

INDIAN CHRONICLE

HYDRA its spreads fangs, razes illegal structures near Gandipet

Hyderabad: Continuing its crackdown on illegal structures to save water bodies in and around the city, the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection Agency (HYDRA) on Sunday demolished unauthorised constructions in the full tank level and buffer zone of Gandipet Lake on the outskirts. Equipped with men and machinery, HYDRA teams demolished unauthorised constructions, which have come up in violation of rules and regulations, at Khanapur in the FTL of the reservoir. Two illegal buildings were razed; a few locals protesting the demolition were arrested.

PM Modi celebrates Raksha Bandhan with schoolgirls in New Delhi



GNS News Agency, August 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated Raksha Bandhan with schoolgirls in the national capital, where they tied rakhis on his wrist. Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated Raksha Bandhan with schoolgirls who tied rakhis on his wrist in the national capital on Monday. In a video, shared by the prime minister's office, the girls were seen tying rakhis to PM Modi, marking the festival of Raksha Bandhan. Earlier on Monday, the prime minister also extended his greetings on the occasion, praying for everyone's happiness and prosperity. "Best wishes to all countrymen on the occasion of Rakshabandhan, a festival symbolising the immense love between brother and sister. May this holy festival bring new sweetness in the relationships of all of you and happiness, prosperity and good fortune in life," PM Modi said in an X post.

'Pledge on this day to safeguard the dignity and safety of women': President Murmu President Droupadi Murmu also conveyed her greetings on Raksha Bandhan, a festival that honors the bond between siblings. She stressed that the celebration fosters feelings of affection and respect for all sisters and daughters. In a post on X, President Murmu expressed, "On the auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan, I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all the countrymen. This festival, based on the feeling of love and mutual trust between brothers and sisters, instills a feeling of affection and respect towards all sisters and daughters. "She also called on citizens to pledge to ensure the safety and respect of women in society. "I would like that on this festival day, all the countrymen to take a pledge to ensure the safety and respect of women in our society," her message added. Raksha Bandhan is a traditional Hindu festival that celebrates the love and bond between brothers and sisters.

Deepa Dasmunshi, Seethakka tie rakhi to CM Revanth Reddy

GNS News Agency, August 19

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, on Monday, celebrated Raksha Bandhan with AICC in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi, state minister Seethakka, MP Kavya, and other women leaders of the Congress party as they tied rakhis on his wrist. Like in the past, Seethakka visited the Chief Minister's residence in Jubilee Hills, tied Rakhi, and offered him sweets. The Chief Minister blessed her in return. Seethakka, whose real name is Danasari Anusuya, is Minister for Panchayati Raj & Rural Development, Women & Child Welfare.

Warangal MP K. Kavya, MLAs Parnika



Reddy and M. Ragamayee, chairperson of Telangana Women Co-operative Development Corporation, Chairperson of Telangana State Women's Commission Sharada Nerella and Chairperson of Telangana Arya Vaishya Corporation were also present for the occasion. Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy in a post on X, shared about his special relationship with sister

16-year-old Preetham Goli from Hyderabad summits Mount Kilimanjaro

Hyderabad: Preetham Goli, a 16-year-old student of Delhi Public School, has made history as one of the youngest climbers from Hyderabad to successfully summit Mount Kilimanjaro. The ambitious young climber reached the summit on July 17, 2024, after an 8-day expedition that tested his physical endurance and mental resilience.

Preetham, who is currently in Class 12, embarked on his journey on July 12 with a group of four climbers, guided by the experienced mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta. The group faced numerous challenges during the ascent, but Preetham's determination and perseverance saw him through to the top.

CRPF officer killed by terrorists in J&K's Udhampur



GNS News Agency, August 19

Jammu: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer was killed on Monday in a terrorist attack in J&K's Udhampur district. Officials said that a CRPF officer identified as Inspector Kuldeep Singh was killed by the terrorists when they attacked a routine patrol party of the CRPF in the Cheel area of Ramnagar in Udhampur district. "The terrorists opened indiscriminate fire in which inspector Kuldeep Kumar was martyred. The area has been cordoned off for searches", officials said.

Terrorists have carried out ambush attacks against the army, security forces and civilians during the last two months in Udhampur, Kathua, Reasi, Doda, Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu division.

After reports of a group of 40 to 50 hardcore foreign mercenaries operating in the area came in, the army deployed over 4,000 highly trained soldiers including elite Para commandos and those trained in mountain warfare to deal with this new wave of terrorism. The modus operandi of these terrorists has been to carry out surprise attacks and then disappear in the densely forested and foliated mountains of these districts. To counter this strategy of the terrorists, the army and the CRPF have been deployed at the mountain tops of Kathua, Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi, Udhampur and Doda districts. Due to the presence of the security forces inside the dense forests and over the rugged terrain of these mountainous districts during the last fortnight, the security forces have been able to engage the terrorists in exchange for firing at a number of places.

No action against Siddaramaiah in MUDA 'scam' until petition against governor's order is heard: Karnataka HC



GNS News Agency, August 19

Karnataka High Court on Monday paused action on chief minister Siddaramaiah in MUDA 'scam' case until petition against governor's sanction is heard. It posted the matter for hearing on August 29 and asked directed the lower court to defer all related proceedings till then. Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah on Monday filed a petition in the high court challenging Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot's recent approval to prosecute him in connection with the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam. Senior advocate Abhishek

Manu Singhvi, representing Siddaramaiah, argued that the governor's sanction is biased and part of a coordinated effort to destabilise the democratically elected government in Karnataka for political reasons.

Earlier today, CM Siddaramaiah expressed confidence that the court would grant him relief in the MUDA land allotment case. He said, "I haven't done anything wrong. My conscience is clear, and my political life is like an open book. I've been a minister for 40 years without a single black spot. I'm confident the court will provide relief." In response to BJP's demands for his resignation, Siddaramaiah accused the BJP, JDS, and the central government of conspiring against him using the Raj Bhavan. He vowed to fight the allegations both legally and politically. Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar also supported Siddaramaiah, claiming that there was a conspiracy to misuse the governor's office to destabilise the Congress government. He said that the party and government stand firmly behind the chief minister, dismissing any possibility of his resignation. The controversy stems from a complaint filed by social activist Snehamayi Krishna, accusing Siddaramaiah and nine others of forging documents to claim compensation from the Mysuru Urban Development Authority.

PM Narendra Modi to visit Poland on August 21-22, Ukraine on August 23



GNS News Agency, August 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Poland on August 21 and 22, and later Ukraine on August 23, the ministry of external affairs said on Monday. "PM Narendra Modi will be undertaking an official visit to Poland this week on 21st and 22nd August on the invitation of PM Donald Tusk. This is a landmark visit as the PM of India is visiting Poland after 45 years. This visit takes place as we also mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations." Tanmaya Lal, secretary (West), MEA, said in a briefing. On the prime minister's Ukraine visit, the MEA official said, "PM Narendra Modi will undertake an official visit to Ukraine later this week on Friday, August 23, on the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This is also a landmark and a historic visit since this will be the first time an Indian PM will be visiting Ukraine in more than 30 years since we established our diplomatic relations. This visit will build upon the recent high-level interactions between the leaders. "The prime minister had met Zelenskyy in Italy along the sidelines of G7 Summit. Last month, Modi met Russian president Vladimir Putin in Moscow. The MEA reiterated India's stand on the Ukraine conflict. "India has maintained a very clear and consistent position that diplomacy and dialogue can resolve this conflict (between Russia and Ukraine) and which can lead to enduring peace, so dialogue is absolutely essential. Lasting peace can only be achieved through options that are accept-

able to both parties and it can only be a negotiated settlement," Lal said in the briefing. "On our part, India continues to engage with all stakeholders. Prime Minister Modi has had conversations with leaders of both Russia and Ukraine as you know and the PM also visited Russia, recently," he added. "India is willing to provide all possible support and contribution required to help find peaceful solutions to this complex issue and at this stage, it is not for us to anticipate or prejudice what the outcome of these discussions will be between the leaders of India and Ukraine," Lal said.

Aim is to win gold with a new world record at the Paralympics: Javelin thrower Sumit Antil

GNS News Agency, August 19

New Delhi: Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil wants to improve upon his world record in his bid to defend his title in the Men's F64 category at the Paris Paralympics Games.

Sumit, along with Bhagyashree Jadhav (shot put, F34 category) will be Indian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics Games to be held from August 28 to September 8, 2024.

He had set a world record thrice in the Tokyo Paralympics and won the gold medal with the best throw of 68.55 metres.

He bettered it with a new world record throw of 70.83 meters at the 2023 Para World Championships and further improved it at the Hangzhou Para Asian Games (2023) to win the gold with an effort of 73.29 metres.

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK
BRANCH ADILABAD MAIN
H.No.4-3-67/2/1 & 4-3-67/2/2, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

POSSESSION NOTICE
[(RULE 8(i))]
(for immovable property)

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated **08.05.2024** calling upon the Borrower **Sri. KOTHA HARISH KUMAR 5/0 KANTHAIHAH 2.Smt.KOTHA NEERAJA W/O KOTHA HARISH** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.25,58,826/- (Rupees Twenty five lakh fifty eight thousand eight hundred twenty six only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on, him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act on this 14th day of August the year 2024. The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** for an amount of **Rs.25,58,826/-** and interest, costs etc. thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
All that House property consisting of House No.9-242/1, Plot No.42 Measuring 40'60" = 2400 Sft= 166.6 Sq Yards= 223.00 Sq Mts. In Sy.No.4/B at Village Dasnapur, GP Mavala, Mandal & Dist Adilabad Within the jurisdiction of Registration Dist and Sub Dist Adilabad. The above said property is not assigned under APAL(Pot) Act.9 of 1997 it is not located in notified area.
East: Road, West: Plot No.41, North: Road, South: Plot No.47.

Date: 19-08-2024
Place: Adilabad
Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Telangana Grameena Bank

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK
BRANCH ADILABAD MAIN
H.No.4-3-67/2/1 & 4-3-67/2/2, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

POSSESSION NOTICE
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The undersigned being the Authouted Officer of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exerCiSe of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated **08.05.2024** calling upon the Borrower **Sri. KOTHA HARISH KUMAR S/o KANTHAIHAH** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 24,72,844/- (Rupees Twenty four lakh seventy two thousand eight hundred forty four only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act on this 14th day of August the year 2024. The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** (name of the institution) for an amount of **Rs. 24,72,844/-** and interest, costs etc. thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:
All that House property constructed upon plot No.53 & 56 measuring each Plot 30'50" = 1500 Sft= 166.66 Sq Yards= 139.35 Sq Mts. Total area measuring =3000 sft. 333.32 Sq Yards=278.7 Sq Mts. In Sy.No.53/2 at Village G P Mavala, Mandal & Dist Adilabad Within the jurisdiction of Registration Dist and Sub Dist Adilabad. The above said property is not assigned under APAL(Pot) Act.9 of 1997 it is not located in notified area.
Boundaries of Plot No.53.
East: Plot No.56, West: 20 wide Road, North: Plot No.54, South: Plot No.52.
Boundaries of Plot No.56.
East: 20 wide Road, West: Plot No.53, North Plot No.55, South Plot No.57.

Date: 19-08-2024
Place: Adilabad
Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Telangana Grameena Bank

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK
BRANCH ADILABAD MAIN
H.No.4-3-67/2/1 & 4-3-67/2/2, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

POSSESSION NOTICE
[(RULE 8(i))]
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The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK, ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated **01.02.2024** calling upon the Borrower **Sri. Shaik Faheem** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 18,88,239/- (Rupees Eighteen lakhs eighty eight thousand two hundred and thirty nine only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act on this date 14.08.2024.

The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK, ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH** for an amount of **Rs.18,88,239/-** and interest, costs etc. thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
Plot No.142 measuring 30' x 50' =1500 Sft = 166.66 Sq.Yards = 139.35 Sq Mts in sy.No.22/2 & 22/3, Situated at Revenue Khanapur Village Adilabad. Within the limits of Adilabad Municipality, Mandal & Dist Adilabad Within the jurisdiction of Registration Dist and Sub Dist Adilabad. The above said property is not assigned under APAL(Pot) Act.9 of 1997 it is not located in notified area.
Bounded by: East : Open Land of Principle holders West: 30' Wide Road North: 40' Wide Road South: Plot No.141

Date: 19-08-2024
Place: Adilabad
Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Telangana Grameena Bank

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK
BRANCH ADILABAD MAIN
H.No.4-3-67/2/1 & 4-3-67/2/2, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

POSSESSION NOTICE
[(RULE 8(i))]
(for immovable property)

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated **08.05.2024** calling upon the Borrower **Smt. Komuravelli Haritha W/o Muktheshwar** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 13,58,449/- (Rupees Thirteen lakh fifty eight Thousand four hundred Forty nine only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act on this 14th day of August the year 2024. The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK** for an amount of **Rs. 13,58,449/-** and interest, costs etc. thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:
All that House property constructed upon part of plot no.95, measuring 10'40"=400 Sft = 44.44 Sq yards, in Sy No.4/A, Situated at Teachers Colony, Village Dasnapur, G.P. Mavala, Mandal & Dist Adilabad Within the jurisdiction of Registration Dist and Sub Dist Adilabad. The above said property is not assigned under APAL(Pot) Act.9 of 1997 it is not located in notified area. Bonded by: East : Remaining Part of Plot No.95 West : Road, North : Remaining Part of Plot No.95 of C Chndra Kiran Reddy South : Road.

Date: 19-08-2024
Place: Adilabad
Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Telangana Grameena Bank

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Mango exports

INDIA produces 40 per cent of the world's mangoes and has a large domestic market. The fruit was largely unknown in China till some saplings were sent as part of India's mango diplomacy in the 1950s. Both in 2022 and 2023, China's exports of mangoes, including Indian varieties, have been higher than India's. Government officials are hopeful of seeing the reversal of this unusual — and decidedly embarrassing — trend this year. Export figures from January to May, they point out, have already exceeded what India exported in the entire 2022. It is inevitable that comparisons will be drawn about the business and trade ecosystems in both countries. The mango data is a reminder of how timely market interventions and a policy reset can make a difference.

As India sets its sights on expanding its share in global supply chains, it is best to weed out the misplaced notion of decoupling from China. The challenge is to strike a balance between national security and industrial policy. How to do business on favourable terms despite the underlying distrust after the Galwan clash in 2020 has to be the primary concern. Last month, the Economic Survey advocated increasing foreign direct investment from China to boost exports. This is a recognition that selective Chinese investments can only help and not derail India's growth story. Taming the burgeoning trade deficit is imperative. An ideal scenario to aim for would be allowing more investment of the desired kind in exchange for increased exports to China of items manufactured in India.

There's much symbolism attached to China stealing a march in the export of mangoes. It's a moment to objectively reflect on industry policies, business models and export promotions. It would be self-defeating to not aggressively address the quality deficit.

