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## NMDC Steel reaches landmark achievement by producing 1 million ton Liquid Steel

Hyderabad: The NMDC Steel Limited (NSL) has achieved a milestone with production of one million ton (MnT) of liquid steel in a year of starting operations. As the latest entrant to India's public sector steel manufacturing, NSL demonstrated its capability to deliver high-quality steel products and established itself as a formidable player by setting new benchmarks in an industry, a company press release said on Thursday. On August 12, 2023, the NSL marked the first blow-in of the blast furnace at its advanced 3 MTPA steel plant in Nagarnar in Chhattisgarh.

## Talks held with World Bank for Telangana financial aid: CM Revanth

GNS News Agency, August 15

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Thursday said the state government held talks with World Bank representatives for financial assistance with low interest rates for the state's development. CM Revanth Reddy, who returned on Wednesday from a 10-day visit to the US and South Korea, said he and other members of the Telangana government delegation met the World Bank President during the visit to the US. Telangana CM Revanth Reddy announces Rythu Bharosa assistance of Rs 12,000 for farm labourers too. "I am delighted to announce that talks with the World Bank representatives were held in a cordial manner in extending financial assistance with low interest rate for state development," CM Revanth Reddy said during his speech on Independence Day after hoisting the national flag at the historic Golconda Fort here. Targeting the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) for adding a debt burden on the state by 10 times during its 10-year rule, CM Revanth Reddy said his government was making efforts to restructure the state's debts.

CM Revanth Reddy assured people that his government would not commit the mistake of borrowing funds with higher interest rates and put a heavy burden on the people. CM Revanth Reddy said the state's economy was in complete ruins when his government assumed power and now they were working to shore it up. The total state debt at the time of formation of Telangana was Rs 75,577 crore and it increased to Rs 7 lakh crore in December last year. "Despite facing financial hurdles, the government is making all out efforts to fulfill the promises of Abhayasthamb with a commitment of bringing happiness in every family," CM Revanth Reddy said. Asserting that the visit to the US and South Korea was fruitful, CM Revanth Reddy said they held talks with 10 most popular global companies. "The government entered agreements for Rs 31,532 crore investments in Telangana. The MoUs with global companies will create 30,000 job opportunities," he said. CM Revanth Reddy said he and Industry Minister D. Sridhar Babu visited the US to promote Telangana as the 'Gateway of the world' and to project the Telangana brand on the world platform. "We held meet-



ings with global investors and multinational company representatives and explained investment prospects in Telangana. We projected Telangana as a 'Future State' and explained the initiatives - Fourth City, Musi Riverfront Development project, Regional Ring Road, international standard civic infrastructure, Metro Rail expansion, etc," CM Revanth Reddy said. CM Revanth Reddy recalled that the state government had entered MoUs with companies for Rs. 40,000 crore investments in Telangana at Davos early this year. The government has already started an action plan to execute the agreements. CM Revanth Reddy claimed that the Congress party granted statehood to Telangana in 2014 to fulfill the aspirations of Telangana people as per the promise made by senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. He stated that after a decade of the formation of Telangana state, a people's government was formed in the state in tune with the aspirations of four crore Telangana people, sacrifices of youth and students' struggle. "The Telangana State was actually liberated on December 3, 2023. The government was elected by the people and for the people. For the first time, the state is witnessing a democratic government," CM Revanth Reddy added.

## Maldives President reaffirms commitment to strengthen ties with India in I-Day greetings

GNS News Agency, August 15

Male: Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on Thursday hailed the "invaluable partnership" between the two neighbouring countries in his greetings sent to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day. "India continues to be an invaluable partner in the development of the Maldives. The long-standing partnership, based on mutual respect and trust, has evolved into a close and cooperative friendship that has been instrumental in advancing the development and prosperity of the Maldives," his office said in a statement.

The Maldivian President reaffirmed his administration's "full commitment" to strengthening the "historic and close connections" between the two neighbouring countries. Taking to X, Muizzu wrote, "On the occasion of India's Independence Day, I extend heartfelt congratulations to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India. "Our enduring friendship, rooted in history, has evolved to foster prosperity and development in the Maldives and the region. As we look to the future, I am confident that our partnership will continue to strengthen, driving mutual prosperity and shared goals," he added.

Earlier this week, calling India one of the "closest allies" and "invaluable partners", the Maldivian President also extended "deep gratitude" to PM Modi, the Indian government, and the friendly people of India for their "generous and continued assistance" to the Maldives. "India has always been one of the closest allies and invaluable partners, facilitating and providing aid whenever Maldives has needed it," Muizzu acknowledged in Exter-



nal Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar's presence during a ceremony held at the President's Office to handover the completed water supply and sewerage facilities on 28 islands in the Maldives, funded by the Government of India's Line of Credit (LoC) facility through the Exim Bank of India. In his remarks, Muizzu highlighted that these projects are key milestones in the Maldives' bilateral relations with India and would provide significant economic benefits, boost the local economies, and together contribute to the nation's prosperity.

During his meeting with EAM Jaishankar, the Maldives President also recalled his recent visit to India to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and expressed appreciation for the invitation and the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister as well as President Droupadi Murmu. India is celebrating its 78th Independence Day this year. On this occasion, PM Modi hoisted the national flag at the Red Fort and paid tributes to the freedom fighters.

## Probe starts against former Bangladesh PM Hasina, 9 others for genocide, crimes against humanity

GNS News Agency, August 15

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal has started an investigation against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and nine others on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity that took place from July 15 to August 5 during students' mass movement against her government. A complaint was filed on Wednesday (August 14, 2024) with the investigation agency of Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal against Ms. Hasina, Awami League general secretary and former Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and several other prominent figures within the party. The petition was filed by Bulbul Kabir, the father of Arif Ahmed Siam, a Class IX student who was killed during the anti-discrimination student movement. Mr. Kabir's application accuses Ms. Hasina and others of orchestrating a violent crackdown on student protestors, resulting in widespread casualties and human rights violations. The complaint came on a day when the interim government said that the

murders conducted within the period from July 1 to August 5 would be tried by the International Crimes Tribunal. Separately, a case of enforced disappearance was filed on Wednesday (August 14, 2024) against Ms. Hasina and several others, including former Ministers of her Cabinet, on the charge of kidnapping a lawyer in 2015. On Tuesday (August 13, 2024), a murder case was filed against Ms. Hasina and six others over the death of a grocery shop owner during last month's violent clashes that led to the fall of her government. Meanwhile, a Dhaka court on Thursday (August 15, 2024) asked police to submit by September 15 the probe report of the case filed against Ms. Hasina and six others over the death of grocery shop owner Abu Saeed in police firing in the capital's Mohammadpur area during the quota protests on July 19. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Zaki Al Farabi set the date after the case was placed before his court for the next course of action. The student-led protests demanding reforms in government job quotas evolved into a government-toppling movement in early August.

## Saudi and other parts of Gulf celebrate Independence Day

Jeddah: The NRI community across the Gulf Region on Thursday celebrated India's 78th Independence Day with patriotic fervor. The Indian missions and Indian Schools in the region celebrated the Independence Day by customary flag hoisting. Prior to Independence Day celebrations, 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign continued where scores of NRIs uploaded selfies with the national flag, posted their certificate of appreciation on social media platforms. In Saudi Arabia's port city Jeddah, newly appointed Consul General designate Fahad Khan Suri hoisted the National flag and read excerpts from the address to the nation by President Droupadi Murmu. The diplomat added that he will further cement the bond between the Indian community and the consulate.

## One nation, one election crucial for progress, urge all to support: PM Modi

GNS News Agency, August 15

Addressing the nation for the 11th consecutive time on Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on all political parties to support the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) to ensure India's steady progress. "The frequent elections in the country are hindering the nation's progress," PM Modi emphasised. "Today, connecting every scheme to elections has become a habit because elections are held every few months in the country. The media often portrays that all these schemes are announced because of the elections," the Prime Minister said. Highlighting the impact of the constant cycle of elections on developmental works in India, the Prime Minister said, "Every developmental work is affected due to these frequent elections, and that is why, extensive discussion was held with all the political parties in the country."

He also mentioned that a committee has presented a detailed report stating that the "country will have to adopt 'One Nation, One Election' to ensure growth and progress". With the "national Tricolour as a witness," the Prime Minister, standing at the Red Fort, said, "Today, I call on all political factions and parties, who understand the country's Constitution well, to come forward and support the realisation of the dream of 'One Nation, One Election' for the steady progress and optimal use of India's resources." The concept of 'One Nation, One Election' entails the simultaneous conduct of Lok Sabha and all As-



sembly elections once every five years. This idea does not include panchayat elections, municipal elections, or by-elections. Implementing this initiative would necessitate a constitutional amendment, which would need to be put in force by 50 per cent of the states. According to the NITI Aayog report, a policy think tank of the Government of India, in the last 30 years, there has not been a single year without an election to either Lok Sabha, State Assembly or sometimes both. The report highlighted that, as a result of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), the government is prohibited from introducing any new projects, development work, or policy decisions until the elections are concluded. Supporters of ONOE argue that it causes the state machinery to grind to a halt, resulting in what is referred to as "policy paralysis".

## 72 pc people satisfied with performance of Revanth govt in Telangana



GNS News Agency, August 15

Majority of people in Telangana are satisfied with the performance of the Congress government in Telangana, reveals a survey. According to the survey by Agni News Service titled 'Pulse of people in Telangana', 72 per cent of the respondents are 'satisfied' with the government while 21 per cent are 'not satisfied'. Remaining 7 per cent replied they 'can't say'. A total of 55 per cent of the respondents rate the performance of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as 'excellent'. Another seven per cent termed it as 'very good' while 10 per cent consider it as 'good'. Only eight per cent believe that it is 'not good'. Twenty per cent replied they 'can't say'. According to R Suresh Kumar of Agni News Service, the survey was conducted between August 1 and August 10. A total of 9,665 respondents across the state participated in the survey. "The survey covered people both from urban and rural parts of Telangana. They included men and women from different social groups and categories like employees, business class, working class and students," he said. "The survey shows that the performance of the Congress government during the last eight months surpassed expectations. There were apprehensions in certain sections if Revanth Reddy would be able to deliver but as the survey shows people are satisfied over how he has performed," said Suresh Kumar. "Farmers are particularly very happy with the

government's functioning during the last eight months. The implementation of the poll promise to waive crop loans of up to Rs.2 lakh has made the farmers happy," he said. He mentioned that 73 per cent of the respondents in the survey were of the view that loan waiver to the tune of Rs.31,000 crore by the government will improve farmers' lives. Only 17 per cent did not agree while 10 per cent replied 'can't say'. An overwhelming majority of respondents also believe that the Congress government will implement six guarantees. As many as 76 per cent of the people, whose opinion was sought, said they think the Congress government will implement the guarantees. According to the survey, 21 per cent do not believe that the government will implement the guarantees while three per cent replied 'can't say'. According to the survey, 72 per cent believe that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent foreign visit will help Telangana. Twenty five per cent of the respondents do not think that the visit will help the state while remaining three per cent said they 'can't say'.

A state government delegation led by Revanth Reddy visited the US and South Korea to invite investments. Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development (including Rural Water Supply), Women & Child Welfare Danasari Anasuya, popular as Seethakka, is the most prominent member of Revanth Reddy's Cabinet. A total of 36 per cent respondents consider Seethakka as the most prominent minister. According to the survey, 29 per cent believe Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is the most prominent Cabinet member while 28 per cent believe it is Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy. Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka also holds the finance portfolio and 58 per cent of the respondents found him effective while 31 per cent replied in the negative. Another 11 per cent replied 'can't say'. Majority of the respondents (41 per cent) see member of Telangana Legislative Council and NSUI state President Venkat Balmoor as the young face of the Telangana Congress. Chittam Parnika Reddy, the first-time MLA from Narayanpet constituency, is considered the young face

## KTR tears into govt over debt-ridden Gram Panchayats



GNS News Agency, August 15

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday alleged that the villages and towns in Telangana were in disarray in the Indiramma rule. Rama Rao alleged that the administration in villages had collapsed, while towns were suffering from severe mismanagement. The neglect of sanitation and drainage maintenance has turned living conditions in the villages into a daily struggle. KTR noted that the lack of funds for even basic needs like mosquito control has led to a surge in deadly diseases such as dengue and malaria, causing

great distress among the people. He criticised the government for not releasing funds to the panchayats, resulting in this dire situation.

KTR expressed his anger over the failure of both the Central and State governments to release the necessary funds, leading to a severe crisis in the management of panchayats. He pointed out that even after eight months, bills related to past works have not been cleared for sarpanchas, plunging them into severe debt and uncertainty. He condemned the Congress government, alleging harassment of over 1,800 former sarpanchas with coercive measures and illegal arrests for merely asking for the clearance of pending bills. KTR demanded an explanation from the government on when the Rs 500 crore received from the 15th Finance Commission would be disbursed to the gram panchayats. He also demanded answers regarding the diversion of Rs 2,100 crore of Central funds from schemes like the Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Health Mission. KTR targeted the government for the lack of funds for municipal corporations and municipalities. He also expressed concern over the dire situation in Greater Hyderabad and other municipal corporations across the state, where even the payment of wages to workers has become impossible due to insufficient budget allocations.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Relief for Ramdev

THE Supreme Court's decision to close contempt proceedings against Ramdev and Acharya Balkrishna in the Patanjali misleading ads case may seem like a reprieve, but it comes with a stern warning that cannot be ignored. While the court accepted their apology, it did so begrudgingly, reflecting its deep frustration with Patanjali's brazen disregard for legal and ethical standards. Patanjali's misleading claims about Coronil being a cure for Covid-19 were not just irresponsible; they were dangerous. At a time when the nation was grappling with a deadly pandemic, such unfounded claims had the potential to mislead millions. The Indian Medical Association rightfully took a stand, labelling Patanjali's actions as a 'blatant lie' and pushing for accountability. The company repeatedly tried to deceive the public with dubious advertisements, even after being warned by the court. The Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, which eventually suspended the manufacturing licences of 14 Patanjali products, was also not spared by the court. The authority's inaction for months, until it was forced to act, earned it a sharp rebuke from the Bench, which accused it of being complicit in Patanjali's continued violations. This delay in enforcement not only undermines regulatory integrity but also raises questions about the authority's commitment to public health. Patanjali's attempts to downplay the severity of its misconduct through half-hearted apologies have rightfully angered the court. Its absolute defiance and lack of genuine remorse were met with the court's order for a full-page public apology. While Ramdev and Balkrishna may have escaped immediate legal consequences, the apex court's warning is clear: any further transgressions will be met with the full force of the law.

## National Green Tribunal orders probe into allegations of illegal tree felling by UP govt for Kanwar Marg

GNS News Agency, August 15

Bengaluru illegal tree fellingIn its order, the tribunal also took on record tree-felling photographs filed by the petitioner and noted the petitioner's submission that the Uttar Pradesh chief secretary carried out inspection at the project site last week. (File photo/Representational)The National Green Tribunal's (NGT) principal bench has ordered a joint committee to investigate allegations of illegal and unnecessary tree felling for the proposed 111-km Kanwar Marg along the Upper Ganga Canal and submit a report in four weeks. It has also questioned whether authorities had considered that a similar road project, along the Upper Ganga Canal, was rejected in 2010.

