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## Heavy rains drench Hyderabad, city braces for more

Hyderabad: Relentless rains pounded Hyderabad for the second consecutive day, turning the city's streets into deluge of water on Friday. Following a stormy Thursday night, residents woke up to a humid Friday, only to be greeted by overcast skies and heavy downpour by evening. Water stagnation was reported in several neighbourhoods, prompting officials to caution citizens against venturing out unless necessary. According to data by Telangana Planning and Development Society (TGDPs) by 7 pm, Patancheru recorded a significant 61.5 mm of rainfall, followed by Quthbullapur at 45.8 mm, and Golconda at 42.8 mm.

## In phone talks with PM Modi, Bangladeshs Yunus assures safety of Hindus, other minorities

New Delhi, GNS News Agency, August 16

In his first direct contact with New Delhi after becoming the head of Bangladesh's interim government, Mohammad Yunus on Friday conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a phone conversation that Dhaka would prioritise protection and safety of Hindus and all other minority groups.

In the talks initiated by Yunus, Modi reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh and underlined the importance of ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minority communities in the violence-hit country. The assurance by Yunus came a day after Modi, in his Independence Day speech, said 140 crore Indians are concerned over the safety of Hindus and minorities in the neighbouring country. "Received a telephone call from Professor Muhammad Yunus, @ChiefAdviserGoB. Exchanged views on the prevailing situation," Modi said on X. "Reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He assured protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minorities in Bangladesh," he said. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two leaders also discussed ways to take the bilateral relationship forward in line with the "respective national priorities". "During the call, the prime minister reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He emphasised India's commitment to supporting the people of Bangladesh through various development initiatives," it said. "The prime minister also underlined the importance of ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh," it said. "Prof Yunus, in turn, assured that the Interim Government would prioritise protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minority groups in Bangladesh," the MEA said.

There have been mounting concerns in New Delhi over widespread incidents of attacks on the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh after Prime Minister Sheikh



Hasina resigned and fled to India on August 5 following weeks of violent unrest. Days after Hasina fled to India, the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate Yunus, was sworn in on August 8, along with 16 advisers. On Tuesday, Yunus reached out to Hindus in Bangladesh as he visited the Dhakeshwari temple in Dhaka and said his government would punish those who attacked the minority community members. Hasina (76), who ruled Bangladesh with an iron hand for 15 years, resigned as the prime minister following massive protests that initially began as an agitation against a job-quota scheme but weeks later, morphed into a mass movement demanding her ouster from power. In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in the national capital, Modi on Thursday said India is committed to peace and that it will remain a well-wisher of Bangladesh in its development journey. "As a neighbouring country, I can understand the concern regarding whatever has happened in Bangladesh. I hope that the situation there will become normal soon," Modi said. "In particular, the concern of 140 crore countrymen is that the safety and security of Hindus and minorities there is ensured. India always wants the neighbouring country to march on the path of peace and prosperity," he said.

RN Agarwal, 'Father of Agni missile', passes away in Hyd

GNS News Agency, August 16 Hyderabad: RN Agarwal, regarded as the father of Agni missiles in the country, passed away here. He was 84. Agarwal, a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, died on Thursday following mild old-age related ailments, DRDO sources said. He had served as the Agni programme director and also as the director of Advanced Systems Laboratory (ASL) in Hyderabad. Former President APJ Abdul Kalam, the 'Missile Man' of India, had started the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)

together in the past but had to be decoupled this time as they decided to conduct Assembly polls in Haryana along with the elections in Jammu and Kashmir. He added that the work of Block Level Officers in preparing for elections in Maharashtra was still pending owing to the monsoon.

The 90-seat Haryana Assembly's term is ending on November 3. In the past three cycles, the EC had announced Haryana and Maharashtra elections together. Maharashtra Assembly's term is expiring on November 26. Haryana has about 2.01 crore electors spread over 20,629 polling stations, as per a draft electoral roll. The final electoral roll will be published on August 28.

the Haryana Assembly polls will be held in a single phase on October 1. It added that the counting of votes will take place on October 4.

While announcing the poll schedule at a press conference in Delhi, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the Haryana and Maharashtra elections were held to-

## Haryana to go to polls in single phase on Oct 1, counting on Oct 4: EC



GNS News Agency, August 16

Haryana assembly election dates Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the Haryana and Maharashtra elections were held together in the past but had to be decoupled this time. The Election Commission (EC) on Friday announced that

## Congress Fulfills Promise as Tummilla Lift Irrigation Project is Activated, Bringing Relief to Farmers in ...



GNS News Agency, August 16

Gadwal: Following the directives of former MLA and AICC Secretary Dr. S.A. Sampath Kumar, RDS (Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme) officials have activated the Tummilla Lift Irrigation Project. In line with the promise made, the Congress Party is committed to reducing the financial burden on farmers by waiving off Rs. 2 lakh in loans and striving to empower them as kings. The Congress Party is determined to ensure timely water supply to farmers, which is now made possible.

On the occasion of activating the Tummilla Lift Irrigation Project, Congress Party farmer leaders, along with former RDS Chairman Tanagala Seetharamireddy, Kisan District President Enumula Nagaraju, and Pacharla

Kumar, visited the canal site and expressed their happiness. The farmers of Alampur constituency extended their heartfelt gratitude to Dr. S.A. Sampath Kumar for his efforts in coordinating with RDS officials to expedite the completion of the project, ensuring timely water supply to the farmers.

After meeting with Tata chairman, Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu announces special task force to fast-track projects

GNS News Agency, August 16

A Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) Development Centre too will be set up in the port city of Visakhapatnam. A Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) Development Centre too will be set up in the port city of Visakhapatnam. (Photo: X/@ncbn) Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced a special task force to fast-track industrial development in the state on Friday. The decision came after a lengthy meeting with chairman of the Tata Group Natarajan Chandrasekaran. The meeting chiefly focused on Tata's expansion in the state.

## Telangana PSC tweaks Group - I Main exam timings

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGPSC) has tweaked the timing of the Group - I Main exams scheduled to be held from October 21 to 27. The exams will now be held from 2 pm to 5 pm instead of 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm as notified earlier.

The General English exam is on October 21, General Essay on October 22, History, Culture and Geography on October 23, Indian Society, Constitution and Governance on October 24, Economy and Development on October 25, Science & Technology, Data Interpretation on October 26 and Telangana Movement and State Formation exam on October 27.

## Foxconn Chairman Meets Revanth Reddy to Investment in New Future City

GNS News Agency, August 16

Boosting Telangana's industrial growth, Foxconn Chairman Yang Liu met with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at his official residence. The meeting, which also included Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu and senior officials, was centred on exploring new avenues for Foxconn's investment in the state, particularly in the newly planned Fourth City, also known as Future City.

During their discussions, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy showcased Telangana's latest pro-investment policies, which are designed to attract international businesses and drive economic growth. He introduced the concept of Fourth City, a futuristic urban development being planned on the outskirts of Hyderabad. This ambitious project aims to meet international standards and become a hub for advanced industries. Revanth Reddy extended an invitation to Foxconn to invest in this new city, assuring Yang Liu that the state government would provide all necessary support to help the



company establish its operations there. The CM emphasised that Fourth City is not just another development project but a vision for the future, one that aligns perfectly with Foxconn's goals.

Yang Liu, impressed by the CM's vision, praised Revanth Reddy for his future-thinking approach and commitment to creating an industrial-friendly environment. He acknowledged that the plans for Fourth City, combined with the supportive policies of the Telangana government, make it an attractive destination for Foxconn's

investments. Expressing his eagerness to explore these opportunities further, Yang Liu announced that he would visit Hyderabad soon. Before his visit, a team led by Foxconn's Campus Operations Chief Kathy Yang and India Country Representative Wei Lee will come to Hyderabad to assess the potential and begin preliminary discussions. Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, speaking at the meeting, described the recent strides Telangana has made under Revanth Reddy's leadership in at-

tracting international investments.

He shared insights from the state's recent successful trips to the United States and South Korea, where Telangana's efforts to draw foreign investments received strong positive responses. The collaboration between Telangana and Foxconn could be a game-changer, not only for the state's industrial landscape but also for its future as a key player on the international stage. With Fourth City positioned as a futuristic hub, this partnership could lead to transformative growth.

## Doctors from major private hospitals in Hyderabad to suspend duties on Saturday

GNS News Agency, August 16

Hyderabad: The protests against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata spread in the Telangana on Friday with the medical fraternity here staying away from outpatient and elective services. Today, doctors from private hospitals too joined the protests announcing suspension of their outpatient and elective services. Major corporate hospitals including Apollo Hospitals, Yashoda Hospitals, Basavataarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital and state-run Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) have announced suspension of their outpatient and elective services for 24 hours from 6 am on Saturday.

All the major associations representing senior government doctors, faculty, non-clinical staff, nurses, senior residents, junior doctors and nurses in government hospitals continued their protests today and intend to continue their boycott for one more day, between Saturday and Sunday. While the emergency/casualty wings functioned normally, the elective surgeries at Gandhi Hospital, Osmania General Hospital (OGH) and NIMS, had to be postponed due to the boycott call. Healthcare services at the OP wings at Gandhi and Osmania Medical College were impacted, as senior doctors, who reported to their regular duties wearing black badges, did their best to make-up for the absence of medicos. Later, the senior



doctors at OGH and Gandhi Hospital also took one hour off from their routine medical duties and participated in protests. More than 200 elective surgeries lined up to at Gandhi hospital and OGH on Thursday and Friday were postponed due to the ongoing boycott by Telangana Junior Doctors Association, TTGDA, AIFGDA and TGDA and NIMS Resident Doctors Association. With the Resident Doctors and Nurses union at NIMS also deciding to join the boycott, the hospital management announced that the OP services and elective surgeries will be curtailed and postponed respectively. Emergency/casualty services, however, will continue in all government and private hospitals.

## Bhadradri temple land encroachment: Tension prevails on AP-Telangana borders



The EO and the temple executive staff asked the encroachers to remove the structures built on the temple lands.

GNS News Agency, August 16

Kothagudem: Tension prevailed at Purushothapatnam in Andhra Pradesh on Telangana borders on Friday as the Bhadradri temple authorities tried to evacuate those who encroached the temple lands.

Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Devasthanam, Bhadrachalam executive officer L Rama Devi along with staff went to Purushothapatnam of Yetapaka mandal in erstwhile East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh on receiving information that a land opposite the temple's goshala was being encroached.

The EO and the temple executive staff asked the encroachers to remove the structures built on the temple lands. The encroachers refused to do so and warned the temple staff against obstructing the construction of the houses and manhandled the staff who tried to enter the encroached land. It led to heated arguments between the two groups, temple staff accompanied by Lord Rama devotees tried to demolish the encroachments. It was said that the temple owns about 890 acres of land at Purushothapatnam and a large extent of land was already encroached. The devotees wanted the Chief Minister of AP and Telangana to look into the issue and take measures for the protection of the temple lands. They also complained that the local revenue officials and the police remained mute spectators when the encroachers attacked the temple staff.

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## The sinking feeling

IN the age of so-called smart cities, the term 'urban flooding' sounds almost like an oxymoron. After all, a smart city ought to have an efficient stormwater drainage system that can handle a few hours' downpour, at the very least. On the contrary, flooded roads are a common sight during the monsoon in cities across the country, right from Delhi and Chandigarh in the north to Chennai and Bengaluru in the south. Gurugram, the Millennium City, has failed to solve this problem despite having spent more than Rs 100 crore on anti-waterlogging measures in the past three years. What else can you expect when nearly half of the drains are not cleaned before the onset of the rainy season? Incidentally, Gurugram is not part of the Centre's Smart City Mission. When asked why, the Haryana CM had said in November 2022 that the state government wanted to make it the 'smartest' city and not just 'smart'. Well, smart, smarter or smartest, the watery nightmare continues for Gurugram residents.

Stormwater drainage systems often don't operate to their designed capacities because of poor maintenance; in some cases, the capacities have not been augmented despite the rapid pace of urbanisation. Encroachments and unplanned growth have worsened the situation. Adequate preparedness is half the battle won when it comes to flood control. However, high-intensity rainfall in a short duration invariably catches the municipal and urban development authorities off guard. And hapless citizens are left to sink or swim in waterlogged streets.

Apparently, funds are not an issue. Under AMRUT Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, 772 stormwater drainage projects worth Rs 2,140 crore have been completed in various states and union territories.

## Bengaluru court extends judicial custody of actor Darshan & other accused till Aug 28

GNS News Agency, August 16

Bengaluru, A court here on Wednesday extended till August 28 the judicial custody of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and others, who are accused in the Renukaswamy murder case. All the 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, were produced before the magistrate through video conferencing from Bengaluru and Tumakuru prisons, where they are lodged, as their judicial custody ended today. The extension of judicial custody follows a remand application filed by the Kamakshipalya Police, who have requested more time to continue their investigation. Authorities claim that substantial evidence ties all the accused to the crime, and that ongoing investigations are scrutinising their involvement. Key scientific evidence collected from the crime scene has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory, but the final reports are still pending. The case has expanded, with additional charges and cases under investigation, necessitating further judicial supervision. There are also concerns about potential threats or coercion directed at the family of the deceased, which could undermine the integrity of the case. The investigation is expected to be bolstered by additional FSL reports and further input from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, which is analysing technical evidence, officials said. According to police sources, 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor, had sent obscene messages to Gowda, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder. His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on June 9. Raghavendra, one of the accused who is part of Darshan's fan club in Chitradurga, had brought Renukaswamy to a shed in R R Nagar here, on the pretext that the actor wanted to meet him. It was in this shed that he was allegedly tortured and murdered. According to the post-mortem report, Renukaswamy, a native of Chitradurga, died due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of multiple blunt injuries. Police sources said Pavithra, who is accused number one, was the "major cause" for Renukaswamy's murder, claiming that it has been proved from the probe that she instigated other accused, conspired with them, and took part in the crime.