Pune's PMPML sees uptick in online payments but most commuters still opt for cash payments



GNS News Agency, August 19

The revenue percentage dropped to 1.96 per cent in March and further to 1.51 per cent in April. The revenue percentage dropped to 1.96 per cent in March and further to 1.51 per cent in April. After grappling with network issues and initial reluctance from bus conductors to accept online payments, the Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML) has finally started to see a steady surge in digital transactions for bus tickets. From a meagre 0.8 per cent in October last year, online payments have risen to around 4 per cent as of July this year, marking a noticeable improvement.

Although the revenue generated through the online system is increasing, the overall revenue rate from its launch date until now stands at only 2.09 per cent, indicating that more efforts are needed toward PMPML's digitisation. The PMPML's gross revenue from October 2023 to July 2024 stands at Rs 490.27 crore, with UPI transactions contributing Rs 10.25 crore. The data highlights seasonal trends in UPI transaction rates. During the five months following the launch of the online system, from October last year to February this year — a period that coincides with the winter season — the UPI system witnessed a gradual increase from 0.8 per cent to 2.4 per cent, as more people opted to use PMPML buses. However, as summer set in during March 2024, this upward trend experienced a slight dip. The revenue percentage dropped to 1.96 per cent in March and further to 1.51 per cent in April.

The PMPML's Traffic Planning Officer, Narayan Jagannath Karde, attributed this decline to the summer holidays when student commuters are fewer. He said, "The slight reduction in digital payments during March and April is primarily due to the decrease in students who prefer PMPML services for travelling. We are consistently working toward enhancing our payment system and resolving network glitches."

He added that despite this seasonal dip, the period from May to July has seen a resurgence in UPI usage. The rate rose consecutively from 2 per cent to 3 per cent and then to 4 per cent, indicating the continuity of online ticketing. As many as 50 lakh passengers paid around Rs 10.25 crore through UPI from October to July. Alongside network issues and PMPML staff's resistance to using the UPI system, another reason for the limited use of UPI is the fear among passengers of losing money during the transaction process. Mohan Bhise, who travels daily from Pimpri to Deccan to attend college, said initially he was excited about the online system, but his personal experience compelled him to stick to cash for ticket booking. "I am in favour of cashless transactions, provided the service and network are reliable. Once, I was involved in a verbal dispute with the bus staff after demanding a refund when my money was deducted, but the staff did not receive it," he said. A woman commuter, who travels daily from Deccan to Kothrud, said she has trust issues with the PMPML's online system and prefers to use cash. However, she said, "Although I am hesitant to use online transactions, I am also excited about the 'Apli PMPML' mobile app where I can book my ticket online. "Passengers will be able to download and use PMPML's mobile app starting August 17, where they can track bus routes in real-time and book their tickets through the app. The app will also feature other user-friendly options.

Kolkata doctor rape-murder: Ex-principal of R G Kar Medical and College questioned by CBI



GNS News Agency, August 19

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. Sandeep Ghosh, the former principal of R G Kar medical college and hospital, where a junior doctor was raped and murdered on August 9, was on Friday questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation for over one and a half hours.

The CBI had taken over the investigation after questions were raised over the Kolkata police's handling of the case. Ghosh appeared for questioning at the CBI office at Kolkata's CGO complex in the afternoon. According to sources, Ghosh had expressed concerns about his safety, because of which CBI officials took him to their office in an agency vehicle. The agency had earlier questioned two members of the Kolkata Police SIT that initially

probed the case, as well as four doctors from the hospital. A special 12-members team of the CBI is investigating the case. Ghosh had on Monday resigned from the post of principal "on moral grounds". Hours later, the West Bengal government appointed him the principal of Calcutta National Medical College and Hospital (CNMCH), triggering protests from students who did not allow him to enter the campus. An orthopaedic professor, Ghosh was appointed the principal of R G Kar in mid-2021, after being promoted from his previous position at CNMCH. His questioning came on a day the Calcutta High Court slammed the police and hospital authorities over miscreants vandalising parts of the hospital during a midnight protest by doctors there. A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam said it was hard to believe that the police intelligence did not have information about the gathering of 7,000 people. The Chief Justice also warned that the court can order the closing down of the medical establishment. The Bench directed the police and the administrator of the hospital to file separate affidavits on the "true state of affairs" at the hospital on August 21, when the matter will be heard again. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee meanwhile accused the opposition CPI(M) and BJP of orchestrating the vandalism at the hospital and attempting to obscure the truth by spreading fake news on social media. Reiterating her demand for capital punishment for the accused, Banerjee commended the Kolkata Police for their investigation. She also urged the CBI to solve the case by Sunday. Banerjee, who led a protest rally from Moulali to Dorina Crossing in Kolkata, demanding justice for the victim, further claimed, "The nexus between the Left and BJP should be exposed... They vandalised the hospital to destroy evidence of the ghastly crime."

Traffic curbs on Baner Road for CM's Mukhyamantri-Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojana program launch

GNS News Agency, August 19

Pune roads Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar are expected to be present for the programme in addition to a large number of political activists and citizens. The Pune city and Pimpri Chinchwad police have imposed certain traffic changes on Pashan Road, Baner Road, Aundh Road and a stretch on the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway in view of the inauguration of the 'Mukhyamantri - Mazi Ladki Bahin Yojana' at the Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi on August 17.

The police said that a huge crowd is expected to come for the function in about 900 buses via the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar are expected to be present for the programme in addition to a large number of political activists and citizens. Vehicles would be diverted from Baner road as and when it will be required on August 17, said a statement by Amol Zende, DCP (traffic) of Pune city police. It mentioned that vehicles going from Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) junction to Radha chowk via Baner Road would be diverted from Ganraj chowk towards the Nanaware underpass. All vehicles going towards Baner Road from Mumbai-Bengaluru highway would be diverted from Balewadi toll post towards Ganaraj chowk in Baner.

The police have appealed to the people going from Pune city to Hinjewadi, Wakad, Lonavala and Mumbai to avoid taking the route from SPPU junction to Baner Road.



Instead, commuters can use the route from Pashan Road to Chandni Chowk or SPPU junction to Aundh road for reaching their destinations at Hinjewadi, Wakad, Lonavala and Mumbai, the statement said. It further mentioned that no heavy vehicles would be allowed to travel from Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) junction to Chandni Chowk via Pashan Road, SPPU junction to Radha chowk via Baner road and SPPU junction to Rajiv Gandhi bridge via Aundh Road, from 1 am to 12 pm on August 17. Meanwhile, Vishal Gaikwad, Deputy Commissioner of Police (traffic), Pimpri Chinchwad, stated that heavy vehicles except emergency services would not be allowed to travel from Chandni Chowk to Urse toll post via the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway, between 6 pm and 8 pm on August 17. During the same period, heavy vehicles would not be allowed to proceed from Chakan to Mumbai-Bengaluru highway via Pimpri Chinchwad; Pune city to Mumbai Bengaluru highway; and Talegaon, Dehu Road to Mumbai Bengaluru highway, the release stated.

Ajit Pawar will contest Assembly polls from Baramati, says Maharashtra NCP chief Sunil Tatkare



GNS News Agency, August 19

Ajit Pawar Baramati Assembly elections Speaking to The Indian Express on Friday, Tatkare said, "Yesterday, I went to speak to Ajit Pawar but could not do so as we are all busy with our 'Jan Samman Yatra'... He will be contesting the Assembly elections. A day after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Ajit Pawar said that he was not interested in contesting the Assembly elections, the party's state unit chief Sunil Tatkare said on Friday that Pawar would contest from Baramati. NCP sources said Ajit Pawar's remark should be seen as a strategy to confuse his opponents ahead of the Assembly elections likely to

be held in the state in November. "No one should draw a wrong meaning out of it (Pawar's remark). In the upcoming Assembly elections, NCP will fight it under the leadership of Ajit Pawar... he will be very much in the election fray. There should be no doubts in anyone's mind about this. I will be speaking to him," Tatkare told reporters. Speaking to The Indian Express on Friday, Tatkare said, "Yesterday, I went to speak to Ajit Pawar but could not do so as we are all busy with our 'Jan Samman Yatra'... He will be contesting the Assembly elections." Asked if Pawar will contest from Baramati Assembly seat, Tatkare insisted that there "was no doubt" he would. Tatkare also pointed out that Pawar's statement was in response to a question posed to him. "He did not announce that he would not be contesting. He was asked about the demand from party workers to field Jay Pawar (his son). After that, Ajit Pawar reacted," Tatkare said, adding that the people of Baramati had full faith in their MLA. "Ajit Pawar has pushed the development of Baramati in the last three decades," he said. The NCP (SP) is likely to field Yugendra Pawar, grand-nephew of veteran leader Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar's nephew, from Baramati. "That is why he (Ajit Pawar) said that he should not have brought politics into the family," a leader from NCP (SP) said. On his part, Yugendra told The Indian Express on Thursday that whatever decision party chief Sharad Pawar takes, he will abide by it.

Surat & Valsad police find 58 kg of Afghani charas, days after similar seizure

GNS News Agency, August 19

This comes after Valsad and Surat police had previously seized Afghani charas from coastal areas in South Gujarat on August 12 and 13. This comes after Valsad and Surat police had previously seized Afghani charas from coastal areas in South Gujarat on August 12 and 13. In separate operations, Surat and Navsari police on Thursday seized 58 kg of high-purity Afghani charas from coastal areas. This comes after Valsad and Surat police seized Afghani charas from coastal areas in south Gujarat on August 12 and 13. "We suspect a huge consignment of illegal drugs might have submerged in the ocean and the contraband in parts has started reaching different coastal areas in south Gujarat," said Navsari district Superintendent of Police Sushil Agarwal.

On Thursday, the Surat police had found eight packets of charas, worth Rs 4 crore, lying abandoned on the coast at Hazira. The same evening, the Navsari police



found 50 packets of Afghani charas, each weighing 1.18 kg, worth Rs 30 crore on a 5-km stretch on the district's Onjal village beach. "This is the first big catch of drugs the district police has ever made. We coordinated with Surat and Valsad police and found that the packets we seized had the same packing and quality of the drugs seized by them earlier," Agrawal said. He added, "

Metro 3's Phase 1 to be launched by September; fully operational by next year



GNS News Agency, August 19

Mumbai metro 3 phase 1 work Given the current status, commissioning of Phase 1 is likely by mid-September, Ashwini Bhide, Managing Director of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRC) said. Mumbai's underground Metro 3 line, which will connect Colaba, Bandra, and SEEPZ, is now set to see its first phase between Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) and Aarey commissioned by September this year. Ashwini Bhide, Managing Director of the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC), which is the project implementing authority, confirmed the revised timeline, acknowledging delays in Phase 1 due to pending mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) works, especially at the airport stations where entry and exit construction is still ongoing. Phase 1 comprises three packages—Package 5, 6, and 7 which includes the SEEPZ, MIDC, and Marol stations.

Work is pending on Package 6 at the Sahar, T1, and T2 stations. The ancillary building at Sahar Road station, which includes an entry and exit, is in its final stages of completion. Multiple processes, such as escalator testing are ongoing. T1 station, which is a major station with significant commercial space, has experienced delays due to the late start on entry and exit work, which was complicated by MIAL's plans for overhead commercial development. Consequently, the stations had to be built deeper than usual, with temporary entry and exit lobbies now in place to facilitate passenger movement. A comprehensive safety review, covering all commuter-related features such as lifts, escalators, and staircases, will follow, leading to a full proposal for CMRS (Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety) certification for the commissioning of Metro 3 Phase 1.

Given the current status, commissioning of Phase 1 is likely by mid-September, Ashwini Bhide, Managing Director of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRC) said. Regarding the second stretch of Metro 3 from BKC to Cuffe Parade, Bhide highlighted significant challenges at the Giraog and Kalbadevi stations. The final stretch, up to Cuffe Parade, is slated for commissioning between March and June next year. Originally, the entirety of Metro 3 line was expected to begin operations in September this year. While Phase 1 was to be commissioned in June, it was later pushed to August and now is aimed to be launched in September this year.

Delhi HC partially rules in favour of French fashion giant, settles 2-decade-long dispute



GNS News Agency, August 19

The ruling came after over two decades of Lacoste's challenge to the use of the logo by Crocodile International and its Indian subsidiary Crocodile Products Pvt Ltd. The ruling came after over two decades of Lacoste's challenge to the use of the logo by Crocodile International and its Indian subsidiary Crocodile Products Pvt Ltd. The Delhi High Court Wednesday prohibited Hong Kong-based fashion brand Crocodile International from using a logo in India similar to the one used by French fashion giant Lacoste.

The single-judge bench of Justice Sanjeev Narula, however, rejected Lacoste's plea for a permanent injunction against the use of any other saurian symbols by Crocodile International. The ruling came after over two decades of Lacoste's challenge to the use of the logo by Crocodile International and its Indian subsidiary Crocodile Products Pvt Ltd. Crocodile International had disputed Lacoste's claim, primarily placing reliance on a 1983 agreement between it and Lacoste, wherein the two had decided to promote "cooperation and co-existence" and resolve existing disputes, legal actions, and controversies, significantly reducing the potential for conflict in their respective trademark uses across different markets. The agreement had also purportedly envisioned a "collaborative stance against third-party infringers" across various jurisdictions. The Court, however, found that India was not among the various jurisdictions where the two had decided to cooperate.

"In the absence of an express provision or subsequent amendment incorporating India into the territories covered... any assumption of the applicability of the 1983 Agreement to Indian territory would contravene its letter and spirit. Therefore, any attempt by Defendant No. 1 (Crocodile International) to enforce rights or claim co-existence under the 1983 Agreement within Indian jurisdiction lacks a legal basis and is inconsistent with the territorial nature of trademark rights," the Delhi High Court held. The Court observed that the copyright of the Lacoste logo "remains valid and subsisting not only in India, but also globally, thereby granting Plaintiff No. 1 (Lacoste) the exclusive rights to control its reproduction and use and protect infringement under the current legal framework governing copyright."

Punjab a preferred destination for inter-cadre transfer among IPS-IAS spouses



GNS News Agency, August 19

On January 20, 2021, Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of 2014 batch Saumya Mishra was transferred from Odisha cadre to Punjab cadre on the grounds of her marriage with batchmate Deepak Pareek, an IPS officer of Punjab cadre. Currently, Saumya is posted as Ferozpur Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and Deepak is the police chief of Mohali district. Saumya-Deepak couple's case is not the lone one in Punjab that has a good number of inter-cadre transfers among IAS, IPS officers on marriage grounds.