The order, passed last week, pertained to a suo motu case that the tribunal's principal bench is hearing relating to the felling of 1.12 lakh trees for the proposed Kanwar Marg. The 111-km road proposed by the Uttar Pradesh Government will be built along the right branch of the Upper Ganga Canal from Murad Nagar to Purkaji, near Uttarakhand. It will pass through Ghaziabad, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar, will need the diversion of 222.98 hectares of protected forest land and involve the cutting of 1,12,722 trees. The joint committee has to probe six issues. Key among them are whether trees were cut illegally for the proposed road, whether the project is feasible and if an alternate route exists, whether work has been done so far sticking to the permissible width of 15/20 m and the potential environmental damage of the project.

The committee will comprise officials from the Forest Survey of India, a senior scientist not below the rank of joint secretary of the environment ministry, the chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh or his representative and the district magistrate of Meerut, who will act as the coordinating agency. The tribunal also made the Surveyor-General of India a party to the case after it was noted that the Survey of India did not comply with an earlier order. The agency was asked to file satellite images of the project stretch under examination, showing the extent of trees that have been cut on both sides of the canal. In its order, the tribunal also took on record tree-felling photographs filed by the petitioner and noted the petitioner's submission that the Uttar Pradesh chief secretary carried out inspection at the project site last week.

The tribunal also took on record the submissions that a similar project of the Uttar Pradesh Government had been rejected by the environment ministry owing to the potential biodiversity and forest damage it would cause. The petitioner had submitted a 2010 inspection report of the ministry that concluded that the expressway, proposed back then, "would cause a lot of damage to the vegetation all along the canal and would definitely disturb the habitat of wildlife which are having natural abode all along the canal." "It is not clear if while taking a fresh decision, the earlier report of 2010 and conclusion recorded therein was considered. The concluding part also records that there are already two roads which are connecting Ghaziabad, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar with Uttarakhand via NH 58 and Kavar road on the left bank of the upper Ganga canal. Therefore, it is also required to be shown if the feasibility of constructing the present road in the light of the earlier observations in the report of 2010 was duly examined," the tribunal said in its order. The tribunal also noted that it was not clear whether the geo-coordinates of trees on the project route were available before they were cut. "By comparing the same, it can be ascertained if the illegal felling of trees has taken place in the process," its order said. The tribunal added that a large number of trees were proposed to be cut and that due caution was therefore required to ensure that no illegal or excess felling of trees takes place. An award-winning journalist with 14 years of experience, Nikhil Ghanekar is an Assistant Editor with the National Bureau [Government] of The Indian Express in New Delhi. He primarily covers environmental policy matters which involve tracking key decisions and inner workings of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. He also covers the functioning of the National Green Tribunal and writes on the impact of environmental policies on wildlife conservation, forestry issues and climate change. Nikhil joined4.

## Mumbai's Museum of Solutions celebrates Jane Goodall's work with chimpanzees, environment



GNS News Agency, August 15

Ahead of world famous ethologist and conservationist Jane Goodall's maiden trip to India in November, Museum of Solutions (MuSo) has rolled out a special exhibition about her life-long study of chimpanzees and work in wildlife preservation. The exhibition, titled 'Celebrating Jane', offers glimpses into Goodall's extraordinary life spent researching chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania. Through a series of interactive objects on display, the exhibition provides an immersive look into Goodall's life. In April this year, she celebrated her 90th birthday.

A tent has been set up to give an idea about the kind of life Goodall, known for her ability to communicate with chimpanzees, led in the forests of Tanzania. When the visitors step inside the tent, they can watch a short film about the primatologist's life in Gombe and her work with chimpanzees. In fact, the exhibition is divided into five

zones — Introduction to Jane; Early Life, Life in Gombe, Celebrating Jane, and the Chimpanzee Guided Zone. London-born Goodall's research began at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania in 1960. Through curated experiences and games, 'Celebrating Jane' focusses on her contribution to wildlife conservation over the years. Speaking about the exhibition, Tanvi Jindal Shete, the founder of MuSo, said, "By sharing Dr Goodall's inspiring journey, we aim to inspire students, kids, and families to become passionate advocates for wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship. Her life and legacy teach us about the enormous challenges she overcame to revolutionise our understanding of animals and humans."

The exhibition, which is on till September 13, is held by MuSo in collaboration with the Jane Goodall Institute India (JGII). According to Katie Bagli, education director, JGII, "This exhibition not only celebrates her legacy but also aims to instil hope and a passion for wildlife preservation in young minds. Through engaging activities and educational programs, we aspire to empower visitors to take actionable steps towards a sustainable future." The exhibition also gives an idea about the activities of the 'Roots & Shoots' programme, founded by Goodall, in India. Its 'Oceans Are Us' programme allows young minds to explore, learn, collaborate, plan and act towards creating a lasting change, one that helps restore the health and natural splendour of our oceans. The 'Celebrating Jane' exhibition is on display at Museum of Solutions, Lower Parel, from August 5 to September 13.

## Mumbai's Veermata Jijabai Technology Institute holds first-ever industry-alumni meet

GNS News Agency, August 15

Amid challenges faced in placements by many reputed institutions, Mumbai's Veermata Jijabai Technology Institute (VJTI) has decided to strengthen industry connect via its alumni not only for increased internship and placement opportunities but also to receive support in various other aspects. The renowned engineering institute held a first such industry-alumni connect event on Saturday last week where over 50 alumni members visited campus, which included representation from close to 25 leading industries. But it was more than a platform for alumni to reconnect with their alma mater.

Chairperson of the VJTI alumni association, Umesh Doshi, said "Industry today requires trained manpower. At the same time, they do not want raw talent, but appreciate those somewhat ready to come to industry. This programme showed the industry potential of VJTI students. If the industry representatives see readiness of the students passing out of this institute; they will be confident to hire a greater number of individuals for internship or even placements." The VJTI Alumni Association, which has over 25,000 registered members, has been actively participating in the institute's development for many years through donations for infrastructural developments and scholarships for students coming from underprivileged backgrounds.

Explaining the unique approach of the industry alumni connect event, Training and Placement Officer at the VJTI, Prof. Dr. Nitin Gulhane, said, "This was a very different programme than regular alumni gatherings on campus. This was intended to reinforce industry connections for the VJTI. So many of the institute alumni are currently at good positions in various industries. This was a way to present to them what VJTI has to offer, especially in terms of training to students." The group was given a guided tour of the facilities available in the institute such as world-class laboratories and other equipment to train students; they interacted with students. The institute now plans to make it an annual event. Director of VJTI, Dr. Sachin Kore, said, "While this initiative is expected to provide good internship and placement opportunities, it can also lead to the institute receiving industry research projects, infrastructural development through CSR activity initiatives, development of curriculum as per industry requirements etc."

## Adivasi-Dalit groups call hartal in Kerala reservation verdict



GNS News Agency, August 15

Various Adivasi-Dalit organisations on Tuesday called for a state-wide hartal in Kerala on August 21, to protest the recent Supreme Court verdict on the sub-categorisation of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as granted under the Constitution. In a joint statement signed by leaders of various Adivasi-Dalit organisations, it was alleged that the verdict aimed to divide the SC/ST list on a caste basis and introduce a 'creamy layer' within SC/ST categories. They said the hartal will exempt Wayanad district due to the recent natural disasters.

The outfits announced that the state-wide hartal is

## BJP's Jagdambika Pal to head joint panel on Waqf Bill

GNS News Agency, August 15

Senior BJP Lok Sabha member Jagdambika Pal was on Tuesday named chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill. A Lok Sabha notification said Speaker Om Birla appointed Pal as the head of the 31-member committee. Amid protests by the opposition in the Lok Sabha on its provisions, the government had decided to refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses. The joint panel has 31 members — 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha — and will submit its report by the next session. The 73-year-old Pal is a fourth-term MP from Uttar Pradesh and is seen as a lawmaker who enjoys warm cross-party relations. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Friday last adopted a motion moved by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, naming the members to be part of the committee.

A formal notification naming Pal as the chairperson of the joint committee is set to be issued shortly, the officials said. In the Lower House.



part of the Bharat Bandh called by Bhim Army and various Dalit-Bahujan movements. The primary demand is for Parliament to pass legislation overturning the Supreme Court verdict, according to the statement. Despite the BJP government's assurance that it will not implement the creamy layer, the central government has yet to acknowledge that the creamy layer division is the basis for categorising the list, they alleged.

Earlier this month, a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgment that state governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data. Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said that States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation.

Justice Gavai penned a separate but concurring judgment in which the top court by a majority verdict said the states are empowered to make sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for granting quotas within the reserved category to uplift those who belong to the more underprivileged castes. The Union Cabinet has asserted that there was no provision for a creamy layer in the reservation for SCs and STs in the Constitution given by B R Ambedkar.



## 4: Five institutions from Mumbai make it to top 10



GNS News Agency, August 15

Five educational institutions from Mumbai have emerged among top 10 under various categories in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024 that were announced on Monday. The institutions are Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Mumbai, Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), Homi Bhabha National Institute, and SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS).

IIT Bombay has secured third place in the overall category, third place in engineering, tenth in management, fourth in research and first in innovation. Last year, it was ranked fourth overall, third in engineering, tenth in management, fourth in research, and seventh in innovation. According to IIT Bombay director Shireesh Kedare, "The students, faculty and support staff are the pillars of our institute. Their dedication and hard work have propelled us to this achievement. I congratulate everyone at IIT Bombay and look forward to further improvements in all areas."

IIM Mumbai, formerly known as the National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE), is ranked sixth in the management category for NIRF 2024, up from seventh last year. Director of the institute professor Manoj Tiwari said, "Our team has made significant improvements in industry connections, research, and professional practices. The IIM designation has positively impacted our perception." The Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) has maintained its fifth rank under pharmacy category for NIRF 2024, down from fourth last year.

NMIMS's Shobhaben Pratapbhai Patel School of Pharmacy & Technology Management (SPPSPTM) is ranked tenth among pharmacy institutes in NIRF 2024. In 2018, the institute was at ninth place but had since fallen out of the top 10. Dr Jagannath Sahoo, Dean of SPPSPTM, said, "This ranking reflects our commitment to excellence, driven by our focus on cutting-edge research, industry-aligned curriculum, and strong placement record." The Homi Bhabha National Institute, Mumbai, has made a significant leap to sixth place in the Research category for NIRF 2024, up from 15th last year. In contrast, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) from Mumbai, which was 10th in research last year, has dropped to 12th place this year. In the universities category, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai has significantly improved its rank, moving from 98th in 2023 to 58th this year. However, the institute remains at 98th in the overall category. The Mumbai University has fallen from 56th place in 2023 to 61st in 2024 in the Universities category and has dropped out of the top 100 overall institutions, compared to its 96th place last year.

## Doctor accused of raping 2 patients in Odisha medical college booked, admitted to ICU after being beaten up



Police sources said the incident took place on Sunday after the accused, who worked in the cardiology department, came in contact with the two patients who had gone to the hospital to get an echocardiogram test done.

GNS News Agency, August 15

A resident doctor at Cuttack's SCB Medical College and Hospital, one of Odisha's premier healthcare centres, has been booked for allegedly raping two patients in the hospital campus. The accused, who police have not yet named, has subsequently been admitted to the ICU of the hospital after allegedly getting beaten up by relatives of the patients.

Police sources said the incident took place on Sunday after the accused, who worked in the cardiology department, came in contact with the two patients who had gone to the hospital to get an echocardiogram test done. The two patients lodged a complaint at the Mangalabag police station in Cuttack after which the police registered a case. "Based on the complaint lodged by the patients, we have registered a case and are investigating the matter. We will record statements of the victims, and take further steps based on the evidence collected during the investigation," Cuttack Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) Anil Mishra told reporters. On the alleged thrashing of the doctor, the ADCP said police were aware of the incident. "If we receive any complaint in this regard, we will investigate it and take action," said Mishra. Hospital authorities have not responded to requests for comment. Established in 1944 as Orissa Medical College, and subsequently renamed SCB Medical College and Hospital in 1951, the healthcare facility caters to coastal Odisha and nearby states like West Bengal.



## All Indian salt and sugar brands have microplastics: Study



GNS News Agency, August 15

Iodised salt had the highest concentration of microplastics (89.15 pieces per kilogramme) while organic rock salt had the lowest (6.70 pieces per kilogramme), according to the study. Iodised salt had the highest concentration of microplastics (89.15 pieces per kilogramme) while organic rock salt had the lowest (6.70 pieces per kilogramme), according to the study. (File Photo) All Indian salt and sugar brands, whether big or small, packaged or unpackaged, contain microplastics, according to a study published on Tuesday. The study, "Microplastics in Salt and Sugar" and conducted by the environmental research organisation Toxics Link, tested 10 types of salt — including table salt, rock salt, sea salt and local raw salt — and five types of sugar purchased from both online and local markets.

The study revealed the presence of microplastics in all salt and sugar samples, in various forms, including fibre, pellets, films and fragments. The size of these microplastics ranged from 0.1 mm to 5 mm

The highest levels of microplastics were found in iodised salt, in the form of multi-coloured thin fibre and films. Toxics Link founder-director Ravi Agarwal said, "The objective of our study was to contribute to the existing scientific database on microplastics so that the global plastic treaty can address this issue in a concrete and focused manner." "We also aim to trigger policy action and attract researchers' attention to potential technological interventions that could reduce exposure risks to microplastics." Toxics Link associate director Satish Sinha added, "Our study's finding of substantial amounts of microplastics in all salt and sugar samples is concerning and calls for urgent, comprehensive research into the long-term health impacts of microplastics on human health." The concentration of microplastics in the salt samples ranged from 6.71 to 89.15 pieces per kilogramme of dry weight, the report said. Iodised salt had the highest concentration of microplastics (89.15 pieces per kilogramme) while organic rock salt had the lowest (6.70 pieces per kilogramme), according to the study.

In sugar samples, the concentration of microplastics ranged from 11.85 to 68.25 pieces per kilogramme, with the highest concentration found in non-organic sugar. Microplastics are a growing global concern because they can harm both health and the environment. These tiny plastic particles can enter the human body through food, water and air. Recent research has found microplastics in human organs such as the lungs, heart, and even in breast milk and unborn babies. Previous studies found that the average Indian consumes 10.98 grams of salt and around 10 spoons of sugar every day — much higher than the World Health Organization's recommended limits.

## Kerala HC lifts stay on release of Hema committee report on women's problems in Malayalam film industry

GNS News Agency, August 15

In July 2017, the Government formed a three-member committee headed by retired high court judge K Hema to look into the woes of women in the film industry, including their safety, salary and working condition. In July 2017, the Government formed a three-member committee headed by retired high court judge K Hema to look into the woes of women in the film industry, including their safety, salary and working conditions. The Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition challenging the release of the report of the Justice Hema committee, which looked into the problems faced by women professionals in the Malayalam film industry.