## Telangana BJP seniors not happy with Maheshwar Reddy's style of functioning

GNS News Agency, August 16

Hyderabad: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Telangana appears to be caught in a cold war between party State senior leaders and BJP Legislative Party Leader A Maheshwar Reddy. Sources say State leadership was not happy with the way Maheshwar Reddy was functioning and taking independent decisions without informing them. Of late, Maheshwar Reddy has been holding press conferences at the BJPLP office on the Assembly premises, which has been objected to by a few senior leaders. They claim that Maheshwar Reddy was supposed to inform the State office bearers about his activities and press conferences so that they could inform the State leadership. On the other hand, Maheshwar Reddy argues that he is legislative party leader and that he has a right to hold press conferences at his will at BJLP office. The party office bearers complain that Reddy was forcing the party media cell staff to give coverage to his press conferences and statements. In fact, he has created a special WhatsApp group to invite media representatives for his press conferences and activities. This has not gone well with the State leadership. The senior BJP leaders are of the opinion that Maheshwar Reddy was working on his personal agenda rather than peoples' issues. "He is targeting Congress and BRS leaders keeping in mind his personal agenda. His action is causing harm to the party," a BJP leader said. Interestingly, not all the eight MLAs are supporting the actions of Maheshwar Reddy. Adilab MLA Payal Shankar, Goshamahala MLA T Raja Singh, Sirpur MLA Palvai Harish Babu.

## Reduce GST on digital news subscriptions: MIB to revenue department



GNS News Agency, August 16

New Delhi: The ministry of information and broadcasting (MIB), in a letter dated July 22, requested the department of revenue to either exempt digital news subscriptions from goods and services tax (GST) or to reduce it from 18% to 5%. In the letter, addressed to revenue secretary Sanjay Malhotra, information and broadcasting (I&B) secretary Sanjay Jaju said that newspapers were exempted from GST because of the significance of giving "correct and factual information" to Indian citizens was recognised.

A brief note annexed to the letter said that a higher tax burden could skew the growth of the online news sector towards the advertising model, which could affect the quality and credibility of the news content. "With the growing internet penetration in India and the nascent stage of the online news industry, it is requested that the disparity between GST on printed newspapers and digital/online news subscriptions may be addressed by either exempting the GST on the latter or rationalizing it from 18% to 5% at par with that on e-books," the letter read.

The MIB mentioned a September 29, 2023, office memorandum in which it had recommended exempting

online news subscriptions from GST to bring parity between printed newspapers and digital/online news subscriptions. The revenue department, however, in an office memo dated June 5, 2024, said that the proposal to exempt digital news subscriptions was discussed by the GST Council in its meeting on July 11, 2023, but the proposal was not recommended by the Council. The MIB cited how a similar disparity between printed books and e-books was addressed in 2018 when the GST Council reduced the GST rate on e-books from 18% to 5% through a notification dated July 26, 2018. The 54th GST Council meeting is scheduled to be held on September 9, and the last meeting was held on June 22. In the attached background note, the MIB noted that very few internet users in India pay for online news. Thus, a higher rate of GST on digital news subscriptions could encourage the online news sector to adopt an advertising model "which may impact the quality and credibility of the news content on the internet through practices such as use of clickbait and sensational headlines, and fake and misleading news, etc." It also noted that the 18% GST on online news subscriptions brings a tax revenue of about Rs. 21.6 crore from a total revenue of Rs. 120 crore. The MIB argued that reducing it to nil or five percent "may not lead to substantial revenue forgone by the government exchequer." Currently, printed newspapers, journals, and periodicals are exempted from the GST. Under the IGST Act, online news subscriptions are taxed at 18% as Online Information Database Access and Retrieval (OIDAR) services, that is, an internet service that has no physical interface between the supplier and recipient of the service. Online news subscriptions are included in the sub-category of services for "supply of images, text, and information and making available of databases." The MIB noted that providing "credible and factual information in the nature of news" is different from other online content services as it "empowers the citizens to take informed decisions and be aware of their rights and responsibilities."

## PM Modi to visit US in September, address major community event in New York

GNS News Agency, August 16

Around 15,000 people are expected to attend the gathering that will be "unique and different" in its format, flow and themes compared to past events. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a major community event in New York on September 22 during a visit to the city to attend the UN's Summit of the Future. The event's theme is 'Modi & US: Progress Together', and its stated aim is to celebrate India and the US and the "cultural ethos" of viewing the "world as one family, diversity a strength, and the well-being of all people and the planet an inspiration for building a better world together." A person familiar with the development said that around 15,000 people are expected to attend the gathering that will be "unique and different" in its format, flow and themes compared to past events that Modi has addressed in the US. "The main aim of the event is to celebrate the diaspora, their progress and future and ties with India." Aware that the event is being planned in the middle of the American election season, in a departure from the past, organisers intend to keep it avowedly non-political. "There will be no elected officials invited for the event this time."

This is the fifth time Modi will address the Indian community in the US at an event. In 2014, he spoke at the Madison Square Garden in New York that saw tens of thousands of Indian-Americans and dozens of elected officials including Congressional representatives and Senators. In 2015, he addressed Indians in California's San Jose with a focus on the tech community in Silicon Valley and the political leadership in the West Coast. In 2017, Modi spoke to community organisation leaders at a smaller event in Washington DC. In 2019, a year before the last presidential elections, Modi and then American president Donald Trump addressed the biggest ever gathering of Indian-Americans in Houston, an event that drew criticism from Democrats who saw India as taking sides in the election, a perception that Delhi had to work hard to counter. During his state visit to the US last year, 8000 Indian-Americans attended the ceremonial welcome at the White House itself while Modi spoke to Indian-American professionals at Kennedy Center and addressed another community event in Reagan Center in Washington DC, both much smaller in scale.

This year, Modi's event comes at a time when the American election has a strong Indian-American dimension. The Democratic nominee for the presidency, Kamala Harris, identifies as both Black-American and Indian-American; her mother was a Tamil and migrated from India in 1958. The wife of the Republican nominee for vice president, JD Vance, is Usha Vance, daughter of immigrants from Andhra Pradesh. The Indian-American community, according to 2020 survey conducted by political scientists Devesh Kapur, Milan Vaishnav and Sumitra Badrinathan, remains overwhelmingly Demo-



crats. And while a slight shift towards Republicans was discernible in recent years, Harris's nomination has galvanised the community for the Democratic ticket. Those familiar with the development are careful to emphasise that Modi's event has nothing to do with American elections nor with Indian-American participation and preferences in the elections. "This is purely to celebrate the bonds between our countries in the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and the ideas of one earth, one family and one future," the person quoted above said. The official purpose of Modi's visit is to attend the Summit of the Future, a flagship event being organised by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his final year in the position. Guterres has been supportive of India's aspirations in recent years, including its G20 presidency. He travelled to Gujarat to attend the launch of Mission LIFE, Modi's personal environmental initiative to tackle climate crisis by encouraging a lifestyle change, and has embraced India's digital public infrastructure as a model worth emulating. Modi may also then address the UN General Assembly on September 26, according to a provisional list of speakers for the general debate put out by the UN last month.

Modi is also expected to have a range of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit. While India is slated to host the Quad Leaders' Summit this year, given the vagaries of the political calendar in different member states — India held elections earlier in the year, there is political instability in Japan with PM Fumio Kishida announcing his decision to step down, and it is unclear if and when President Joe Biden can travel to India — there has also been speculation that the meeting may be held in New York itself. The community event is being organised by the Indian-American Diaspora Association (IADA), which describes itself as a non-profit that encourages India-US cooperation to advance the "shared values of democracy, inclusive economic development, and mutual respect". The event site states that community donations will cover the costs of the event and registration is open for partner organisations that wish to participate.

## Ram Lalla sculptor Arun Yogiraj denied US visa for 3-day conference

GNS News Agency, August 16

Arun Yogiraj was scheduled to attend a three-day World Kannada Conference, set to take place at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia. Renowned sculptor Arun Yogiraj, who carved the Ram Lalla idol installed at the newly built Ram Temple in Ayodhya, has been denied a US visa to attend a three-day conference in Virginia. Arun Yogiraj was reportedly scheduled to attend the 12th AKKA World Kannada Conference (WKC 2024), set to take place from August 30 to September 1. "Your remarkable contributions to the field of sculpture have caught our attention, and we believe that your artistic vision would greatly enrich our conference. Your work embodies the spirit of creativity and innovation, qualities that align perfectly with the objectives of our event," the invitation letter read. The family members of Yogiraj said that all necessary arrangements were made, and the denial was particularly surprising given that the sculptor's wife, Vijeta, has previously travelled to the US without any issues, reported Republic Kannada. According to the family, the sole purpose of the trip was to attend the conference, and the couple had intended to return to India promptly after the event. "I don't know any reasons why it was denied, but we have submitted all the documents related to the visa," Republic



World quoted Yogiraj as saying.

Who is Arun Yogiraj? Arun Yogiraj's journey into the world of sculpting began at a young age, inspired by his father and grandfather, who were also renowned sculptors. After a brief stint in the corporate sector, Arun returned to his passion for sculpting in 2008. Apart from the Ram Lalla idol, his notable works include a 30-foot statue of Subhash Chandra Bose near India Gate, a 12-foot sculpture of Adi Shankaracharya in Kedarnath, and a 21-foot Hanuman statue in Mysore. AKKA World Kannada Conference The AKKA World Kannada Conference is a bi-annual event that brings together the Kannada-speaking diaspora in North America and beyond.

## Congress names Abhishek Manu Singhvi as its candidate for Rajya Sabha bypoll in Telangana



GNS News Agency, August 16

The Congress party has nominated Abhishek Manu Singhvi as its candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha bypoll in Telangana. "The Congress President, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, has approved the candidature of Abhishek Manu Singhvi as Congress candidate to contest the ensuing bye-election to the Council of States from Telangana," Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said in a release.

Earlier this year, the party had fielded Singhvi from Himachal Pradesh but a cross-voting by some disgruntled Congress MLAs saw the senior advocate losing the election to BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan. The Congress had a strength of 40 members and the support of three Independents in the 68-member Himachal Assembly. However, both the candidates polled 34 votes each as six Congress rebels and three Independents voted in favour of the BJP candidate. The winner was announced by a draw of lots. The Rajya Sabha bypoll in Telangana has been necessitated due to the resignation of K Keshava Rao from the upper house. Rao quit the Congress party in 2013 and joined the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (now Bharath Rashtra Samithi). However, the veteran leader returned to the grand old party in July, months after Congress's sweeping victory in Telangana, and resigned from Rajya Sabha. The Election Commission of India (ECI) last week announced bypolls for 12 Rajya Sabha seats in nine states. Of the 12 seats, 10 fell vacant after the members were elected to Lok Sabha in the 2024 general elections. These include Piyush Goyal, Sarbananda Sonowal, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Deepender Hooda, Biplob Deb, KC Venugopal, and Misa Bharti among others. The last date for filing nominations is on August 21 and the elections, if required, will be held on September 3. Singhvi is likely to win the bypoll this time and enter the Upper House with the Congress having a majority in Telangana.

## Kolkata doctor's rape-murder: BJP alleges delay in investigation



GNS News Agency, August 16

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday attacked the West Bengal government, alleging delay and mishandling of the Kolkata trainee doctor's alleged rape and murder case. "The first 48 hours following such a brutal crime are essential for collecting and preserving evidence. Delays or blunders during this period can severely hinder the investigation and potentially allow the perpetrators to escape justice," emphasised party spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia.

The party said that the Mamata Banerjee-led government delayed transferring the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The CBI took over the case on Tuesday following the Calcutta high court's on Tuesday, which ordered the agency to probe the "brutal rape and killing" of a postgraduate trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College Hospital last Friday.

Bhatia further criticised the initial classification of the death as "unnatural" by local police, suggesting that this misclassification might have led to significant evidence being compromised or mishandled. "The chief minister's decision to postpone the transfer of the investigation raises serious questions about her commitment to delivering justice," Bhatia added as he accused the CM of failing to take decisive action, thereby worsening the situation and undermining justice for the victim's family. The handling of the case by local authorities further compounds the issue, with the principal of the college where the crime occurred, as alleged by the BJP, involved in destroying evidence. Instead of being suspended, this principal was transferred to the principal of the Calcutta Medical College (CMC), which the BJP spokesperson described as a "disturbing reward for failing to uphold his responsibilities." Furthermore, "evidence was being destroyed under the veil of construction," claimed Bhatia as he pointed out that there was renovation taking place in the area where this heinous act was committed. Critics, including the BJP, have raised significant concerns about the broader implications of this case for governance and law enforcement in West Bengal. Bhatia's criticism extends to Banerjee's overall handling of the situation, calling for her resignation and suggesting that her administration's failures have compromised the safety and security of women in West Bengal. The Trinamool Congress (TMC), however, iterated its sympathy for the deceased. Condemning the act, TMC spokesperson Sagarika Ghose posted on X (formerly Twitter), stating, "The incident in R G Kar Hospital is very unfortunate and disturbing." Ghose further expressed the West Bengal government's stance toward the victim and her family members and deplored the politicisation of the incident. "The law will bring justice and the TMC and Mamata Banerjee are committed to ensuring so".

## SC affirms decision not to hold NEET super speciality exam in 2024



GNS News Agency, August 16

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to interfere with the National Medical Commission's (NMC) decision not to conduct the NEET-Super Speciality Exam (NEET-SS) 2024 this year. A bench, comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, noted that the data provided by the NMC indicated that at least 40% of the candidates who take the NEET-SS are drawn from the most recent graduating batch.

The court observed that the petitioners, who have previously taken the NEET-SS, would not be unduly harmed if the exam is postponed to next year. However, it noted that holding the exam this year would disadvantage students from the 2021 post-graduate batch, who are set to complete their courses only in January 2025, by denying them an opportunity to appear. In light of this,

the bench held that the NMC's decision is "fairly equitable" and cannot be considered "arbitrary." Simultaneously, the court accepted the petitioners' request for the NMC to promptly lay down a schedule for the NEET-SS 2024 exam. The bench ordered that the schedule be announced within 30 days, taking into account the number of students completing their PG courses in January 2025. Furthermore, the bench directed that the exam be conducted within three months of January 2025. Thirteen doctors had moved the Supreme Court assailing the NMC's decision to not hold NEET-SS in 2024. The NMC justified its decision to defer the NEET-SS 2024 exam due to the delayed admissions for MD, MS, and DMB courses through the NEET-PG exam in the 2021 academic year. These admissions, delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, occurred between January 2022 and May 2022, resulting in course completion being pushed to January 2025. To accommodate these students, the NMC decided to postpone the NEET-SS 2024 exam. Advocate Rashmi Nandkumar, representing the petitioners, argued that only 40% of students who join the Super Speciality course are from the most recent PG batch. Therefore, the decision to cancel NEET-SS this year was arbitrary, as it would deprive the remaining 60% of students of their opportunity. On behalf of the NMC, senior advocate Gaurav Sharma countered that conducting the NEET-SS this year would result in the 2021 PG batch students losing their chance to appear for the exam. While acknowledging that the delay in the exam would cause some inconvenience to the petitioners, the bench emphasised that this hardship must be balanced against the broader concerns highlighted by the NMC.