Aditya S Warriar, Manipur cadre IPS officer of 2020 batch, was transferred to Punjab cadre on September 1, 2022 on the grounds of his marriage with batchmate Jasroop Kaur Batth in Punjab cadre. While Warriar is posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigation) in Jalandhar police commissionerate, Jasroop is serving as Superintendent of Police (Investigation) in Jalandhar Rural police district. Another instance is that of 2020 batch Karnataka cadre IPS officer Akarshi Jain who is married to Punjab cadre IPS officer of 2021 batch Jayant Puri. She was transferred to Punjab on February 22, 2023. Akarshi is serving as Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) - Central in Ludhiana police commissionerate. Following police transfers on Thursday Jayant Puri has been posted as Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Dera Bassi. The notification for inter-cadre transfer of the IPS officers is issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in exercise of the powers under sub rule 2 of rule 5 of the Indian Police Service (Cadre) Rules - 1954 as per which the Central Government may, with the concurrence of the State Governments, transfer an officer from one cadre to another.

The oldest and perhaps most interesting inter-cadre transfer of an IPS-officers couple in Punjab in 1996, when 1994 batchmates Praveen Kumar Sinha and Anita Punj decided to marry each other during training. Sinha, who hailed from Ranchi (then in Bihar now in Jharkhand), was allocated Punjab cadre and Punj, who lived in Delhi, was allocated Kerala cadre. "Anita's paternal grandparents lived in Punjab and maternal grandparents lived in Himachal Pradesh where she was born. She opted for Himachal Pradesh cadre. But, at that time there were only two vacancies in Himachal Pradesh and those went to outsiders. As per norms, one third of the vacancies every year in any state are reserved for insiders (belonging to home state) having a good rank and two third for outsiders. And when home state cadre was not available, a roster system which was more or less like a lottery used to come into play. In that lottery system, Anita was allocated Kerala cadre and I got Punjab cadre. She was eventually transferred from Kerala to Punjab by the end of December 1996," Sinha, who is currently posted as Additional Director General of Police (NRI), told The Indian Express. Anita Punj is serving as the ADGP-cum-

Director of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Police Academy at Phillaur.

The transfers driven by nuptial knots is not limited to IPS officers alone but also extends to couples where the husband is an IAS officer and wife an IPS officer or vice versa. Among the IAS-IPS couple in Punjab is Amneet Kondal, a 2012-batch IPS officer of Punjab cadre who is currently posted as Bathinda SSP and is married to Girish Dayalan, a 2011-batch IAS officer. Dayalan who was in Jammu & Kashmir cadre was transferred to Punjab cadre on August 19, 2014 on the grounds of marriage to Amneet. Dayalan is currently posted as Markfed managing director. The notification for inter-cadre transfer of IAS officers is issued by the Department of Personnel & Training. 2012-batch IPS officer of Punjab cadre Sandeep Kumar Garg is married to same batch IAS officer Surabhi Malik who was transferred from Gujarat to Punjab cadre on December 30, 2013. Garg is currently posted as Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Intelligence-III and Surabhi is serving as Punjab Energy Development Agency chief executive officer.

2016-batch IPS officer of Punjab cadre Ankur Gupta who is currently posted as Moga SSP is married to IAS officer Deepshikha Sharma. 2015-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre. Deepshikha was transferred to Punjab cadre on September 17, 2018, is currently awaiting fresh posting after having served on various positions.

2014 batch IPS officer Dayama Harish Omprakash was transferred from Jammu & Kashmir cadre to Punjab cadre on January 25, 2017 on the grounds of his marriage with Punjab cadre IAS officer of 2014 batch Amrit Singh. Dayama is currently the Gurdaspur SSP, while Amrit holds charges of director higher education; employment generation, skill development & training; and social justice, empowerment & minorities. Another IPS officer, 2020-batch Vaibhav Choudhary was transferred to Punjab cadre from Bihar cadre on April 13, 2023, on grounds of his marriage with Punjab cadre IAS officer of 2019-batch Manisha Rana. Vaibhav Choudhary is currently posted as ASP City-I, Patiala, while Manisha is the joint commissioner Patiala Municipal Corporation.

2016-batch IPS officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre Vatsala Gupta was transferred to Punjab cadre on May 14, 2018, following her marriage with 2016-batch Indian Forest Service officer of Punjab cadre Nalin Yadav. Vatsala is posted as Kapurthala SSP while Yadav is the Divisional Forest Officer of Hoshiarpur. IPS officer Gaurav Toora who is posted as Tarn Taran SSP is married to IAS officer of 2015-batch Palavi who is serving as Malerkotla deputy commissioner. Gaurav and Palavi are both Punjab-cadre officers. Another couple who are both Punjab cadre officers are 2003 batch IPS officer Ashish Choudhary, who is on central deputation since July 4, 2018 and serving in National Investigation Agency (NIA) and 2005-batch IAS officer Shruti Singh, who is posted as Resident Commissioner, Punjab Bhawan, New Delhi. Interestingly, the inter-cadre transfer of couples to Punjab is not confined to one of the officers having Punjab cadre. On May 31, 2022, Haryana cadre IAS of 2003 batch Ajit Balaji Joshi and 2009 batch Odisha cadre IAS officer Gauri Parasher Joshi both were transferred to a third cadre Punjab on their marriage grounds. While there have been a number of inter-cadre transfers with one of the spouses opting for Punjab, in case of Punjab cadre officer Vahini Singh, the 2014-batch IPS officer was transferred to Madhya Pradesh on December 17, 2015 after she entered into wedlock with same batch officer Nagendra Singh of Madhya Pradesh cadre.

Khau gallis of Pune that cater to both the hungry and the discerning



GNS News Agency, August 19 Once a month, Anirudha Pawar, a banker residing in the Pimple Gurav area of Pimpri Chinchwad, tries st eet food. His go to point invariably is the khau galli at the PWD maidan in Sanghvi, which over the last few years has developed into a major centre for food carts. "It's mostly the Khandeshi handcarts which use a special blend of spices used in North Maharashtra. They are high on heat and medium on sweet — it's my favourite. Since the prices are reasonable, it does not pinch my pocket much," he said.

Khau galli, as the name suggests, refers to a place where a large number of food stalls are set up. The concept is neither new nor unique to Pune. In fact, they exist in almost all cities such as Indore's Sarafa Bazaar, an area that houses goldsmiths in the morning and transforms into a street food joint at night. Even Mumbai has its own share of khau gallis. Of late, the word khau galli has been appropriated by some organised players who rent out their spaces to multiple food carts to operate under one roof. However, true khau gallis are the ones that are unorganised and often those that have sprung up on their own to house various food joints. Come evening, the PWD maidan opposite Sanghvi police station transforms into an array of food joints with hand carts lining up to set up their shops. From Kolhapuri Mutton to Loni Sponge Dosa, the choice is pretty wide. However, Maharashtrian cuisine, especially from the North of Maharashtra or Khandesh, is the speciality of this place.

For vegetarians, the place offers bharit (baingan bharta) and bhakri and for non-vegetarians, it has mutton, chicken, egg and fish. Khandeshi cuisine is known for the liberal usage of chillies, peanuts and the notes are usually not very acidic. The food carts here are run by different families. Thus, do not be surprised to find the wife dishing out the bhakris, while the husband takes care of the customers. Many of them say they use their own masalas or source them from authentic vendors. Pricing: A plate of chicken and bhakri is normally priced between Rs 120-150/plate while a mutton plate would be around Rs 200-250/plate. Shev bhaji, the iconic dish made from thick shev, is served with roti or bhakri with a side of chutney and raw onions at Rs 120/plate. JM Road requires no introduction to any one living

in Pune as it is one of the arterial roads which is lined with shops and eateries which are few and far between the quaint buildings. In a lane right opposite to the Jangli Maharaj Temple, nestled between the mobile shops, is a small lane which has developed into a khau galli. By far the most famous dish that one can get here are the Sabudhana Wadas sold by the stall called Hindavi Swaraj. Served with a sweet kochumbar, these crunchy wadas, the proprietor claims, are fried in ghee (sajuk top). Hindavi Swaraj, and its spin offs, are not the only gems in this khau galli.

Majorly serving vegetarian food, this khau galli has an outlet of Durga Café as well as some tea shops. There are some shops which serve dapaht (thick wheat parathas served mostly in Marathwada) as well as some shops who serve Indo-Chinese. A hot favourite among office goers, this khau galli is operational mostly during the day time. Before the Metro construction squeezed its space, the small place at the entrance of the Z bridge in Deccan was a bustling khau galli. The Shevgaon Kachori right next to the Sukanta Dining is a hot favourite here. With its multi spiced filling, sweet and sour chutney and chillies, this shop manages to sell out all that it makes every day. Shevgaon Kachori, gets its name from the temple town of Shevgaon in Buldhana district of Maharashtra. The filling is made of various kinds of pulses which are deep fried to a crispy coat. On the other side of the road are shops which sell mostly sandwiches, Devengere dosa and a host of other shops. If you like Wada Pav, the Jumbo Wadapav is there for you. To cool down the spices, a visit to the kulfi place is a must at this khau galli, which is operational from afternoon till evening. Perhaps the oldest of the Khau gallis in Pune, this place is in the lane leading to the Sarasbaugh Ganesh temple and is lined with shops selling pav bhaji and bhel. Some of the shops also sell mastani and milk shakes. This khau galli, over the years, has managed to keep itself afloat. The Punesque Pav Bhaji and Tawa Pulav are hot favourites among visitors to the temple and the park. Some of the shops have also started serving Loni Sponge Dosa and other south Indian dishes. Pricing: Pav bhaji is priced between Rs 60-80 per plate and the khau galli remains open from afternoon to evening.

Delhi HC directs reconstitution of IOA ad-hoc panel for wrestling

GNS News Agency, August 19

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the reconstitution of the ad-hoc committee of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) that was tasked with overseeing and supervising the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI's) operations, including selections and trials, after the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) had suspended the wrestling body's newly elected executive committee last year. Hearing an application by wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik, seeking suspension of the WFI, the court of Justice Sachin Datta held that the revocation of the ad-hoc committee appointed by the IOA was "incongruous" with the ministry's December 24, 2023 order suspending the body.

The court also did not mince its words to record that "the MYAS did not express any reservation or protest, when the ad-hoc committee was dissolved by the IOA" and that it appears that "dissolution of the ad-hoc committee enjoyed the tacit approval of MYAS". The WFI had elected a new executive committee after the ouster of former chief Brij Bhushan Singh following sexual harassment allegations by several women wrestlers, including Phogat, but the sports ministry in its December 24, 2023 order directed the newly elected body to abstain from administering and managing the day-to-day activities of WFI over serious concerns over the body's "governance and integrity". Apart from the sports ministry, the United World Wrestling (UWW) too in August 2023 had suspended the WFI on account of not holding elections. But in February this year, the UWW lifted the suspension even as the ministry's suspension remained in operation. With UWW's revocation of the suspension, in effect, this meant that India's athletes were allowed to once again compete under the national flag internationally. At the same time, WFI proposed conducting parallel trials for international competitions along with the trials being conducted otherwise by the ad-hoc committee of IOA. On March 18, the IOA issued an office order where the ad-hoc committee appointed to manage the affairs of WFI was dissolved with immediate effect. The IOA reasoned that the decision was in light of the lifting of the WFI ban by the UWW and the successful completion of selection trials by the ad-hoc committee, consequent to which "there is no further need for running the activities of the WFI through an ad-hoc committee". The office order had further instructed the WFI to appoint a safeguarding committee/officer to address the concerns of abuse and harassment and to ensure adherence to all rules, regulations and guidelines set forth by UWW.

In its 30-page verdict, Justice Datta took note of the fact that the sports ministry has clarified that its suspension of WFI continues and that the ministry had not issued any communication to IOA withdrawing its request for the constitution of an ad-hoc committee, and the dissolution of the committee was without the ministry's approval. The court went on to observe that the reasons cited for the dissolution of the committee in IOA's office order "had no bearing or connection with the governance issues highlighted in the suspension order dated 24.12.2023, which impelled constitution of the ad-hoc committee in the first place" and held that UWW's revocation of suspension of WFI "was unconnected with the circumstances set out in the suspension order" by the min-



The Delhi High Court observed that the sports ministry 'tacitly' approved of the dissolution of the Indian Olympic Association's ad-hoc panel that was tasked with overseeing the Wrestling Federation of India's operations.

istry, and the consequent formation of the ad-hoc committee by the IOA. The court held that the dissolution of the ad-hoc committee is "incongruous and incompatible" with the sports ministry's order "whereby the newly elected executive committee of the WFI has been instructed to abstain from administering and managing the day-to-day activities of the Federation with immediate effect...considering that there is nothing on the record of this court to conclude that the concerns which impelled the issuance of the said order in the first place, stands allayed or resolved, the dissolution of the ad-hoc committee is held to be unwarranted". The court ruled that till the December 24, 2023 suspension order was "revisited/reviewed/recalled, it is necessary for an ad-hoc committee to manage the affairs of WFI". It further added that "the possibility of reprisal/disapproval" by UWW "cannot afford any valid justification" for not implementing the December 24, 2023 order. "...there is no reason for the MYAS to adopt a passive approach which undermines its own orders/decisions. The remote possibility of the UWW taking umbrage ought never (to) prevent the MYAS from doing what it must to implement good governance practices consistent with the NSDCI (National Sports Development Code of India), 2011, and the law of the land..." the court said. "Also, in any event, since the Paris Olympic Games 2024 is already over, there is no reason why the respondent no.1 (MYAS) should feel constrained in taking/implementing requisite decision/s as to whether the suspension (of WFI) is required to continue or not and/or whether there needs to be an ad-hoc committee for managing the affairs of (WFI)", the court further said. The court also stressed that the insistence on "compliance with the law of the land" cannot be construed as "governmental interference" or "third party interference so as to invite any adverse action from the international body".

Kolkata doctor rape-murder: BJP accuses Mamata of doing 'vote bank politics', shielding accused

GNS News Agency, August 19

National spokesperson of BJP Gopal Agrawal alleged Friday that instead of making efforts to ensure strict punishment to the accused in the rape and murder case of a junior doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, the TMC-led West Bengal government is "doing vote bank politics" and "shielding the accused". He demanded that the criminals should be given "exemplary punishment so that nobody can think of doing such an offence", adding that West Bengal Chief Minister Banerjee should "take responsibility" as she has not been able to "maintain law and order" in her state.

Agrawal was addressing a press conference at BJP Gujarat headquarters Shree Kamalam, in Gandhinagar, on the issue along with state general secretary Rajni Patel. Quoting Agrawal, a party release said, "Wide repercussions have been felt across the country over the rape of a female doctor in West Bengal. In such a condemnable incident, the way the Government of West Bengal has taken action is condemnable...Following country-wide outrage over the incident, the college principal tendered his resignation and he has been appointed principal in another college...The principal has not been in-



terrogated in connection with the case and has been given appointment in another hospital shows that the leaders of the government and police too are shielding the accused." Agrawal said that Banerjee is working "very cruelly and trying to weaken the country by her politics". He also alleged that in the name of secularism, "Bengalees are being made to intrude in the country". "For vote bank politics, Mamata Banerjee is promoting politics of appeasement and those indulging in violent activities," he alleged.