On July 24 the high court, in an interim order, stayed the release of the report following a petition moved by producer Sajji Parayil, who had challenged the State Information Commission's July 6 directive to make the findings public. The information commission stepped in after the cultural affairs department, which appointed the Hema committee in 2017, declined to disclose the report under the Right to Information Act. A bench of Justice V G Arun lifted the stay and ordered that the report be published within a week. The court had given the interim stay hours before the state government was slated to release the report.

The issue of publicising the committee report has been controversial in Kerala. The Government had earlier decided not to reveal the report, which has been with it for the last five years. The cultural affairs department was not ready to hand over a copy of the report even under the RTI Act. In July 2017, the Government formed a three-member committee headed by retired high court judge K Hema to look into the woes of women in the film industry, including their safety, salary and working conditions. The demand for a committee to examine the issues faced by women in the industry came after a leading woman actor was abducted and sexually assaulted in a moving van in Kochi in February 2017. The incident exposed the insecurity of women professionals in the industry. After recording statements from several women professionals in the film industry, the committee submitted a 300-page report to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in December 2019. It had recommended the formation of a tribunal to look into the issues faced by women in the industry. Instead of disclosing it, the Government in January 2022 formed a panel to study the report and work out a plan to implement its recommendations. In May 2022, the Government released a draft of the recommendations of the Hema committee, which suggested making job contracts mandatory in the sector. Other recommendations included equal wages for men and women, ban on use of drugs and liquor at shooting locations, and safe working conditions for women at the locations.

## Fresh plea wants compliance of Supreme Court order to complete probe against Adani Group



GNS News Agency, August 15

A lawyer has approached the Supreme Court with a fresh application seeking compliance with its January 3, 2024, order asking the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to "complete the pending investigations" into some of the allegations raised by the US-based short seller Hindenburg Research against Adani Group "preferably within three months".

In his plea, Advocate Vishal Tiwari said the Supreme Court in its order "clearly fixed the timeline of three months for the completion of investigations by Sebi". "By using the word 'preferably' it cannot be understood that no timeline was fixed. While three months have been spe-

cifically mentioned in the order, it is sufficient to be understood as prudent that a fixed time period is laid down for them on completion of the pending investigations," he said. Tiwari said he wasn't seeking any modification of the January 3 order, and claimed that the Supreme Court Registry on August 5 refused to accept his fresh application. He is one of the petitioners in the earlier litigation in which the SC delivered the January 3 order.

"It is important in the public interest and for the interest of the Investors who lost their funds after the publication of the Hindenburg report in 2023 against the Adani Group. The Right to know about the investigations led by SEBI and its conclusions are essential for the benefit of investors," he said. The plea also pointed to the new report published by Hindenburg alleging "that the current Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India, and her husband had stakes in offshore funds linked to the Adani Group's alleged money siphoning scandal". The report cited "whistleblower documents". Tiwari said in the plea that the Sebi chief has denied the allegation as baseless and the SC has also held that third-party reports cannot be considered. He said this has created an atmosphere of doubt in the minds of the public and investors and in such circumstances, it becomes incumbent for Sebi to conclude the pending investigations and declare the conclusion of the investigations.

have been better if the Centre had ordered a high-level inquiry into the matter by now. Hindenburg Research on August 10 alleged that SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged Adani money siphoning scandal. Bahujaan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati said in a post on X, "First the Adani Group and now the SEBI chief-related Hindenburg report are again in the news and the allegations and counter-allegations are continuing to such an extent that it is being said to affect the national interest. Despite the clarifications provided by Adani and SEBI, the issue remains on the boil." "By the way, this issue is now beyond debate between the ruling party and the opposition and is affecting the goodwill ('saakh') and credibility of the Centre itself... It would have been better if the Centre had ordered a high-level inquiry, ie JPC or judicial inquiry, by now," she said

## Odisha govt begins probe into Pandian's 'indiscriminate' chopper use during BJD regime



GNS News Agency, August 15

The ruling BJP in Odisha has started an investigation into the alleged extensive use of government choppers by former chief minister's close aide V K Pandian during the BJD regime, a minister said. Pandian, who announced his retirement from active politics following BJD's defeat in the Lok Sabha and assembly polls, has been accused of "indiscriminately" using government choppers to conduct grievance redressal hearings at the doorstep of people. Odisha's Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena said the state government is investigating the "extensive use of helicopters by Pandian", a 2000-batch retired IAS officer who served as private secretary to Patnaik.

"Action will certainly be taken against anyone if there

is misuse of the state exchequer. People have raised questions on Pandian's frequent chopper travel across the state between February 2020 and December 2023," Jena said. Pandian had in 2023 visited 190 places in all 30 districts of Odisha for the grievance redressal hearings, according to the data furnished by state BJP leaders. The previous BJD government had claimed that Pandian, during the sessions, collected 57,442 petitions of which 43,536 issues were resolved. However, it did not reveal the amount spent on the chopper travels. Odisha's Law, Excise and Works Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said "450 helipads" were built across Odisha during the period so that choppers availed by Pandian could land with ease. It is estimated that about Rs 3 lakh was spent for the construction of each helipad, he said.

"Who authorised the construction of the helipads and how were the expenses met will be properly probed. Strict action will be taken against those involved in the illegal construction," Harichandan said. Meanwhile, defending Pandian's helicopter use, BJD leader Sambit Routray said he was touring different places in the state for holding public hearings on behalf of the chief minister. "The BJP has been making noise over a non-issue after coming to power in the state," Routray asserted. Congress leader and former chief secretary Bijay Patnaik has also called for a thorough probe into the chopper use of Pandian.

## Supreme Court closes contempt proceedings against Patanjali, warns against 'any future intransigence'

GNS News Agency, August 15

The Supreme Court on Tuesday closed the contempt-of-court proceedings against yoga guru Ramdev and Patanjali MD Acharya Balkrishna in connection with a plea filed by the Indian Medical Association accusing them of making statements critical of modern medicine. Accepting the unconditional apology tendered by them, a two-judge bench presided by Justice Hima Kohli noted that the "though" their "initial conduct... prior to their tendering apology showed that the same was in violation of the undertakings given to this court...", after they tendered the apology, "efforts have been made by them to take steps to make amends".

"On an overall conspectus of the facts of the present case and the sequence of events that have transpired from November 23 till May 2024, we are of the opinion that though the initial conduct of the proposed contemnors prior to their tendering apology to the court showed that the same was in violation of the undertakings given to this court, subsequently thereto, after they tendered, an unconditional apology to this court, efforts have been made by them to take steps to make amends. This was not only by expressing regret for their conduct on affidavit and in person, but also by taking steps to publicise the apology tendered by them through advertisements, published prominently in national and regional newspapers," Justice Kohli said, reading out from the conclusions of the judgment.

The bench further said, "No doubt the wisdom of tendering an unconditional apology dawned belatedly on the proposal contemnors after this court rejected the first attempt made by them to offer a qualified apology, but their subsequent conduct demonstrates that they have made sincere efforts to purge themselves. Given the attendant facts and circumstances of the case, and the ef-



orts made by the proposed contemnors to absolve themselves of acts that amounted to breach of undertaking given to their court, we are inclined to accept the apology tendered by them and close the matter." The bench added, "At the same time, they are cautioned to strictly abide by the terms of their undertakings. Any future intransigence on their part, whether by act deed or speech that could tantamount violating the order of the court, or dishonouring the terms of the undertakings shall be [dealt with] strictly, and the ensuring consequences could indeed be grave. In that eventuality, the sword of contempt that is now being returned to rest in its sheath shall be flourished as swiftly as this proceedings were originally initiated." The court had summoned Patanjali MD Acharya Balkrishna for allegedly flouting an undertaking given to the court.

The court was upset over a press conference held by Ramdev on November 22, 2023, in Haridwar and an advertisement issued by the company on December 4, 2023, after it had assured the court on November 21, 2023, that it would not make any "casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine".

## Stock not exhausted, Army extends deadline on use of old combat uniform by a year

GNS News Agency, August 15

Indian army uniform To prevent misuse, the new uniform is only issued to the troops through ordnance chain as against the previous combat uniform which is available in the open market. Over two years after the Army introduced a new combat uniform for its personnel, it has recently issued guidelines on their use and management after it was found that much of the existing stock of the old uniform had remained unutilised and could lead to wastage. The Army has learnt. The Army had unveiled its digital print combat uniform in January 2022 — a shift from its earlier disruptive print combat uniform — and it was to be issued to all personnel in a phased manner over the next few years considering the existing stocking and provisioning mechanisms in place. To prevent misuse, the new uniform is only issued to the troops through ordnance chain as against the previous combat uniform which is available in the open market.

According to sources in the Army, the existing stock of the old disruptive pattern combat uniform was supposed to be exhausted by June 2025. However, the latest assessment conducted by the Army suggests it would not be possible to exhaust the entire stock by June 2025 as the life of a combat uniform is 15 months. The sources said it was found that several Army units stopped seeking the old disruptive pattern combat uniform thinking that the new digital print uniform will be made available to them post June 2025.

To avoid wastage of the existing stock of old combat uniform and to check any loss to state and objection by auditors in the later years, the Army has issued new guidelines which state that the existing stock of the old combat uniform will be in service till June 2026, as against the earlier deadline of June 2025. Under the new guidelines, all units will have to put in their demands to get the old disruptive print combat uniform from their respective ordnance echelons or the various ordnance units and supply chains for the troops and receive them when ready.

Sources said Army formations have also been told not to put pressure on troops to wear the new combat uniform, while ordnance echelons will have to keep issuing the old combat uniform to troops even if they receive the new combat uniform through central procurement. The old combat disruptive print uniform will have to be issued to Defence Security Corps (DSC) troops as they are not authorised to get the new digital print combat uniform. Additionally, the Army has stated that no regional procurement of new digital print combat uniform will be car-



ried out by ordnance echelons till the existing stock of old combat uniform is exhausted. Any other stock of combat uniform in the old pattern would be first offered to other government departments such as Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and charitable trusts, the rest will be disposed of through official channels. Since the old pattern of combat uniform was readily available in the market, one of the challenges was to create a unique and multi-terrain pattern. The new digital print combat uniform, designed and developed by NIFT and introduced in January 2022, is said to be lightweight, robust and quick drying and thus more comfortable for the troops during operations. It is available in 13 different sizes and the fabric is a combination of cotton and polyester in a ratio of 70:30.

## Farmers complain over delay in urea supplies

Hyderabad: Farmers across different districts have been complaining about difficulties in obtaining sufficient urea, which is crucial for the Vanakalam (Kharif) crops. Paddy transplantation is fast picking up with release of water to the ayacut of the major and medium irrigation projects, barring certain exceptions. Urea fertilizer supports the crop providing the essential macronutrients it needs. It is extensively used in the initial stages of crop season as it improves plant growth and crop yields. Late application of the fertilizer would have a bearing on the output and pest resistance. Despite government assurances of adequate supplies, many farmers are still facing shortages and are forced to buy urea at higher prices from private outlets.



## 58 rain-related deaths in Karnataka this year so far, 80,000 hectare of crop loss: Minister Krishna Byre Gowda



GNS News Agency, August 15

Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Monday said that in the last eight months, 58 persons in Karnataka have died due to rain related incidents and 80,000 hectare of agricultural crops have been damaged.

After a review meeting for the Bengaluru division, Gowda said, "In 2019, 67 people had lost their lives by this time. In 2022, 75 people had died during the monsoon season. However, this year, 58 people have lost their lives, and the government's precautionary measures have reduced the number of deaths. Nevertheless, every life is valuable, and it is the government's duty to protect every individual." He added, "District collectors have been instructed to take further preparatory measures to prevent such casualties. Heavy rainfall is expected in the Malnad and coastal regions, as well as in the Cauvery-Krishna reservoir basin after August 15. A crucial meeting on this matter will be held under the chairmanship of CM Siddaramaiah on Wednesday."

Speaking about the crop loss, Gowda said, "In the northern interior region, the average rainfall is 260 mm,

but this year it has received 322 mm, which is 24 per cent higher than normal. The Malnad region typically receives 1,127 mm of rainfall, but this year, it has received 1,361 mm, 21 per cent higher than normal. The coastal region typically receives 2,299 mm of rainfall, but this year it has received 2,947 mm, which is 28 per cent higher. The state has received an average of 553 mm of rainfall, but this year it has received 699 mm, which is 26 per cent higher. No district has received less rainfall than normal this year."

He added, "Last month, there was a rainfall deficit in the dryland regions. Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Yadgir, Koppal, Vijayapura, and Raichur had received less rainfall than usual. However, good rainfall has been recorded in these areas over the last 10 days. Moreover, the monsoon is expected to intensify again from August 16. All districts are reporting good monsoon activity. This year, the rainfall is expected to be above average, and we anticipate a good agricultural season." "The monsoon will continue for another one and a half months, and more rain is expected in the coming days, especially in the regions from Bengaluru to Central Karnataka and the Malnad area. Heavy rainfall is likely along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border and the Krishna and Cauvery river basins. Therefore, precautionary measures have been instructed to the district collectors to prevent unnecessary flood situations," the minister said. "During heavy rains, rivers tend to overflow, and if water is released from dams simultaneously, it could lead to flooding, causing distress to people. Therefore, instructions have been given to regulate the release of water from reservoirs before they reach full capacity, to control floods. The district collectors have also been instructed to identify and evacuate people from dilapidated schools and houses at risk of landslides and move them to safety centers," Gowda said.

## After Dwarka, Valsad police in Gujarat seize Afghani charas from coast

GNS News Agency, August 15

In a first on the South Gujarat coastline, Valsad police have found 11 packets of Afghani charas (produced from live cannabis grown in Afghanistan) at Udvada in Pardi taluka. Police seized the packets weighing 11.746 kg. The international market value of one kilogram is Rs. 50 lakh. On Monday evening, a fisherman found an abandoned bag lying behind a local kindergarten school near Rohit colony. He opened it to find the packets, and called the police. A case has been registered under the NDPS Act and investigations are on.

When Pardi police seized the packets, they reportedly noted that they had some inscriptions in Arabic. A forensic examination found the packets had high-value Afghani charas. On coordinating with Dwarka police, who had also seized contraband from a coastal area on June 8, they found that the packets and inscriptions were "similar", Pardi Police inspector G R Gadhi told The Indian Express. Gadhi said, "The suspected contraband was packed in three layers of plastic packing bags, which



was then put in a big bag. One of the packets was found to be torn and some contraband was missing. Dwarka police, a state anti-terrorist squad, and a state special operation group are parallelly inspecting the details." Soon after the seizure, Valsad police carried out foot patrolling on the seacoast area. "The Valsad coastline area is 70 km long, and it is for the first time that such a consignment was found," the inspector added.

## ECI reviews preparations for Haryana Assembly polls: Over 2 crore voters in electoral roll

GNS News Agency, August 15

As many as 2.01 crore people will vote in the upcoming Assembly elections in Haryana. Among them, 1.06 crore are male, 0.95 crore are female, and over 4.52 lakh are first-time voters aged 18-19. Additionally, 2.55 lakh voters above 85 years and 1.5 lakh people with disabilities have registered across Haryana. More than 10,000 voters are aged 100 years or more. The final electoral roll will be published on August 27. The details were shared in a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday. A team of ECI headed by Kumar and comprising Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu is on a two-day visit to review the poll preparedness for the Assembly elections in Haryana due in October.

