages, Kamal is an encyclopaedia, and we have just ruffled through a few pages here. And as long as cinema exists in this world, there would be someone turning over a page of this encyclopaedia to understand what this 'Kamalism' truly meant to cinema.

Priyanka Chopra, Nick Jonas' daughter Malti Marie channels Janice from Friends with a dramatic 'Oh my God'; gives her dad a 'haircut'.



Since Priyanka Chopra had been away for a while due to her filming schedule, Nick Jonas has been going the extra mile to make sure their daughter Malti Marie doesn't miss her mom too much. Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra Jonas with her husband, American singer-songwriter Nick Jonas, and their daughter Malti Marie Chopra Jonas.

Priyanka Chopra and husband Nick Jonas — could there be a celebrity couple more obsessed with their daughter than these two? It's unlikely. They never miss a chance to share little Malti Marie on social media, making sure everyone knows how much she means to them and how they cherish their family time together. Since Priyanka had been away for a while due to her filming schedule for the upcoming Hollywood movie *The Bluff*, Nick has been going the extra mile to make sure Malti

doesn't miss her mom too much. Recently, the American singer-songwriter took to Instagram to share some joyful moments he shared with his daughter recently. With the caption "Lately ??," Nick shared a series of adorable photos and videos, some of which also include Priyanka. While the first picture captures the trio together, the second video shows Malti playfully giving her dad a haircut with toy scissors. As the video goes on, she even considers chopping off one of his ears, but decides against it, continuing to 'cut' his hair with a big smile on her face. In another cute and funny video, Malti is seen yelling "Oh my God" on cue as Nick records. When he asks her to say it again, she turns away from the camera, repeats "Oh my God," and dramatically falls onto the couch. This new trick, which makes her sound a lot like Janice Hosenstein (Maggie Wheeler) from the American sitcom *Friends* (1994-2004), leaves Nick in splits as well.

From Vinesh Phogat to Yusuf Dikec, here are Paris Olympics' most talked about athletes



GNS News Agency, August 14

From record-shattering performances to heartwarming moments of triumph, the Paris Olympics 2028 has left an indelible mark. As the Paris Olympics has come to an end, the Indian Express brings you the untold stories of Games' most talked about athletes. Turkish pistol shooter Yusuf Dikec has gone viral on social media for his seemingly casual attitude while shooting his way to a silver medal at the 2024 Olympics. The most-shared images show Dikec shooting in a T-shirt with one hand in his pocket, a seemingly standard pair of glasses and an impassive look on his face. He's been likened to a regular guy competing at the Olympics, or even a hitman. Stephen Nedoroscik's deadpan reaction stole the show. A viral clip captures the American gymnastics team erupting in jubilation, while Nedoroscik sits calmly, unfazed, and bespectacled, providing a hilariously contrasting moment of stoic serenity amidst chaotic celebration. South Korean pistol shooter Kim Yeji's confident demeanour and dramatic stance have brought praise on social media for her "main character energy".

Giorgia Villa missed the Tokyo Olympics because of a sprained ankle. At the Paris Games, despite lingering back injuries, the 21-year-old gymnast made history. Giorgia Villa was part of Italy's silver medal-winning women's team in the all-round event in gymnastics at the Paris Olympics. But she has gone viral for old images of her posing with wheels of cheese. Giorgia Villa was part of Italy's silver medal-winning women's team in the all-round event in gymnastics at the Paris Olympics. But she has gone viral for old images of her posing with wheels of cheese.

With their silver medal behind the Simone Biles-led U.S. team's gold, Angela Andreoli, Alice D'Amato, Manila Esposito, Elisa Iorio and Villa matched Italy's best result in Olympic gymnastics, a feat the country achieved in 1928. But it wasn't that solid performance that made her a social media sensation. It's her previous role as an ambassador for Parmigiano Reggiano cheese that has put her in the spotlight. Ilona Maher angled for a shot on reality TV show "Love Island" after leading the United States to a heart-stopping late victory that gave the US its first-ever a medal, a bronze, in rugby sevens. She used her social media platforms before the Games to promote

body positivity and inclusivity, urging fans to celebrate athletes of all shapes and sizes. Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat's appeal for a shared silver medal after she was disqualified from an Olympic final for missing weight.