Mahua Moitra fact-checks RG Kar Hospital rape-murder coverage, busts 'fake propaganda'



R G Kar Government Medical College and Hospital, TMC MP and national spokesperson Mahua Moitra took to social media Friday to "put some facts on record" and "bust myths and fake propaganda." This comes a day after she asserted that claims of a "systemic cover-up" were wrong.

Moitra put forth four points: Addressing the mention of '150 grams of bodily fluids' in media reports, Moitra clarified that the autopsy report mentions the weight of the inner and outer genitalia, which was close to 150 grams. She said that fluids are measured in millilitres and responsible media houses must carry out due diligence in reportage. Dispelling claims of the crime scene or place of occurrence (PO) being tampered with, she said, "It has been sealed off and only the police and CBI have access to it." As for claims of construction work at the crime scene, the MP said the health secretary spoke to students who said there was a need for toilets in the hospital immediately. "The work started at a different place of the students' choosing. The PO is entirely separate," she added. She also 'debunked' reports of an inquiry committee being set up to analyse the mental health and psychiatric condition of the victim by clarifying that a five-member enquiry committee was set up as per standard operating procedure (SOP) to see if there were any lapses on the part of the hospital.

Addressing the mention of '150 grams of bodily fluids' in media reports, Moitra clarified that the autopsy report mentions the weight of the inner and outer genitalia, which was close to 150 grams. She said that fluids are measured in millilitres and responsible media houses must carry out due diligence in reportage.

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mahua moitra, rg kar, kolkata protests, doctors protest, Dispelling claims of the crime scene or place of occurrence (PO) being tampered with, she said, "It has been sealed off and only the police and CBI have access to it." Amid ongoing protests and public outrage over the rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor at the state-run

OPDs across Punjab govt hospitals shut to protest Kolkata doctor rape-murder; IMA's strike call likely to hit services even

GNS News Agency, August 19

The Out Patient Departments (OPDs) of all government hospitals in Punjab remained shut on Friday in support of the Kolkata doctors who are protesting the rape and murder of a junior doctor of the West Bengal government-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The government doctors of Punjab also abstained from elective surgeries in view of the protest call by the Punjab Civil Medical Service (PCMS) association.

The protest, which is expected to continue on Saturday in view of a call by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), has crippled the health services across the state. Meanwhile, sources said doctors who practice in private chambers will not attend to patients on Saturday. They added that private hospitals will only handle emergency cases. Punjab has 23 district hospitals, 112 sub-division hospitals and 450 community health centres in which over 3,000 doctors, including the specialists, work. Speaking to The Indian Express, Dr Jagjit Singh, chief advisor of Punjab specialist doctors' association, said, "Over 3,000 doctors working in 685 government hospitals of Punjab had kept the OPD services shut from 8 am to 2 pm. We also did not perform elective surgeries. Only emergency and medico legal cases were handled."

At the Rajindra Medical College and Hospital, Patiala, protesting doctors raised "no safety, no duty" slogans and stressed that they have ceased work to ensure their safety. Dr Nrip Jindal, the vice-president of the Resident Doctors' Association of the hospital, said, "At times, attendants of the patients become very aggressive, especially during the night hours. They even attack the medical staff." He added, "We demand to put a stop to incidents like the one that happened in Kolkata. We seek justice in the case of the Kolkata doctor and demand adequate security in government hospitals of Punjab." Dr Akshay Seth, president of the residents doctors' association of Rajindra Medical College and Hospital, said, "The security staff is not adequate in the government medical colleges of Punjab. As of now, in Patiala, private security has been hired and 50 per cent of the posts are still lying vacant. It is high time to provide adequate safety to



doctors." Dr Mehtab Bal, a resident doctor of the Rajindra Medical College, said, "We demand the implementation of the Central Protection Act for Doctors (Prevention of Violence Against Healthcare Professionals and Clinical Establishments Bill, 2022) to ensure the safety of the medical professionals working in the hospitals." Punjab has 600 Aam Aadmi clinics and doctors of some of these clinics too abstained from attending to patients on Friday. However, since the doctors work on a per patient basis, several Aam Aadmi clinics remained open on Friday.

Even the nursing staff of Punjab have expressed solidarity with the doctors of government medical colleges. Even the nursing staff of Punjab have expressed solidarity with the doctors of government medical colleges. Even the nursing staff of Punjab have expressed solidarity with the doctors of government medical colleges. "Members of United Nurses Association of Punjab participated in dharnas along with the doctors (on Friday) and in the evening, will take out a candle march," said Juhar Singh, president of the association. Dr Manoj Sobti, convenor of IMA, Punjab, said, "We will take out a rally and handover memorandums to the deputy commissioners of all the districts of Punjab to seek justice for the Kolkata doctor. We, as a medical fraternity, stand united and will not tolerate such a heinous crime." He added, "Our OPDs will remain shut in the morning and evening hours (on Saturday). The IMA has given a call to the entire medical fraternity and even government doctors can be a part of the protest on Saturday."

Kolkata rape-murder protests: Delhi Police issues prohibitory orders in central Delhi

GNS News Agency, August 19

Delhi Police issued prohibitory orders in the central areas of the national capital amid protest calls by multiple organisations against the Kolkata rape-murder case on Friday, officials said. Deployment of police personnel has been increased and Section 163 (prohibitory orders) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) has been imposed near the Parliament and other parts of central Delhi, they said. A Delhi Police officer said the city remains on alert due to Independence Day celebrations. Due to the protests announced, traffic at some intersections in central Delhi have been diverted, he said. The alleged rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor at the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata has triggered widespread protests in many parts of the country.

Multiple resident doctors' associations (RDAs), including those from AIIMS, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, have announced a protest meet near Nirman Bhawan on Friday. The Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) has given a call for a candle march at India



Gate at 6 pm. Delhi University's Krantikari Yuya Sangthan has announced a protest meet at 2 pm at Mandi House, while Congress's student wing NSUI has given a call of protest at 7.30 pm at Jantar Mantar. Earlier in the day, hundreds of women were part of another march organised by RSS-linked Nari Shakti Forum over alleged atrocities committed against minorities in Bangladesh. The march began from Mandi House and will end at Jantar Mantar.

Announce MVA's CM candidate, will extend support, Thackeray tells Congress, NCP(SP)



"I am willing to back any candidate announced by the Congress or the NCP (SP) today. Let's decide on the candidate. I will support because we are fighting for the betterment of Maharashtra and not for our selfish ambitions," Thackeray said. Recalling his experience with the BJP, Thackeray said, "I don't want the repetition of what happened during our alliance with the BJP. We were together for 25 years and similar meetings used to take place before elections. It used to be decided that the CM would be made from the party that would win the maximum number of seats. So, after that, the politics of defeating one's alliance partner's candidates started... So first decide who will be the chief minister. I have no objection." Demanding to announce the CM face, the UBT chief said, "Today Sharad Pawar ji and Congress's Prithviraj Chauhan ji are here. I request them to announce their candidate for CM. I will have no objection to it and I will announce my support for that candidate unconditionally. Because who will be the chief minister is not important, but taking down this government is important. I am not here for my selfish ambitions but for the betterment of the state." Asserting that the MVA will contest the polls unitedly and win, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) President Nana Patole said the CM's face will be decided after holding discussion with senior leaders of the alliance. During his 23-minute speech, Thackeray also slammed the BJP and its alliance partners, including Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and clarified his stance on the Waqf bill over which some Muslim community members had protested in front of his residence last week. Asserting that he won't let anyone touch Waqf properties, Thackeray said, "Be it the Waqf Board or any temple or other religious property, I will not let anyone touch those properties at any cost. This is my promise."

GNS News Agency, August 19

Uddhav Thackeray, Narendra Modi, Bangladesh Crisis, Bangladesh protests, Bangladesh protesters, Indians stay back in Bangladesh, sheikh Hasina, sheikh Hasina fled to India, Dhaka., Delhi, Old Dhaka's Kolta Bazar, Indian express news Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said he was willing to support any nominee of the Congress or the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) as the chief ministerial candidate of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly polls.

Speaking at a meeting of MVA office-bearers in Mumbai on Friday, the former chief minister emphasised contesting the polls unitedly and avoiding infighting that may arise during the seat-sharing arrangement. Opposing the idea of nominating CM from the party that would win the maximum seats, Thackeray urged the alliance partners to announce the CM's face in advance. "I am willing to back any candidate announced by the Congress or the NCP (SP) today. Let's decide on the candi-

Pawar hits out at Centre Nationalist Congress Party (SP) president Sharad Pawar hit out at the Centre over Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi not being allotted a front-row seat at the Independence Day event, accusing it of not honouring the post of LoP. Addressing the MVA meet, Pawar said, "The Centre did not honour the post of Leader of Opposition." The Congress on Thursday said making Gandhi "sit in the fifth row" at the Red Fort event showed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "pettiness" and lack of respect for democratic traditions. Pawar said that when he was the leader of the Opposition during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, his seating arrangement at the I-Day event was alongside the cabinet ministers. He recalled that when Manmohan Singh was the PM, the then LoP Sushma Swaraj was given a seat allotted to cabinet ranks. The prestige of the PM's post has to be maintained. Similarly, LoP's prestige is also equally important, Pawar said.

BJP stages protest against vandalism at RG Kar Hospital, gets into scuffle with police, workers detained

GNS News Agency, August 19

While the BJP was staging a protest Friday in West Bengal's Shyambazar in Kolkata, alleging that the TMC is "destroying evidence" in the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder case, more than a hundred party supporters got into a scuffle with the state police, who detained a number of BJP workers during the agitation. The state president of BJP Mahila Morcha, Falguni Patra, alleged that police "mercilessly beat us". "Police of the undemocratic Mamata Banerjee government don't allow any protest," she said. On Friday, the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) called for a 12-hour strike against the vandalism that happened at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. Supporting it, the BJP organised their protest on Friday morning. Police allegedly broke their stage.

BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul said, "TMC is trying to destroy the evidence. We are protesting that. Across the nation, people are protesting the incident... Even after that, our state government is sleeping." On August 10, a doctor's body found at RG Kar Medical College sparked protests nationwide. On Wednesday night, a mob en-



tered the RG Kar Hospital campus, resulting in significant damage. Security officials intervened to disperse the crowd. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also called for a Saturday rally to demand capital punishment for the accused Kolkata police arrested a civic volunteer named Sanjay Ray in the rape-murder case and on Monday, the Calcutta High Court ordered a CBI investigation into the incident. 24 people have been arrested so far in connection with the vandalism of the hospital.

Malayalam director Anjali Menon on Hema panel report: 'Important to know workings of gender in industry'



GNS News Agency, August 19

Justice Hema Committee was set up in Kerala in 2017, after the brutal rape of a leading film actor in Kochi the same year. The committee was expected to study the working conditions of women in the film industry. However, the report of the committee, which was submitted before the government in 2019, was not released. In response to RTI requests, the State Information Commission ruled recently that a redacted version of the report can be released. Earlier this month, the Kerala High Court too ruled that the report can be released. Malayalam film director Anjali Menon has been at the forefront of protests for the release of the Justice Hema Committee report. A senior member of Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), she says the wait for the report has been long and that its pages could upset the "power structures" within the film industry.

According to you, why was the Justice Hema Committee set up?

We (women artistes and technicians) had written to the chief minister (Pinarayi Vijayan) and asked for a study on the gender conditions in the Malayalam film industry. As women from the film industry, we were well aware how gender affected working conditions in the film industry. But this study was to give it an official standing — we (women) were saying something that should have been corroborated with proper studied evidence by a committee.

What did you expect from the committee report?

We expected the committee to cover the seven terms of reference set by the government. We expected the committee to discuss these with people, collect data, take interviews, identify the problems in the industry and give suggestions on how the issues can be resolved. Further, when we were approached by the committee, many of us had diligently filled the questionnaire which they had sent, done in-person consultations and discussions and offered our suggestions on what changes could be brought about. So many conversations have been had around this that I would like to see what they have found under every term of reference in the report — a statement of that. To address any issue, you should first say that there is a problem. That's what I am expecting from the committee report.

What reforms are you expecting when the report gets out?

It is not about reforms alone. It is about documenting the current situation and what the problems within the industry are. That's the first step. Only then can you speak about reforms. We have a heavily male-dominated space here and even in 2017 every issue raised by a woman was rubbished. That needs to be countered first. The only way to do that is through official study, which officially documents what the problems are. Only then will we know if the reforms suggested are good enough to deal with them.

Has the wait for the report been harrowing?

It has been a complete, giant disappointment. In these last five years we could have really used the report to make the industry a safer and fair workplace for all, which it is not. The work culture is slowly evolving but fairness and safety needs to become the norm and not the exception. In the delay taken with this report other reports have been published/ (WCC) & Sakhi have published SHIFT FOCUS and Ormax has published the O Womaniya! Report. To be fair if the intent is there they can rely on any report. We hope this official report will put pressure on the industry and the government to act on it and ensure compliance to it.

So, are the men in the industry rattled about the outing of the report? I personally feel that there are many existing unaid rules and power structures within the industry — which tend to marginalise a certain section of people, predominantly women and people who have less power. When a clear statement that spells out what's clearly wrong in the industry comes out, then this power structure gets dismantled. I think that is the biggest threat — that the report coming out is not in the interest of people who want to continue to hold on to those old, regressive power structures.

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Villages that were epicentre of Wayanad landslides are still unsafe, experts say

GNS News Agency, August 19

Wayanad landslides... Our prima facie finding is that PUNCHIRIMATTAM and MUNDAKKAI areas, which were the first to bear the brunt of the landslide, are unsafe... a senior scientist said. A Kerala government-appointed expert team studying the landslide-hit areas of Wayanad district has said that most parts of Chooralmala — one of the hardest-hit villages — are safe for habitation, but the villages of Mundakkai and Punchirimattam, which were the first to be hit by the landslides, are unsafe.

Dr John Mathai, a senior scientist with the Thiruvananthapuram-based National Centre for Earth Science Studies, who led the study, said: "We will submit a report to the state government, demarcating safe and unsafe areas. Our prima facie finding is that Punchirimattam and Mundakkai areas, which were the first to bear the brunt of the landslide, are unsafe. At the same time, most parts of Chooralmala



village downstream are safe." Speaking to reporters before leaving Wayanad, where he had been conducting the study, Mathai said it was up to the government to decide "what should and should not be allowed" with regard to habitation in these areas.