There will be a total of 20,629 polling stations for the assembly polls, which is an increase of 817 polling stations from the assembly elections in 2019. Out of these, 13,497 will be in rural areas and 7,132 will be in urban areas, with an average of 977 voters per polling station. At least 125 polling stations will be managed solely by women, and 116 will be managed by young employees to encourage voting among women and youth. Additionally, one polling station in each assembly constituency will be manned by people with disabilities. During the state legislative assembly polls in Haryana, the voting process will be webcast at all polling stations. In a first for the state, those above 85 years and persons with disabilities (more than 40 per cent disability) will have the option to cast their votes at their homes. The entire process will be recorded on video. cVIGIL, Suvidha, Know Your Candidate, and Saksham apps will facilitate all stakeholders, including voters and political parties.

Political parties have raised concerns about the misuse of government machinery during the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) period. The Commission has directed all district election officers (DEOs), superintendents of police (SPs), and state administration to act with complete impartiality and ensure a level playing field for free and fair elections. DEOs were instructed to be equally accessible to all political parties and to promptly resolve their complaints and grievances. They were also directed to meet with the parties regularly through periodic meetings. Additionally, DEOs were tasked with ensuring assured minimum facilities at all polling stations, including ramps, wheelchairs, and volunteers for the elderly and voters with disabilities.

All polling stations will be located on the ground floor and within 2 kilometres of the voters' residences. Observers will be available to all parties and voters during the election period, and the DEOs will make their contact information public. Additionally, all DEOs and superintendents of police will monitor social media for fake news and respond swiftly with appropriate legal action, if necessary, according to the directions issued by the ECI's team. The ECI's team also held a meeting with nearly 20 central and state law enforcement agencies on Tuesday. "All enforcement agencies must work in a coordinated manner to curb the inflow of illicit liquor, cash, and drugs in the state. Cohort-wise route maps are identified to keep



strict vigilance on the movement, stockpiling, and distribution of any kind of inducements. Strict action will be taken against liquor and drug kingpins in the state. Enforcement agencies are expected to mutually share intelligence and work in a coordinated manner," the directions issued to the agencies said. "There will be 24x7 CCTV monitoring at critical check posts on interstate borders. The State Level Bankers Committee will ensure that cash transfers only occur in designated vehicles during designated hours. Concerned agencies will monitor unscheduled chartered flights and helipads in the state for any movement of goods. There will also be strict vigilance over illicit online cash transfers through wallets," it added.

## PMC approves Rs 7.19 crore for Bhide Wada memorial in Pune, sources say foundation laying likely before Maharashtra Assembly polls

GNS News Agency, August 15

The state government too has assured financial assistance for the Bhide Wada memorial project and has been backing the PMC on acquisition of the historic property. (File Photo) The state government too has assured financial assistance for the Bhide Wada memorial project and has been backing the PMC on acquisition of the historic property. Ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly election, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has approved Rs 7.19 crore for the construction of the Bhide Wada memorial, which was proposed to commemorate the first girls' school of India and the contributions of social reformer Savitribai Phule. The foundation stone of the memorial is likely to be laid soon by the ruling Mahayuti alliance, said sources. In 1848, social reformers Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule had started the first girls' school of the country in Bhide Wada. The PMC had acquired the Bhide Wada property in December last year after winning a long legal battle with the private occupants who were refusing to vacate the property.

## Objective of UP anti-conversion law is to uphold spirit of secularism in India: Allahabad High Court



GNS News Agency, August 15

While rejecting the bail application of a man booked on various charges, including those under the anti-conversion law, the Allahabad High Court recently observed that the primary objective of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, is to guarantee religious freedom to all, thereby reflecting the social harmony and spirit of India. The court noted that the Act's objective is to uphold the spirit of secularism in the country. A bench of Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal, who was hearing the matter, stated in its order, "The Constitution confers on each individual the fundamental right to profess, practice and propagate his religion. However, the individual right to freedom of conscience and religion cannot be extended to construe a collective right to proselytize, the right to religious freedom belongs equally to the person converting and the individual sought to be converted."

The court made these observations while hearing the bail application of Azeem, who was charged in a case registered at the Kotwali police station in Budaun under Indian Penal Code sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt),

504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), and 506 (criminal intimidation). The police also invoked the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act. In this case, a woman alleged that Azeem had made videos of her and was blackmailing her. She claimed that he had sexually exploited her and was pressuring her to marry him. The complainant further alleged that she was living with Azeem and was being forced to accept Islam, eat non-vegetarian food, and wear clothes typically worn by Muslims. Azeem has been in jail since June 27 last year. In his bail application, Azeem stated that the woman who was in a relationship with him and had left his home voluntarily had falsely implicated him in the case. He also pointed out that the woman, in her statement, admitted she had solemnised marriage with him. The government counsel opposed the bail application, arguing that the woman's statement clearly revealed that she was coerced into accepting Islam and that her Nikah ceremony with Azeem was performed without any conversion. Furthermore, on the day of Bakrid, her father-in-law had asked the complainant to witness the sacrificial rites, which she refused to see. After hearing the case, the court passed the order stating that "As there is contravention of Sections 3 and 8 of the Act of 2021, which is punishable under Section 5 of the Act of 2021, and the applicant having failed to make out a case for bail, bail application stands rejected." The court observed, "...The basic object and reason of the enforcement of the Act was to guarantee religious freedom to all persons which reflects the social harmony and spirit of India. The objective of this Act was to sustain the spirit of secularism in India." The court further said, "According to the Constitution, State has no religion and all religions are equal before the State, and no religion shall be given preference over the other. All persons are free to preach, practice and propagate any religion of their choice."

## To 'get even with' cops, lawyers bar police vehicles from Dwarka court premises

GNS News Agency, August 15

Lawyers gathered at gate number 7 outside Delhi's Dwarka court on Tuesday morning. Their objective? To prevent the entry of police vehicles, because the lawyers allege their vehicles are barred from entering police station premises. "They don't allow lawyers' cars to enter police station premises... Why should their vehicles be allowed inside court premises?" N C Sharma, president of the Dwarka Court Bar Association, told The Indian Express. "They enter our courts with their vehicles, but multiple lawyers told me that their vehicles are not allowed inside police stations."

"Since advocates' vehicles are not allowed on the premises of police stations, a similar restriction will be imposed on police vehicles entering the court complex. This is being done to maintain parity and balance between the two institutions," said Jitender Solanki, secretary of the Bar association. During the morning protest outside the Dwarka court, the lawyers caught a man with a "fake" Bar sticker on his car along with a "police" cap. They also found a dozen bottles of alcohol from his car. He was handed over to police, who said the man was a property dealer, not a lawyer or a police officer. Dwarka They also found a dozen bottles of alcohol from his car. He was handed over to police, who said the man was a



property dealer, not a lawyer or a police officer. "The cap found in his car was found to have no badge. It was a fake cap. We are registering a FIR against him under the Excise Act and for impersonating an official," said Ankit Singh, DCP, Dwarka. "We have posted sentries at gates that restrict private citizens from parking their cars on thana premises. We've told the advocates that we don't have an issue with them coming inside. All they have to do is show their ID cards and they'll be let in. We'll take this issue up with the advocates and will try to have a discussion regarding this with them," he said.

## Pune Rural police probe if NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule's WhatsApp hack was targeted attack or random attempt

GNS News Agency, August 15

In a post on X on Sunday, the Baramati MP appealed to people not to call or text her saying her WhatsApp account was hacked and that she had approached the police. (File Photo) In a post on X on Sunday, the Baramati MP appealed to people not to call or text her saying her WhatsApp account was hacked and that she had approached the police. The Pune Rural police have started an investigation into whether the suspected hacking of the WhatsApp account of NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) leader Supriya Sule was a random incident or a targeted attack. A First Information Report (FIR) in the case was registered late on Monday at Yavat Police station, and the investigation has been transferred to the Cyber Cell of the Pune Rural police, said Pankaj Deshmukh, Superintendent of Police, Pune Rural. "The focus of our investigation is to find out whether this was a targeted attack or it was a random act of access denial hacking. An FIR in the case has been registered based on the complaint given by Supriya Sule's personal assistant," said an officer from the Pune Rural police.

In a post on X on Sunday, the Baramati MP appealed to people not to call or text her saying her WhatsApp account was hacked and that she had approached the police. After receiving information, a team of the Pune



Rural police initiated a probe into the matter and found that Supriya Sule had lost access to her WhatsApp account on her Apple device. "While Supriya Sule was denied access to WhatsApp on her device, the account was in use from the suspect's device. We have also come to know that her PA was in contact with this user and a ransom demand of \$400 was made," said an officer from Pune Rural police. The officer said they contacted WhatsApp authorities and after some time, Sule's account was restored on her Apple device. "Following our request, the unauthorised access to Sule's WhatsApp account was disabled," added the officer.

## Will Atishi be Arvind Kejriwal's substitute? No end to suspense over who will hoist Tricolour at Delhi govt Independence Day event

GNS News Agency, August 15

tricolour, independence day The GAD organises annual Independence Day celebrations at Chhatrasal Stadium, where the Delhi chief minister hoists the national flag as per tradition and rules. (File/representational) Two days before the national flag hoisting at the Delhi government's annual Independence Day event, suspense persists over the identity of the flag hoister. A day after Delhi General Administration Department (GAD) Minister Gopal Rai issued directions regarding preparations for his cabinet colleague Atishi to hoist the Tricolour after receiving instructions to this effect during a meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at Tihar Jail, the department on Tuesday wrote back, terming these "legally invalid". The GAD organises annual Inde-

pendence Day celebrations at Chhatrasal Stadium, where the Delhi chief minister hoists the national flag as per tradition and rules. This year, because Kejriwal has been in custody since March due to the excise policy case, the AAP convener, nominated Atishi to replace him in a letter to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on August 6. On Monday, the Tihar administration, citing prison rules, warned the Delhi chief minister that the privileges being extended to him would be curtailed if he undertook formal communication like the one written to the L-G nominating Atishi for the role last week as "impermissible activity". On Tuesday, Navin Kumar Chaudhary, Additional Chief Secretary, GAD, wrote to Rai stating that Kejriwal's direction to authorise Atishi to hoist the national flag was "legally invalid and cannot be acted upon",



## Only Gaza ceasefire can delay Iran's response to Israel, officials say



GNS News Agency, August 15

Only a ceasefire deal in Gaza stemming from hoped-for talks this week would hold Iran back from direct retaliation against Israel for the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on its soil, three senior Iranian officials said. Iran has vowed a severe response to Haniyeh's killing, which took place as he visited Tehran late last month and which it blamed on Israel. Israel has neither confirmed or denied its involvement. The U.S. Navy has deployed warships and a submarine to the Middle East to bolster Israeli defences.

One of the sources, a senior Iranian security official, said Iran, along with allies such as Hezbollah, would launch a direct attack if the Gaza talks fail or it perceives Israel is dragging out negotiations. The sources did not say how long Iran would allow for talks to progress before responding. With an increased risk of a broader Middle East war after the killings of Haniyeh and Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur, Iran has been involved in intense dialogue with Western countries and the United States in recent days on ways to calibrate retaliation, said the sources, who all spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

In comments published on Tuesday, the U.S. ambassador to Turkey confirmed Washington was asking allies to help convince Iran to de-escalate tensions. Three regional government sources described conversations with Tehran to avoid escalation ahead of the Gaza ceasefire talks, due to begin on Thursday in either Egypt or Qatar. "We hope our response will be timed and executed in a way that does not harm a potential ceasefire," Iran's mission to the U.N. said on Friday in a statement. Iran's foreign ministry on Tuesday said calls to exercise restraint "contradict principles of international law." Iran's foreign ministry and its Revolutionary Guards Corps did not immediately respond to questions. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the U.S. State Department did not respond to questions. Looming conflict "Something could happen as soon as this week by Iran and its proxies... That is a U.S. assessment as well as an Israel assessment," White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Monday.

"If something does happen this week, the timing of it could certainly well have an impact on these talks we want to do on Thursday," he added. At the weekend, Hamas cast doubt on whether talks would go ahead. Israel and Hamas have held several rounds of talks in recent months without agreeing a final ceasefire. In Israel, many observers believe a response is imminent after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran would

"harshly punish" Israel for the strike in Tehran. Iran's regional policy is set by the elite Revolutionary Guards, who answer only to Khamenei, the country's top authority. Iran's relatively moderate new president Masoud Pezeshkian has repeatedly reaffirmed Iran's anti-Israel stance and its support for resistance movements across the region since taking office last month. Meir Litva, a senior researcher at Tel Aviv University's Alliance Center for Iranian Studies, said he thought Iran would put its needs before helping its ally Hamas but that Iran also wanted to avoid a full-scale war. "The Iranians never subordinated their strategy and policies to the needs of their proxies or protégés," Mr. Litva said. "An attack is likely and almost inevitable but I don't know the scale and the timing." Iran-based analyst Saeed Laylaz said the Islamic Republic's leaders were now keen to work towards a ceasefire in Gaza, "to obtain incentives, avoid an all-out war and strengthen its position in the region."

Mr. Laylaz said Iran had not previously been involved in the Gaza peace process but was now ready to play "a key role." Iran, two of the sources said, was considering sending a representative to the ceasefire talks, in what would be a first since the war started in Gaza.

The representative would not directly attend the meetings but would engage in behind-the-scenes discussions "to maintain a line of diplomatic communication" with the United States while negotiations proceed. Officials in Washington, Qatar and Egypt did not immediately respond to questions about whether Iran would play an indirect role in talks. Two senior sources close to Lebanon's Hezbollah said Tehran would give the negotiations a chance but would not give up its intentions to retaliate. A ceasefire in Gaza would give Iran cover for a smaller "symbolic" response, one of the sources said. Israel launched its assault on Gaza after Hamas fighters stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and capturing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, nearly 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli offensive in Gaza, according to the health ministry. April missiles Iran has not publicly indicated what would be the target of an eventual response to the Haniyeh assassination. On April 13, two weeks after two Iranian generals were killed in a strike on Tehran's embassy in Syria, Iran unleashed a barrage of hundreds of drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles towards Israel, damaging two airbases. Almost all of the weapons were shot down before they reached their targets. "Iran wants its response to be much more effective than the April 13 attack," said Farzin Nadimi, senior fellow with the Washington Institute for Near East policy. "Nadimi said such a response would require 'a lot of preparation and coordination' especially if it involved Iran's network of allied armed groups opposing Israel and the United States across the Middle East, with Hezbollah the senior member of the so-called 'Axis of Resistance,' that along with Iraqi militias and Yemen's Houthis have harried Israel since Oct. 7. Two of the Iranian sources said Iran would support Hezbollah and other allies if they launched their own responses to the killing of Haniyeh and Hezbollah's top military commander, Fuad Shukur, who died in a strike in Beirut the day before Haniyeh was killed in Tehran. The sources did not specify what form such support could take.

## Without reforms, UNSC 'ill-equipped' to address global challenges: G4 nations

GNS News Agency, August 15

A reform of the U.N. Security Council that does not address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, would only "exacerbate" the current imbalances in its composition and render it "ill-equipped" to address current global challenges, India has said on behalf of the G4 countries. "Recent global geopolitical events have clearly shown that the U.N. Security Council is unable to deliver on its primary responsibilities to safeguard international peace and security when the world needs it the most," Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the U.N. Ambassador R. Ravindra said on Monday (August 12, 2024).