Vinesh carried not just dreams of a medal, but hopes of vindication for herself and millions of others. It was unfair all along Vinesh Phogat after winning her Women's Freestyle 50kg Round of 16 wrestling match against Japan's Yui Susaki at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris, France.

Vinesh was disqualified after weighing in at 100 grams above the weight limit. Instead of becoming India's first woman to compete in an Olympic final, she was denied a medal. She appealed, requesting credit for the three wins she earned after weighing in successfully. The court said a judge in Paris held a hearing Friday in her case against United World Wrestling and the International Olympic Committee. Vinesh had also announced her retirement. "My courage is broken, I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye Wrestling, 2001-2024," she wrote on X. Belgium's Olympic committee withdrew its team from the mixed relay triathlon at the Paris Olympics after one of its competitors who swam in the Seine River fell ill. Michel was one of several triathletes who got sick after swimming in the Seine. Noah Lyles has crowned the fastest man in the world for winning the 100 meters, but after he finished third in the 200 — his first loss in his favourite event since the Tokyo Olympics three years ago — he later revealed he had tested positive for Covid-19.

Gold medalist Algeria's Imane Khelif kisses her medal for the women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics. Gold medalist Algeria's Imane Khelif kisses her medal for the women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics. Imane Khelif endured intense scrutiny in the ring and online abuse from around the world over misconceptions about her womanhood and still won gold in the women's welterweight division. "I'm a woman like any other woman. I was born as a woman, I live as a woman and I am qualified," Khelif said after her victory. Anthony Ammirati French pole vaulter Anthony Ammirati found offers coming his way — granted, from porn company CamSoda — after he was eliminated from the Paris Olympics because he couldn't clear the bar. The reason? It had gotten stuck on his crotch and knocked down, resulting in a 12th-place finish. Olympic gold medalist Thomas Ceccon was spotted sleeping in a park after complaining about the living conditions in the Games Village at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The Italian had won gold medal in the men's 100m backstroke event and slammed complained publicly about the accommodations in the Olympic Village. Rachael Gunn, or "b-girl Raygun," a 36-year-old professor from Sydney, Australia, quickly achieved internet fame, but not necessarily for Olympic-level skill. Competing against some b-girls half her age, she was swept out of the round-robin stage without earning a single point, and her unconventional moves landed flat while failing to match the skill level of her foes.

Graham Thorpe took his own life after major depression battle, wife Amanda reveals

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Former England batter Graham Thorpe who passed away aged 55 last week, took his own life after battling chronic depression, his wife Amanda revealed. The England and Wales Cricket (ECB) board and the Surrey Cricket Club (SCC) whom Thorpe throughout his First-Class career, announced on August 5 that the England veteran of 100 Tests had passed away. Thorpe had taken a break from all coaching activities shortly after he was appointed the Afghanistan head coach in March 2022. Thorpe's condition and the nature of his illness had been kept private ever since. However, speaking to the media for the first time since his passing, his wife Amanda revealed Thorpe's battle with depression. Speaking to The Times' Michael Atherton, Thorpe's former England teammate, Amanda said: "Despite having a wife and two daughters whom he loved and who loved him, he did not get better. He was so unwell in recent times and he really did believe that we would be better off without him and we are devastated that he acted on that and took his own life."