He said the area had received unusually heavy rainfall — 570 mm — over the 48 hours before the landslides happened. Normally, he said, during heavy rains in the region,

the maximum rainfall would be 160 mm. However, there was a cloud-burst like scenario in this case, causing intense, short spells of rain, he said. On the devastation caused by the landslides, the scientist said the debris that was washed down in the first landslide had formed a sort of dam near Mundakkai. This was then burst when the flow of water and debris increased, leading to a massive flow that wreaked havoc. The debris, including uprooted

trees and large boulders, flowed eight kilometres downstream, he said. Other members in the expert team were T K Drishya, principal scientist at the Centre of Excellence in Water Related Disaster Management (CWRDM); Srivalsa Kolathayar, associate professor at Suratkal NIT; Tara Manoharan, District Soil Conservation Officer; and G S Pradeep, hazard and risk analyst with the Kerala Disaster Management Authority.

Netizens doubt JD Vance accidentally promoted Kamala Harris while...



GNS News Agency, August 19

JD Vance has done it again, and this time, he has endorsed Kamala Harris with a newspaper headline. The Vice-Presidential candidate of Donald Trump has said the opposite of what the former president said about abortion pills and, whose pictures doing drag resurfaced this week, has, in fact, been an advocate for his enemies.

Vance, who will debate Harris' running mate Tim Walz after attacking his military service, held up a bottle of Mountain Dew in a follow-up to a joke he made at a campaign rally two weeks ago. The joke, which Vance attempted to revive, fell flat with the crowd, drawing no laughter as he quipped, "I had a Diet Mountain Dew yes-

terday and one today. I'm sure they will call that racist." But all social media users quickly noticed a newspaper headline in the photograph that read, "Inflation Hits Lowest Level Since 2021." This headline, which reflects positively on the current administration's handling of inflation, was interpreted by some as an inadvertent endorsement of the Biden-Harris administration's economic policies. One X (formerly Twitter) user, pointed out, "Just when you thought the weirdo couldn't f--- up any worse than he already has — as Donald Dump trends on Twitter, JD Vance unwittingly advocates for a Kamala Harris presidency by advertising the headline in the Wall Street Journal, 'Inflation Hits Lowest Level Since 2021.'" "He was too busy being turned on by that airplane seat to notice the headline," another quipped. One echoed the same sentiment, "What do you see? The JD Vance continuance of his WEIRD Mountain Dew joke that wasn't funny the first time he told it?" "Watch them claim the paper was planted there by the secret Kamala Harris Deep State CIA CCP funded acronyms. And that WSJ is the Woke St Journal," another person is trying to point out. This misstep comes at a critical time for Vance, who is gearing up for a high-stakes televised debate with Minnesota Governor Tim Walz on October 1. CBS News will broadcast the debate. The network had initially proposed several dates for the debate, but Walz confirmed his participation on October 1, responding to the CBS News announcement with, "See you on October 1, JD."

Taco Bell testing new Nostalgic Menu with returning fan-favourites from each decade

GNS News Agency, August 19

Taco Bell is bringing back five of its fan-favourite discontinued items from the '60s to the '00s as part of its all-new Nostalgic Menu. Taco Bell is honouring its "rich history" with a new Nostalgic Menu that features popular discontinued items from each decade. The fast-food giant is presently testing the menu at three locations in Southern California for a limited time only. The company aims to treat its loyal fanbase by reviving five fan-favourite menu items from the '60s to the '00s. The fast food chain announced in a statement released Wednesday that it is testing an all-new Nostalgic Menu at select SoCal locations for a span of a couple of days. Following this brief run, the company is planning to roll out these classic menu items nationwide for a limited time.

Presently, customers can take the trip down memory lane with Taco Bell's latest menu at these three locations: Barranca (2222 Barranca Pkwy, Irvine, CA 92606), Brea restaurant (303 W Imperial Hwy, Brea, CA 92821), and the Fullerton restaurant (31 E Orangethorpe Ave, Fullerton, CA 92832). The Nostalgic Menu is available at the first two locations from August 15 to August 21, while at the latter from August 15 to August 19, while the supplies last. The five popular discontinued menu items that are



returning from each decade are: Taylor Montgomery, Chief Marketing Officer at Taco Bell, said, of the company's latest offering, "Thanks to our rich history, we have a vault of craveable products our fans have become passionate about and we continuously explore ways to reintroduce the ones that deliver on the comfort and value they are looking for." "Now, we're thrilled to unite two groups of fans: those who fondly remember these menu items and those who have yet to experience the delight of a Caramel Apple Empanada or savor their first bite of a Meximelt with this menu," Montgomery added.

Hawk Tuah girl throws first pitch at Mets Game, sparks debate online, 'Do better!'



GNS News Agency, August 19

Hailey Welch, aka the Hawk Tuah girl, tossed the first pitch at a Mets game on Thursday. The 22-year-old Tennessee native was present at Citi Field in Queens, New York, for the ceremonial act ahead of the game against the Athletics. The viral TikTok sensation has since been drawing heat online, with netizens telling the Mets to "do better." After throwing the pitch, Welch ran to her friend, who was also present at the game. The duo

hugged each other and gave a chest bump to celebrate Welch's first ceremonial pitch. While the Nashville resident appeared to be on cloud nine at Thursday's game, the Mets' decision to invite her has sparked a major debate online.

Earlier this year, Welch shot to fame after a video of her street interview with YouTubers Tim and Dee TV went viral on TikTok. Her unfiltered bedroom advice- "Hawk tuah and spit on that thang" took social media by storm. Welch has since been raking money from fan events and the sale of her merchandise. Shortly after a clip of Welch's Mets appearance was shared online, netizens began criticising the baseball team. "What an awful, awful decision to legitimize her and give her a platform," wrote an X, formerly Twitter user. A second user queried, "We have 120 Olympic medalists and you chose her? Seriously?" Meanwhile, a third said, "I usually find these types of things entertaining, but to have her come in during an afternoon game over the summer where thousands of camp kids are in this stadium?... Not great... Someone did not plan that very well..." "Disgusting! Do better Mets!" commented another user.

Taylor Lorenz accused of calling Biden 'war criminal' on Instagram, WaPo says it's 'looking into' it



GNS News Agency, August 19

Washington Post columnist Taylor Lorenz allegedly called Joe Biden 'war criminal' in an Instagram story shared with her close friends. Washington Post columnist Taylor Lorenz has been accused of branding Joe Biden a "war criminal" on social media. The 40-year-old journalist came under fire after a screenshot of her controversial Instagram story went viral. In the screenshot, Lorenz had written "war criminal" over her selfie featuring the US president in the background. In the selfie, which was taken at the White House Creator Economy Conference on Wednesday, Lorenz can be seen wearing a mask as Biden spoke to the crowd behind her. The photo was shared via the close friends feature on Instagram and was first obtained by NY Post's Jonathan Levine. Amid the severe backlash regarding her choice of words against Biden, Lorenz denied the credibility of the photo. "You people will fall for any dumba** edit someone makes," she told Levine, per Fox News. However, the Post reporter wrote on X, formerly Twitter, "She's denying it's real, but she has a long history of lying about things like this — and it came to me from someone reliable. So take it as you will."

Washington Post 'looking into' accusations against Taylor Lorenz. In the wake of the incident, a spokesperson for the Washington Post told NPR, "Our executive editor and senior editors take alleged violations of our standards seriously. We're aware of the alleged post and are looking into it." In addition to the NY Post, NPR also obtained a screenshot of Lorenz's "actual post" and confirmed that it did contain the controversial caption. Additionally, four people who had "direct knowledge" of Lorenz's post, in which she branded Biden a "war criminal," confirmed its authenticity to the outlet. "They spoke to NPR on condition they not be identified due to the professional sensitivity of the situation for Lorenz," the outlet explained.

UN expert condemns alleged sexual assault of Palestinian in Israeli custody

GNS News Agency, August 19

BERLIN - The U.N. special rapporteur on torture on Friday condemned what she called a "particularly gruesome" case of the alleged sexual abuse of a Palestinian prisoner by Israeli soldiers and said the perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. "There are no circumstances in which sexual torture or sexualised inhuman and degrading treatment can be justified," Special Rapporteur Alice Jill Edwards said in a statement. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said prosecutors have requested that soldiers accused of abusing a Palestinian detainee be placed under house arrest. Israeli media reports said the soldiers have been accused of sexually abusing a member of an elite Hamas unit at the Sde Teiman detention facility in the Negev desert in southern Israel.

New York man accused of being Egyptian agent pleads guilty to lesser charge



GNS News Agency, August 19

A New York man who was indicted in 2022 on felony charges of acting as an unregistered agent of Egypt's government pleaded guilty on Wednesday to a lesser charge, in the latest stumble for US prosecutors trying to clamp down on foreign influence. Pierre Girgis, a dual Egyptian-US citizen living in Manhattan, admitted in court to sharing information in 2019 with the Egyptian-American community from the Egyptian government about expatriates' military draft obligations, without labeling it as "political propaganda" as required by law.

That was a far cry from the felony charges Girgis initially faced. Prosecutors had accused him of tracking US-based opponents of Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and helping visiting Egyptian officials attend police trainings in Manhattan meant only for law enforcement. Those charges will be dropped as part of a deal in which Girgis agreed to plead guilty to one misde-

meanor count of failure to file and label informational materials.

"This was overcharged from the beginning," defense lawyer Andrew Dalack told reporters after the hearing, adding that he was grateful prosecutors decided felony charges were not warranted. "This was just not what it seemed to be." A spokesperson for the US Attorney's office in Manhattan declined to comment. Egypt's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The US Justice Department has in recent years cracked down on what it terms transnational repression, or efforts by a foreign state to intimidate or threaten political opponents in another country. But prosecutors have occasionally struggled to win convictions on foreign agent charges, which require them to prove that defendants were acting at the "direction or control" of a foreign government. The US Attorney's office in Brooklyn last year dropped charges against a former New York City Police Department officer who was accused of acting as a Chinese agent, and businessman Tom Barrack was acquitted after a six-week trial in 2022 of acting as an agent of the United Arab Emirates. Girgis, who worked in finance, said in court he did not know he was breaking the law at the time he shared the information on behalf of an Egyptian consular official. He apologized and said he now understood he should have "placed a statement on the document identifying it as political propaganda." Girgis, 42, faces no more than six months behind bars at his Oct. 3 sentencing before US District Judge Katherine Polk Failla in Manhattan. The two felony charges he previously faced carried maximum prison terms of ten and five years.

US army soldier pleads guilty to selling sensitive military information

GNS News Agency, August 19

An army soldier has pleaded guilty to charges that accuse him of selling sensitive information related to US military capabilities, including dozens of documents addressing topics ranging from rocket systems to Chinese military tactics. Sgt Korbein Schultz, who was also an intelligence analyst, entered the guilty plea Tuesday in federal court in Nashville. He had previously pleaded not guilty, then last month requested a hearing to change his plea. In total, Schultz received at least 14 payments totaling \$42,000, prosecutors have said.

Schultz was accused in a six-count indictment of charges including conspiring to obtain and disclose military defense information and bribery of a public official.

The 24-year-old was arrested in March at Fort Campbell, which straddles the Tennessee-Kentucky line, shortly after the indictment was released. He pleaded guilty to all charges against him and will be sentenced on Jan 23, 2025. A federal public defender representing Schultz declined to comment Tuesday. "Let this case serve as a warning: if any member of the Army, past or present, is asked for classified or sensitive information, they should report it to the appropriate authorities within 24 hours or be held fully accountable for their inaction," Brigadier General Rhett R Cox, Commanding General of the Army Counterintelligence Command, said in a news release. The indictment alleged that Schultz -- who had a top-secret security clearance -- conspired with an individual identified only as "Conspirator A" to disclose various documents, photographs and other national defense materials since June 2022. The indictment said that Schultz was recruited by the individual not only due to his security clearance but also because he was tasked with



gathering sensitive US military information.

Some of the information Schultz supposedly gave to the individual included information related to rocket, missile and artillery weapons systems, including the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System; hypersonic equipment; tactics to counter drones; US military satellites; studies on future developments of US military forces; and studies on military drills and operations in major countries such as China. The indictment said that Schultz was initially asked to provide documents detailing lessons that could be learned from Russia's war with Ukraine and how those lessons could be applied to the US in helping Taiwan in the event of an attack. Schultz was paid \$200 for that information, which then prompted Conspirator A to ask for a "long-term partnership." Conspirator A, who was described in the indictment as a foreign national purporting to reside in Hong Kong, later suggested that Schultz could earn more money if he handed over "internal only" material rather than unclassified documents.

Donald Trump is returning to X for a live interview with the platform's owner, Elon Musk

GNS News Agency, August 19

Donald Trump is returning at least for one night to do a live interview Monday on X, the platform from which he was banned for nearly two years following the Jan. 6, 2021, storming of the US Capitol. Trump and Elon Musk, X's owner, are slated to have what the tech titan has termed a "live conversation" at 8 p.m. Eastern Time that will be "unscripted with no limits on subject matter, so should be highly entertaining!" Musk is soliciting X users to pose their own questions.

The conversation serves not only as a way for the former president to reach potentially millions of voters directly. It's also an opportunity for X, a platform that relies heavily on politics, to redeem itself after some struggles. X has already been the scene of some of the 2024 cycle's most memorable moments. As he skipped the first GOP presidential debate in August, Trump launched counterprogramming of his own, appearing in a taped interview with former Fox News Channel host Tucker Carlson, which aired on X. Last month, President Joe Biden broke the news of his departure from the campaign in a letter posted to the platform. Also notably, in May 2023, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis used the platform as a way to officially announce his presidential bid, a disastrous rollout marred by technical glitches, overloaded by the more than 400,000 people who tried to dial in. Ahead of his conversation with Trump, Musk posted on the platform that X was conducting "some system scaling tests" to handle what's anticipated to be a high volume of participants. The coming chat also prompted a cautionary response from Europe. Thierry Breton, a French business executive and commissioner for internal market of the European Union, warned Musk of possible "amplification of harmful content" by broadcasting his interview with Trump. In a letter posted on X, Breton urged Musk to "ensure X's compliance" with EU law, including the Digital Services Act, adopted in 2022 to address a number of issues including disinformation. In a statement, Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung urged the EU to "mind their own business instead of trying to meddle in the US Presidential election." He said the EU was "an enemy of free speech and has no authority of any kind to dictate how we campaign." Musk, who has described himself as a Democrat until a few years ago, endorsed Trump's candidacy two days after the former president was wounded during an attempted assassination at a Pennsylvania rally last month. Long before he endorsed Trump, Musk turned increasingly toward the right in his posts and actions on the platform, also using X to sway political discourse around the world. He's gotten in a dustup with a Brazilian judge over censorship, railed against what he calls the "woke mind virus" and ampli-



In a letter posted on X, Breton urged Musk to "ensure X's compliance" with EU law, including the Digital Services Act, adopted in 2022 to address a number of issues including disinformation.

fied false claims that Democrats are secretly flying in migrants to vote in US elections. Musk has also reinstated previously banned accounts such as the conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and Trump, who was kicked off the platform then known as Twitter two days after the Jan. 6 violence, with the company citing "the risk of further incitement of violence." By November 2022, Musk had bought the company, and Trump's account was reinstated, although the former president refrained from tweeting until Monday, insisting that he was happier on his own Truth Social site, which he launched during the ban. Hours ahead of his interview with Musk, Trump posted a two-and-a-half minute video to his X account, featuring video from his time in office, as well as audio of him saying one of his standard campaign lines referencing the legal cases that have mounted against him: "They're not coming after me, they're coming after you, and I just happen to be standing in their way, and I will never be moving." But Trump's audience on X is legions larger than on Truth Social, which became a publicly traded company earlier this year. Trump has just over 7.5 million followers on Truth Social, while his mostly dormant X account is followed by 88 million. Musk's account, which will host the interview, has more than 193 million followers. Trump's campaign didn't immediately respond to a message as to whether he would cross-post his interview with Musk via his own accounts, including on X. The former president has most recently posted on X only once, with a photo of his mug shot after he surrendered at an Atlanta jail a year ago on charges he conspired to overturn his election loss in the state.