He was delivering a statement on behalf of the G4 countries – Brazil, Germany, Japan and India – at the UNSC High-Level Debate on 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing the Historical Injustice and enhancing Africa's effective representation in the UNSC'. The realities of 1945, when the Council was established, have long been superseded by current geopolitical realities, with the need for change being felt across the board, Mr. Ravindra said ahead of next month's annual high-level U.N. General Assembly session which world leaders will attend.

He noted that for the G4, the primary reason for the underperformance of the critical U.N. Security Council remains the non-representation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the under-representation of Asia Pacific in the permanent category. "It is the G4's firm belief, shared we believe by Africa and other groups, that any reform of the Council that does not address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, would only exacerbate the current imbalances in the Council's composition and render it ill-equipped to address Monday's (August 12, 2024) international challenges," he said. The 15-nation UNSC comprises five permanent, veto-wielding members – China, France, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S. – and 10 non-permanent members, without veto powers, who are elected for two-year terms. Underlining that the G4 has "walked the talk" when it comes to correcting historical injustices done to Africa, Mr. Ravindra said the group's model of UNSC reforms has clearly proposed that the Security Council membership increase from the current 15 to 25-26 by adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members. Among the six new permanent members, two each are proposed to be from African States and Asia Pacific states, one from Latin American and Caribbean states, and one from West European and Other States. "On rights and privileges associated with permanent memberships, such as the veto, we also support the Common African Position that as long as it exists, it should be available to all permanent members, both new and old alike," Mr. Ravindra said.

Mr. Ravindra said that the G4 is convinced that African representation in permanent and non-permanent categories will be an indispensable part of UNSC reform for a more representative and effective Council. The group believes it is "inconceivable" that Africa, which constitutes over 70 per cent of the UNSC's agenda items under discussion, does not get a permanent voice at the horse-

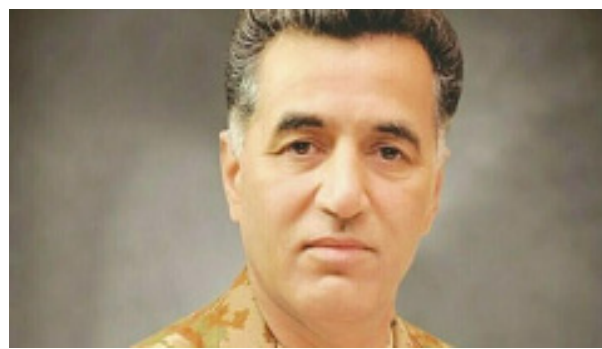


shoe table. "We as G4 continue to support fully these legitimate demands and aspirations from the people of Africa," he said, adding that the group's relationship with Africa is anchored in trust and mutual respect, and is focused on ensuring that Africa finds its "rightful" place in a new age of reformed multilateralism. Making a few remarks in his national capacity and not on behalf of the G4, Mr. Ravindra said that references to the Common African Position and majority support to expansion in the permanent category should be added in the Pact for the Future as it befits endorsement by global leaders.

With world leaders convening in New York later next month for the annual high-level U.N. General Assembly session, they will also participate in the ambitious Summit of the Future convened by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The summit will produce an inter-governmentally negotiated, action-oriented 'Pact for the Future' with chapters on sustainable development and financing for development, international peace and security, among other things.

"The draft Pact under negotiation has the potential to promote a multilateral system that reflects the realities of Monday's (August 12, 2024), and that delivers for everyone everywhere," the U.N. has said. Mr. Ravindra further stressed that text-based negotiations in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations on UNSC reform should be expedited. "Consensus is an output of negotiations... It is important that we do not keep delaying reforms, waiting for a consensus to emerge as consensus can only be arrived at through text-based negotiations," he said, adding that for this, the 80th anniversary of the U.N. next year could be a befitting milestone. "The other scenario is of status quo where reforms and representation are only elusive. That should not be our path," he said. India emphasised the need to push for reforms, heeding the voice of the young and future generations, including from Africa, where the demand to correct the historical injustices grows ever stronger. "Otherwise, we simply risk sending the Council down the path of oblivion and irrelevance," he said. The G4 asserted that representation in key multilateral bodies is still not a reality for Africa and many other regions of the world, and it is "imminent on us to correct this historical injustice. Not only from a historical point of view but also from the perspective of future generations, this holds true." Mr. Ravindra noted that Africa is a continent with the youngest demography, vast natural resources, expanding capabilities, growing markets, and rising ambitions.

## Pakistan's ruling coalition supports former ISI chief Faiz Hameed's impending court-martial



GNS News Agency, August 15

Pakistan's ruling coalition has hailed the arrest of former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd.) Faiz Hameed in connection with a housing scheme scandal but jailed former premier Imran Khan's party decided to stay neutral and termed it the army's "internal matter". Mr. Hameed served as the director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from 2019 to 2021, when Mr. Khan was prime minister and was accused of meddling in political affairs at his behest.

According to the Army, he was arrested on Monday (August 12, 2024) by military authorities and court martial proceedings were initiated against him under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act for alleged misuse of authority. His arrest followed a probe into complaints against him by the owner of Top City Housing Society over an alleged raid at his house. Asserting that the military's actions were "internal", former premier Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chairman, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, said the army is a disciplined and organised institution with its own procedures for dealing with both serving and retired officers, the Dawn newspaper reported. However, members of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), including Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Senator Afnan, Rana Sanaulah as well as Pakistan People Party

(PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira, were more open in their views on the move, with Tarar calling it a "right decision". "Action against Faiz Hameed would have been taken on the basis of investigation," the minister said. Pointing out that only a brief announcement had been made by the military spokesman about the ex-ISI DG, Senator Siddiqui said, "When investigation will go forward, his (Hameed's) political meddling will also be proved." Siddiqui quoted PTI founder Khan as saying that Hameed had supported his party inside Parliament by getting legislation passed and meeting the required number of members in the National Assembly. He said Mr. Hameed also remained involved in the general elections by backing the PTI.

The senator said the former ISI chief had controlled the media and politicians and tried to control the judiciary as well. Senior PML-N leader Sanaulah alleged that Hameed was involved in "political meddling" and on his instruction, the Faizabad sit-in was staged by a religious group, choking the main arteries of the federal capital for weeks. Mr. Sanaulah said action against him was taken in the light of the Supreme Court's order in the private housing scheme, Top City, whose owner filed a petition in the Supreme Court on 2023, accusing Hameed of misusing his authority. The owner stated in the petition that on May 12, 2017, at the behest of Gen Hameed, ISI officials raided the top city office and his house and seized valuables, including gold, diamonds and money. Hailing the military's internal accountability system, PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said an inquiry had confirmed multiple violations by Hameed that prompted the initiation of disciplinary proceedings under the Pakistan Army Act. He said if the military had decided to proceed with such measures against a high-ranking officer, it indicated the severity of the offences committed. "Gen Faiz has definitely had a hand in the events on the political scene since his retirement. Knowing him a little bit, he could not abstain and had to muddy the waters," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told Geo News.

## Bangladesh crisis: court orders probe against former PM Sheikh Hasina



GNS News Agency, August 15

A murder case has been filed against Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and six others over the death of a grocery shop owner during last month's violent clashes that led to the fall of her government, media reports said. The case was the first to be filed against Ms. Hasina, 76, after she resigned and fled to India last week following widespread protests against her Awami League-led government over a controversial job quota system. The case was filed by a well-wisher of the grocery store owner Abu Sayed, who was killed on July 19 in police firing during a procession in support of the quota reform movement in Mohammadpur, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. The other accused are Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and former Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, among others.

Besides, several unnamed high-ranking police officials and government officials were also accused in the case, according to the report. Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July. An interim government was formed after the fall of the Hasina-led government, and its Chief Adviser, 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, announced the portfolios of his 16-member council of advisors last week. On Monday (August 12, 2024), seven political parties, including the Awami League's arch-rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), met Mr. Yunus separately and said the interim government could take the time necessary to create a conducive environment for holding free and fair elections. The Daily Star newspaper reported. "We have given this interim government the time required to create a proper environment for holding an election," the report quoted BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir as saying. He said they did not discuss the election and that the BNP did not mention any specific time frame for holding the next election. The BNP was extending its full support to all the activities of the interim government, he said. Quoting sources, the report said that the party urged Mr. Yunus to have all the cases against its leaders, including those against party chairperson Khaleda Zia and acting chairman Tarique Rahman, withdrawn. Former prime minister Ms. Zia, 79, was released from jail after Hasina's ouster. She was sentenced to 17 years in prison for graft in 2018.

## Kamala Harris more incompetent than Biden, Trump tells Elon Musk

GNS News Agency, August 15

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris is a "third-rate phoney candidate" and "more incompetent" than her boss President Joe Biden, her Republican rival in the November election, Donald Trump, has said. In a much-anticipated audio-only interview with billionaire tech magnate Elon Musk on Monday (August 12, 2024) on his social media platform X which was delayed by more than 40 minutes due to technical difficulties, the 78-year-old former President said, "She is a radical left lunatic," as he alleged that "she wants to be more Trump than Trump". Launching a scathing attack on the 59-year-old U.S. Vice President, Mr. Trump described Ms. Harris as a "third-rate phoney candidate." He reiterated his allegation that Mr. Biden being replaced by Harris as a presidential candidate of the Democratic party was a coup. Mr. Musk agreed with the former President and said, "Her behaviour is far left." "She (Ms. Harris) had three and a half years, and by the way, they have another five months that they can do something. But they won't do anything. It's all talk," Mr. Trump said. "She's incompetent, and he (Mr. Biden)



is incompetent. And frankly, I think that she's more incompetent than he is, and that's saying something because he's not too good," he said. Mr. Trump would face Ms. Harris in the general elections on November 5. He accused Ms. Harris of having failed miserably on border security as hundreds and thousands of people entered the country illegally. Asserting that he is in favour of legal immigration, Mr. Trump said it is illegal immigration that he is against. "She is such a liar," Mr. Trump alleged on X, previously known as Twitter, on the day when he returned to the social media platform. Over a million people listened to the much-awaited audio-only conversation, which started

more than 40 minutes late because of technical issues. "There appears to be a massive DDOS (distributed denial-of-service) attack on X. Working on shutting it down. Worst case, we will proceed with a smaller number of live listeners and post the conversation later," Mr. Musk said in a post on X.

During the interview, both Mr. Musk and Mr. Trump agreed that the crime rate has increased in the U.S. because of the open border policy of the Biden-Harris Administration. "We're gonna have the largest deportation in the history of this country. And we have no choice," said the former President. Responding to a question from Mr. Musk, Mr. Trump also slammed Mr.

Biden's foreign policy and applauded Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. "I got along well with them," he said, claiming there would have been no war if he was the president of the United States. Meanwhile, Mr. Musk stressed that people respond to strength and not weakness and said, "We have some really bad people... we have some really bad people, and I say they are more dangerous than Russia and China." The biggest threat, he said, is not climate change but nuclear warming. The conversation between Trump and Musk started with the failed assassination attempt on the former president in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13.



## Fund Buch couple invested in part of structure under Sebi probe



SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Sebi probe, SEBI Chairperson controversy, Dhaval Buch, Adani group fund flows, Hindenburg, Indian express newsIn March 2017, days before Madhabi Puri Buch became a SEBI member, Dhaval Buch became the sole person authorised to operate their fund account IPE Plus Fund 1. Mauritius-based IPE Plus Fund 1, which is at the centre of the controversy surrounding SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch, not only had investments by Vinod Adani, elder brother of industrialist Gautam Adani, but was also part of the investment structure used by two of the 13 overseas funds being probed by the market regulator for opaque fund flows into Adani Group companies since 2016-17.

Information from multiple sources, including corporate records accessed by The Indian Express, the consortium of Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and additional information made available by US-based Hindenburg Research, show that the investments by Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband in 2015, are clearly linked to the fund which had significant

investments by Vinod Adani.

A scrutiny of the web of funds and investments also reveals that the parent fund (Global Opportunities Fund) of the sub-fund (Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund) where Buch invested, was administered by Trident Trust Company (Mauritius) — the declared beneficial owner of Emerging India Focus Fund and EM Resurgent Fund that were part of the 13 overseas entities under Sebi lens. The period under investigation (at least since 2016-17) of the two funds in question — Emerging India Focus Fund and EM Resurgent Fund — overlaps with the period (2015-2018) of investment in IPE Plus Fund 1 by Buch and her husband. SEBI started the investigation in October 2020 when Buch was a Whole-Time Member. New Hindenburg report | As Opposition seeks JPC probe, BJP hits back: Fictitious report, bid to destabilise markets From Vinod Adani to Sebi chief In March 2017, days before Madhabi Puri Buch became a SEBI member, Dhaval Buch became the sole person authorised to operate their fund account IPE Plus Fund 1. In February 2018, Madhabi Puri Buch instructed the fund manager to redeem their entire investment. With approximately \$522.2 million in assets, Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund Limited (Bermuda) is a hedge fund operated by IIFL Capital Pte Ltd (360 One) which also manages IPE Plus Fund. In a statement issued on Sunday, Madhabi Puri Buch said, "When, in 2018, Mr Ahuja, left his position as CIO of the fund, we redeemed the investment in that fund." Ahuja was the CIO of IIFL and her husband Dhaval's childhood friend. "All disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed, including disclosures of all securities held or subsequently transferred," it said. A statement by 360 One said that throughout the fund's tenure, IPE-Plus Fund 1 made zero investments in any shares of the Adani Group either directly or indirectly through any fund.

## Factory output slows to 4.2% in June as manufacturing drops to seven-month low

Indias manufacturing sector, Indias manufacturing drops, manufacturing sector growth, Factory output, IIP, Index of Industrial Production, Indian express newsThe overall industrial output had recorded a growth of 4 per cent in June 2023 and 6.2 per cent in May this year. India's factory output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), eased to 4.2 per cent in June, the lowest level since January 2024, mainly due to a slower growth in manufacturing output.

Manufacturing, which accounts for 77.6 per cent of the weight of the IIP, slowed to a seven-month low of 2.6 per cent compared with 5 per cent in May and 3.5 per cent in June 2023. The overall industrial output had recorded a growth of 4 per cent in June 2023 and 6.2 per cent in May this year. Cumulatively so far in the financial year 2024-25, industrial growth has been recorded at 5.2 per cent during April-June as against 4.7 per cent in the previous financial year. Mining output growth rose to 10.3 per cent in June from 6.6 per cent in May and 7.6 per cent in the year-ago period due to higher coal demand. As per the latest data, electricity output slowed to 8.6 per cent in June from 13.7 per cent in May but was higher than 4.2 per cent growth in the corresponding period in the previous year.