## 'Sanatana Dharma' remark: SC exempts Udhayanidhi Stalin from appearing in courts

GNS News Agency, August 16

Appearing for Stalin, senior advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi and P Wilson told the court that the petitioner faces serious threat to his life. The Supreme Court on Wednesday exempted Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin from appearing personally in any case at various courts across multiple states over his alleged remark against 'Sanatana Dharma'. "The petitioner (Stalin) may appear through his authorised representative in all courts and be granted exemption from personal appearance," a bench headed by justice Sanjiv Khanna said as it agreed to consider in November his petition seeking clubbing of multiple cases at one place. The bench, also comprising justice Sanjay Kumar, further issued notice on an application moved by the petitioner to place on record details of a fresh FIR registered over the same remark made by him in September 2023 at an event organised in Chennai by the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Artists Association on the topic 'Eradication of Sanatan'.

Appearing for Stalin, senior advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi and P Wilson told the court that the petitioner faces serious threat to his life and the cases against him are pending in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invoking hate speech provisions. "If there is one utterance and registration of offence against that one utterance are in different states, we cannot allow them to go on," the bench said. The court asked the petitioner's lawyers to inform them by the next date of hearing about the place where trial in all cases can be conducted. However, the bench added, "You have to go out of Tamil Nadu."



Stalin had filed a petition earlier under Article 32 of the Constitution, claiming violation of his fundamental rights, and sought clubbing of FIRs. The top court objected to it by stating that the trial had begun, and told the petitioner that the only solution in such cases was to file a petition under Section 406 of the code of criminal procedure (CrPC), which allows the transfer of a criminal case or appeal pending before any court under any high court to another court subordinate to another high court. Stalin, the son of Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin, is currently the minister for youth welfare and sports development in the state. At the event attended by him last year, he reportedly said, "There are some things that we have to eradicate and we can't merely oppose. Mosquitoes, dengue, corona and malaria are things that we cannot oppose, we have to eradicate them. Sanatanam is also like this. Eradication and not opposing Sanatanam has to be our first task."

## Punjab govt creating obstacles in NHAI projects, land acquisition responsibility of state government: BJP leader Anil Sarin

GNS News Agency, August 16

Wading into the war of words between the Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-ruled Punjab government over National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) projects, BJP general secretary Anil Sarin said on Wednesday that the state government was creating obstacles for them. "State government-sponsored individuals are creating obstacles for prestigious projects because it is worried that the completion of these projects on time will further increase the popularity of Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)," said Sarin in Jalandhar.

He stated that the Centre has no direct role in land acquisition and compensation settlement. "Both of these are carried out by the state government, and the Centre is responsible for making the payment, which it is currently fulfilling," said Sarin, who was accompanied by former Jalandhar MP Sushil Kumar Rinku and former MLA Sheetal Angural, among others. "The state government must carry out all work related to land acquisition and decisions about the compensation amount. The Right to Fair Land Compensation Act of 2013 clearly outlines the rules and regulations for calculating compensation based on the collector rate of the specific area, which the state government determines," he said. "The sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) of the area or the district deputy commissioner is responsible for claim settlement. The Centre must provide funds according to the compensation determined by the state government after the land has been acquired. Therefore, blaming the Centre for compensation issues reflects negatively on the AAP government, showing an anti-Punjab, anti-Punjabi, and anti-development stance," he added.

On Tuesday, three days after Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari wrote to the Punjab government threatening to terminate eight NHAI projects in the state due to the "prevailing law and order situation," Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann responded, reaffirming his government's commitment to completing these projects. The government also questioned the Centre's "warning" to scrap road projects over 'law, order'. The AAP pointed to NCRB data to refute law order claims in the letter from Gadkari, saying problems were localised. "Delay tactics, lack of will to develop Punjab" Sarin, meanwhile, said that the Union government had already given Punjab Rs 17,325 crore for land acquisition. Of this, Rs 13,626 crore has already been disbursed, while Rs 3,699.37 crore is still with the state government, he said. He said the Union government had announced 42 highway projects in Punjab, measuring 1,764 km in length and costing over Rs 58,000 crore.



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However, the projects were progressing very slowly due to obstacles created by the state government.

He said contracts for three projects measuring 104 km had already been terminated, while seven more projects with a cost of Rs 8,245 crore had been stalled due to a delay in land acquisition. Sarin said, "Not only this, according to the information available from NHAI, the 31 other projects coming up on 1,150 km of length are also running behind the schedule of appointed date as more than 80 per cent of land hasn't been acquired in these cases as well. The cost of these 31 projects is Rs 42,175 crore out of the over Rs 58,000 crore of total announced projects. In short, we can say that the projects are running too late because of delay tactics and a lack of will to develop the state." "The Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway is a prestigious project that everyone knows about, and so is the Amritsar-Bathinda-Jamnagar project and various other projects that can encourage more industries to invest in Punjab. The development of these projects will also improve the lives of local residents. However, AAP is not focused on the welfare of the people and is instead engaged in cheap blame-game politics," Sarin added. On the alleged manhandling of an NHAI engineer in Jalandhar and the attack on a project officer in Ludhiana, he said, "The CM has indicated that it was a fight between two groups. Does that mean that to settle a dispute, one group will resort to an attack? Where is the law and order of Punjab? I can only feel sorry for the vague explanations of the CM about these incidents."

## BMC to spend Rs 20 crore per km on south Mumbai road concretisation



GNS News Agency, August 16

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to shell out Rs 20 crore per kilometer for concretisation of roads in the island city. The civic body has finalised the rates for the work order, which will be issued to the contractor, NCC Limited. The total cost of concretising the roads of south Mumbai has been pegged at Rs 1,362 crore, which includes concretising 214 different roads spread across 65.5 KM. While the contractor was selected in May, the final work order is yet to be issued. BMC

officials claim the final cost is only 4% higher than the initial estimate of Rs 1,300 crore.

"After winning the contract, negotiation was underway for carrying out works at the best possible rate. Since the rates have been finalised now, the work will start immediately after the monsoon season," said a senior official. Former municipal corporator Makarand Narwekar told The Indian Express that earlier, the BMC was set to issue work orders at 9 per cent to the contractor. "I was told that the contractor is getting the work order at 4% above estimate. Earlier, the administration was set to issue work orders at 9%, following which we intervened. This effectively will result in saving of around Rs 70 crore of public money. I have written to the civic administration and have requested them to ensure CCTV monitoring is carried out of the work done, along with a third party audit of the quality of work that is being executed by the authorities," Narwekar told The Indian Express. The island city's road concretisation is part of the larger Rs 6,000 crore project announced by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in 2022. While work is underway in the suburbs, the island city's initiative has faced delays. A previous contract was terminated due to the contractor's inaction, leading to a fresh tender.

## Karnataka Govt to end association with SBI and PNB over fixed deposit 'frauds'

GNS News Agency, August 16

The Government has set a September 20 deadline for all departments to comply with the direction, according to a circular issued by P C Jaffer, secretary in the department, on Monday. The Government has set a September 20 deadline for all departments to comply with the direction, according to a circular issued by P C Jaffer, secretary in the department, on Monday.

Karnataka's finance department has issued an order asking all state government departments, public sector units, boards, corporations, local bodies, universities and other institutions to close all accounts at State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB). The Government has set a September 20 deadline for all departments to comply with the direction, according to a circular issued by P C Jaffer, secretary in the department, on Monday.

According to the government, the decision followed two fraudulent transactions reported at these banks. The first is related to PNB's Rajajinagar branch, where the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board had started a fixed deposit of Rs 25 crore on September 14, 2011. However, after the term of the deposit ended, PNB allegedly released only Rs 13 crore. Meetings and repeated communication with bank officials did not yield fruit, the circular said, adding that the case had been



heard by a court for the last 10 years. The other case was related to a fixed deposit at the erstwhile State Bank of Mysore, which merged with the SBI in 2017. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board had a fixed deposit of Rs 10 crore at the bank's Avenue Road branch. According to the Government, the amount was adjusted to the loans taken by a private company using forged documents. Attempts to recover the amount are said to have suffered the same fate as that of the fixed deposit in PNB. These issues attracted severe objections in the Comptroller and Auditor General of India reports. The Public Accounts Committee held multiple meetings over the issues and recommended that the authorities stop transactions with these banks, the circular added.

## Citing security reasons ahead of Independence Day, AAP postpones Sisodia's padyatra to Aug 16

GNS News Agency, August 16

Bharadwaj further said Sisodia's padyatra will take place in all the 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi and will continue till the upcoming elections. Bharadwaj further said Sisodia's padyatra will take place in all the 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi and will continue till the upcoming elections. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Wednesday postponed former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's padyatra to August 16 following the advice of Delhi Police against holding it on Independence Day eve due to security reasons.

"Due to the conspiracies of the central government, Manish Sisodia remained in jail for 17 months and after that, he got bail from the Supreme Court. Following his release, the party decided that Manish ji will hold padyatra in various constituencies of Delhi and will meet the people...but the padyatra has been postponed due to some reasons," said AAP senior leader Saurabh Bharadwaj. He said, "As per the strategy, Manish ji's first padyatra was to start from the Greater Kailash assembly constituency. When permission was sought for it, Delhi Police suggested to postpone the yatra because of the atmosphere of August 15 and security reasons...we also found Delhi Police's suggestion reasonable and have decided to postpone it to August 16."

He further said, "We do not want any kind of problem or trouble to arise on the occasion of Independence Day. That is why we are accepting the police's suggestion." He said that the time and place will remain



the same, which means Sisodia's march will start from Greater Kailash on August 16 at 5pm.

Bharadwaj further said Sisodia's padyatra will take place in all the 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi and will continue till the upcoming elections. However, the party will also conduct padyatra assessments from time to time, he said, adding if any other programme of the party takes place in the period, the padyatra schedule will be changed accordingly. "We have decided that we will...go to every Vidhan Sabha...and will tell the people about the BJP's truth, how the party is trying to obstruct all the works being done for them in Delhi...How BJP is trying to hurt them by creating obstacles in all the decisions of the elected government..." said AAP General Secretary Sandeep Pathak.

## Filing of nominations for Haryana Rajya Sabha polls begins

GNS News Agency, August 16

The nominee of the ruling BJP, which has 41 members in the 87-member Haryana Vidhan Sabha is all set to win in the absence of adequate numbers in the Opposition. The nominee of the ruling BJP, which has 41 members in the 87-member Haryana Vidhan Sabha is all set to win in the absence of adequate numbers in the Opposition. The filing of nominations for the bye-election for the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Haryana began on Wednesday. The nominations can be filled till August 21 (3 pm), and candidates can withdraw their nominations until August 27. The nominee of the ruling BJP, which has 41 members in the 87-member Haryana Vidhan Sabha is all set to win in the absence of adequate numbers in the Opposition.

Dr Saket Kumar, Managing Director of Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (UHBVN) and Returning Officer of the election, said that in case of an opponent in the election, voting will be held on September 3 at the Haryana Vidhan Sabha Secretariat from 9 am to 4 pm. As per the Vidhan Sabha's current records, the main Opposition Indian National Congress led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda has 29 members and Dushyant Chautala led JJP has 10 members. However, Congress' Tosham MLA Kiran Choudhry has already quit the party and joined the BJP for which Congress had approached Speaker Gian

Chand Gupta seeking her disqualification. JJP, too, has moved disqualification petition under anti-defection law against four of its MLAs accusing them of anti-party activities.

In the wake of the defection that both Congress and JJP are facing, both the parties are unable to field their respective nominee. Even if they join hands and field a candidate jointly, they would be unable to defeat BJP's nominee unless the BJP legislators indulge in cross-voting. Leader of Opposition Hooda had already said that there was no point for Congress to field any nominee for the Rajya Sabha poll because the party did not have adequate numbers. Dushyant Chautala, however, had been accusing Hooda of deliberately giving BJP an edge by not fielding a candidate of Opposition. Dushyant had even offered support to Congress in case Hooda wishes to field a joint candidate against the BJP nominee. The ruling BJP has yet not declared its nominee but is expected to do so in the coming few days. The bypoll was necessitated following Congress' former Rajya Sabha member Deepender Hooda's election to the Lok Sabha from Rohtak in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls. Dr Saket Kumar said, "Nominations can be submitted by any candidate on any working day, except holidays, at the Haryana Vidhan Sabha Secretariat in Sector 1, Chandigarh between 11 am and 3 pm until August 21, 2024. The scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on August 22 at 10 am."

## More trouble for Dr Sandip Ghosh, complaint filed against ex-principal for disclosing woman's identity



GNS News Agency, August 16

Dr Sandip Ghosh resignation, RG Kar Medical College principal, Kolkata doctor rape and murder, Dr Ghosh, an orthopaedic professor, assumed the role of principal in mid-2021 after being promoted from his previous position at Calcutta National Medical College. A complaint has been filed against the former principal of Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, Dr Sandip Ghosh, accusing him of disclosing the identity of the 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor who was allegedly raped and killed on the hospital premises on the night of August 8.

The complaint, filed by Advocate Shayan Sachin Basu, has been sent to the Director General of West Bengal Police Rajeev Kumar, and Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal. The complaint alleged that on August 12, Dr Sandip Ghosh "egregiously disclosed the identity of the rape victim by using her name on no fewer than six occasions." "This deliberate and reckless act of naming the victim was done in the presence of various media outlets, thereby amplifying the violation and causing ir-

reparable harm to the dignity and privacy of the victim," the complaint read. "The public disclosure of the victim's identity is not merely a breach of law but also a moral transgression that perpetuates the trauma of the victim and deters others from seeking justice," it added. Advocate Basu, the complainant, said, "It is well-established under the law that the identity of rape victims must be safeguarded to protect their dignity, as enshrined under Section 72 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Furthermore, this protection is reinforced by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court, both of which have consistently upheld the sanctity of such provisions. The actions of Sandip Ghosh not only contravene these legal provisions but also exhibit a blatant disregard for the directives laid down by the highest echelons of our judiciary." Repeated calls to the DGP office, office of the Kolkata Police Commissioner, office of the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) and office of the Additional Commissioner of Police, Kolkata went unanswered.