Gold plunges Rs 400; silver rallies Rs 800



were closed on Thursday on the occasion of Independence Day. Silver prices rallied Rs 800 to Rs 84,000 per kilogram from Rs 83,200 per kg in the previous close.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 400 to Rs 72,400 per 10 grams. In the previous session, it ended at Rs 72,800 per 10 grams. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,500.90 per ounce, up by USD 8.50 per ounce. "Gold rose slightly on Friday as geopolitical uncertainty continued to provide support for precious metals. However, stronger US retail sales and jobless claim data released on Thursday suggest robust consumer spending, reducing concerns about recession risk in the US and dampening aggressive interest rate-cut expectations, potentially limiting further gains in precious metals," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. "Comex gold closed 0.5 per cent higher at USD 2,492.4 per ounce on Thursday, as mixed US data with easing Consumer Price Index inflation and stronger retail sales did not provide any fresh insights on the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy path," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,500.90 per ounce, up by USD 8.50 per ounce. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,500.90 per ounce, up by USD 8.50 per ounce. Gold prices plunged Rs 400 to Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the previous session. The commodity markets

Need to create between 60 million and 148 million more jobs in 6 years till 2030: IMF's Gita Gopinath

In the recently released Economic Survey, the Chief Economic Advisor estimated that India needed to create close to 8 million new jobs each year for the coming decade. In her interview with The Indian Express's Udit Misra, Gita Gopinath, IMF's First Deputy Managing Director, says India needs to create anywhere between 60 to 148 million additional jobs between now and 2030 cumulatively. That works out to be an annual rate ranging from 10 million to 24 million.

Q1: What are the main worries or challenges that you see before the global economy?

GG: So firstly, if you look at global growth, we see it as quite stable — at 3.2% this year and 3.3% for next year. In terms of the challenges to it, the concerns are, firstly, on the front of inflation. It's been coming down for most countries in the world, and we expect that to continue, but the job is not completely done at this point. So we just need to make sure that that happens without there being any big effect on terms of economic activity. The second is what's coming from geopolitics and conflicts around the world that has implications for commodity prices. And there's a risk that if there is further increase in tensions in the Middle East that could have that could raise oil prices, for example. So that's another area that has implications for the world. We're also in a year of political uncertainty, because this is a year where we're having a large number of elections around the world. That brings with it uncertainty on specific policies, and that could have some implications for global growth. What we are somewhat more concerned about is the medium term, where our projections for growth of the medium term are some of the weakest we've had in decades. It's around close to 3%. It used to be 3.8% on average over the last two decades, if you look at the average over the last two decades. So we're looking at, you know, not great global growth into the medium term, and for that, we think it's going to be important all over the world for governments to focus on growth, which will take some very structural reforms.

Q2: One of the things that we saw in the last two, three years was the massive spike in inflation across the world, and central banks across the world raised interest rates, but as we saw in many emerging economies, including India, there was a sense that raising interest rates was not tackling this supply-shock inflation. There have been many question marks on the inflation-targeting regime that India is following. Do you think that an inflation targeting regime is apt for developing economies such as India? GG: I think inflation targeting regimes have really delivered for countries around the world. As you know, it's called flexible inflation targeting, which is that you do take into account the fact that some of the drivers of inflation may be out of the control of monetary policy, and so you do take that into account when you're setting your policy rates. But inflation targeting helps because it helps anchor inflation expectations. What we've seen is the countries that have moved towards inflation targeting regimes, they gain credibility because of the anchoring of that inflation expectation. And so these second round effects that come from shocks like food prices are more contained. And in that sense it's very helpful. I think it's been very beneficial for India too. You know, since it adopted inflation targeting in 2015 using inflation expectations more anchored on average, inflation has been lower than before. So again, the idea is to use it, and to use it, of course, keeping in mind this is that there is flexibility associated with it. You don't try to hit the target in every single moment, but this is on average that gives you the flexibility you take into account what the impact is going to be of food prices on second round effects that show up in core inflation. So you have to do it smartly, of course, but it's still, I think, a very good framework.

Q3: India has been one of the brightest spots when it comes to GDP growth rates. Data shows that India is around that level of GDP where China was in 2002. China, of course, went to experience a massive rise in GDP since. Do you think that India could follow a similar trajectory over the next two decades? And are there certain bits of China's rise which India should avoid?

GG: Firstly, as you said, India is doing extremely well in terms of its growth numbers. At 7% growth for this fiscal year makes India the fastest growing major economy in the world, and that contributes about 17% to global growth. So it is a very important contributor to the global growth that we're seeing right now, and we expect in the medium term, as of now, (India's GDP) growth to be around six and a half percent. So that it should hold up as being one of the big contributors to global growth.

It is to make direct comparisons with other countries because there's a lot of the devil in the details. But what is absolutely clear is that if India continues on the path of serious reforms, and it will require large scale reforms and on multiple fronts, then you know, this growth can be maintained. It can be increased, and certainly per capita incomes will then, will then rise. But again, it's important for growth to come along with a lot of job creation. We ran some numbers, and if you look at what is needed in terms of additional job creation in India between now and 2030 cumulatively is, you know, anywhere between 60 million and 148 million. That will not happen if you just focus on a couple of sectors or particular areas. It's going to require broad based growth across the different sectors.

Q4: Employment is an issue creating massive unrest in many developing countries such as India. Bangladesh is just another example. Is there a policy

prescription for developing economies, which have a large and growing youth population, to allow them to make economic growth work for all and create jobs?

GG: So firstly, if you have, in general, an environment where there is more corporate investment that's taking place, that induces more corporate investment, that has flexibility in the labor markets, that allows for allocation of resources to move freely in terms of labor, land, capital across different sectors — those are what help with just broad based growth and job creation.

So in the case of India, there are things that can be done in the short term, but also others that would require a longer period of time.

So in the near term, first year, I think it's important that business climate matters. The ease of doing business matters in terms of dealing with regulations, red tape and so on. All of that really is critical to be able to get business dynamism in the economy going. And there are some states like, you know, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, where you're seeing more foreign direct investment go, which are also states where the business climate is ranked as high.

The other is areas, in terms of labor market reforms, the government has done a lot. There were these new laws that were approved by parliament in 2019-2020, it's important now to implement those fully. That's going to require working with the state governments, incentivizing them to do the full implementation. That's going to be very helpful. Trade has been very helpful for other countries in the world, who've grown and, you know, also done a lot of job creation. India has, on average, higher tariff rates than its peers do. So I think again, working on removing trade restrictions will enable it to play a bigger role in global supply chains. And this is a moment to seize, because a lot of countries are looking to India as a country to work with, given the current geopolitical environment we're in. Public investment spending, which has been very good in India, obviously, needs to continue, and the budget is putting an appropriate focus on that.

But there's also these other more slow moving factors that are absolutely critical. Human capital — making sure that the skills of the population are keeping up with the demands of industry is super important. And so, you know, focusing on education and skilling is absolutely critical. Raising productivity of agriculture is very important. To get the workers to move out of agriculture into other areas. Land reforms, again, play a very important role. So you need these broad based reforms happening at multiple levels to be able to keep up the growth rate and continue on the trajectory towards higher income status.

Q5: How do you view the rise of artificial intelligence and, in the Indian context (surplus labour), will it be a saviour or is it going to be a curse leading to massive job losses?

GG: So in terms of exposure — our estimate is that around 25% of workers in India would be exposed to AI. Now that doesn't mean they're all going to be negatively affected by it because depending on the sector you are in, you can be positively impacted or negatively impacted. The fact that a large number of workers are still in the agricultural sector, the substitution coming from the new form of AI, generative AI, is somewhat less. Again, in terms of a country like India, there are multiple channels through which it can affect India — some of it very beneficially, some of it less so. On the beneficial front, it can help, for example, in terms of dealing with skill shortages. It just helps to fill that space. But also in terms of raising human capital and education; there are more creative ways of making that education happen. AI can help with that. It can help in the public finance space in terms of being able to raise revenue, implement your tax scheme much better, raise revenues much better. So all of that is super positive. And since India has also, you know, this services IT area, they can complement it quite well. But on the other side, there are some areas, like, for example, call centres, where you might see AI basically leading to not as much demand for these kinds of workers. So it's a mixed bag. But again, this gets me back to the point that we certainly now are in times where we've had a lot of automation in manufacturing, and what generative AI does is bring about customer automation in the services sector. So which is why, if you really want to make sure they have growth and you have job creation for a lot of people, you just need broad based reforms.

Q6: There is a lot of chatter about dollar dominance. Many countries see a strong exchange rate as a matter of national pride, as the case of India. There is a desire to move away from dependence on the US dollar for trade. How do you see these demands? Are these necessarily beneficial for global trade and India?

GG: Firstly, the dominance of the dollar has come about organically, which is a choice of market participants around the world to rely on the dollar. And this is the case of the dollar now it's a case of the British pound in the past, before the dollar took over that role. So the reason the dollar places the dominant role is because of the strength of the institutions of the US, the fact that you have fully open capital markets, and full convertibility of the exchange rate. It's the trust in the institutions that have backed the dollar that have led to the adoption of the dollar as a dominant currency. And of course, if it's taken up by a large number of people, you get these strong network effects, where, because I buy in dollars, I sell in dollars, and that generates a self-fulfilling dominance that comes about. So it is the fundamentals that matter.

The ancient Roman tradition that inspired Mark Zuckerberg to get a 7-foot backyard statue of wife Priscilla Chan



Mark Zuckerberg has solidified his "wife guy" status with an over-the-top gesture of love. The Meta CEO recently unveiled a colossal seven-foot statue of his wife, Priscilla Chan, crafted by renowned artist Daniel Arsham. Zuckerberg playfully likened the gift to a revival of the Roman tradition of erecting statues in honour of spouses. The statue, a contemporary art piece by the New York-based artist, depicts Chan in a dynamic pose, cloaked in silver and rendered in an otherworldly turquoise hue. Arsham is known for his collaborations with luxury brands such as Tiffany & Dior. The internet has been abuzz with reactions, ranging from admiration for the extravagant display of affection to criticism of its perceived extravagance.

Zuckerberg and Chan tied the knot in 2012 and are parents to three daughters: Maxima, August, and Aurelia, having been together since their time at Harvard University in 2003. "Bringing back the Roman tradition of making sculptures of your wife," Zuckerberg wrote in an Instagram post that shows Chan posing next to the humongous turquoise-and-silver statue, as she sips her morning coffee. While it's true that Romans created statues of significant figures, including family members, the context and purpose were vastly different. Roman statues were often displayed in public spaces like forums, temples, and baths. They served as symbols of power, authority, and family lineage. Statues played a significant role in Roman funerary practices. They were placed in tombs as a form of commemoration and to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. Family members, especially those of high social status, were also often depicted in statues. These sculptures served as a testament to family unity and continuity. So, most Roman statues typically honoured deceased loved ones or celebrated their achievements. These statues were public declarations of status and power. It's important to note that while the Romans did create statues of women, their roles were often circumscribed by societal expectations. They were typically depicted as wives, mothers, or goddesses, emphasising their domestic and maternal virtues.

Try solving this brain teaser, and learn about the many benefits of regularly doing puzzles

Brain teasers have surged in popularity across social media platforms, captivating millions with their clever puzzles and mind-bending challenges. The appeal lies not just in the satisfaction of solving a puzzle, but in the engaging way they exercise our minds. As more people discover the joy and benefits of tackling these mental gymnastics, brain teasers have evolved from mere pastimes to valuable tools for cognitive enhancement.

You might find yourself hooked on the intellectual thrill, all while potentially boosting your problem-solving skills and keeping your mind sharp. So the next time you scroll past a brain teaser, take a moment to engage — your brain just might thank you for it. Neha Cadabam, senior psychologist and executive director at Cadabams Hospitals, says, "Taking a moment to challenge our brains with a brain teaser can feel like a welcome mental respite. But beyond the immediate satisfaction of solving a puzzle, these little brain teasers might be doing a lot more for us than we realise." Effect of brain teasers on cognitive function in adults Cadabam explains, "Our brains, like any other muscle in our bodies, require exercise to stay sharp. Daily brain teasers serve as a mental workout, engaging different cognitive processes and pathways, which can have a remarkable impact on cognitive function, especially as we age." Brain teasers challenge your memory by requiring you to recall information, patterns, or previous experiences, she says. This active engagement strengthens neural connections, potentially slowing down age-related memory decline.

"Solving puzzles demands sustained attention and focus. Regularly engaging with brain teasers can train your brain to filter distractions and improve your concentration abilities. Brain teasers present unique challenges that require creative problem-solving and critical thinking. This exercise helps maintain cognitive flexibility and adaptability," notes Cadabam. Focusing on a puzzle can be a form of mindfulness, diverting your attention from daily worries and creating a state of mental flow. Focusing on a puzzle can be a form of mindfulness, diverting your attention from daily worries and creating a state of mental flow. (Source: Freepik)

Psychological benefits of regularly solving brain teasers Beyond the cognitive boost, Cadabam stresses that brain teasers offer a range of psychological benefits that can enhance overall well-being. "Focusing on a



puzzle can be a form of mindfulness, diverting your attention from daily worries and creating a state of mental flow. This can lead to a reduction in stress and anxiety levels, promoting relaxation and mental clarity," she says. Brain teasers at work: A productivity hack? Cadabam agrees that taking a short break from work to engage in a brain teaser allows your mind to rest and recharge. "This mental break can help prevent mental fatigue and improve focus when you return to your tasks." Solving puzzles stimulates creative thinking and encourages you to approach problems from different angles. This boost in creativity can spark new ideas and solutions in work, while also providing relief from any stress.

Specific types of brain teasers that are more effective Different types of brain teasers can target various cognitive skills and offer unique benefits, Cadabam remarks. These are: Logic Puzzles and Riddles: These challenge your analytical thinking and deductive reasoning skills. They can enhance your problem-solving abilities and promote a sense of mental clarity. Word Puzzles and Crosswords: These expand your vocabulary, improve your verbal fluency, and engage your memory and language centers. Visual Puzzles and Spatial Reasoning Games: These enhance your spatial awareness and visualisation skills, which can be beneficial in fields like architecture, design, and engineering. Math Puzzles and Sudoku: These strengthen your numerical and logical reasoning skills, improving your ability to analyse and interpret data.