"For the past couple of years, Graham had been suffering from major depression and anxiety. This led him to make a serious attempt on his life in May 2022, which resulted in a prolonged stay in an intensive care unit. Despite glimpses of hope and of the old Graham, he continued to suffer from depression and anxiety, which at times got very severe. We supported him as a family and he tried many, many treatments but unfortunately none of them really seemed to work," Amanda explained. Known for his gritty knocks as a top-order left-handed batter and his coaching nous, Thorpe was also part England's coaching set-up during their 2019 ODI World Cup win. Thorpe represented Surrey from 1988-2005 and amassed



over 21,000 runs in his entire First-Class career. Thorpe smashed 16 Test hundreds including a career-best of 200 not out against New Zealand. The left-hander made his debut against Australia in 1993 in Trent Bridge and became the first Englishman in 20 years to record a century on debut

"We are not ashamed of talking about it," Thorpe's eldest daughter Kitty, 22, said. "There is nothing to hide and it is not a stigma. We were trying to help him get better before and trying to protect him, which is why we said nothing. This is the time now to share the news, however horrible it is. We've wanted to be able to talk and share and we'd now like to raise awareness, too." Following his retirement, Thorpe began his coaching career with New South Wales, working with Steve Smith and David Warner. However, he soon returned to England to join up with the national team as batting coach, before getting promoted to assistant coach under Trevor Bayliss.

Paris leaves India with a few smiles — and many red flags

GNS News Agency, August 14

Hiroaki Ota, a Japanese psychiatrist, called it "Paris Syndrome". The state of being where tourists come to Paris with lofty hopes, expecting it to be a picture of perfection, but leave underwhelmed. Three weeks ago, India's athletes didn't land on these shores as tourists. But they will still return with a lingering sense of disappointment. The country's Paris Olympics campaign ended with six medals — one silver and five bronze. There could be another, with an asterisk, as the Court of Arbitration for Sport is yet to pronounce its verdict in Vinesh Phogat's plea for a silver. But there were also six agonising fourth-place finishes, more than ever, to mark the bitter-sweet campaign that ebbed as the Games progressed. Every medal had a story. It elicited contrasting emotions but did one thing: raise the bar for India's athletes. In the warm and sunny city of Chateauroux, shooter Manu Bhaker showed it is possible to win not one but two medals in a single campaign. With some luck, it could have been an unprecedented hat-trick. Festive offer Currently, Manu Bhaker is pursuing a degree in Public Administration at Punjab University.

Manu Bhaker reacts after winning her second medal at the Paris Olympics. About 300 km away in Paris, Neeraj Chopra soared again and took India to newer territories: following up on the Tokyo gold with a silver here. But the country's greatest living Olympian, at war with his own body, looked tormented that he couldn't throw the javelin any longer. The focus, however, will be on the lessons from each medal that was lost. The first, coming from two of India's biggest legends Prakash Padukone and Abhinav Bindra, was: spend, but wisely. As The Indian Express reported before the Olympics, the Government spent Rs 72 crore under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) during the three-year Olympic cycle from Tokyo in Covid-hit 2021 to Paris. That money was spent on customised training programmes, with the athletes getting almost everything they wanted — from a big entourage to specialised coaches to hi-tech equipment. Prakash Padukone and Lakshya Sen at the Tata Open India International challenge at CCI, Mumbai in 2017. Express Photo by Kevin D'Souza. Prakash Padukone and Lakshya Sen at the Tata Open India International challenge at CCI, Mumbai in 2017. Express Photo by Kevin D'Souza.

Youth could be the flavour of upcoming European football season as clubs eye academy graduates to cut costs, add freshness and balance books



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As suspense gripped the Olympics football final between Spain and France, as the refreshingly open game descended into chaos, a slender six-footer offered the antithesis, steady and serene, immune to the drama unfolding around him. When the seessawing game ended 5-3 in Spain's favour, coach Santi Denia sought one face among his delirious wards, still glowing after 120 minutes of searing football, of Pau Cubarsi. Without his timely interventions, tidy and tactical defending, Spain wouldn't have enjoyed the night as they did. After Lamine Yamal at the Euro, another 17-year-old from Barcelona's fabled La Masia left his stamp on a big game. He is no stranger to big nights. In the same city a few months ago, he had diligently marked Kylian Mbappe in a Champions League tie. Before that, he had Victor Osimhen in his pocket in Naples. A modern defender with the intuition of a deep-lying playmaker, a vast spread of passes, and the sturdiness of a classical centre-back, his former club manager Xavi says, "When Cubarsi has the ball at his feet, my heart rate doesn't go up." He would add: "His decision-making is exemplary, especially when you consider his age, but I tell you please do not consider his age."