Amid protests by junior doctors, Ghosh resigned as the principal of R G Kar Medical College and Hospital on Monday, taking "moral responsibility" for the rape and murder of the trainee doctor. While Ghosh's ouster was one of the demands of the protesting doctors at RG Kar Hospital, his appointment as the principal of Calcutta National Medical College and Hospital within hours sparked further outrage and protests. On Tuesday, the Calcutta High Court, while transferring the probe to the CBI, asked Ghosh to go on leave and came down heavily on the West Bengal government for his re-appointment, saying he couldn't be made principal of another state-run teaching hospital till the court resumed hearing a batch of PILs linked to the rape and murder of the trainee doctor.

## Asaram Bapu gets 7-day parole for Ayurvedic treatment: Know more about Khopoli hospital where he will be treated

GNS News Agency, August 16

Noted personalities such as Anna Hazare and others have received treatment at the hospital, Walawalkar said. Noted personalities such as Anna Hazare and others have received treatment at the hospital, Walawalkar said.

The Rajasthan High Court on Tuesday granted seven-day parole to self-styled Godman Asaram Bapu for Ayurvedic treatment. Bapu, who is serving a life sentence at a Jodhpur jail for raping a minor girl, will undergo treatment at Madhavbaug Multidisciplinary Cardiac Care Clinic and Hospital's oldest facility at Khopoli, a hill station between Mumbai and Pune. Yogesh Walawalkar, chief marketing officer at Madhavbaug Hospitals, said, "We have been informed that Asaram Bapu wants to avail treatment at our hospital. However, the exact date of his arrival has not been confirmed." Bapu was arrested in August 2013 for raping a minor girl at his ashram in Jodhpur. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in the case by a Pocco court in 2018. Recently, he was admitted to AIIMS Jodhpur after he complained of unease and chest pain, and appealed to the Rajasthan High Court for treatment at Madhavbaug Hospital. "More than lakh patients have been treated at the hospital that focuses on a nonsurgical approach and uses 'sampoorna Friday shuddikaran' therapy," Dr Gurudatta Amin, chief medical officer at the hospital, told The Indian Express. Noted personalities such as Anna Hazare and others have received treatment at the hospital, Walawalkar said.

The 45-bed hospital in Khopoli, which the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) accredits, has visiting consultants and its in-house team of doctors. Dr Rohit Madhav Sane is the



founder and managing director of the chain of 350 multidisciplinary cardiac care clinics and three hospitals—at Khopoli, Kondhali (Nagpur), and Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). He set up the first facility in 2006 as a tribute to his father, who died of a heart attack. According to Madhavbaug authorities, Dr Sane uses a combination of modern medical science and well-established therapies prescribed in Ayurveda to treat chronic heart failure in an alternative and integrated way. Dr Jagdish Hiremath, an interventional cardiologist in Pune, is the Madhavbaug Institute of Preventive Cardiology chair professor. "Our treatments are scientifically researched integration of Ayurveda and modern medical science," Dr Amin said. "We often admit patients who prefer nonsurgical treatments and experience relief from their symptoms. Our goal is to enhance blood supply to the heart and focus on panchakarma treatment, alongside lifestyle adjustments such as dietary modifications and exercise," said Dr Amin. Following medical assessments, a personalised treatment plan is devised based on the patient's requirements, as per hospital authorities.

## With climbing now an Olympics event, youngsters look up to it more than ever



GNS News Agency, August 16

"A few moons ago when no one knew what exactly climbing/bouldering is, for the very first time, came across a living room with an artificial climbing wall. This was because of my seventh-grade school friend and his professional climber parents. In no time, casual playtime became a full-time profession endeavour," says Jay Shinde, 27, coach and owner of Pune based climbing gym Rock Aliens. Shinde, realising Pune lacks proper infrastructure and coaches for climbing, started a professional outfit to cater to the sport. Climbing as a sport, made its Olympic debut in 2020, soon after being added as a medal sport to the Youth Olympic Games in 2018. Madhuri Pingla,

mother of ten-year-old Anay Pingla, while on their way to Bangalore for his Open Nationals says, "Anay was only seven when we enrolled him into bouldering just to add some activity in his routine and standing. Today, he spends 2 hours almost everyday to train on his own. He's absolutely in love with the sport." Mostly dominated by Britain, Olympic climbing competitions are divided into two distinct disciplines: bouldering and lead as one combined event, and speed climbing. This year in climbing at the Paris Olympics, Toby Robert from Britain bagged a gold in the men's category along with Janja Garnbret from Slovenia winning the same under the women's category, showcasing absolute resilience and sportsmanship.

Bouldering makes

climbers navigate a series of short challenging routes without the use of a rope and calls for strength, agility and problem-solving skills. While in lead, climbers ascend a tall wall, climbing their rope into an extender. In speed climbing, athletes compete to reach the top of a standardised 15-metre wall in the fastest time possible. "Just like Sorato Anraku, a rock climber from Japan, I'll represent India in the Olympics one day with regular training. I also eat healthy and rest well as suggested by my coach," says Anay Pingla, ten-year-old climber from Pune. Anay Pingla is ten and will soon compete for the zonals, conducted by Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), and his performance here could well win him a ticket to the nationals, says his

mother. "Every weekend, my students, mostly hailing from rural communities of Lonavala, come to Pune at Della. Apart from strength training and climbing, I also guide them in terms of communication, which is important when they leave their homes to compete all across the nation and later the world," says Ganesh Geedh, 37, a climbing coach at Della with an experience of 23 years. Geedh is preparing a bunch of youngsters for this new sport. Sahil Khan, 22, a climber from Pune, who started his international career with Asian Youth Championship in 2015 says, "I've been climbing for the past ten years, and after my international tournaments I have realised that there's hardly any place in Pune that meets international standards in terms of infrastructure and coaching. One of the important things in bouldering is to provide athletes with trendy holes, so that once they are climbing internationally, it's not an alien territory for them." Khan, a seasoned climber and graduate from MIT Pune who participated last in the 2022 Indonesia World Cup, now wishes to go to Europe for his sports and higher education.

## Maharashtra Congress MLAs' meeting with CM Eknath Shinde fuels speculation of defection



GNS News Agency, August 16

The two MLAs, however, said that they would not leave the Congress, claiming that the meeting was with regards to discussing funds and constituency-related work. The two MLAs, however, said that they would not leave the Congress, claiming that the meeting was with regards to discussing funds and constituency-related work. Maharashtra Congress MLAs Hiranam Khoskar and Jitesh Antapurkar met Chief Minister Eknath Shinde late on Tuesday night, fuelling speculation that they would

soon join the Shiv Sena. The meeting came amid the backdrop of Congress MLAs cross-voting in the recently held MLC elections in the state. The two MLAs, however, said that they would not leave the Congress, claiming that the meeting was with regards to discussing funds and constituency-related work. Apart from Khoskar and Antapurkar, Congress MLAs Sulbha Khodke, Zeeshan Siddiqui and Mohan Hambarde allegedly helped the ruling Mahayuti candidates by cross-voting in the MLC polls held last month.

According to sources, the Congress has identified the MLAs who cross-voted and the party leadership has decided to not give tickets to these five MLAs in the upcoming Assembly elections. A Congress functionary said that the Congress high command had given instructions in this regard to the state-level leaders a few days ago and fresh faces will be given an opportunity in the upcoming polls likely to be held in November. Khoskar said he met Shinde to seek funds. "I met CM Shinde for funds. I am not going to leave... I was with the Congress and will remain with the Congress. I am confident that I will get the candidature from the party," Khoskar said.

## Haryana announces Rs 1,111 for anganwadi staff on Raksha Bandhan, Rs 1.1 lakh for SC students

GNS News Agency, August 16

With the Assembly polls around the corner, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday announced a gift of Rs 1,111 for all anganwadi workers and helpers on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan and Rs 1.1 lakh for meritorious Scheduled Castes students—both to be provided through direct bank transfers. These were announced by the woman and child development department in a notification, which said the anganwadi workers and helpers would get the gift on August 19.

"Under the Medhavi Yojana, the Haryana government is facilitating the access of Scheduled Caste students to higher education institutions. The scheme aims to promote comprehensive development and ensure that students from all communities and categories can advance together. This Yojana has been launched with the special financial incentive to increase the gross enrolment ratio of Scheduled Caste students in higher education, in line with the National Education Policy 2020. Under this scheme, Scheduled Caste students who have passed 12th grade with more than 90 percent marks will be provided with Rs 1,11,000," a Government statement



read. According to the statement, 700 meritorious students have qualified for the scheme in the 2023-2024 academic year, for which Rs 8 crore has been allocated. "Out of these, the bank account data of 666 students has been verified, and the payment process for 623 of them has been completed, with Rs 6,91,53,000 sent through DBT," the statement said. "The highest number of beneficiaries are from Sirsa district, totaling 89. Hisar district is in second place with 83 beneficiaries, while Jind district stands third with 69 beneficiaries," the statement further said.

## Inter-caste love story has a hiccup: Girl's parents take away boy's mother with them to force couple to return



GNS News Agency, August 16

Two police teams are now engaged in a dual search — one to find the couple and the other to locate the girl's parents, who have since disappeared after locking their house and switching off their phones. Two police teams are now engaged in a dual search — one to find the couple and the other to locate the girl's parents, who have since disappeared after locking their house and switching off their phones. In a village near Morappur in Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri, a young couple's decision to elope on Tuesday night has not only set the village abuzz but also led to an unusual hostage situation. In a twist that has baffled

both locals and the police, the woman's upper caste parents responded by allegedly taking the young man's mother, an SC woman, into custody, believing it would force the couple out of hiding. Two police teams are now engaged in a dual search — one to find the couple and the other to locate the girl's parents, who have since disappeared after locking their house and switching off their phones. The 23-year-old woman belongs to the Gounder (OBC) community. She and her 24-year-old boyfriend studied and worked in Bengaluru. When the couple eloped on Tuesday night, her family first filed a missing person complaint. A senior officer monitoring the case said the drama began when her parents realised she was missing. "Both the woman and the man are well educated — the latter is a graduate in agriculture sciences. They suspected the young man but were unable to reach him on the phone. Then they turned their frustration towards his mother," the officer said. On Wednesday morning, the woman's parents reached the man's house in the neighbouring village. "On learning that her son had eloped, the young man's mother was shocked. She tried to call her son but the phone was switched off. She had little time to process the situation. Without much ado, the woman's parents informed her of their daughter's elopement with her son and allegedly took her with them — though no violence was involved," said the officer.

## 'Predetermined, grave, barbaric': Chhattisgarh court sentences man to death for murdering wife, 3 children

GNS News Agency, August 16

He is also known to have assaulted his wife in the past but the couple's families' are believed to have intervened to settle it. Chhattisgarh The man is also known to have assaulted his wife in the past but the couple's families' are believed to have intervened to settle it. A court in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur Tuesday sentenced a 34-year-old man to death for having murdered his wife and three children this January saying the act was "predetermined, grave, barbaric, (and) horrifying where innocent and helpless children were murdered by a man who was supposed to be their natural guardian". According to court records, the incident occurred on the night of January 1 in Hiri village, where the convict Umendra Kevat is said to have strangled his 32-year-old wife Sukrita and then used the same rope to kill his three children — two daughters Khushi (5) and Lisa (3) and son Pawan (18 months). The couple had been married in 2017 and Umendra is stated to "suspect" his wife of cheating. He is also known to have assaulted his wife in the past but the couple's families' are believed to have intervened to settle it.

Umendra tried to hang himself using the same rope with which he killed his family but it broke. He eventually surrendered to the police. The court's sentence came after it examined 16 witnesses and 54 documents. In its ruling, the court said the accused was "neither mentally ill nor of unsound mind". "There are no signs of remorse on his face. Reason for the crime, cruelty, method, rela-



tionship of the parties and the trust between them, three children being innocent, helpless and unarmed, motivation of the accused, weakness of the deceased, horror of the crime and execution of the crime. All these facts and circumstances make the case rarest of the rare," the order, written in Hindi, said it further said that in view of the crime, "he (the accused) does not have the right to live in the society and if judicial humility is shown to him, then considering it as judicial paralysis, he will be encouraged to commit such crimes and then it will be difficult to run this society with the help of law." There is no scope for improvement in this matter and he is not fit to rejoin society. In this case, it would be appropriate in the better interest of the society to give (the) death penalty to the accused," court held.

## Donald Trump loses third bid for judge to step aside in hush money case: Defendant has provided nothing new...!



GNS News Agency, August 16

A New York judge declined for a third time to step aside from the case in which Donald Trump was convicted of charges involving hush money paid to a porn star, dismissing the former U.S. president's claim of conflict of interest related to political consultancy work by the judge's daughter.

As he did in April and in August 2023, Justice Juan Merchan in a decision released on Wednesday denied a request by Trump's lawyers that he recuse himself from the first case involving criminal charges against a former U.S. president. Merchan is scheduled to sentence Trump on Sept. 18. "Defendant has provided nothing new for this Court to consider. Counsel has merely repeated arguments that have already been denied by this and higher courts" and were "rife with inaccuracies and unsubstantiated claims," Merchan wrote in the ruling, dated Aug. 13.

A spokesperson for the Manhattan District Attorney's Office declined to comment. "The Highly Conflicted Judge should have long ago recused himself from this case," Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung said in a statement. Trump was found guilty by a jury on May 30 on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records for having covered up former personal lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen's \$130,000 payment to adult film actress Stormy Daniels to avert a sex scandal before the 2016 U.S. election. Two months later, his lawyers made their third

request that Merchan step aside, arguing that his daughter's work for a political consultancy that has counted Democratic campaigns among its clients - including the unsuccessful bid by Kamala Harris for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination - posed a conflict of interest. Harris, now vice president, is the Democratic presidential candidate facing Republican nominee Trump in the Nov. 5 U.S. election.