"Within manufacturing, growth was driven by electronics (after a long hiatus), electrical machinery, metals and the auto sector. There was some recovery in consumer demand for sure though aided by the base effect. Infra work, though muted due to the elections, did have a positive impact on metals and machinery... industry does appear to be on the right path and further pickup can be expected from the end of Q2 and Q3, as the festival season brings in higher demand," Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda said. As per the IIP data, 14 out of the 23 sectors in manufacturing registered growth in June, with manufacture of electrical equipment (28.4 per cent), furniture (16 per cent), and computer, elec-



tronic and optical products (10.7 per cent) were among the highest growing sectors. Other manufacturing (-12.6 per cent), tobacco products (-10.9 per cent), leather and related products (-3.9 per cent) were amongst the significant non-performers. On the basis of use-base classification, the capital goods segment, a key indicator of the investment sentiment, showed slower growth of 2.4 per cent in June from the 2.9 per cent growth rate seen both in the previous month and the year-ago period. Consumer durables output — an indicator of consumption demand — grew 8.6 per cent mainly coming on the back of the base of (-) 6.8 per cent in June 2023. Consumer non-durable goods output, which reflects fast-moving consumer goods, was in negative territory at (-) 1.4 per cent in June over just 0.5 per cent growth last year. Moderating growth in the manufacturing and electricity sectors offset the acceleration in mining growth weighing on the overall industrial performance. The performance in consumption related segments remained mixed with output of consumer durables rising by 8.6 per cent while non-durables output contracted by 1.4 per cent. Broad-based consumption improvement and the revival of private investment remain crucial for industrial activity. From the consumption perspective, the trajectory of food inflation and progress of monsoon remain the key monitorable," Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings said.

## Madhabi Puri Buch redeemed funds through husband's name 2 weeks after getting Sebi top post: Hindenburg

US-based short seller Hindenburg Research on Monday hit back at Securities and Exchange Board of India Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch alleging that she ensured the accounts with ties to Adani 'be registered solely in the name of Dhaval Buch', her husband, two weeks after her appointment as SEBI Chairperson and 'redeemed the funds through her husband's name'.

"Despite disclaiming control, a private email she sent a year into her SEBI term shows she redeemed stakes in the funds through her husband's name, as per the whistleblower documents," it alleged. On Saturday, quoting "whistleblower documents", Hindenburg had alleged that "SEBI's Chairperson had stake in obscure offshore entities used in Adani money siphoning scandal." SEBI had come out in Buch's defence on Sunday, saying that 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. "Chairperson has also recused herself in matters involving potential conflicts of interest," the regulator said, backing its Chairperson and advising investors to remain calm and exercise due diligence. In another statement issued on Sunday, Madhabi Puri Buch and Dhaval Buch said the investment in the fund referred to in the Hindenburg report was made in 2015 when they were both private citizens living in Singapore and almost two years before Madhabi joined Sebi, even as a Whole Time Member. At no point in time did the fund invest in any bond, equity, or derivative of any Adani group company, they said in the statement. Reacting to the clarification issued by Buch to its earlier allegations, Hindenburg said on Monday, "Buch's response now publicly confirms her investment in an obscure Bermuda/Mauritius fund structure, alongside money allegedly siphoned by Vinod Adani. She also confirmed the fund was run by a childhood friend of her husband, who at the time was an Adani director." Further, Hindenburg alleged that Buch remained a 100 per cent shareholder of Agora Partners Singapore until March

16th, 2022, per Singaporean records, owning it during her entire time as a SEBI Whole Time Member. She only transferred her shares into her husband's name two weeks after her appointment as SEBI Chairperson, the US firm alleged.

The US short seller said "Buch's statement also claims that the two consulting companies she set up, including the Indian entity and the opaque Singaporean entity "became immediately dormant on her appointment with SEBI" in 2017, with her husband taking over starting in 2019." "As per its latest shareholding list as of March 31st, 2024, Agora Advisory Limited (India), is still 99% owned by Madhabi Buch, not her husband. This entity is currently active and generating consulting revenue," it said. "Furthermore, Buch remained a 100% shareholder of Agora Partners Singapore until March 16th, 2022, per Singaporean records, owning it during her entire time as a SEBI Whole Time Member. She only transferred her shares into her husband's name 2 weeks after her appointment as SEBI Chairperson," Hindenburg said. "The Singaporean consulting entity she set up doesn't publicly report its financials like revenue or profit so it's impossible to see how much money this entity has earned during her time at SEBI," it claimed. Hindenburg said the Indian entity, still 99% owned by the SEBI Chairperson, has generated Rs 23.985 million (US \$ 312,000) in revenue (i.e. consulting) during the financial years (FY22, FY23 and FY24), while she was serving as Chairperson, as per its financial statements. "This is especially important given whistleblower documents showing that Buch used her personal email to do business using her husband's name while serving as a Whole Time Member of SEBI," the US firm alleged. "This raises the question: What other investments or business has the SEBI Chairperson engaged in through her husband's name while serving in an official capacity?" Hindenburg alleged. "Buch said her husband used the consulting entities starting in 2019 to transact with unnamed 'prominent clients in the Indian industry'. Do these include clients SEBI is tasked with regulating?" the US firm alleged. "Buch's statement promised a 'commitment to complete transparency'. Given this,

## There is 'no one magic pill' to boost memory, but these 'strategies' can help



As we age, so does our memory making it difficult to remember little details, and often even scramble for answers. But many people believe that all one needs to boost their memory is a pill, and often go knocking on a doctor's door. Debunking this myth, Dr Sudhir Kumar, neurologist, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad said, "Several students as well as adults visit my clinic asking for a magic pill that can boost their memory. In reality, there is no such magic pill." However, "a combination of several strategies can give a strong boost to memory and prevent memory decline with ageing", he added.

One effective approach is maintaining a healthy

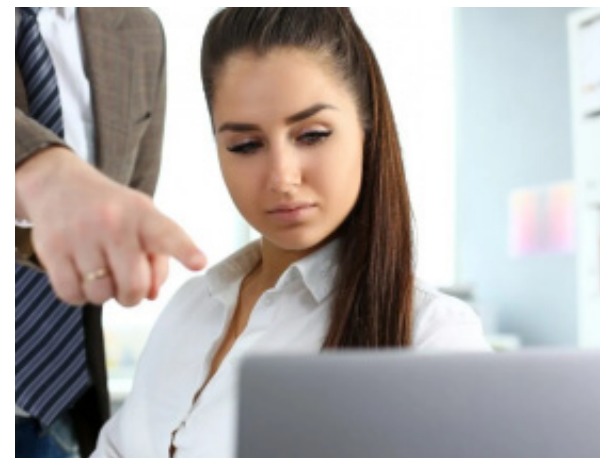
lifestyle, which includes a balanced diet rich in antioxidants, healthy fats, and vitamins that support brain health. "Regular physical exercise is also crucial as it increases blood flow to the brain, promoting neurogenesis, and the formation of new neurons," said Dr Vinit Banga, associate director, neurology and head neurointervention, BLK Max Hospital.

Mental exercises, such as puzzles, reading, or learning new skills, keep the brain engaged and can improve cognitive abilities. "Additionally, consistent sleep patterns are vital; quality sleep helps consolidate memories and clear out brain toxins," noted Dr Banga. Social engagement and managing stress are also important. Dr Banga explained that social activities stimulate cognitive functions, while chronic stress has been shown to impair memory and cognitive performance due to the detrimental effects of cortisol on the brain. Dr Banga shared that supplements like omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish oil, have been linked to improved memory and cognitive function, although their effectiveness can vary. "Finally, mindfulness and meditation practices can enhance focus, attention, and working memory by reducing stress and promoting mental clarity," said Dr Banga. Integrating these strategies into daily routines creates a holistic approach to memory enhancement, which is far more effective than relying on any single supplement or "magic pill", experts urge.

## Isha Koppikar opens up about casting couch experience; expert shares tips to recognise inappropriate advances in a professional setting

The entertainment industry, like many others, has long grappled with the insidious issue of sexual harassment and the abuse of power. Actor Isha Koppikar in an interview recently disclosed her casting couch experience at the age of 18 highlighting this pervasive problem that continues to affect aspiring talents. She said, "I was 18 when a secretary and an actor approached me for casting couch. They told me that to get work, you have to be 'friendly' with actors. I am very friendly, but what does 'friendly' mean? I am so friendly that Ekta Kapoor once told me to have some attitude." "When I was 23, one actor asked me to meet him alone, without my driver or anyone else, because there were rumours about him being involved with other actresses. He said, 'There are already controversies about me, and the staff spreads rumours.' But I refused and told him that I couldn't come alone. He was an A-list actor from the Hindi film industry," she added. Isha Koppikar, workplace harassment Reach out to a trusted colleague, mentor, or HR representative for guidance and support. Koppikar's account reflects the challenging situations many women and men, especially in junior roles, can face in their careers. It resonates across industries worldwide, highlighting the urgent need for awareness, support, and actionable strategies to combat inappropriate advances in professional settings. Gurleen Baruah, organisational psychologist and executive coach at That Culture Thing, says, "Recognising inappropriate behaviours helps individuals and organisations maintain a professional environment where respect and boundaries are upheld, ensuring everyone feels safe and valued at work."

Common signs that indicate someone may be making inappropriate advances in a professional setting According to Baruah, these are some common signs: Persistent flattery: Continuously complimenting a colleague's appearance or personal attributes in a way that goes beyond professional norms. Unprofessional texts or emails: Sending messages that are overly familiar or suggestive. Unwanted gifts or favours: Giving expensive gifts or offering favours that seem out of place in a professional context. Manipulative guilt-tripping: Using emotional manipulation to pressure someone into personal meetings or compromising situations. Positional power leveraging: Using one's authority or influence to solicit inappropriate interactions. Boundary violations:



Invading personal space or making unwelcome physical gestures.

Gaslighting or excuses: Dismissing concerns raised by others or rationalising inappropriate behaviour. Sexual innuendos or jokes: Making suggestive comments or jokes of a sexual nature that create discomfort. Steps an individual should take if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation Baruah suggests, "Reflect on the behaviour and determine if it truly constitutes inappropriate advances. Sometimes misunderstandings can occur, so clarity is important." Politely but firmly communicate boundaries to the individual making advances. Keep a record of any inappropriate interactions, including dates, times, and details of what was said or done. Documentation may be crucial if the situation escalates or if you decide to report it. Reach out to a trusted colleague, mentor, or HR representative for guidance and support, she adds. "They can provide advice on how to handle the situation professionally and may assist in resolving the issue. If appropriate and safe, directly inform the person making advances that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop. Use clear language and maintain professionalism." If the behaviour persists or escalates despite setting boundaries, consider formally reporting the issue to HR or a relevant authority within your organisation. Provide your documented evidence to support your case, Baruah says.

## Olympic bronze medalist Manu Bhaker has trained in Huiyen Lallong; know about this martial art form from Manipur

Manu Bhaker has made history by winning two medals at a single Olympics edition. Her prowess in shooting has been appreciated by many across the world. Bhaker's exceptional shooting performance stems from multiple sources. A key factor is her practice of Huiyen Lallong, an ancient martial art from Manipur, India. This unconventional pursuit sharpens her focus and complements her shooting skills. Beyond the range, Bhaker maintains her fitness through equestrianism and regular yoga practice, demonstrating a holistic approach to her athletic development. Dilip Kumar Rai, northeast cultural expert, Rinchonpong, Sikkim, says, "Huiyen Lallong, or Huyen Langlon, is an ancient martial art form deeply rooted in the vibrant culture of Manipur, a state in northeastern India. With a history dating back centuries, it's not merely a fighting style but a way of life, embodying the region's warrior spirit and cultural values." The significance of Huiyen Lallong in Manipuri culture is profound, he adds. It was traditionally practiced as a means of self-defense and military training, with warriors honing their skills to protect their communities. "The art form is also deeply intertwined with spiritual practices, with practitioners seeking to cultivate inner peace, discipline, and a connection to their heritage."

In the past, Huiyen Lallong was a crucial part of the 'Lallup' system, a mandatory military service for all able-bodied men in Manipur. This system ensured that the kingdom was always prepared for any threat, and Huiyen Lallong played a vital role in maintaining the region's independence and resilience. Today, Huiyen Lallong continues to be practiced and celebrated as a cultural treasure. Manu Bhaker Huiyen Lallong continues to be practiced and celebrated as a cultural treasure. Huiyen Lallong is a dynamic martial art that incorporates a diverse range of techniques and skills, Rai says. "Practitioners learn various strikes, kicks, blocks, and grappling maneuvers, all executed with precision and fluidity."



Thengou Palba (Sword and Shield): A signature aspect of Huiyen Lallong, warriors train with a traditional sword (thang) and shield (chung) to develop offensive and defensive skills. Sarit Sarak (Unarmed Combat): Practitioners learn to use their bodies as weapons, employing strikes, kicks, joint locks, and throws to neutralize opponents. Kanglon Chatpa (Leaping and Kicking): The art form emphasises acrobatic movements and high kicks, adding a spectacular visual element to the combat style. Thaoimei (Spear Fighting): Training with the spear (thaoimei) hones agility, accuracy, and the ability to strike from a distance. Meditation and Breathing Exercises: Huiyen Lallong incorporates meditative practices to cultivate mental focus, calmness, and inner strength. Difference from other martial art forms Rai states, "Huiyen Lallong stands apart from other martial arts due to its unique blend of combat techniques, spiritual philosophy, and cultural significance. Unlike many modern martial arts that focus primarily on competition and self-defense, Huiyen Lallong emphasises holistic development." Training in Huiyen Lallong is not just about physical fitness but also about mental discipline, spiritual growth, and cultural awareness.



## When Dimple Kapadia admitted she was 'very scared' for Rajesh Khanna when he contested elections, said she 'begged' people to vote for him



Dimple Kapadia and Rajesh Khanna had a rocky marriage and after spending nine years with each other, and welcoming two daughters Twinkle and Rinke, the couple decided to part ways. While they never divorced, their separation made waves as Dimple made her comeback in the movies. As she became a successful actor in the 1980s, Rajesh was going through a tough phase as a lead actor. In the early 1990s, he decided to contest for Lok Sabha elections and at that time, his estranged wife Dimple campaigned for him. When asked about it later, Dimple said that she was "scared" for Rajesh when he decided to enter politics and said that she actually "begged" the people to vote for him.

In a 1994 interview with Pritish Nandy, when Dimple was asked why she campaigned for Rajesh, she said

that it was important for her to stand by him in public. "Why did I do it?" she said out loud and as the interviewer asked that it was "rare" for an "estranged wife" to campaign, she said, "What are friends for? I mean if I can't stand by somebody I've known for a good part of my life. For me, it's important." When asked if she expected Rajesh Khanna to win, Dimple Kapadia said that she was "very scared for him" and it was actually a surprise that he won. "I was scared for him. I was really scared for him. And it was a very pleasant surprise that he won. I am very very glad that he won," she said. Rajesh had contested from New Delhi seat during the 1991 Lok Sabha elections, which he lost at first. After the winning MP resigned, he again contested for the seat in 1992 and won. He left active politics after 1996.

Dimple was asked about the promises that she made during his campaign and how she got people to vote for him. She said, "I didn't make any promises. I begged them. That's what I did. At times, I would take my dupatta and go like that (gestures putting her arms out.) I genuinely begged them and asked them for it and they gave it to me." Calling the experience of campaigning the "greatest experience of my life", she called it "incredible" because of the love she received. Dimple Kapadia and Rajesh Khanna got married when she was only 15 and he was twice her age. The couple separated after nine years of marriage and never reconciled again. He was passed away in 2012 at 69.