This monsoon, use these practical safety tips when travelling to malaria-endemic areas

Many travellers are planning trips to regions known for their lush landscapes and cultural attractions this monsoon. However, travelling to malaria-endemic areas during this time requires extra caution due to the increased mosquito activity and risk of malaria transmission. To ensure a safe and enjoyable trip, it's essential to take proactive steps to protect yourself from malaria. We speak to Dr Palleti Siva Karthik Reddy, MBBS, MD, General Physician, Bengaluru, about practical safety tips for travellers heading to malaria-endemic areas, focusing on effective prevention strategies and what to do if symptoms arise.



Dr Reddy tells indianexpress.com, "Embarking on a journey to a tropical paradise during the monsoon season can be a dream come true, but it's important to be aware of the increased risk of malaria. As a travel enthusiast and doctor, I've seen firsthand the importance of taking preventative measures to stay safe in malaria-endemic areas."

Recognising and managing malaria symptoms on the road Dr Reddy mentions, "Even with the best preventive measures, it's still possible to contract malaria. Knowing the symptoms and seeking prompt medical attention is crucial." Malaria typically presents with flu-like symptoms, including: Fever and Chills: A high fever with shaking chills is a hallmark of malaria. Headache and Muscle Aches: These are common symptoms, often accompanied by fatigue and weakness. Nausea and Vomiting: Gastrointestinal symptoms can also occur.

Sweating and Profuse Perspiration: As your body tries to fight the infection, you might experience excessive sweating. If you experience any of these symptoms while travelling in a malaria-endemic area, Dr Reddy says, to seek medical attention immediately. Early diagnosis and treatment are critical for preventing severe complications and ensuring a full recovery. Essential tips to keep yourself safe while traveling

Protecting yourself against malaria requires a multi-pronged approach that combines proactive measures and informed choices, states Dr Reddy. These include: Antimalarial Medication: Consult your doctor well in advance of your trip to discuss appropriate antimalarial medications. These medications work by killing the malaria parasites in your blood, preventing them from establishing an infection. It's essential to start taking them before your trip, continue them throughout your stay, and complete the course even after you return home. Mosquito Bite Prevention: The cornerstone of malaria prevention is minimising your exposure to mosquito bites. Anopheles mosquitoes, the primary carriers of malaria, are most active at dawn and dusk. Wear long-sleeved clothing and pants, especially during these peak biting times.

Insect Repellents: Apply insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or other effective ingredients to exposed skin. Choose a product with a concentration of at least 20% DEET for optimal protection. Treated Bed Nets: If you're staying in accommodations without air conditioning or screened windows, sleep under a treated bed net. These nets create a physical barrier against mosquitoes and are impregnated with insecticides that kill them on contact. Indoor Spraying: Consider using insecticides indoors to further reduce the mosquito population. Spraying before dusk can be particularly effective.

Alka Yagnik recalls refusing to work with AR Rahman on Roja: 'I wanted to bang my head on the wall...'



AR Rahman with time has become one of the most renowned music composers in the world. However, there was a time when Rahman was still a budding artiste and singers from Bollywood often rejected the opportunity to work with him, asking, "Who is AR Rahman? Why should we ditch our friends for an unknown name?" Recently, veteran playback singer Alka Yagnik recalled a similar incident, which now she and Kumar Sanu regret.

In an interview with Radio Nasha, Yagnik recalled the time when Rahman approached her for the first time. She said, "AR Rahman was a new name at that time. Nobody, especially in Bombay, knew him. Down south, he was well known. He was a very young boy then. I got a call from Chennai at that time saying that there is a new composer called AR Rahman. He is your fan. He is composing songs for a film and he wants you and Kumar Sanu to sing the entire soundtrack. But the problem was that he wanted me to come immediately. But, my dates were booked for a long time. Plus, the fact that I had worked with the composers in Bombay so much and had built a rapport that I didn't want to ditch them. Moreover, I didn't know who AR Rahman was. I didn't know his caliber." The singer added, "I then called up Sanu ji. I told him, 'Sanu ji, I received a phone call from Chennai.' He was like, 'Yes, even I did. I won't sing for them. I have

already given dates to others, how can I ditch them? God knows who this composer is. I have never heard the name AR Rahman or his songs. I won't be going to Chennai. Even I was like when I have committed dates to others, I can't drop them. So, I said to them, 'Sorry, I cannot come.' So like that I lost the opportunity. Later, when I heard the songs, I wanted to bang my head on the wall. They were beautiful songs." Alka Yagnik then recalled her first collaboration with AR Rahman. She said, "The next time when I worked with Rahman, the moment he met me, he was like, 'You didn't sing my older songs.' I felt so embarrassed. I wanted to bury myself inside the land. It was entirely my loss." In another interview, Yagnik recalled collaborating with Rahman for Taal. Sharing her experience working with Rahman, the playback singer said, "I was called around 9 something in the evening, till 12 midnight there was no sign of either AR Rahman or anybody." "A little after 2 am he came, absolutely fresh as if he had just woken up and both of us (Alka and Subhash) were like this (enacts getting tired). He is man of few words, he always has this smile on his face. I always saw something divine about his face. Every time he looked at me, I felt calm and nice. The vibes he gave were very calm and soothing," added the singer, who sang three songs in the film, "Kariye Naa", "Ramta Jogi" and "Taal Se Taal".

Kirti Kulhari says she wants to work with directors who can 'see beyond' her serious image: 'Unfortunately good actors get stuck...'

Actor-producer Kirti Kulhari has opened up about being stuck in a certain kind of role as an actor resulting in a lack of opportunities to showcase her acting prowess. Kirti was last seen in Khichdi: Mission Panthukistan, reprising her role as Parminder from Khichdi: The Movie (2010). Kirti, who has had impactful roles in films like Pink (2016), Indu Sarkar (2017), Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019), and Mission Mangal (2019) and web shows like Four More Shots Please! (2019), Criminal Justice (2020) and Human (2022), says she tried her hands at doing comedy in Khichdi because that's where she started her career from, in the first place, and because she wanted to break free from the "serious actor" tag.

Kirti Kulhari said, "It is the people's perception that serious actors can do only intense roles well. This is not true for actors and unfortunately good actors get stuck to only serious, intense roles. But I think we are all capable of comedy as much. Having experimented with comedy, I would like to say that if this tag is taken off from us, we can do a lot more. It is about giving us an opportunity and I think there are directors who can see that, see beyond this, they can see what all you can do. I think those are the directors I want to work with."

Kirti Kulhari is currently seen in Shekhar Home, a show based on the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Talking about the series, the actor said, "I personally love the detective genre and in the last three-four-five years, when you open any of the OTT platforms, there's a lot of investigative, detective content, which I, personally, absolutely enjoy watching. I also like the humour. Sherlock Holmes is one of my favourite things to watch. I totally love that world, that genre, what all is possible with it. I absolutely love it." While Kirti has done many films in her 15-year-long career as an actor, the actor says she feels blessed to be a part of several OTT shows because here



she found the kind of work she was looking for. She said, "OTT has really blessed us with a lot of opportunities which I think I had been looking for a while. So, it's given me a lot in terms of just being out there and being able to showcase what I am capable of. But yes, there's a lot of noise also because the quantity (of content) is a lot, so the quality suffers quite a bit, quite often. We are still wondering where to take small films and what to do with those films. I wish something also happens with them and in a way sort of opens up. Honestly, there are no complaints." "Life has been good and god has blessed me with a lot of good work and there's more to come. But, I also feel there is a demarcation from the media side as to OTT stars versus film stars. I want to reach a point where all of this just ends and everyone is just spoken for who they are, rather than where their work is being showcased. So I hope we can reach a point where we are all able to be everywhere and be spoken about in the same platform sans all the segregation. People do it for their convenience, everyone likes to put everyone in a box. I think we need to bridge that gap and just see people for who they are and what they do," Kirti concludes.

Ponniyin Selvan cinematographer Ravi Varman on winning National Film Award: 'It has been a long journey'

It's been 25 years since Ravi Varman turned cinematographer with TK Rajeev Kumar's Jalamarmaram. Since then, it has been a fruitful journey for the ace cinematographer who has worked with the likes of Mani Ratnam, Shankar, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Priyadarshan, KS Ravikumar, Revathy, Anurag Basu, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and Rajkumar Hirani. Ravi Varman has won a range of accolades over 25 years of a stellar career, but one award eluded him — the National Award — and that dream got realised with Mani Ratnam's Ponniyin Selvan 1. "It's been a long journey to get here," says Ravi Varman, who recently shot the Shankar-Kamal Haasan film, Indian 2.

Going on to congratulate his fellow winners, Ravi Varman says, "I'm very happy for the other National Award winners, and the talented team that won multiple awards for Ponniyin Selvan 1. It was a lot of hard work, and I'm happy to see it receive recognition. Big congratulations to AR Rahman sir, Anand Krishnamoorthy for the Sound Design, and of course, to the man responsible for it all... Mani (Ratnam) sir."

Ponniyin Selvan 1, the first part of the duology based on the eponymous novel by Kalki Krishnamurthy, stars Vikram, Aishwarya Rai, Karthi, Trisha, Jayaram, and Sobhita Dhulipala among others. The historic film broke box-office records during its run, and is now winning big



in the awards circuit too. While Rishab Shetty won the Best Actor award for Kantara at the National Film Awards held on Friday, the Best Actress honour was shared by Nithya Menen for Thiruchitrambalam and Manasi Parekh for The Kutch Express, respectively. The Best Director honour went to Sooraj Barjatya for his film, Uunchai. Ponniyin Selvan 1, KGF 2, Brahmastra and Aparajito won multiple awards at the ceremony. Apart from Best Cinematography, Best Sound Design, and Best Background score, Ponniyin Selvan 1 was also adjudged the Best Tamil film. This was the fourth time Mani Ratnam's film has won the Best Tamil film award, and the first since Kannathil Muththamittaal (2002).

KGF 2, Ponniyin Selvan, Thiruchitrambalam win National Awards: Yash, Vikram and Dhanush share wishes

It was the South brigade that took home most of the top honours at the recently announced National Awards for the films certified in 2022. While KGF 2 and Kantara were the big winners from Kannada cinema, Ponniyin Selvan Part 1 and Thiruchitrambalam won a handful of awards from Tamil cinema. Aattam and Saudi Vellakka became the top winners from Malayalam cinema. With netizens congratulating the deserving winners, stars like Vikram, Dhanush, and Yash too joined the bandwagon.

Vikram, who played Aditya Karikalan in Ponniyin Selvan Part 1, and is being hyped up for sweeping all the awards for his performance in Part 2, said, "Blessed that PS1 is crowned with national recognition propelled with the love of the audience. Tamil history, literature, culture & cinema marching triumphantly together from the past to the present!! Congratulations Mani (Ratnam) Sir, Lyca Produc-



tions, AR Rahman and Ravi Varman." The film also won the Best Sound Design award for Anand Krishnamoorthy. Congratulating all the "well-deserved winners" of this edition of the National Awards, Dhanush, who starred in Thiruchitrambalam, had a separate post for his Raayan music director AR Rahman. "Congratulations, AR Rahman sir. This feel so special," said the man of few posts, who went on to write one more post for

his Thiruchitrambalam co-star Nithya Menen, who won the National Award for Best Actress for the film.

"Congratulations team Thiruchitrambalam. It's a personal win for me that Nithya Menen has won the National award. Big congrats to Jaani master and Satish master. It's a great day for the team," said the two-time Best Actor winner. Understanding the magnitude of KGF 2 and

Kantara's win for Kannada cinema, Yash wrote "Heartiest congratulations to all the winners of the National Awards. A special shoutout to our very own Rishab Shetty, Vijay Kiragandur, Prashanth Neel, and the entire Hombale Films team for the well-deserved recognition for Kantara and KGF 2. Here's to many more heights. This is indeed Kannada cinema's shining moment on the national stage."

Kantara, KGF 2 win National Film Awards 2024; Chaluve Gowda of Hombale Films reveals how it happened: 'Wanted to take Kannada cinema to...'

Ten years back, when Hombale Films made their production debut with Puneeth Rajkumar's Ninnindale, they had one aim in mind. "The plan was to create good movies with good content, and take Kannada cinema to the next level," says Chaluve Gowda, who started the production company with Vijay Kiragandur. Today, two of their films — KGF 2 and Kantara — have won big at the 70th National Film Awards. While KGF 2 won the Best Kannada Film and Best Stunt Choreography (Anbariv), Kantara won the Best Actor (Rishab Shetty), and Best Film providing wholesome entertainment. Talking about the palpable excitement among both teams, Chaluve says, "Both films, which are from completely different genres, were deserving of the wins. They were meritorious films. We have been congratulating each other since the time of the announcement. Rishab, Prashanth Neel, Yash, all of us are really happy and excited about the wins." KGF 2 actor Yash also shared his excitement on the win on X, "Heartiest congratulations to all the winners of the National Awards. A special shoutout to our very own Rishab Shetty, Vijay Kiragandur, Prashanth Neel, and the entire Hombale Films team for the well-deserved recognition for Kantara and KGF 2. Here's to many more heights. This is indeed Kannada cinema's shining moment on the national stage!"

Crediting the entire team of Hombale Films, KGF 2 and Kantara for their extensive support to the making of the films, Chaluve says, "The kind of movies that we have created so far, especially KGF and Kantara, is the result of our plan to create quality films. You can see that in



every film that we have backed, and special thanks to all the actors, the directors, and the team for giving it their all." While they have indeed taken Kannada cinema to the next level, and given it a huge platform on the national stage, the filmmaker asserts that Hombale Films will always stay true to its origins. "We did want to expand, and make quality films in other languages. It is in that process that we recently made Raghu Thatha in Tamil. But there is no doubt in our minds that we will still concentrate on making Kannada films." It was a clean sweep for Hombale Films in the 70th National Film Awards as every award that came to Kannada feature films was for a project backed by them. Apart from these two films, the other big winners from the South at this edition of the National Awards were Ponniyin Selvan 1, Thiruchitrambalam, Aattam, and Saudi Vellakka.

Kareena Kapoor shares then-and-now pics with Saif Ali Khan on his birthday: 'The love of my life'



Sharing these pictures, Kareena penned a sweet note that read: "Happy Birthday to the love of my life. Parthenon 2007, Parthenon 2024, who would have thought? As they as must keep growing, which we did and quite well."

Saif Ali Khan is celebrating his 54th birthday today. As wishes are pouring in from all quarters, the one wish that stole the limelight was of his wife Kareena Kapoor, who shared a before and after picture of herself with Saif from Parthenon, Greece. While one of the pictures was from 2007, the year when they started dating, the other picture was from the same spot but from 2024.