Falsifying business records is a crime punishable by up to four years in prison, though sentences such as fines or probation have been more common for others convicted of that crime. Prosecutors with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office, which brought the charges, had called Trump's recusal request a "frivolous" attempt to relitigate an issue that was resolved twice before. "No amount of overheated, hyperbolic rhetoric can cure the fatal defects in defendant's ongoing effort to impugn the fairness of these proceedings," prosecutors wrote in an Aug. 1 court filing.

The payment to Daniels was made in exchange for her silence before the 2016 election about a sexual encounter she has said she had with Trump a decade earlier, which Trump denied. Trump went on to win the presidency by defeating Democrat Hillary Clinton. Merchan rejected a recusal request in April before jury selection in the trial and last year after an ethics panel found that his daughter's work did not pose reasonable questions about the judge's impartiality. During the trial, Trump took to his social media platform to deride Merchan as a "highly conflicted" overseer of a "kangaroo court." Ahead of the trial, Trump wrote on social media that Merchan's daughter "makes money by working to 'Get Trump,'" comments that in part contributed to Merchan's decision to expand a gag order to bar the former president from commenting publicly about family members of court staff or prosecutors. Trump's lawyers separately have asked the judge to throw out his conviction in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's July ruling giving former presidents broad immunity from prosecution for official acts taken in office. Merchan has said he will decide on Trump's arguments by Sept. 16.

## US consumer inflation records smallest annual rise since March 2021, clearing way for Fed to begin cutting rates

GNS News Agency, August 16

Year-over-year inflation reached its lowest level in more than three years in July, the latest sign that the worst price spike in four decades is fading and setting up the Federal Reserve for an interest rate cut in September. Wednesday's report from the Labor Department showed that consumer prices rose just 0.2% from June to July after dropping slightly the previous month for the first time in four years. Measured from a year earlier, prices rose 2.9%, down from 3% in June. It is the mildest year-over-year inflation figure since March 2021.

The government said nearly all the increase last month reflected higher rental prices and housing costs, a trend that, according to real-time data, is easing.

For months, cooling inflation has provided gradual relief to America's consumers, who were stung by the price surges that erupted three years ago, particularly for food, gas, rent and other necessities. Inflation peaked two years ago at 9.1%, the highest level in four decades. Inflation has taken a central role in the presidential election, with former President Donald Trump blaming the Biden administration's energy policies for the price increases. Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday said she would soon unveil new proposals to "bring down costs and also strengthen the economy overall." "Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, so-called core prices climbed 0.2% from June to July, after a 0.1% increase the previous month. Compared to a year ago, core inflation rose 3.2%, down from 3.3% in June, the lowest since April 2021. Core prices are closely watched by economists because it typically provides a better read of where inflation is headed.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has said he is seeking additional evidence of slowing inflation before the Fed begins cutting its key interest rate. Economists widely expect the Fed's first rate cut to occur in mid-September. When the central bank lowers its benchmark rate, over time it tends to reduce the cost of borrowing for consumers and businesses. Mortgage rates have already declined in anticipation of the Fed's first rate reduction. At a news conference last month, Powell said that cooler inflation data this spring had strengthened the Fed's confidence that price increases are falling back to a 2% annual pace. Another inflation report will be issued next month before the Fed's Sept. 17-18 meeting, with economists expecting that report to also show that price increases remained mostly tame. Inflation has eased substantially in the past two years as global supply chains have been repaired, a spate of apartment construction in



many large cities has cooled rental costs and higher interest rates have slowed auto sales, forcing dealers to offer better deals to potential car buyers. Consumers, particularly lower-income ones, are also becoming more price-sensitive, forgoing high-priced items or shifting to cheaper alternatives. This has forced many companies to rein in price hikes or even offer lower prices. Prices are still rising sharply for some services, including auto insurance and health care. Auto insurance costs have shot up as the value of new and used vehicles has soared compared with three years ago. Economists, though, expect those costs to eventually grow more slowly.

As inflation continues to decline, the Fed is paying increasingly close attention to the job market. The central bank's goals, as defined by Congress, are to keep prices stable and support maximum employment. This month, the government reported that hiring slowed much more than expected in July and that the unemployment rate rose for a fourth straight month, though to a still-low 4.3%. The figures roiled financial markets and led many economists to boost their forecasts for interest rate cuts this year. Most analysts now expect at least three quarter-point rate cuts at the Fed's September, November and December meetings. The Fed's benchmark rate is at a 23-year high of 5.3%. Still, the rise in the unemployment rate has reflected mainly an influx of job-seekers, especially new immigrants, who haven't immediately found work and so have been classified as unemployed. That is a much more positive reason for a higher unemployment rate than if it came from a jump in layoffs. Measures of job cuts remain low. On Thursday, the government will release its latest data on retail sales, which are expected to show that consumers increased their spending modestly in July. As long as shoppers are willing to spend, businesses are likely to hold onto their workers and may even add staff.

## Nikki Haley makes bold declaration about Kamala Harris, tells Trump to 'quit whining' about her

Nikki Haley has issued a strong statement about Kamala Harris as polls show that the Democratic nominee is gaining an edge against Donald Trump. During her Tuesday appearance on Fox News' Special Report segment, Haley asserted that Republican leaders should "quit whining" about the vice president and focus on devising a campaign strategy that caters to the needs of the American people.

During the interview, Haley bluntly advised fellow Republicans and the former president to "quit whining" about Harris' run in this year's elections. She emphasized that the Trump campaign must focus on the public's needs rather than attacking the Democratic nominee on her race and intellectual abilities. "You can't win on those things. The American people are smart. Treat them like they're smart. It's not about her. It's about the American people. Talk to them and let them know you need their vote," Haley said before explaining that Harris would refrain from giving interviews. "I take her at her word that she thinks that illegal immigrants should be able to vote and be given driver's licenses. I take her at her word that she wants to ban fracking and kill a bunch of U.S. jobs. Take her at her word," Haley added. Haley went on to explain



how she had already predicted that Joe Biden would pass the baton to Harris. "Republicans should not be surprised that we are now running against Kamala Harris. It was her all the time," the former GOP presidential candidate told Fox News anchor Bret Baier. Following the president's shaky performance during CNN's presidential debate against Trump, Haley warned Republicans that a switch was incoming. "Mark my words... Biden will not be the Democrat nominee. Republicans, get your guard up!" she wrote on X, formerly Twitter, in June.

## Kamala Harris' campaign manipulating headlines within Google search ads to suggest major publishers backing her:



GNS News Agency, August 16

Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign team has been subtly manipulating news headlines in Google search results to give the impression that major media outlets support her, according to Axios. This revelation comes amidst critics questioning Harris for keeping a distance from significant interviews and media appearances since declaring her candidacy for president. The modified headlines, which were all accompanied by a banner that read "Paid for by Harris for President," were altered without the news outlets' knowledge, the report stated. The fake headline campaign involved around a dozen publishers, including well-known outlets including CBS News, PBS, Reuters, The Guardian, and The Associated Press. Her campaign has even changed headlines of even small publications, such as WDay Radio in North Dakota.

Launching sponsored ads on Google, Harris' campaign has been linking to actual news articles from different sources with customised headlines and descriptions created, a tactic that Google and industry analysts referred to as "common." The headline of one sponsored advertisement that directs viewers to NPR's website reads, "Harris will Lower Health Costs," while another headline from AP says, "VP Harris' Economic Vision - Lower Costs and Higher Wages," as per Axios. In another instance, the Guardian headline saying, "VP Harris Fights Abor-

tion Bans - Harris Defends Repro Freedom," includes supporting text beneath it reading, "VP Harris is a champion for reproductive freedom and will stop Trump's abortion bans". Representatives from the impacted firms, including CNN, USA Today, and NPR, all of which had released positive stories for Harris in recent weeks, claimed they were unaware that their organisations were linked with the campaign.

"While we understand why an organisation might wish to align itself with the Guardian's trusted brand, we need to ensure it is being used appropriately and with our permission. We'll be reaching out to Google for more information about this practice," a spokesperson for the Guardian asserted. A representative for Gannett, the parent company of USA TODAY, clarified that they were unaware about the Harris campaign's move about using their content. As a news organisation, the spokesperson said that they are dedicated to making sure that their stories are disseminated responsibly, upholding the greatest standards of accuracy and integrity. Despite being deceptive, the strategy does not break Google's guidelines because the phony advertisements are clearly marked as "sponsored" and "easily distinguishable from search results."

Did Kamala Harris campaign say anything on matter?

An insider close to the Harris campaign's advertising staff claims that the campaign purchases search advertisements that include news links to provide people looking for information regarding the Democrat presidential candidate with more context. The campaign adhered to Google's regulations, although some advertisements may not have had the required disclosures when they appeared due to a technical issue in Google's Ad Library. A Google representative verified the glitch and stated that the company is conducting an inquiry into what went wrong. "Election advertisers are required to complete an identity verification process and we prominently display in-ad disclosures that clearly show people who paid for the ad," said the spokesperson.

## Raygun accused of scoring zero points at Olympics 'on purpose' as netizens call Holy Molly more 'skilled'

GNS News Agency, August 16 Australian breakdancer Dr. Rachael Gunn, known by her stage name "Raygun," has been accused of scoring zero points at the Paris Olympics 2024 "on purpose." The 36-year-old dancer's Olympic debut has been nothing short of a controversy, with netizens comparing her performance with Holly Chapman, who lost the Olympic spot to Gunn. Amid the growing debate about her poor performance, social media is abuzz with claims that the World Championship was rigged. Recently, professor Megan Davis, pro vice chancellor of the University of New South Wales, called out Gunn for being "disrespectful" towards other competitors by deliberately underperforming. The Australian academic became a controversial Olympic figure after losing all three round-robin battles 18-0, 18-0, 18-0 against the USA, France and Lithuania.

"Getting zero points on purpose in three rounds for an academic study subsidized by the taxpayer both at a university and Olympic level isn't funny and isn't 'having a go'," Davis said on social media. "(It's) disrespectful to other competitors. I'm glad most Aussies aren't buying the Kool-Aid," she continued, adding, "Affluent, comfortable life, educated, not a care in the world, nothing matters really, what fun, what a fun Aussie gal, chortle chortle," per New York Post.

As the debate surrounding Raygun's poor performance intensified on social media, netizens began wondering if the Olympic qualifier competition was rigged. Molly Chapman, who lost to Gunn at the World Champi-



onships, has been deemed more "skilled" than the latter. Shortly after the Olympics breakdancing event, footage of Chapman, AKA Holy Molly's performance, started making rounds on social media, with several users claiming that Gunn won solely because her husband was one of the judges. "Aussie media refuses to say that her husband was the judge for the 'competition' she 'won'... Taxpayer funded holiday to Paris," wrote one user on YouTube. "She placed at every competition she entered... the fix was in... Simple when Gunns husband was one of the judges, and she and her husband oversaw the qualification process. She placed at every competition she entered... the fix was in..." a second user commented. Meanwhile, a third said, "The corruption is real with this one."

## Trump reveals why he sounded 'different and strange' during Elon Musk interview as netizens question his 'slurred' voice

Donald Trump has acknowledged that he sounded "strange and different" and defended the tone of his voice during a two-hour rambling interview with Tesla CEO Elon Musk. The former President and Musk spoke with each other over the phone on Monday night. While the interview marked his comeback to X, formerly Twitter, after a long hiatus following his 2021 ban, Trump seemed to "slur his words" and have a "lisp". With this interview, Trump intended to connect with millions of prospective voters, but many were surprised with the 78-year-old's "slurred" voice. "Donald Trump has a pretty bad NEW lisp either that OR he's slurring his words. HE'S REALLY SLURRING HIS S's! Like he has cotton stuffed in his mouth," one X user wrote.

"Does Donald Trump have a lisp?" inquired another, stressing that "I've never noticed it before." "That particular lisp is from someone without



their dentures in. Does Donald Trump have dentures?" a third user asked. Meanwhile, American journalist Jonathan Lemire bashed the GOP presidential candidate, stating that he "slurred his words" during the interview and displayed "a dark, dystopic picture of America." Here's what Donald Trump has to say

Addressing the concerns on Truth Social,

Trump cited technical issues as the cause. Calling his conversation with Musk "really something special", the former President hailed the billionaire and thanked him for such a "strong endorsement". "Unfortunately, because of the complexity of modern day equipment, and cellphone technology, my voice was, in certain areas, somewhat different and strange. Therefore, we have put out an actual, and perfect, recording of the conversation. ENJOY!" Reacting to his post, one of his supporters hit out at his Democrat rival, writing, "Kamala Harris couldn't sniff even a fraction of the viewership." "It was a fantastic conversation and millions loved hearing about the many great concepts to bring about a brighter future for the country under your leadership," another chimed in. "The left is unhinged about his voice,"

## PM Kisan installment amount could rise to Rs 8,000



to Rs 8,000 annually. They also seek all subsidies to be directly transferred to farmers through DBT, along with additional funds for agricultural research in Budget 2024.

Introduced on February 24, 2019, the PM-KISAN scheme aims to assist land-holding farmers financially, provided they meet specific income-based criteria. Under the PM Kisan scheme, eligible farmer families across India receive Rs 6,000 annually in three instalments every four months via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). As of now, over 11 crore farmers have received payouts totalling more than Rs 3.04 lakh crore. With the upcoming disbursements, the total payout since the scheme's inception will exceed Rs 3.24 lakh crore. Recently, upon his third term's start, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initial decision was to release the 17th instalment, benefiting 9.3 crore farmers and involving an approximately Rs 20,000 crore distribution. The PM-KISAN scheme, a central sector initiative, provides income support to all land-holding farmers' families nationwide. This financial aid aims to assist in purchasing agricultural inputs and meeting household expenses. Documents from the Interim Budget reveal a Rs 1.27 lakh crore allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture in the 2024-25 fiscal year, slightly up from the current fiscal year.

PM-KISAN scheme aims to assist land-holding farmers financially, provided they meet specific income-based criteria. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met agricultural experts for discussions ahead of the upcoming budget. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met with various experts as part of her pre-budget meeting. The Union Minister also met agricultural experts for discussions ahead of the upcoming budget.