## Akshay Kumar says film industry friends have questioned his movie choices: 'Why do you make films on sanitary pads, toilets?'

Actor Akshay Kumar recently opened up about his choice of films and noted that many of his industry peers and friends have questioned his film choices. Actor Akshay Kumar has starred in several films that address socially relevant issues.

Once a powerhouse figure who dominated the box office with a string of superhits, actor Akshay Kumar is currently experiencing a rough patch, with many of his recent films falling flat at the box office. This year alone, two of his movies — *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* and *Sarjira* — ended up being major flops, leading to significant losses for their makers. One of the outsiders who made it big in Bollywood, Akshay has also starred in several films that address socially relevant issues. His repertoire includes films tackling topics such as the elimination of open defecation in *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* (2017), the need for affordable sanitary pads for rural women in *Pad Man* (2018) and the significance of sex education in *OMG 2* (2023). He has also appeared in projects based on real-life incidents, such as *Airlift* (2016), *Rustom* (2016), *Mission Mangal* (2019) and *Mission Raniganj* (2023).

Recently, Akshay Kumar opened up about his choice of films and noted that many of his industry peers and friends have questioned his film choices. He explained that his upcoming film *Khel Khel Mein* also deals with a relevant societal issue, but approaches it through comedy. In an interview with *India Today*, Akshay shared,



"Somethings (films and the subjects they discuss) look so good and lovely that your heart would want to do it. Many people in the industry, including my friends and (movie) critics, have asked 'Why do you have to make films on sanitary pads and toilets.' When I made a movie on sex education, a lot of people opposed me, 'sex's a bad thing to talk about.' But I like to do such movies and will keep on doing them if given the opportunity." Now, Akshay is set to return to the silver screen with director Mudassar Aziz's multi-starrer comedy drama *Khel Khel Mein*, which also features Taapsee Pannu, Ammy Virk, Vaani Kapoor, Fardeen Khan, Aditya Seal, and Pragya Jaiswal in key roles. The film is scheduled to hit theatres on August 15.

## Dalljiet Kaur lashes out at estranged husband Nikhil Patel: 'How many women were you cheating on?'

Dalljiet Kaur accused husband Nikhil Patel, Dalljiet Kaur, case registers against Nikhil Patel, Dalljiet Kaur divorce, Dalljiet Kaur-Nikhil Patel, Nikhil Patel, Nach Baliye, Bigg Boss. Khatron ke khiladi, indian express online, indian express, television news, celeb divorces Dalljiet Kaur parted ways with Nikhil Patel one year after their wedding.

In the middle of an ugly divorce battle, actress Dalljiet Kaur and her estranged husband Nikhil Patel are again trading accusations. The actress, who was earlier married to actor Shalin Bhanot, tied the knot with the NRI businessman in May 2023. She moved to Africa after the wedding but returned to India after a few months, accusing Nikhil of cheating on her. Dalljiet had even shared how Nikhil only married her for fame. Recently, Nikhil addressed these accusations following Dalljiet filing an FIR against him. In a long statement, Nikhil revealed that he met Dalljiet in Dubai in 2022. When they got married, the actress was aware of his first marriage too. He accused Dalljiet of 'deliberately omitting crucial details to create a false narrative'. Nikhil also accused her of cyberbullying his teenage daughter, urging her to leave his children alone and stop this harmful behaviour.

Now, reacting to these accusations, Dalljiet Kaur penned a long note on social media, calling out Nikhil Patel's statement as a PR stunt. She wrote, "You had three days in India after knowing about the FIR. Which you have just admitted you knew about. If the rubbish you have printed out right now is true, you would have gone to the police station and told your story to them instead of sending it out to your PR after running away from India while the police kept telling you to visit them again and again. Your PR stories are not going to give me justice and a person like you deserves to be punished. It's like you are so not done wanting more and more publicity. My god."

Dalljiet further wrote, "Calling our wedding an event is shameful. In India it's called marriage. And yes NRI was written in Marathi by the cop, it's no big deal that a criminal is an NRI or a British citizen! Why did you flee from my country if all this was true that you are sending for the press? You should have sat in front of the cops eye to eye and told this rubbish story you have made up and seen if they believed it. I came to India and spoke about work because I didn't want to talk about family problems. Because I had hoped you would take at least one flight to India to fix this. But you would rather take that flight with your new girlfriend. Shame on both of you. She is married with kids? What example are you setting for your kids that you are speaking for here??? I have given



nothing but love to Aari. And I will love her till the very end of my life. What you did with Jaydon is a story untold but not for long. I was busy painting and writing stories to produce in Africa not India. I was very happy to be married and to start a life there with you. I sold one painting to your colleague, remember? I was happy to be a housewife and would have loved to find a way to earn money there as you wanted me to do so. So if you want to white-wash your deeds. You should have started by not running away from the police. I went to the station because I believe in justice and a man like you to be punished so our kids believe in standing up for what's right."

She continued, "You and your parents showed us papers of the divorce that's signed and was not being contested. I had even spoken to your ex-wife before the wedding if there was any chance she wanted to come back to you. And she said no. I am not a home wrecker like your present girlfriend. Does SN know when you came to meet me in Dubai you were dating a girl called s\*\*r.. While your wife was at home? (Which you told me in the first voice note that your wife lives in America and is coming just for a week to pick up Aari?) So how many women were you officially cheating on ... That time? Three??? While we might not know many under the closet!"

"You write some other rubbish and lies and trust me those women are dying to come out in the open too. Your parents stayed in our house for almost a month barely till a week before the wedding. Who does that? Why did they do that? Let's talk about that someday soon too! They insisted on the marriage in March as they did not want to go to the UK and come back for it when we told them to wait a little longer for your final decree to come. You got your lawyer to write an undertaking stating you will get the marriage registered. Aari had given a legally signed document stating she is happy. You are such a shame on humanity Nikhil. You are shame on even using your card as a father. Go for therapy, meditate. And believe in the power of god.

## India's first female superstar who lit up screens but was a recluse in real life



Sridevi's reticence is perhaps as popular as her stardom — the coy, shrinking woman who would bloom into a screen goddess once the camera switched on and the world faded away. She was India's first female superstar, a woman who not only outshone and outearned her male contemporaries, but also created a legacy that refuses to fade. Whatever role she inhabited, she made her own — we loved her as the child-woman in *Sadma*, the resourceful journalist who could shake the dance floor when surrounded by villains (*Hawa Hawai* in *Mr India*), serve the double dose with elan (*Chaalbaaz*), then turn into a boss lady (*Laadla*), and at times, even a snake (*Naagin*). India liked all her avatars, ensuring she enjoyed a stardom that was rarely seen before. She began her career as a child actor and went on to act in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, and Kannada movies. Far from her on-screen persona, Sridevi, born Shree Amma Yanger Ayyappa, was a private and inherently shy person who liked to keep to herself, even on film sets. "Off-screen, Sridevi was a contrast to her on-screen persona," is a common answer one gets from her peers and journalists who interviewed her, but swore by her undying dedication to her craft and talent. She was described by superstar Rajinikanth, with whom she shared a close bond, as "quiet and childlike" when not acting. "She was always a quiet, childlike person behind the camera. But when the camera started rolling, she would turn into a fire. Like an electric current, that is how she performed. She never had a fallout with anyone on sets. I was also amazed by her success in Bollywood without knowing a single word of Hindi then. She was a born actress," Rajinikanth, who shared the screen with the late actor in 16 films across languages, said.

Sridevi, who was known for her fearless choice of roles and defied stereotypes, took on characters that many actresses of her time would shy away from. But she was extremely guarded as a person, creating a sense of enigma around her personal life. She never spoke about her alleged romance and rumoured marriage with Mithun Chakraborty and remained tight-lipped about her marriage to Boney Kapoor. Many cited her foray into acting at a tender age, which put her in the spotlight, and her strict parents as reasons for her reclusive nature. According to author Lalita Iyer, who calls Sridevi "first Pan-India star," the actor's lack of command of Hindi and English "led to a certain guardedness or aloofness on sets".

In her book, *Sridevi: Queens of Heart*, she mentions that people, including her co-stars, took her aloofness for 'arrogance'. But the actor didn't think it was necessary to explain her choice to be identified as "quiet" and "guarded" because she was busy doing films or reading her lines on sets. "All through the 1980s, when her career was at an all-time high, she was a fortress journalists could not breach. She spoke very little and mostly answered in monosyllables. The media was not very kind to her. They called her 'thunder thighs' and 'ask Mummy' because most of her answers were either 'ask Mummy' or yes or no," she wrote in her book. Sridevi's career spanned over 50 years in a wide range of genres. Sridevi's career spanned over 50 years in a wide range of genres. While many mistook her for being "cold," the actor proved that she was warm and caring, too. According to a report in *Deccan Chronicle*, when her co-star Rajinikanth, who she was fond of, fell seriously ill during the shooting of *Rana*, Sridevi kept a fast for a week to pray for his recovery. Sridevi's Mom co-star and Pakistani actor Sajal Aly described Sridevi as caring and said she was like her "mom" who fed her when she was ill. In her interviews, Sridevi often spoke of missing out on childhood given she started her career at the age of four. While her tutor would accompany her on sets in the initial days, with her growing popularity and more film offers, she gave up on education. "My heavy work schedule made it difficult for me to attend regular school and I had to leave it in the first grade. My father, a lawyer, arranged for a home tutor who accompanied me even on shoots," she told *Rediff* in an interview.

Sridevi's journey to stardom began remarkably early. At just four, she graced the silver screen for the first time in the Tamil film *Kandan Karunai* (1967). By the age of

ten, she was already a seasoned actress, juggling multiple film shoots each day. She made waves in Tamil and Malayalam cinema, delivering standout performances in films like *Aalinganam*, *Kuttavum Sikshaiyum*, and *Aa Nimisham*. Her career trajectory truly soared when she shared the screen with titans of the Tamil film industry, Kamal Hassan and Rajinikanth. She played Rajinikanth's stepmother at the mere age of 13. Her foray into Bollywood, however, was not as smooth. A minor role in *Julie* (1975) and a lackluster performance in *Solva Saawan* (1978) preceded her meteoric rise. *Himmatwala* (1983), opposite Jeetendra, catapulted her to unprecedented heights, marking the beginning of a legendary career.

But the actor wasn't happy with the success of *Himmatwala*, a film that opened doors for her. It was thanks to a scene where she cracks the whip while dressed in leather leotards that she received the tag of "thunder thighs," which she despised. "In Tamil films, they love to see me act naturally, but in Hindi films they want a lot of glamour, richness and masala. My bad luck was that my first big hit in Hindi films was a commercial film (*Himmatwala*). When I did a character role in *Sadma*, the picture flopped. So people started casting me only for glamour. But one day I'm going to prove to everyone that I can act also," said the actor, as quoted in Iyer's book. "She went through so much and due to her early career entry, life never gave her time to grow up at a normal pace. She was the most beautiful woman for so many people but did she think she was beautiful?" filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma wrote in his book, *Guns & Thighs*. Following the actor's passing, the Rangeela director took to his Facebook page and wrote that Sridevi was "an extremely unhappy woman, who didn't have much glimmer of happiness in her life." "She always came across as a little uptight but that's because she built a psychological wall around her as she was scared of anybody to really see what's going on within her. She was panicky about anybody knowing what her insecurities were. She was being constantly directed by the motives of her parents, her relatives, her husband and to an extent even her own children. She was scared whether her daughters would be accepted or not like most star parents do," he penned. Her co-stars and senior journalists of her time noted that the constant media attention and curiosity around her personal life made the star uncomfortable as she only wanted to be known for her on-screen work. She once said, "I don't know anything besides acting." And therefore, when she took a 15-year hiatus from the silver screen, which was followed by the demise of her mother, Sridevi enjoyed the role of being a wife and mother to Janhvi and Khushi. When asked if she missed the spotlight, she told *Rediff*, "No. I was happy to spend time with my children and my husband. I was enjoying motherhood." Actor Sridevi has been part of several blockbuster films like *Mr India*, *Chandani*, *Lamhe* and more. (Photo: Instagram/sridevi.kapoor) Actor Sridevi was part of several blockbuster films like *Mr India*, *Chandani*, *Lamhe* and more. Despite those who knew her calling her a recluse, the actor refuted such labels and even corrected her co-star Akshay Khanna during Mom's promotions. According to a report in *Mumbai Mirror*, Khanna said, "I thought I was borderline reclusive but Sridevi takes being a private person to a whole different level. She is the ultimate non-communicator. I haven't seen this quality in actors in a long time. No one can be friends with us unless they have known us for years, there can never be an icebreaking moment and I love it!" However, Sridevi replied, "When you are a public personality, you can't afford to be a recluse. If I sit quietly in a corner waiting for the camera to roll, it doesn't mean that I am aloof and cut off from people. It could be that I am thinking about the shot or going over my lines." For Sridevi, the film industry was both her stage and sanctuary. Her return to acting after a 15-year hiatus was marked by critical acclaim, particularly for *Indian Vinglish*. Her final role in *Mom* was a testament to her enduring talent and versatility. Her career was a celebration of both commercial success and artistic depth. From her early days as a child star in *Poombatta* to her iconic roles in *Nagina*, *Chandni*, and *Sadma*, Sridevi's journey was a testament to her remarkable talent and unwavering dedication. Even in her private moments, she remained a captivating figure, her quiet demeanor masking a profound passion for her craft. Despite her reticent and introverted off-screen personality, Sridevi was known to be headstrong. Despite her reticent and introverted off-screen personality, Sridevi was known to be headstrong.

Chandni co-star and late actor Rishi Kapoor, who admired her determination to challenge typecasting and break taboos, said, "She was always there to do her best... She always wanted to challenge the typecast, to break the taboo." While her private life remained a constant topic for tabloids and magazines, she focused on her work and craft. Her legacy, etched into the fabric of Indian cinema, continues to inspire generations of actors.

## Would Rajkummar Rao have accepted Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Kabir Singh*? 'I would get into a big debate with the director'

Actor Rajkummar Rao recently made it clear that one thing he deems he cannot do, even in a movie scene, is "slapping a girl." Rajkummar Rao recently said that he might not have been able to play the titular role *Kabir Singh* had the character been offered to him.

An outsider who has carved his space in the massive world of Bollywood, Rajkummar Rao is now regarded as one of the finest actors in the country. Hailing from Gurgaon, Haryana, Rao is an alumnus of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, and made his on-screen debut in 2010 playing small roles in *Rann* and *Love Sex Aur Dhokha*.