Two of his Barcelona colleagues shone as well, forward Fermin Lopez and centre-back Eric Garcia, 21 and 23, bringing the thrill back to watching a youthful Barcelona again this season. Their rise has been swift, but was not necessarily dictated by the vision to hand out opportunities to youngsters, rather by their shackled finances. According to ESPN, their squad cost is over €400m, which is more than double the La Liga-imposed limit. Years of mis-spending and hefty wages to players — want-away midfielder Frenkie de Jong gets €721,154 per week, for example — have crippled their finances. The alternatives were procuring post-peak players on free transfers or digging deep into the impeccable academy.

Gold medalists Alex Baena of Spain, Fermin Lopez of Spain and Jon Pacheco of Spain celebrate on the podium. Gold medalists Alex Baena of Spain, Fermin Lopez of Spain and Jon Pacheco of Spain celebrate on the podium. Not only Barcelona, a raft of clubs have found their finances tied to wanton spending due to league-regulated profit and sustainability rules (PSR). Teams would still find ways to bypass the rules — like the increasing swap deals — but winds of austerity have swept leagues in Europe. So far, just 839 transfers have been made at an estimated €3 billion. Last season, Chelsea alone spent € 2.5 billion. No transfer has yet to hit the three-figure mark this season, Tottenham's €66.5 million splurge on striker Dominic Solanke being the most expensive deal, though the almost-done deal of Julian Alvarez's €82m move from Manchester City to Atletico Madrid could eclipse it. Last season alone had four €75 million transfers. All of this made academy products a valuable asset, in terms of bleeding them in the senior side as well as selling

How race for bragging rights between sporting powerhouses USA and China unfolded on final day

The top spot on the medal tally at the Tokyo Olympics came down to one gold, the United States edging China 39 to 38 on the last day of the Games. If one thought that the tussle for bragging rights between the two sporting superpowers couldn't get any tighter, they were wrong.

In the French capital, it came down to the last medal event, and the last shot. The USA tied with China on 40 gold by winning the women's basketball event in a final that itself was decided by a single point at the last second. But by virtue of having more medals of the other two hues, the Americans got their noses in front, only just. At one point, on the penultimate day of the Olympics, China had a lead of four on the medal tally, before the USA got close after a memorable night of athletics action, including winning the two 4x400 relays. Going into Sunday, they trailed China by one, which became two when Li Wenwen won the



women's +81kg weightlifting gold. When the Americans lost the women's volleyball final to Italy and Kennedy Alexis Blades went down to Japan's Yuka Kagami in the women's 76kg wrestling finale, it seemed as if they would fall short and China would finish on top for the first time since it hosted the Games in Beijing in 2008. But Jennifer Valente brought a gold in the women's omnium cycling event, setting the

stage for the USA's women hoopsters to get the job done, barely.

Looking at the bigger picture, they brought medals in as many as 34 sports, with 14 of them fetching gold. Athletics contributed 14 of them and swimming eight, despite being pushed all the way by Australia and France. There were some unexpected contributions as well, Olivia Reeves's gold in women's 71kg weightlifting was

USA's first in several decades. The American male wrestlers drew a blank as far as gold is concerned, while their women took home two. China benefited greatly from their total dominance of table tennis and diving and, to a lesser degree, weightlifting. They also took five gold medals from shooting and three from boxing, though they had to be satisfied with just two from their badminton squad.