Various media reports suggest they have urged for an increase in the PM-KISAN installment from Rs 6,000

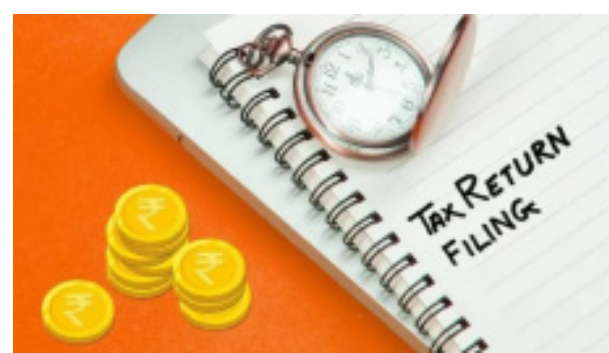
## These individuals are exempt from paying tax

Filing the income tax return (ITR) is an essential duty of an Indian citizen and failure to do so can attract legal repercussions such as penalties, increased tax scrutiny, etc. It is important to note that every individual in the country needs to file their income tax returns, even if their income is not taxable or they are not paying any income tax. Filing the ITR by July 31 of a financial year helps avoid penalties.

Under the Income Tax Act in India, specific groups residing in certain regions of select states are eligible for exemptions from paying income tax. These exemptions are given based on predefined criteria such as income thresholds, socio-economic standing, and occupations of individuals within these communities. These targeted tax relief measures aim to reduce the financial burden on marginalised populations in these areas, promoting fair opportunities for all. Exemptions for residents of North-eastern States and UTs

"Under Section 10(26) of the Income Tax Act in India, members of Scheduled Tribes residing in Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Ladakh region of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are exempt from paying income tax," said Rohit Jain, Managing Partner, Singhania & Co. Exemptions for individuals in certain areas as outlined in Section 10(26) of the Income Tax Act, a specific category of income is exempt from income tax obligations. This exemption pertains to income generated within specified areas or states, in the form of dividends or interest on securities. More specifically, this exemption applies to members of a Scheduled Tribe who reside in regions designated within the Constitution.

"This exemption also applies to those living in specific areas within these regions, including the North Cachar Hills District, Karbi Anglong District, Bodoland Territorial Areas District, Khasi Hills District, Jaintia Hills District, and Garo Hills District in Meghalaya. The exemption covers income generated within these specified areas, including income from dividends or interest on securities. However, income from renting property or conducting business outside these regions is not eligible for the exemption," said Rohit Jain, Managing Partner, Singhania & Co. Additionally, the states of Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, and the



Ladakh region are also covered under this exemption. Claiming tax exemption

One can claim tax exemption under Section 10(26) by filing an income tax return (ITR). Since their incomes qualify for tax exemptions based on the nature of that income, these individuals need to disclose the income generated and the exemption. Individuals belonging to Scheduled Tribes residing in several northeastern states and the Ladakh region of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are required to submit Income Tax Returns (ITRs) if their earnings exceed the limit set by the Income Tax Department. It is essential for them to declare their total income and avail the exemptions provided under Sections 10(26) and 10(26AAA) of the Income Tax Act. ITR exemption for certain senior citizens

An individual resident aged 60-79 is considered a Senior Citizen for Income Tax purposes, while a Super Senior Citizen is someone aged 80 years or older. These classifications impact tax benefits and exemptions, and compliance with regulations for each category is crucial for accurate tax filing and financial planning. Under Section 194P of the Income Tax Act, individuals who are 75 years old or above and receive pension income along with interest income from a specified bank account are eligible to opt out of filing their Income Tax Return (ITR). To proceed with this option, qualifying seniors need to complete a declaration in Form 12BBA. The form must be submitted to the designated bank where the pension and interest income is received. The bank will then assess and deduct the applicable income tax based on the information provided in the form.



Leading the equity issuance surge during the first two months were IPOs from the small and mid-cap (SME) segment, with 44 of these companies getting listed in the first two months of the current fiscal (FY25).

board IPOs in April and May, the data showed. Some of the main board IPOs included Aadhaar Housing Finance (Rs 3000 crore), Go Digit General Insurance Rs 2,614 crore and Awfis Space Solutions Ltd (Rs 599 crore).

Indian corporates raised Rs 67,956 crore from the IPO market in FY24 and they are expected to mobilise over Rs 1 lakh crore through primary issuances in the current fiscal. The rise in the number of companies raising money through IPOs can be attributed to the strong macroeconomic growth of the country, stable government and interest rates, and ease in inflation. According to Sebi data, corporates did not raise money through the follow-on public offer route in May this year. However, in April, Rs 18,000 crore was raised through a single FPO of Vodafone Idea, which was the largest issue in the country. Funds amounting to Rs 3,798 crore were raised through 20 rights issues in April and May. Funds raised through preferential allotment during the two months stood at Rs 32,695 crore. The amount raised through QIP (Qualified Institutional Placement) stood at Rs 14,512 crore in the period. In May 2024, Rs 1,207 crore was mobilised through the public issue of debt, compared to the Rs 687 crore raised during April. Private placement of debt raised Rs 61,227 crore in May, compared to Rs 30,508 crore in April.

## SMEs on IPO spree in April, May as corporates mobilise nearly Rs 85,000 crore from equity offerings

In just the first two months of financial year 2024-25 (FY25), Indian corporates have mobilised Rs 84,866 crore through equity issuances, including initial public offerings (IPO), follow-on public issues and preferential allotment. In the twelve months of FY24, corporates had raised Rs 67,956 crore from the IPO market and are expected to mobilise over Rs 1 lakh crore through primary issuances in the current fiscal. Leading the equity issuance surge during the first two months were IPOs from the small and mid-cap (SME) segment, with 44 of these companies getting listed in the first two months of the current fiscal (FY25). This comes amid the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch raising concerns over manipulation in the listing of SMEs a few months back.

While 44 companies got listed on SME platforms of the BSE and the NSE in April and May, there were a total of 52 listings (main board IPOs plus SME IPOs) during the two month period. In fiscal 2023-24, the total number of SME companies that were listed was 196. A total of 21 SMEs got listed in April, raising Rs 527 crore, while there were 23 SME IPOs which mobilised Rs 673 crore in May, according to the data from Sebi data.

In March this year, the Sebi Chairperson had said that there were signs of price manipulation in SME IPOs and trading of such shares in the secondary market. "The reality is that SMEs are relatively small entities, the market is small, the free float is small, it is relatively easy to manipulate both at the IPO level and the trading level," Buch had said. Some of the SMEs that raised capital through IPO route in April and May 2024 included ABS Marine Services (Rs 96.29 crore), Trust Fintech Ltd (Rs 63.45 crore), Creative Graphics Solutions India (Rs 54.4 crore), Quest Laboratories (Rs 43.16 crore) and Indian Emulsifiers (Rs 42.39 crore). All SME IPOs witnessed higher participation from retail investors and also were listed at a premium. In order to check volatility in the listing of SMEs, NSE, on Thursday, introduced an overall capping of 90 per cent on the opening price discovered during a special pre-open session for IPOs on its SME platform. This means the listing day price of any SME cannot go above 90 per cent of the issue price. On an overall basis, Indian corporates mobilised Rs 84,866 crore through equity issuances, including initial public offering (IPO), both mainboard and SME platform, follow-on public offering and preferential allotment in the first two months of fiscal 2024-24, the SEBI data showed.

India Inc raised Rs 14,661 crore through eight main

## What's your pick: Ready to cook or ready to eat?



Managing work, family and personal commitments often leaves us with limited time to cook. Pre-packaged food alternatives like ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat meals become increasingly attractive in these situations. While both offer undeniable convenience, the question still persists: are these convenient meals as healthy as cooking from scratch? Garima Dev Verman, a Certified Nutritionist and Medical Content Analyst with The Healthy Indian Project (THIP), breaks down the key differences and sheds light on their nutritional value. Garima clarifies the distinction between these two categories:

"Ready-to-cook meals are already prepared to some extent, but might require further cooking steps like microwaving. Think of Haldiram's retort pouches. Ready-to-eat options, on the other hand, are good to go straight from the package, like popcorn, namkeen (savoury snacks), or khakras (flatbreads)." Convenience Comes at a Cost While convenience is a major benefit, Garima cautioned against the potential downsides. "Ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat meals often lack the robust nutritional value of fresh ingredients," she explained. "They tend to be higher in sodium to enhance shelf life." This raises a

red flag, as excessive sodium intake can contribute to health problems like high blood pressure.

"Similar to how pickles use salt and mustard oil for preservation, pre-packaged meals rely heavily on sodium and sometimes sugar to extend shelf life. While these preservatives benefit the companies, they're not exactly health-friendly." Hidden sugars can also lurk in sauces and dressings. Nutritionists emphasise the importance of reading labels. "Consumers need to become label detectives. Companies create mass-produced products, and preservation is a necessity. This is why they use sugar and other additives. It's crucial to be aware of these hidden ingredients."

Garima acknowledged the ideal scenario: "If time allows, cooking a fresh meal with whole ingredients is always the best option for optimal nutrition." However, she recognises the realities of busy lifestyles. "For those short on time, ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat options can be an occasional solution. But remember, anything packaged, whether it's namkeen or biryani, isn't the healthiest choice." She recommended making informed choices: "Read the ingredient lists and nutrition labels carefully. When possible, prioritise fresh ingredients. Remember, India has a rich culinary tradition, and cooking delicious meals doesn't have to be complicated. It's a skill worth investing in for your health." While ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat meals offer convenience, they shouldn't become the norm. By understanding their nutritional limitations and developing label-reading skills, you can make informed choices and maintain a healthy balance in your diet. If a person is not able to cook a meal every day, what you can do is make dal, deep freeze it, suggested Garima, adding that resist the urge to rely on pre-made snacks as your primary source of nutrition.

## Can adding a dollop of ghee in your chai improve your gut health? Here's what an expert says

Adding a shot of ghee to your morning coffee was a hack well loved by celebrities and fitness enthusiasts alike. Social media is trending with nutritionists and content creators singing praises about adding ghee to their chai, promising health benefits and an exceptional taste. Indianexpress.com spoke with Dr Preeti Nagar, dietician at Noida International Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital (NIIMS), to delve into the advantages of this unique combination. "Ghee is rich in antioxidants and healthy fats that aid in detoxifying the body. This powerhouse superfood enhances nutrient absorption and helps balance stomach pH," she said. Tea, particularly when consumed on an empty stomach, can sometimes cause acidity. Nagar pointed out that ghee counters the acidic properties of milk, reducing the risk of inflammation and indigestion. "Ghee also helps improve gut health, and when combined with turmeric, it helps fight free radical damage," she said. For those prone to acidity, Nagar recommended mixing ghee with lukewarm water as an excellent alternative. "It has natural laxative properties that promote bowel movements and is godsent for those with irritable bowel syndrome. Milk and ghee as a combination fights constipation," said Nagar. Other than lowering



uric acid levels, the combination of ghee and milk also help in flushing out stubborn fat. Therefore, drinking ghee with tea is full of health benefits. However, Nagar warned people who are overweight and obese to be careful of consuming ghee as it may increase their cholesterol levels. Those suffering from fatty liver should also be careful.

## Can the viral purple toothpaste lead to brighter, whiter smiles? Dentists weigh in



If you're familiar with the concept of purple shampoo, this won't come as a shocker! The internet has been abuzz with purple toothpaste, claiming to whiten yellow teeth and spread happy smiles all around. What's got us curious, is to find out how these toothpastes work and whether they are safe to use in the long run. Dr Aditya Sharma, dentist, said, "It doesn't whiten the teeth as such,

but just uses the colour theory, which ends up hiding the yellow hue and gives the appearance of much whiter teeth. While it removes stains to a lesser extent, purple toothpaste work better as colour correctors compared to teeth whitening agents."

"Unlike traditional ones, purple toothpaste contains V34 colour corrector serum which is the main differentiator. Much like what is used in purple hair toners," said Dr Kamlesh Kothari, cosmetic dentist and maxillofacial surgeon, Kolkata. According to him, the toothpaste releases purple micro-particles (Red 33 and Blue 1 dyes) onto your teeth, which when mixed with yellow stains produces a white colour. While it does not change the internal colour of teeth, it does remove surface stains and enhance your smile for a few hours. This colour correction is akin to makeup for your teeth, not a substitute for your daily oral hygiene routine, Kothari further explained. Dr Niyati Arora BDS, MDS (prosthodontist) at Crown Hub Dental Clinic, Pitampura, said that oral care solutions containing purple dyes can frequently be used regularly, but it's crucial to adhere to the unique directions that come with each product.

## South Korean airport introduces bedbug-detecting dog as Paris Olympics close; learn how these insects can be harmful

To prevent a potential bedbug invasion following the Paris Olympics, South Korea has introduced a novel solution: a bedbug-sniffing dog. Ceco, a two-year-old beagle, is the country's first canine trained to detect the odour of bedbug pheromones. This highly trained pup can inspect a standard hotel room in less than two minutes, making it an invaluable asset in the fight against these pesky pests, Reuters reported. The initiative comes after France experienced a bedbug scare in the lead-up to the Olympics. To prevent a similar crisis, South Korea has deployed Ceco and his team at its main airport to inspect arriving passengers and their belongings. This canine unit will be on duty until September 8. "As the global community is gathering in Paris, France, on the occasion of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games, there's a chance bedbugs will enter the country following the event," a government press release said. "Therefore, we are taking a preemptive response to intercept the entry through the Incheon International Airport, which is the main gateway to the country." Why skipping showers can disrupt your skin's natural balance Bedbugs, those tiny, parasitic insects, have become an increasingly common nuisance in homes, hotels, and other public places. (file)

Why is exposure to bedbugs harmful? Bedbug, a tiny, parasitic insect, has become an increasingly common

nuisance in homes, hotels, and other public places. While they don't typically transmit diseases, their presence can significantly impact one's physical and mental well-being. According to Dr Narendra Singhla, Lead Consultant - Internal Medicine at CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, the effects of bedbug exposure can range from mild to severe. "Short-term consequences include itchy skin, irritation, and even allergic reactions in susceptible individuals," he explains. The psychological toll is also considerable, as the constant worry and discomfort associated with bedbug infestations can lead to heightened stress and anxiety. The long-term implications of bedbug exposure are equally concerning. Chronic skin issues can develop due to repeated bites and scratching, Dr Singhla said. Sleep disturbances are common, as the knowledge of these pests sharing your bed can make it difficult to relax. Moreover, the persistent mental anguish caused by the infestation can contribute to broader mental health concerns. While the risk of transmitting diseases like Chagas disease through bedbugs is relatively low, Dr Singhla emphasises the importance of taking preventive measures. Chagas disease, also known as American trypanosomiasis, is a serious parasitic illness primarily found in Latin America. It's caused by the parasite Trypanosoma cruzi and is typically transmitted through the bite of an infected triatomine bug, often called a "kissing bug."