He gradually rose through the ranks by taking on supporting roles in acclaimed films like *Shaitan*, *Gangs of Wasseypur 2* and *Talaash*, before turning heads with

his performance in director Hansal Mehta's biographical drama *Shahid* (2012), which earned him his first National Film Award for Best Actor. As he gears up

for the release of the highly anticipated horror-comedy *Stree 2*, a sequel to the 2018 film *Stree* and the fifth instalment in the *Maddock Supernatural Universe*,



## Reigning Paralympic badminton gold medallist Pramod Bhagat blames technical glitch for 18-month suspension for three whereabouts breaches



GNS News Agency, August 15

Reigning Paralympic gold medallist and current world champion Pramod Bhagat blames a technical glitch for his 18-month suspension after being found in breach of Badminton World Federation's anti-doping regulations for having three whereabouts failures within 12 months. Bhagat, champion in SL3 category, had appealed against BWF's March 1, 2024 decision to the CAS Appeals Division. "On 29 July 2024, the CAS Appeals Division dismissed Bhagat's appeal and confirmed the CAS Anti-Doping Division decision of 1 March 2024," a BWF statement said on Tuesday. Bhagat called it an "unfair and hard decision," adding, "it is not right." The 36-year-old was a strong contender for the gold medal at the Paralympics, having beaten Great Britain's Daniel Bethell at the World Championships earlier this year. The events leading up to the third whereabouts breach have been bone of contention with the Badminton World Federation since January 3, 2023. "At CAS, the BWF argued that Pramod Bhagat was a very big and great athlete. In their opinion, being a big athlete comes with big responsibility. So the third breach, even if debatable, could not be exonerated," Bhagat told The Indian Express.

Bhagat's first whereabouts breach dates back to a tournament in Peru. "I was playing a tournament at that time, and an OTP issue cropped up. I will have to accept that though a few younger para-athletes have also faced a similar situation when the App goes for maintenance.

That was bad timing, but BWF argued that the others were not big athletes like me from the testing pool, so they could be excused," he recalled. Festive offer Pramod Bhagat Para Badminton The 36-year-old was a strong contender for the gold medal at the Paralympics, having beaten Great Britain's Daniel Bethell at the World Championships earlier this year. (BWF Badminton) The second whereabouts failure, according to Bhagat, took place in August 2022. "I had just returned from winning a title. The Bihar government, which was newly elected, wanted to felicitate me, but the invite came at the last minute and I had to rush at short notice. My parents belong to Bihar so I couldn't have missed that. So, again, I wasn't at the place I'd entered in the form. And I accept my mistake, but I was being felicitated," Bhagat reasoned.

It is the third incident that felled India's most consistent champion at the highest competition level, who was a string name for gold at Paris. "I had filled the quarterly form on 1 January, 2023 giving all details till March. We also put screenshots on group, to get it checked if everything is OK. I had submitted and it showed green, so I believed everything was done. On 3 January, BWF contacted me that there had been a 'filing failure.' They said, maybe I could see it in my Drafts, but they couldn't on their end. I rechecked, but that's when debate between BWF and me started and they filed a case," he maintains. "It was a technical issue and I couldn't do anything from my side. Why will I not fill (the form)? I've been tested at least 10 times last season, including three times in one month," Bhagat said. The shuttler from Vaishali won the Para World Championship, beating Brit Bethell, and the Asian Para Games during the period in question. "But they hadn't declared me guilty then. So I played and won. At the appeal, they said they can't ignore that I'm a big player, hence the punishment. There is no equality in this judgment, and I keep repeating that it was a technical issue. But no one listens, and if I miss the Paralympics, that opportunity will never come back. I'm waiting for a detailed explanation now, but there's just one week left," Bhagat said. "I'm shocked. But nothing can be done now. I got green dots, but they say they didn't receive the form," he added.

## Ashwini Ponnappa on Paris Olympics: 'Telling the nation I got money is ridiculous...was denied coach of choice'



Ashwini Ponnappa play against Australia's Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu during their women's doubles badminton group stage match at Porte de la Chapelle Arena during the 2024 Summer Olympics, Tuesday, July 30, 2024, in Paris, France. (AP Photo) Ashwini Ponnappa plays against Australia's Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu during their women's doubles badminton group stage match at Porte de la Chapelle Arena during the 2024 Summer Olympics, Tuesday, July 30, 2024, in Paris, France.

Indian doubles badminton shuttler Ashwini Ponnappa on Tuesday conceded that she didn't receive financial support from the sports ministry for the Paris Olympics, as opposed to a recent document shared from the Sports Authority of India (SAI), also stating that even her desired choice for a coach was denied. The SAI recently shared a document detailing the financial support provided to the several athletes in the Indian contingent for Paris 2024, in which it was mentioned that Ashwini

was provided Rs 4,50,000 under TOPS and Rs 1,48,04,080 under Annual calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC). "I'm absolutely shocked. I don't mind not getting money but telling the nation that I got money is ridiculous. I haven't received it. Like if you're talking about national camp, then that 1.5 Crore is spent on all the campers," Ashwini told PTI. "I don't have a specific coach. As for my personalised trainer, I'm paying for him myself. I'm not taking money from anyone. I've played on my own until November (2023). I was included as part of TOPS only after we qualified..." Ashwini added. Ponnappa, who completed the set of gold, silver and bronze medals for India at the Commonwealth Games, was knocked out of the doubles badminton event at Paris 2024 during the group stage without registering a single win alongside Tanisha Crasto - her third time featuring at the Summer Games. An exit that had left her to tears. She conceded that while she took full responsibility for her performance, the authorities were wrong in claiming that she received adequate financial support. "I haven't played well, irrespective of the coach not being there, I take responsibility for that. But you can't say I'm getting this amount when I haven't even got this amount," she said. The ministry has always supported me. I've been part of the team for years and I'm grateful for the support I've received. The last year I haven't been supported and it's ok. But you can't say I've been given Rs 1.5 crore, if it's over four years, fair enough. As I was TOPS when I was partnering Sikki," she added. "Playing her third Olympics, Ashwini was left in tears after she and her partner Tanisha couldn't win a single match to make an unceremonious exit from the group stage.

## After international retirement, James Anderson open to play franchise T20s at 42

GNS News Agency, August 15

Anderson said he will take a call on his domestic cricket future at the end of the English summer. (FILE) Anderson said he will take a call on his domestic cricket future at the end of the English summer. He may not have played a T20 match for nearly 10 years but James Anderson is not downplaying the possibility of a return to white-ball cricket at 42, a month after he brought down the curtains on his legendary Test career.

Still in 'denial' after his 188-Test career came to a halt at Lord's against West Indies in July, Anderson says he is not done with his playing days and may look for a brief foray back to white-ball cricket. Anderson, who took up a stint as a bowling mentor for the English Test side might not be seen in the role after the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka. "I might be in a bit of denial because I'm well aware I won't play for England again, but I've still not made a decision on my actual cricket career," Anderson told The Press Association.

"I watch The Hundred and see the ball swinging around in the first 20 balls and I think: 'I can do that, I can still do that.' I don't know if that is a viable option, to maybe see if I could do a job in white-ball cricket. Franchise cricket is something I've never done," Anderson elaborated on The Final Word podcast. "I still feel [playing domestically] is not off the table. The way that my body feels, the way I have been bowling in recent years, I still feel I could potentially have something to offer on that front," Anderson added.

Anderson last featured in a T20 in August 2014 for



He may not have played a T20 match for nearly 10 years but James Anderson is not downplaying the possibility of a return to white-ball cricket at 42, a month after he brought down the curtains on his legendary Test career.

Lancashire before nearly serving out a decade exclusively for red-ball cricket. Anderson picked up 18 wickets in his 19-match T20I career. He also not featured in a List A game since 2019 and last played for England at the 2015 ODI World Cup. Besides retiring as their most prolific Test bowler, Anderson also finished as the highest wicket-taker for England in ODIs with 269 scalps from 194 appearances.

## '3-1 to Australia': Ricky Ponting's early Border-Gavaskar Trophy prediction against India



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Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting has lit the spark for the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Test series by favouring the hosts to reclaim the trophy over India this season. Interestingly, the intense Test rivalry between India and Australia has had rather one-sided results over the last decade. India have won the previous four Border-Gavaskar series since 2017, twice at home (in 2016-17 and 2022-23) besides two historic series triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2021-22.

However, the Aussies trumped India in the second ICC World Test Championship final in mid-2023 to claim the title for the second cycle. The two teams will lock horns with qualification for the third final, slated to be held in June 2025, on the line. The winner of the upcoming series, set to feature five Tests for the first time, will be an overwhelming favourite to make the final. While Australia have not managed to beat India at home since the 2014-15 season, Ponting believes that the tides will turn

this time. "It's going to be a competitive series and as I said I think Australia's got a bit of a point to prove against India in Australia on the back of what's happened the last two series here," Ponting told in the ICC review. "We are back to five Tests as well, which is the other really important thing about this series. It's only been four Tests the last couple of times. Five tests, I think everyone's really excited by that and I don't know if there'd be too many drawn games. "I'm obviously going to tip Australia to win and I'm never going to tip against Australia. There will be a draw somewhere and there will be some bad weather somewhere, so I'm going to say 3-1 to Australia," Australia's most successful captain added.

Ponting remarked that Australia are unlikely to see major overhauls with the only major question lingering over Steve Smith's role as an opener. "I think Australia will pretty much pick itself. Probably the only one question there might be with Australia again, is if (Steve) Smith's the right man to be opening the batting. That would be the only query that I can see there. But that was all about obviously bringing Cameron Green back into the side. The three-time World Cup winner a;so said the visitors could include a left-arm pacer in their side this time, suggesting pacer Khaleel Ahmed. "Someone like Khaleel Ahmed I think could find himself on the Test tour. I know he's just been over in Zimbabwe recently and played that (T20I) series over there, but a left-arter would be ideal for them to have in their touring squad." (Mohammed) Shami will be back fit by then. (Mohammed) Siraj we know will be thereabouts somewhere and obviously Bumrah is going nowhere. So both teams are going to line up really, really strongly," Ponting added.

## Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat suspended for 18 months, to miss the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games

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The Badminton World Federation (BWF) announces that India's Tokyo 2020 Paralympic gold medalist, Pramod Bhagat, has been suspended for 18 months due to anti-doping regulation violations. "Tokyo 2020 Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat has been suspended for a period of 18 months and will miss the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games," BWF said in a statement. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) found Bhagat guilty of three whereabouts failures within 12 months.

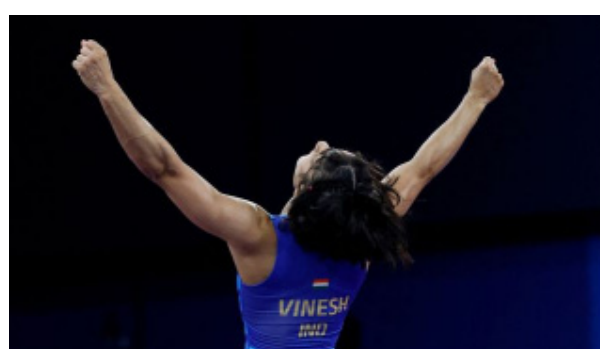
"On 1 March 2024, the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) Anti-Doping Division found Bhagat in breach of the BWF anti-doping regulations for committing three whereabouts failures within 12 months," read the statement. Despite appealing, the CAS Appeals Division upheld the decision, confirming the suspension. Bhagat, an SL3 athlete, will miss the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. "On 29 July 2024, the CAS Appeals Division dismissed the Bhagat's appeal and confirmed the CAS Anti-Doping Division decision of 1 March 2024. "His period of ineligibility is now in effect."

Earlier this year Bhagat had defended his men's



singles SL3 title as he defeated England's Daniel Bethell in a hard-fought final at the 2024 Para Badminton World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand. The 35-year-old Bhagat came from behind to beat his arch-rival 14-21, 21-15, 21-15 in a contest which lasted an hour and 40 minutes. It was Bhagat's fourth singles world title for Bhagat, who has previously won the same medal thrice in 2015, 2019, and 2022. He also has a men's doubles gold at the global championships from the 2013 edition.

## Vinesh Phogat appeal to CAS: Paris Olympics over, but wrestler awaits verdict on Tuesday



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Vinesh Phogat in action during Paris 2024 Olympics Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has appealed to be awarded the silver medal and the decision is expected to be issued before the end of the Olympic Games. Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her disqualification at the Paris Olympics due to missing the weight cut by 100gms will find a resolution on Tuesday as Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), having heard arguments of all parties, gets ready to deliver the verdict. Vinesh stormed into the final of the women's 50kg freestyle event after starting her campaign with a stunning win over wrestling royalty Yui Susaki of Japan last Tuesday. But on the second day of the event, she was debarred from the gold medal bout against eventual winner Sarah Hildebrandt of the United States as she was marginally above the prescribed limit in the customary morning weigh-in.

Vinesh appealed against the decision by UWW, arguing that she be given a joint silver with Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who had lost to Vinesh but was later promoted to the final following the Indian's disqualification. A day after her disqualification, Vinesh announced her retirement from the sport, saying she doesn't have the strength to continue, even as sporting icons from across the world threw their weight behind the 29-year-old wrestler who was appearing at her third Olympic Games.

Vinesh's legal team has French lawyers Joelle Monlouis, Estelle Ivanova, Habbine Estelle Kim and Charles Amson, who helped her and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) during the filing of the application. They have been provided to her by the Paris Bar and are handling the case pro bono. In addition, senior counsels Harish Salve and Vidushpat Singhania were also roped in to help her in the case. 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. (PTI Photo/File) IOA president PT Usha on Sunday said that any attack on the contingent's medical team, especially Chief Medical Officer Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala, around the Vinesh saga is unacceptable. The former athlete said in a statement that, "...the responsibility of weight management of athletes in

sport like wrestling, weightlifting, boxing and judo is that of each athlete and his or her coach and NOT that of the IOA-appointed Chief Medical Officer Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala and his team. The hate directed at the IOA medical team, especially Dr. Pardiwala, is unacceptable and worthy of condemnation. "Each Indian athlete in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in such sport had his or her own support team. These support teams have been working with the athletes over so many years," Usha said. "The IOA appointed a medical team a couple of months ago, primarily as a team that would assist in the recovery and injury management of athletes during and after their competition. This team was also designed to support athletes who did not have their own team of nutritionists and physiotherapists."

## India aiming to win more than 25 medals at Paris Paralympics: PCI chief Jhajharia

Jaipur: India is hoping to win more than 25 medals from its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes at the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games beginning on August 28, the country's governing body chief Devendra Jhajharia said on Tuesday. Jhajharia, himself a double gold medallist at the Paralympics, said the Indian contingent would look the carry the momentum of record-breaking performances in the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 Hangzhou Asian Para Games.

India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and a historic 111 medal at the Para Asian Games. "This is the biggest para contingent India has ever sent to the Paralympics. We are very confident about the overall performance and are sure to win more than 25 medals," Jhajharia said here at an event organised by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). India is set to compete in 12 sports, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo. "Most of our athletes are in excellent shape, having trained rigorously for this event. We expect outstanding results, particularly in athletics, badminton, archery, and shooting. They are ready to make India proud," the PCI president said. The Indian team boasts of a mix of experienced and young athletes athletes. Many of them are participating in their second or third Paralympics. Amit Kumar Saroha, a seasoned athlete competing in his fourth Paralympics, will represent India in the F51 category discus throw. The 39-year-old Asian Para Games medallist is the oldest member of the contingent. On the other end of the spectrum, the youngest athlete is 17-year-old archer Sheetal Devi, who shoots with her legs instead of her hands due to a medical condition that has afflicted her since birth.