Sharing these pictures, Kareena penned a sweet note that read: "Happy Birthday to the love of my life. Parthenon 2007, Parthenon 2024, who would have thought? As they as must keep growing, which we did and quite well."

Not just Kareena, but the Devara actor also received special wishes from both his sisters Saba Pataudi and Soha Ali Khan, as well as his daughter Sara Ali Khan.

The former gave a glimpse of the actor cutting his birthday cake along with his son Ibrahim Ali Khan and wife Kareena Kapoor in the frame. Sharing the pictures, Sara Ali Khan wrote, "Happiest Birthday Abba." The entire family could be seen wearing casual outfits. Meanwhile, Soha Ali Khan in her special post for her brother shared a series of photos from different times. She captioned the post: "Happy birthday to my favourite brother." Similarly, Saba Pataudi took to her Instagram Stories to share a photo with Saif Ali Khan. She wrote, "To the made leo beside me! You're wished the stars n moon... success n happily ever after. From a sister who's always head your back! Lots of love."

On the work front, Saif Ali Khan is all set to feature in NTR Jr and Janhvi Kapoor-starrer Devara. The actor will play the role of Bhaira.

Sumit Antil, Bhagyashree Jadhav announced as India's flagbearers for Paris Paralympics opening ceremony



Tokyo Paralympics gold medal winner javelin thrower Sumit Antil and Asian Para Games silver medalist shotputter Bhagyashree Jadhav will be India's flagbearers for the Paris Paralympics opening ceremony, Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) chief Devendra Jhajharia said on Friday. "Antil and Bhagyashree have been consistent performers over the years. They will be Indian flag-bearers at the Paris Paralympics' athletes march past," Jhajharia told PTI. Haryana's Sumit won the Tokyo Paralympics gold medal with a world record throw of 68.55 metres in the F64 category. He then went on to win a gold at the World Para Championships last year and shattered his own record at the Asian Para Games with a throw of 73.29m.

Bhagyashree, who competes in the F34 category, won a silver medal at the Asian Para Games. She is also a medal winner at the FAZZA World Cup. Earlier on Friday, the Indian contingent was given a grand send-off before they go on to represent the country in the Paris Games slated to begin at August 28 and go on till September 8.

The PCI and Sports Authority of India (SAI) hosted the ceremony for the Indian team comprising 84 athletes across 12 disciplines, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo. "Our para athletes have a remarkable ability to overcome obstacles and turn challenges into opportunities. They have shown remarkable determination and perseverance in their preparation for the Paris Paralympics 2024," Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in a release. "Many athletes have benefited from the Khelo India initiative, and a significant number from there will be going to the Paris Paralympics. The government is committed to providing them with the resources and support they need to excel at the highest level. As they embark on this important journey, we stand united in our support and are confident they will bring honour to our nation. We wish them the very best as they strive for excellence on the global stage," he said.

What new VAR promises? Fewer breaks, lesser soft penalties and you also get to hear referee

The VAR was designed to end all potential turf wars. Yet, five seasons since its inception, EPL's technological foray has only spurred controversies and sparked debates. It survived a scrap-campaign, with 77 per cent of the votes favouring the technology. A revision though was inevitable, so the Premier League launched a six-point plan to fine-tune VAR—highlights being a high threshold of VAR's intervention including the "referee's call", interpretation of handballs inside the box, holding shirts in the box and effective communication of the decision to the spectators—so that the decision-making mechanism is smoother, transparent and the game's flow uninterrupted.

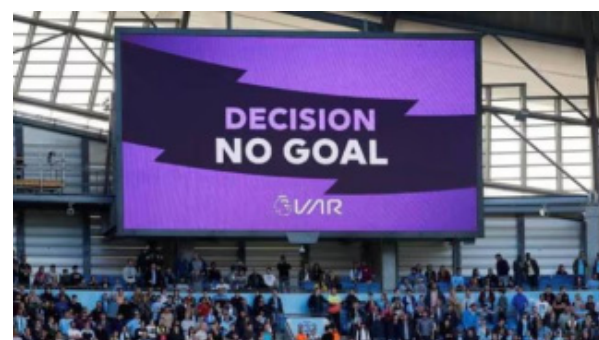
What is the referee's call?

In practice, it is different from the umpire's call in cricket, wherein the television umpire sticks with the umpire's decision upon review. But in spirit, both emphasise the primacy of the referee's (umpire's) judgement. VAR, thus, would interfere only if the error is clear and obvious. Like if the referee had missed a dangerous tackle, or if the linesman had missed a clear offside or such-like blatant oversights. If the officials handling VAR believe the referee has conclusively erred, based on readily available evidence, it would inform the referee, who would watch full-speed replays on the pitch-side monitor. Slow motion frames would be shown only if the point of contact, for instance a handball or a tackle, needs to be verified. One of the biggest drawbacks of VAR has been that the slow-motion replays made the challenges look worse on the monitor, thus influencing the eventual decision. It has resulted in soft penalties and harsh offside calls. With fewer slow motion replays such instances too could dwindle. The VAR would also not instruct him to change the decision—the final call would be the referee's.

It promises fewer breaks. The VAR officials would not brood on every decision for an eternity, thus disrupting the game's tempo, and making teams build momentum again. It would reduce the instances of footballers appealing to the referee for VAR for trivial matters. The brief has been to speed up decision making—the emphasis being if a decision can't be made in the first few viewings, no conclusive evidence can be reached. Moreover, 12 new specialist video assistant referees have been added to ensure a quicker verdict and provided specialised training. "Emphasis is on speed of process while preserving accuracy," the Professional Game Match Officials Board had asserted. The semi-automated offside technology, which would be implemented after one of the autumn international breaks, would further reduce the breaks in play (by at least 31 seconds). It would also unburden the referees, some of whom had complained that the relentless eye of the VAR had put them under extra pressure, thus affecting the quality of decision-making.

Would this season see fewer penalties?

The number of penalties awarded have not actually skyrocketed after the introduction of VAR. After a high of 125 in the first year of VAR, it dropped to 106 last season (the same number as in 2016-17 pre-VAR season). Yet, there were plenty of soft penalties, especially awarded for handballs inside the box. But a relaxed handball rule could see fewer spot kicks being given for hand balls, the interpretation of which has been complicated for ages. There, though, is a genuine attempt to simplify it. Last year, referees awarded penalties whenever it hit the arm, unless it was from a point-blank range. Now they would consider if the arm was in a justifiable position or making a justifiable movement. For example, if the ball hits the supporting arm of a player when he is trying to balance himself when falling on the ground, or when it has deflected wickedly from his own body or another player, to hit him arm and he had little time to react. The proximity of the player to the ball too would be evaluated. Players



have been advised that they do not need to keep their arms unnaturally behind their backs to avoid being penalised.

What is the new interpretation of holding inside the box?

It is the commonest sight when taking corners, players locked in bear-hug, pulling and tugging shirts, often wrestling the other down. Ahead of this campaign, referees were told to bear in mind how far the incident is away from the ball. Players will only be penalised when holding is sustained and has a clear impact on the opponent's opportunity to play or challenge for the ball, including non-footballing actions. Former referee Kevin Friend, who gave the new guidance to the referees, explained to Sky Sports: "If the defenders' actions are to deliberately bring the player down by holding him, sustained, impactful, then we're going to penalise that. The more away from the ball, the more severe it's got to be."

Would we see fewer refereeing controversies this year?

Not necessarily. Though some of the rules have been relaxed and some made stringent, controversies would invariably strike because many of the rules in football are still bound to interpretation and subjective. What might look like a deliberate handball to one referee might not necessarily look the same for the other. It would depend on the mood of the match, and the angle from which the referee had watched the action too.

How would the VAR experience be for in-stadia fans?

The screens would show all VAR overturns and the on-field goals that are disallowed. There is also a new Premier League Match Centre social-media account that will communicate the facts regarding VAR decisions, besides announcements. However, this would not be live, but after the check has ended.

Warm welcome for Telangana football team

GNS News Agency, August 19

Hyderabad: Telangana Football Association (TFA) officials gave a warm welcome to the Telangana's junior boys team, who recently won the Dr BC Roy Football Championship at Nagoan, Assam.

In the final of the junior national championship, the team defeated Manipur on penalties to lift the trophy. TFA congratulated the team for their remarkable achievement and reaffirmed its commitment to the development of the sport in the State.



'The team will miss you', PM Modi tells the 'Great Wall of India' Sreejesh

GNS News Agency, August 19 New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the wall of Indian hockey PR Sreejesh and stated, "The team will miss him" as the veteran goalkeeper drew curtains on his outstanding career following the bronze medal-winning campaign at the Paris Olympics.

The Prime Minister met the Indian Paris Olympic contingent at his residence on the Independence Day. He also clicked pictures with the athletes during the event. Sreejesh along with captain Harmanpreet Singh, also gifted India jerseys and hockey to the Prime Minister during their meeting. During the interaction with players, the Prime Minister asked about Sreejesh's retirement decision, "Sreejesh, had you already decided to retire?" Sreejesh replied, "I had been contemplating retirement for the past few years. My teammates would often ask in a fun way, 'When are you leaving?' I first attended the national camp in 2002 and played my first international match at the junior level in 2004. Since then, I've been representing my country for 20 years."

"I felt that retiring on a



grand stage like the Olympics, where the whole world comes together, would be the perfect way to conclude my career," he added. The Prime Minister responded, "The team will miss you, and they have given you a wonderful farewell." Sreejesh further said, "After we lost the semi-final, the team was little demotivated. But when we headed on to the pitch for the last match, my teammates kept encouraging each other, saying, 'We have to win this for Sreejesh Bhai'. I thanked them from that Olympic podium and announced my retirement after our victory."

The Paris Olympics

saw the Indian team play scintillating hockey at times; performances that saw them defeat Australia by 3-2, for the first time after 52 years in the Olympics. They pulled out another rabbit from the hat in the Quarter Finals, an unreal performance by every single member of the team against Great Britain, where they defended with a man down for over 40 minutes to force penalty shootouts and win by 4-2, courtesy of heroics from Sreejesh. Reflecting on the team's performance against Britain in the quarterfinal, captain Harmanpreet, who was India's top scorer with 10

goals, said, "It was tough after the first quarter as we lost one player, but our coaching staff provided incredible support. In the Olympics, anything can happen, so we visualised every challenging situation and stuck to our game plan no matter what. The team was full of energy and determined to win the match at any cost. Also, beating Australia after 52 years was an achievement and a big record in itself." With a bronze medal win in Paris, the Indian men's team claimed back-to-back medals in hockey for the first time since the 1972 Olympics in Munich and attained their 13th overall Olympic medal.

Cricket in India is finally back to conventional game form

Hyderabad: Indian cricket is finally cruising forward towards playing the conventional form of the game. India, have 10 Test matches to look forward to. Each one of them is important to earn a place in the final of the ICC World Test Championship 2025.

A two-match series against Bangladesh, a three-match series against New Zealand both at home, and a gruelling five-match series against the mighty Australians in their backyard, are just what a die-hard Indian cricket lover is waiting for this new avatar of the Duleep Trophy format, one gathers, was suggested by a team of astute and well known former Indian cricketers. One does accept that at times a change is necessary, however, when one has a historical and well proven system in place, one needs to ensure that it continues.

Unfortunately, this is where the BCCI have fallen short, as the established and star Indian players were never seen partaking in it. The Duleep Trophy gradually lost its importance and the very essence of what it stood for diminished expeditiously. The battle between the four irrelevant sides of nearly 60 players playing the Duleep Trophy is like a cricket trial that one had to undergo to unearth and identify prospective cricketers at the initial level. In this case, each cricketer is already established, so the only criteria for a player is to play for themselves. How this could be good for cricket or the cricketer is quite puzzling. One can imagine the bickering that may take place internally amongst players, when a batting order does not meet up to one's expectations or being bowled from the wrong end or underbowed. The four captains



have an even tougher task, as apart from them being under scrutiny, both as a leader and player, they also need to give each of their players a fair platform to perform. They will also need to showcase no partiality and so whatever they do, there will be disgruntled individuals to face. The Indian selectors are 5 wise men from their respective zones. However, for them to have an overall view of all the players in one's zone is an enormous task. One that is impossible to grasp. This is where the zonal selectors from the state sides under the chairmanship of the national selector, played an important part. One then got a better perspective about the talent that existed overall. One hopes that the BCCI goes back to the tried and tested format of the Duleep Trophy next year and insists that the cream of Indian cricketers play in it. A tournament that started 63 years needs its status and importance, and having A, B, C and D sides is very far from it.

Ishan Kishan hits quickfire hundred for Jharkhand, smashes nine sixes in 39 balls in Buchi Babu tournament



Kishan recorded nine sixes in the space of 39 balls and brought up his century in only 86 deliveries on the back of consecutive maximums as Jharkhand overhauled Madhya Pradesh's first-innings total. He eventually holed out on 114 off 107 balls, an innings laced with five fours and 10 sixes.

Ishan Kishan reached his hundred in 86 balls on the back of nine sixes. (PTI) Ishan Kishan reached his hundred in 86 balls on the back of nine sixes. Turning up for Jharkhand in their opening round of the Buchi Babu Invitational Tournament, India wicket-keeper Ishan Kishan smashed a blistering hundred against Madhya Pradesh

in Thirunelveli on Friday.

Leading the Jharkhand Cricket Association side in the fixture, Kishan walked out to bat at number six on the second day after Madhya Pradesh were bundled out for 225. While the left-hander was watchful initially, Kishan raced to his half-century in only 61 balls before teeing off. Kishan recorded nine sixes in the space of 39 balls and brought up his century in only 86 deliveries on the back of consecutive maximums as Jharkhand overhauled Madhya Pradesh's first-innings total. He eventually holed out on 114 off 107 balls, an innings laced with five fours and 10 sixes. Kishan, who was part of the national side across all formats, opted for a break towards the end of the 2023 season after experiencing travel fatigue. The 26-year-old soon found himself out of favour in the national set-up and also missed out on a spot for the T20 World Cup earlier this year. In February, Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were snubbed from the BCCI central contracts after the duo were deemed to have skipped domestic red-ball matches. Kishan returned to competitive cricket with the Mumbai Indians for the IPL 2024 season, scoring 320 runs in 14 games with a solitary half-century. "I was scoring runs and then I found myself on the bench. These things do happen in a team sport. But I experienced travel fatigue. It meant there was something wrong, I was not feeling well or right and so I decided to take a break. However, sadly, barring my family and few close people no one understood that," Kishan told The Indian Express in an exclusive interview as he explained his decision to take a break from the national set-up. Kishan last featured for India in a T20I in November 2023. He last played in a Test match against West Indies in July last year. Earlier this week, Kishan was also named as the wicket-keeper in the India D squad that will be led by Iyer in the Duleep Trophy starting next month.