## Over 5 lakh Stree movie tickets sold, Shraddha Kapoor film breaks Gadar 2's box office record



ever, the locals living in Chanderi team up with the mysterious character, played by Shraddha Kapoor, as they confront another ghost known as 'Sarkata'. Characters played by Rajkummar, Aparshakti, Abhishek return to confront the ghost and they are joined by Pankaj Tripathi's Rudra.

Stree 2 is expected to become the biggest box office opener of the year as reports have indicated that the film might make over Rs 40 crore on the opening day. As per industry tracker Sacnilk, the film has already collected over Rs 13.7 crore at the box office. The film will also witness the advantage of an extended weekend as after its release on Thursday, the weekend extends upto Monday, which is the holiday for Raksha Bandhan. Stree 2 is releasing against John Abraham-starrer Vedaa and Akshay Kumar-starrer Khel Khel Mein but both these films have failed to generate any buzz. Stree 2 is banking on audience's loyalty to become the biggest hit of the year and if everything goes in their favour, it might cross the Rs 100 crore in the first couple of days itself. Stree 2, starring Shraddha Kapoor, Rajkummar Rao, Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurana, Abhishek Banerjee, among others, is releasing in theatres on August 15. The film is a sequel to Stree, which released in 2018. The first film was a horror-comedy set in Chanderi and the second film starts off from the same place where the first one ended. Stree 2 is aiming to be the biggest box office blockbuster of the year. The first film was a massive hit as it made around Rs 130 crore at the domestic box office.

Stree 2 Review Live Updates: Stree 2 Movie Review Live Updates: Starring Shraddha Kapoor, Stree 2 releases in theatres on August 15. Stree 2 Movie Review Live Updates: Starring Shraddha Kapoor, Stree 2 releases in theatres on August 15. Shraddha Kapoor Stree 2 Release and Review Live Updates: Stree 2, starring Shraddha Kapoor, Rajkummar Rao, Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurana, Abhishek Banerjee, is releasing in theatres on August 15. Stree, released in 2018, was a horror-comedy that was loved by the audience. Directed by Amar Kaushik, the film was set in town of Chanderi where a spirit kidnaps men. The lore of Stree is such that people write 'O Stree Kal Aana' on their walls.

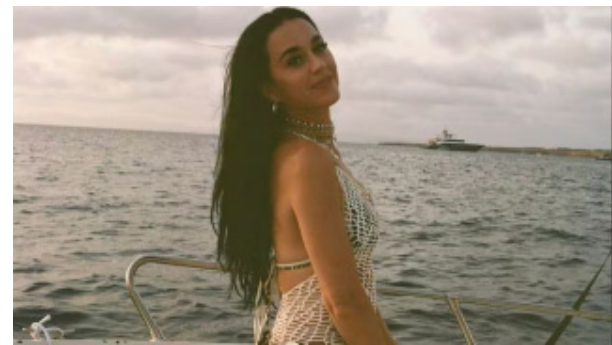
The sequel takes the story ahead and starts from the same point where the first film ended. This time, how-

## Katy Perry's Lifetimes video accused of 'environmental damage', Spanish island investigates possible damage to dunes

Katy Perry might be in trouble as her music video Lifetimes is under the scanner for filming on a small, protected island in Spain without the necessary permission from the authorities. On Tuesday, the environment department of the Balearic Islands issued a press release claiming that the video's production company did not secure the proper authorisation before filming the music video for Katy Perry's new single Lifetimes on the protected dunes of S'Espalmador in Ibiza.

On 8 August, the Stillz-directed video for the track was unveiled, where the 39-year-old singer could be seen frolicking on the islands of Ibiza and Formentera. It includes shots of the dune system of S'Espalmador, one of the most ecologically rich areas of Formentera. In its statement, the department clarified that it was looking into potential damage of the prohibited area, which is marked by rope. According to the statement, the filming does not constitute a "crime against the environment." A video or photographic reports can be authorised upon request.

According to the regional government's tourism website, S'Espalmador—an approximately 1.8 mile-long



islet to the north of Formentera—has been part of the Ses Salines de Ibiza and Formentera natural park since 1980. Reportedly, the dunes on the small privately owned, uninhabited island make up the best-preserved dune system in the Balearic Islands and are of "great ecological value". Katy Perry's "Lifetime" is the follow-up single to the singer's comeback vehicle Woman's World. It was released to negative reviews in July. Her album 143-code for I love you-to release on 20 September.

## Salman Khan most misunderstood by Bollywood, want to direct him in film with Shah Rukh, Aamir: Kangana Ranaut



need that kind of entertainment but I also think that they have a very artistic side of them, which hasn't been explored other than a few films. I would love to explore that."

Though Kangana doesn't mind directing the three Khans, she claimed to be a forever fan of Irrfan Khan and expressed regret at not being able to direct him. "One actor that I regret not being able to direct is Irrfan Khan. He is one of my favourite Khans and I will always miss him," she said. Talking about Salman Khan and how he is misunderstood by people in the film industry, she said, "Salman Khan has a massive fan following; people love him so much. He is the most loved star in the country. Those who compete with him and people in the film industry are the only ones who have misunderstood him, and that is because they are jealous of him and want to be in his position," she explained.

The Queen actor further discussed how she, too, has faced hate from certain industry insiders but chooses to focus on the overwhelming support she receives from her fans. "I get so much love from everywhere. People from the Opposition love me so much. They make me sit on their tables and don't let me go. They say, 'You are our heroine too. We have seen your films.' They talk to me about my films. It surprises me. Obviously, I won't be liked by people of the film industry because they would want people from their gang and their families to be in this position. I won't acknowledge them. If 90 percent people love me, why will I look at the rest 10 percent," she said. Emergency is based on the life of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Besides playing the lead role, Kangana has also directed and co-produced the film. The movie is set to release in theatres on September 6.

Kangana Ranaut, currently busy with the promotions of her upcoming film Emergency, recently expressed her desire to direct Bollywood's three Khans — Salman, Shah Rukh, and Aamir — while sharing her thoughts on their unexplored artistic potential. The actor-politician also opened up about her association with Salman Khan, describing him as the most misunderstood actor in the film industry.

At the trailer launch event for Emergency in Mumbai, Kangana was asked if she would consider directing all three Khans in a single film. She enthusiastically responded, "I would love to direct and produce films all three Khans. I would love to show their talented side, where they can act and they can also look good and, at the same time, do something that is very significant to the society. I would love to make a film like that because I think that they are very talented. They are generating a lot of revenue for the industry and we should be eternally grateful to them. They are engaging with the masses who

## Rajesh Khanna declined Rs 3.5 crore per episode offer to appear in Bigg Boss as career hit rock-bottom, was rejected by channel when he agreed

Stories of superstar Rajesh Khanna's fall from grace are legendary. After dominating the Hindi film industry for years on end, Khanna's career crumbled before his eyes as audiences switched their allegiance to the up-and-comer Amitabh Bachchan, and began to favour action-oriented movies over the dramas that Khanna was known for. But it was his rumoured arrogance that also influenced producers to stop betting on him.

His former wife, Dimple Kapadia, has spoken extensively about watching his disintegration first-hand, while other contemporaries have spoken about his behaviour on set. According to a 2012 Rediff article, journalist Ali Peter John recalled his interactions with Khanna over the years, and shared an anecdote about the actor scoff-

ing at being offered a spot on the reality show Bigg Boss when his career had hit its nadir. Ali Peter John recalled, "Once, the makers of Bigg Boss called me to fix a meeting with him; they wanted him in the Bigg Boss house. But he said, 'Nahin, nahin, Rajesh Khanna aise show thodi karega (Rajesh Khanna won't work in such shows)'. Colors was reportedly willing to offer the actor Rs 3.5 crore per episode. "I tried to convince him, but he said no. The Colors people told me they were willing to pay him Rs 3.5 crore for every episode he appeared in, but he said no." Ali recalled, adding, "A few days later, he called me and said he wanted to do the show, but by then Colors had lost interest." While Salman Khan took over as the host of Bigg Boss in 2010,

## Hina Khan gets a wig made from her real hair amid cancer battle: 'It was an empowering decision'



Actress Hina Khan announced that she was battling stage 3 breast cancer in June this year. As the actress began her spirited journey to overcome this illness, she also inspired many. In the course of her treatment, one emotional moment for the Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai actress and her family was when she had to cut her hair as she undergoes chemotherapy. On Wednesday, the actress revealed how she got a wig made from her real hair to feel comfortable during this tough phase.

Sharing a video, Hina Khan penned a long note on social media, explaining to women who are in similar situations why this was an empowering decision. Hina wrote, "The moment I was diagnosed, I knew I'd lose my hair, I chose to cut it off on my own terms while it was still healthy, long, and vibrant. I decided to make a wig of my OWN hair that would bring me comfort during this challenging time. And I must say it was an empowering decision, and I'm so proud of it. And I want to send out a special message to all my Women brave hearts out there

who are going through similar struggles... if you resonate with my decision and agree with it... I suggest you do the same. It will make at least one thing much easier and you will feel better, you will feel at home."

The note further read, "You know, it feels like somehow I am reunited with my lost hair when I wear it. It feels good, it feels cozy and it feels like home. It's just a phase, I knew I would have to go through, and decided preemptively to normalize it first for myself and now that I have been using it, I thought it would be a good story to share with all of you. Because you guys have been like a dream, it's so heartwarming, reassuring, and encouraging to see your response wherever I go, my god, so much love and concern is directed towards me. It is so overwhelming to see a stranger's eyes welling up in concern when they wish me a speedy recovery. I am just blown away by the positivity you guys send me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I know the world is praying for me. Lekin Phir bhi dua please!"

## Kangana Ranaut says 'I have been boycotted by Bollywood, not easy to work with me': 'My PR team imposed emergency...'

The trailer for Kangana Ranaut's Emergency was finally launched at a grand event in Mumbai. It was attended by the film's cast — Kangana Ranaut, Anupam Kher, Mahima Choudhary, and Shreyas Talpade. While addressing the media, Kangana, who took over two years to complete the film, spoke about being boycotted by the film industry. The actress-turned-politician also claimed that many in the film industry become extremely negative and vile and tried to ruin her career. The Queen star revealed how her PR team asked her not to speak at the Emergency event.

"I have faced many obstacles while making this film, which is common with every film," Kangana said at the event. "Every film faces a lot of obstacles and then they find many angels who support you through those obstacles. I want to say a special thanks to my cast. Everybody knows I have been boycotted by the film industry. It's not easy to stand with me, it's not easy to be part of my film, and it's definitely not easy to praise me. But, they have done all of it."

She also said that her PR team put 'an emergency' on her ahead of the trailer launch. "Just now my PR team put Emergency on me. They said, we are not going to open up to the media. But, Anupam Kher pitched in and he said 'this is media, they are all our friends, we don't



have to put an Emergency here.' So, I think I will open up to you," she told the press. Kangana also claimed that there are people out to sabotage her. "This is mostly for people who are waiting to override this project with negativity. They will invest in PRs to malign the film. That's our only concern. Our industry people can be extremely negative and vile, and attempt to sabotage films and ruin people's careers. So, we are just concerned about them, I openly speak in the Parliament." Kangana Ranaut's Emergency, first announced during the pandemic, is all set to hit the theatres on September 6. The film was rescheduled twice due to several reasons.

## 'Unprofessional' Gurucharan Singh asked for his replacement on TMKOC to be fired, says report; actor admits he asked Asit Kumarr Modi for 'clarity'

Gurucharan Singh, who is best known for playing Roshan Sodhi in the television sitcom Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah, left the show back in 2020. But recently, there have been reports that Gurucharan was trying to get his job back. After he left the show, the character of Roshan Sodhi was taken over by Balvinder Singh Suri. A recent report claims that Gurucharan asked show's producer, Asit Kumarr Modi, to fire Suri from the role, but was shut down. As per a source quoted by News18, "Gurucharan wanted to come back to TMKOC and so he insisted Asit to terminate Suri's contract. But this is not how it works. Asit had no reason to remove Balwinder suddenly and so he clearly said a no to Gurucharan."



As per a source quoted by News18, "Gurucharan wanted to come back to TMKOC and so he insisted Asit to terminate Suri's contract. But this is not how it works. Asit had no reason to remove Balwinder suddenly and so he clearly said a no to Gurucharan."

while watching an episode of the show.

In an earlier chat with Siddharth Kannan, when Gurucharan was asked if he met with Asit Kumarr Modi to ask him for work, the actor said that he asked for "clarity" instead. "I asked him that just give me some clarity if I am going to be a part of this (Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah) or no," he said. Gurucharan said that he needed information on the subject be-

cause the audience keeps telling him that they want him back on the show. "They really stuck with me and prayed for me. It is their wish and it is my duty to think about their wishes," he said. When asked pointedly if Asit refused to cast him again, Gurucharan said, "Asit just gave me good wishes, so you just interpret his response from that." He also insisted that he has now moved on from the past, and wants to focus on the future. Balvinder

Singh Suri has been playing the character for over three years now. "I was also thinking about Ballu (Suri) because he too has been working there for so long. So one actor thinks about the other actor. Back when Ballu started doing this, he called me to ask if I had any problem with him playing Sodhi. I don't think anyone knows that he asked me. I don't hold personal grudges against any actor," he said.

## Vinesh Phogat to return to India on August 17, says Bajrang Punia



GNS News Agency, August 16

Paris Olympics: Wrestler Vinesh Phogat will land in New Delhi on Saturday, August 17, Bajrang Punia said in a social media post. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) will announce the verdict on Vinesh Phogat's disqualification. Vinesh Phogat will return from Paris and land in New Delhi on Saturday, August 17 at 10 am IST, fellow wrestler Bajrang Punia said in a social media post on Wednesday. Vinesh left the Games Village on Monday but did not return home even as the verdict on her appeal against disqualification was pending. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) verdict was expected to be out on Tuesday. However, an ad-hoc panel of the CAS deferred the verdict until Friday, August 16. Bajrang Punia shared a poster on social media, announcing the details of Vinesh Phogat's arrival and celebrations that have been planned along her route on Saturday, August 17.

Vinesh Phogat was feeling 'a little better' and began eating on Monday before leaving the Games Village. In exclusive photos accessed by India Today, the wrestler was seen carrying her bags out for the Games Village. The rest of the Indian contingent, including flagbearers at the closing ceremony Manu Bhaker and PR Sreejesh, returned to India earlier in the week and were felicitated in the capital city by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandavya. Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the Indian athletes from the Paris Olympics at his

residence on Independence Day and congratulate the Olympians who competed hard at the Games. Vinesh was disqualified from her women's 50kg gold medal match after failing a weigh-in ahead of the final. Vinesh was found 100 grams overweight on the second day of the weigh-in. Vinesh had cleared the weigh-in on the opening day of the event and went on to win three matches and reach the final. One of those three victories included a sensational upset of Yui Susaki, the Japanese wrestler, who had an 82-0 international record until facing the Indian on the mat on Tuesday.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) disqualified Vinesh Phogat and allowed Cuba's Guzman Uzneylys, who lost to the Indian in the semi-final, to compete in the gold medal bout against USA's Sarah Ann Hilderbrand on August 7. Vinesh appealed against her disqualification, knocking on the doors of the ad-hoc panel of the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Paris. The appeal against her disqualification was filed as early as August 7.

Notably, the Sole Arbitrator of the ad-hoc division of the CAS, Dr Annabelle Bennett, initially extended the deadline for the announcement of the verdict until August 13, allowing both parties -- applicant Vinesh Phogat, the respondents United World Wrestling and the International Olympic Committee, as well as Indian Olympic Association as an interested party -- to submit more evidence and proofs, backing their arguments. Dr. Annabelle heard the arguments of both parties in a hearing that lasted three hours on August 9 after registering Vinesh Phogat's appeal a day earlier. While the initial appeal was filed by French pro-bono lawyers for Vinesh, the IOA roped in senior counsels Harish Salve and Vidushpat Singhania to represent the wrestler at the hearing. The lawyers argued the weight gain on Tuesday evening was due to the body's natural recovery process and that it is the athlete's fundamental right to look after his/her body. They argued her body weight was under the prescribed limit on Day 1 of the competition, and the weight gain only happened because of recovery and that's not a fraud.

## Ben Stokes and Trent Boult join MI Cape Town for 3rd season of SA20

GNS News Agency, August 16

MI Cape Town has made two significant signings for the 3rd season of SA20, bringing in England's Test captain Ben Stokes and New Zealand's star bowler Trent Boult. The two cricketing giants are set to bring their world-class talent and experience to the tournament, making MI Cape Town a team to watch. Ben Stokes, known for his incredible performances on the world stage, returns to Newlands, a ground where he has fond memories. It was here that Stokes played one of the most memorable innings in cricket history, scoring 258 runs off just 198 balls against South Africa. Though currently sidelined with a hamstring injury, Stokes is expected to be fit in time for England's tour of Pakistan in October and ready to make an impact in SA20. Overall, Stokes has scored 3023 runs in 159 T20 matches at an average of 24.77 at a strike-rate of 133.23. Equally, he has claimed 90 wickets at an average of 30.38.

Boult and Stokes join MI Cape Town. Joining Stokes at MI Cape Town is Trent Boult, one of the finest left-arm pacers in modern cricket. Boult and Stokes have shared many memorable moments on the field, including the dramatic 2019 World Cup final, where Boult bowled the Super Over to Stokes. Boult has been a key player for New Zealand, leading their bowling attack in multiple World Cup finals and playing a crucial role in their World Test Championship win. Boult is no stranger to the MI family, having played for Mumbai Indians and MI New York. His experience and skill will be invaluable for MI Cape Town as they aim to make their mark in SA20. Boult



and Stokes to boost MI's lineup. Boult is a vastly experienced T20 campaigner, having been part of the IPL since 2015, and claimed 121 wickets in 104 matches. He will once again be part of the MI family after spending two seasons with Mumbai Indians, claiming a sensational 25 wickets in 15 matches that helped MI win the IPL title in 2020. Boult also plays for MI New York in the Major Cricket League in the United States, where he played a major role in MINY becoming the first team to lift the MLC title in 2023. He finished as the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 22 scalps, exactly double more than the second-placed Andrew Tye."

MI, MI Emirates, MI New York and now MI Cape Town. I'll be donning the Blue-and-Gold colours in the edition of SA20. Playing at the scenic Newlands is going to be special. I know, it's going to be Lekker," Boult said.

## No Rohit, Kohli, Bumrah or R Ashw in named in Duleep Trophy squads

GNS News Agency, August 16

The BCCI selection committee announced the four squads for the upcoming Duleep Trophy. Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and R Ashwin were the key missing names from the squad. The BCCI selection committee announced the squads for the first round of the Duleep Trophy, 2024-2025. The names of the star India players, including Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravichandran Ashwin were missing. The Duleep Trophy marks the beginning of red-ball cricket in the domestic season, giving youngsters and emerging talent to compete against some of the finest players from international cricket. The tournament is set to begin from September 5, 2024, in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh and M Chinnaswamy stadium, Bengaluru.

Other key Indian players, including India's ODI and T20I vice-captain Shubman Gill. KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Mohammed Siraj, Ravindra Jadeja alongside T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav will be taking part in the tournament.



ment. The BCCI in its release informed that the players who will be selected in India's squad for the home Test series against Bangladesh will be replaced in the Duleep Trophy. Nitish Kumar Reddy's participation in the Duleep Trophy has been subjected to fitness, after he missed out from the T20I series against Zimbabwe.

Kishan returns, Pant's red-ball comeback awaited. The tournament will also mark the return of our wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan. It was learnt that the selectors were also thinking about giving Rishabh Pant a go in the Duleep Trophy. However, that did not happen as the 26-year-

old is yet to kickstart his first red-ball assignment after coming back from the horrific car accident in 2022. Since his return, Pant has been a part of India's white-ball set-up and the wicketkeeper batter also donned the national jersey in the T20 World Cup. Mohammed Shami, who has been recuperating from surgery, will not feature in the tournament. However, the availability of the top players will also be subject to the dates of the preparatory camp that the team management is mulling holding in Chennai ahead of the Tests against Bangladesh. The four squads for the first round of the tournament are - Team A: Shubman Gill (C),

Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat.

Team B: Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant, Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy\*, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohd Siraj, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK). Team C: Ruturaj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abhishek Porel (WK), Suryakumar Yadav,

## Jason Gillespie invites Arshad Nadeem to Pakistan team's dressing room



GNS News Agency, August 16

Pakistan Test team's head coach Jason Gillespie invited Arshad Nadeem to the Pakistan team's dressing room after his Olympics gold medal win. Pakistan Test team's head coach Jason Gillespie said that he would love to invite Arshad Nadeem to the cricket team's dressing room. Arshad Nadeem created history by becoming the first-ever Pakistani to win an Olympic gold medal. He broke the Olympic record during the final of the men's javelin throw final in the Paris Games. Arshad's throw of 92.97m was crucial in him winning the Olympic gold medal. The Pakistani team players had also extended their warm wishes to Nadeem ahead of the men's javelin throw final.

"We would love to invite Arshad Nadeem to the dressing room as well. I saw all the Shaheens cheering him on during the Olympics. Having him visit and share

his gold medal with the team would be a fantastic boost, especially with the Olympic spirit still in the air. It was a wonderful moment, and we extend an open invitation for him to visit the dressing room," Gillespie said on the PCB Podcast. Can Arshad Nadeem inspire Pakistan cricket team? The Pakistan Test team coach felt that Arshad's meeting with the Pakistan players could be a huge morale and confidence booster for the players. Arshad was welcomed by the entire Lahore amid huge fanfare and has become the nation's hero. In a country which has always been obsessed over cricket, saw a new hero emerge from the small town of Mian Channu in Pakistan. Arshad also ended Pakistan's wait of 32 years to win an Olympic medal and his good friend and India's pride Neeraj Chopra, won the silver medal.

Arshad's gold win an added pressure for Pak cricketers?

Pakistan Test team's skipper Shan Masood was asked if Arshad's gold medal win could turn out to be an added pressure rather than a source of motivation for the players. "Does it put pressure on the team? I don't see it as pressure but as a privilege. Representing Pakistan is a huge honor, and every day we play is a privilege. We should feel extremely proud and grateful to represent our country. Arshad Nadeem's success motivates us to seize our opportunity to do something good for Pakistan," Masood said on the PCB Podcast. Pakistan's last trophy win in an ICC tournament was during the Champions Trophy in 2017. The team will be hoping for change in fortunes in the upcoming marquee events.

## Jhulan Goswami backs franchise leagues as 'future' for women's cricket

GNS News Agency, August 16. Jhulan Goswami said that franchise T20 leagues may end up playing a huge role in the growth of women's cricket. Goswami is ready for her stint as the mentor of the Trinbago Knight Riders in the WCPL. Legendary fast bowler Jhulan Goswami said that franchise cricket is necessary for women's cricket to grow. Goswami, all-time leading wicket-taker in Women's ODIs, reckoned that focus needs to be on T20 leagues around the world for the growth of cricket in the women's circuit.

Goswami has worked with the Mumbai Indians as their bowling coach and mentor in the Women's Premier League (WPL). The former speedster recently joined the Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) as their mentor for the Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCL). "It's a big challenge for women's cricket. Earlier, we saw these things happen for men's cricket but never expected it to happen for women's cricket, but that's happening. And I'm happy to see that. The ICC needs to take care, franchise cricket is the future of women's cricket. And that's the growth of women's cricket globally. You have to give priority to every franchise league otherwise cricket will not grow," Goswami said on ESPNcricinfo's Powerplay podcast. "Quality cricketers produced by franchise cricket"

Indian women's cricketers, including Smriti Mandhana, Richa Ghosh, Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues and Shreyanka Patil have played in franchise leagues around the world. Last year, Shreyanka became the leading wicket-taker in the WCPL. Harmanpreet once bagged the Player of the Tournament award in the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL). Mandhana has done well while playing for



Sydney Thunder in the WBBL and Southern Brave in the Hundred. Jemimah and fast bowler Shikha Pandey will play for TKR in the upcoming WCPL. Goswami also said that international calendars should be made in such a way that bilateral series and franchise leagues don't end up clashing.

"See how many quality cricketers were produced by franchise cricket in the last few years, starting with WBBL as well as the Hundred, WCPL, WPL. A lot of youngsters they've provided every year so you have to give priority to those windows and after that you have to have bilateral series. If you have your bilateral series and franchise leagues clashing then you will lose out on quality cricketers," Goswami added. The WPL has also witnessed the emergence of cricketers like Sajeewan Sajana and Asha Shobana, who both made their debuts for India after last season. After an impressive WPL campaign, left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwar also forayed into international cricket during the Asia Cup.

## Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant among big names included in squads for opening round of matches

GNS News Agency, August 16

The squads for the first round of the Duleep Trophy matches were announced by the BCCI on Wednesday with big names like Shubman Gill, KL Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant, Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer all set to play. India Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma and stalwart batter Virat Kohli were not named in any of the squads. However, the players who would be selected for the India vs Bangladesh Test series, set to start from September 19 will be replaced in the Duleep Trophy which is set to begin on September 5. Played primarily as a preparatory event ahead of India's home Test series and the tour to Australia later this year, the Duleep Trophy will see a revamp in its structure and overall system. Usually played in the zonal format, across six zones of the country, the Duleep Trophy served as a tournament that offered India's red-ball hopefuls a chance to shine. Last season, Hanuma Vihari-led South Zone won the title, beating West Zone by 75 runs in the final in Bengaluru. However, the BCCI has decided to do away with the six-team zonal format and zonal selections this time. Instead, four teams, namely India A, India B, India C and India D will feature in the tournament this time.

The Duleep Trophy will be played in a round-robin league-based format with no knockout matches this year. The team at the top of the standings after three rounds will be declared the winner. The tournament will begin at Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh and M Chinnaswamy stadium, Bengaluru, the BCCI release stated. Team A: Shubman Gill (C), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush



Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat. Team B: Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant, Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy\*, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohd Siraj, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK). Team C: Ruturaj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abhishek Porel (WK), Suryakumar Yadav, B Indrajith, Hritik Shokeen, Manav Suthar, Umran Malik, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khamboj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (WK), Sandeep Warrier. Team D: Shreyas Iyer (C), Atharva Taide, Yash Dubey, Devdutt Padikkal, Ishan Kishan (WK), Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Tushar Deshpande, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (WK), Saurabh Kumar.

## Zeeshan Ali resigns as India's Davis Cup coach before clash against Sweden

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Zeeshan Ali stepped down as the coach of India's Davis Cup team before the tie against Sweden to be held in Sweden from September 14 to 15. Zeeshan Ali has stepped down as the coach of India's Davis Cup team on Wednesday (August 14). India are now set to have a new coach when they lock horns with Sweden next month in Stockholm to be held from September 14 to 15. "I have resigned as the coach of the Davis Cup team," Zeeshan Ali told PTI. Back in 2013, Zeeshan had replaced Nandan Bal as the coach of the team before their tie against South Korea in New Delhi. Zeeshan also went down the memory

lane and talked about the highlights of working as a player, coach and captain of the Davis Cup team. "I felt that I have already achieved whatever there was to achieve as far as Davis Cup was concerned," Zeeshan added. Back in February, India played their last match in the Davis Cup when they defeated Pakistan 4-0 in Islamabad during the World Group I play-offs. Back in 2005, India last faced Sweden in Delhi and lost 1-3. Sweden, on the other hand, will be looking to bounce back after losing 1-3 to Brazil. Zeeshan Ali's career in brief. Zeeshan was appointed as the non-playing captain of the Indian Davis Cup team for the historic tie against Pakistan.