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Fire breakdown in residential complex destroys mobile warehouse

Hyderabad: Property worth lakhs of rupees was gutted down when fire broke out at a flat in a residential apartment complex at KPHB on Wednesday afternoon.

According to the fire officials, the fire broke out at a warehouse where mobile phones and batteries were stored in huge number. The owner, S Pavan runs a mobile phone sales store near the building and had stocked the gadgets and accessories in the building. On information, a fire tender from Kukatpally fire station reached the spot and doused the flames within half-an-hour. The fire officials suspect the fire broke out due to a short circuit.

Rains hit normal life in Khammam, Kothagudem; lowlying areas inundated

Kothagudem: Widespread rains for the last two days in Kothagudem and Khammam districts disrupted normal life, coal production and transportation on Wednesday. At Bhadrachalam, Annadanasatram, Vista complex and other areas around Bhadradi Temple were inundated. Rainwater stood at knee-deep level for sometime as officials have closed river Godavari embankment sluice gates to prevent the river water entering the temple town.

District Collector Jitesh V Patil visited Bhadrachalam town to take stock of the situation. He told the media that the news reports of Godavari entering the town were false and the water logging in the town was caused due to heavy downpour.

Vinesh Phogat disqualified from Paris Olympics 50kg wrestling final for being overweight, misses historic medal

GNS News Agency, August 7

The Indian contingent was in for a shock as wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who was on her way to become the country's first woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final by defeating Cuba's Guzman Lopez on Tuesday night, was eliminated for being overweight ahead of her final bout against USA's Sarah Ann Hildebrandt on Wednesday (August 7, 2024). "It is with regret that the Indian contingent shares news of the disqualification of Vinesh Phogat from the Women's Wrestling 50kg class. Despite the best efforts by the team through the night, she weighed in a few grams over 50kg this morning. No further comments will be made by the contingent at this time. The Indian team requests you respect Vinesh's privacy. It would like to focus on the competitions on hand," the Indian Olympic Association said in a statement.

Vinesh was found to be overweight by exactly 100gm during the weigh-in this morning, Indian women's chief coach Virender Dahiya told The Hindu. "The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) Sanjay Singh and the IOA officials are in touch with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United World Wrestling (UWW) over the issue," Dahiya said, adding that the weight of Antim Panghal, who would compete in 53kg on Wednesday, was within the limits. "Last night [Vinesh's] her weight was

up by one kg. We and her personal support staff worked to cut it down. Unfortunately, it was slightly above the limit," Dahiya said. Indian Olympic Association president P. T. Usha said she was "shocked and disappointed" by Vinesh's disqualification and that the IOA was following the matter "in the strongest possible manner" after the national federation's appeal to the world body against the verdict. "I met Vinesh at the Olympic Village Polyclinic a short while ago and assured her of complete support of the Indian Olympic Association, Government of India and the whole country. We are providing Vinesh all medical and emotional support.

"The Wrestling Federation of India has filed an appeal to UWW to reconsider the decision to disqualify Vinesh and IOA is following that up in the strongest possible manner." The IOA chief said despite concerted efforts from all, Phogat could not meet the competition's weight requirements. "I am aware of the relentless efforts made by Vinesh, medical team, led by Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala and the Chef-de-Mission Gagan Narang through the night to ensure that she could meet the competition requirements," Usha said. "The IOA is taking every step to ensure that the morale of the contingent remains high. We are sure all Indians will stand with Vinesh and the entire Indian contingent."

PM Modi to visit landslide-struck Wayanad on Aug 10



GNS News Agency, August 7

New Delhi/Thiruvananthapuram: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit landslide-struck Wayanad in Kerala on August 10 (Saturday) and interact with the survivors of the disaster that hit the southern state last month, a source said on Wednesday. From Kannur, PM Modi will conduct an aerial survey of the landslide-affected areas on a helicopter. He will then visit a few relief camps where over 10,000 people are currently sheltered.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan are expected to accompany PM Modi after his arrival in Kannur. The Vijayan-led state government as well as the Congress-led Opposition have been demanding that the Central government declare the disaster as a national calamity. Meanwhile, the toll from the disaster on Wednesday rose to 413, with 152 people still missing. The announcement of PM Modi's visit came hours after Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday urged the Union government to declare the Wayanad landslide as a national disaster given the devastation it has left behind. "I urge the Union government to support a comprehensive rehabilitation package for Wayanad. This package must include building disaster-resilient infrastructures to help the affected communities. The Union government should also enhance the compensation that people are getting. Importantly, the Union government should declare the Wayanad landslide as a national disaster," LoP Rahul Gandhi said while addressing the Lok Sabha. He said that there is a need for a comprehensive assistance plan from the Union to rebuild Wayanad. On August 1, Rahul Gandhi along with his sister -- Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra -- visited the landslide-affected Chooralmala in Kerala's Wayanad.

KTR Criticises Revanth Reddy's Handloom Policies on National Handloom Day



GNS News Agency, August 7

Telangana's BRS Working President and MLA KTR extended his heartfelt congratulations to handloom workers on National Handloom Day. He described the BRS regime as a "golden era" for the handloom industry. KTR reminisced about his father's visionary leadership that revitalised the handloom sector. He noted that while the Union budget allocated only Rs. 600 crores over six years for handlooms, the BRS government significantly increased annual funding to Rs. 1200 crores along with introducing revolutionary schemes.

The initiatives mentioned were "Cheneta Mitra" savings scheme, offering a 50 percent subsidy, and the "Netannaku Bima" insurance scheme, which provides a guarantee of Rs. 5 lakh. Additionally, 36,000 individuals have supported the families of weavers, and loan waivers amounting to Rs. 29 crores have been granted to 10,150 handloom workers. The BRS government also implemented a support pension for artisans and planned significant projects, such as an apparel park in Sirisilla and the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park in Warangal.

KTR criticised the current government, Congress and also BJP for their detrimental impact on the handloom sector. He pointed to the introduction of GST on handloom cloths, the abolition of various schemes, and the reduction of yarn subsidies as factors that have exacerbated the industry's struggles. He also condemned the cancellation of the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bhima Yojana, an insurance scheme and the crisis faced by weaver families under Revanth's rule. KTR requested the current governments to take immediate action to rescue the handloom sector from its ongoing crisis and ensure the continuation of successful schemes introduced by the BRS regime.

Telangana's Swachh Bio US deal not so clean!

GNS News Agency, August 7

Hyderabad: Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy's claims of attracting investments into Telangana by signing pacts with US-based companies during his ongoing US tour are increasingly coming under a shadow of doubt, with the credentials of the firms and the people behind them being questioned. This is after it was found that one of the firms was just 16 days old, and had the Chief Minister's brother's name as one of the promoters. BRS social media convener Manne Krishank had on Tuesday first raised questions over the credentials of Walsh Karra Holdings, with which Revanth Reddy and the official delegation signed an agreement on Monday, but a bigger revelation came when more details of another firm, Swachh Bio, with which the delegation signed a pact on Tuesday, surfaced on X late on Tuesday night. As per an official statement from the Chief Minister's Office, Swachh Bio, a lignocellulosic biofuels manufacturing company, would soon establish a 250 KLPD second-generation, cellulosic biofuels plant in Telangana. The firm announced a capital investment of over Rs 1,000 crore, in the first phase, which it said would provide employment to 250 people at the plant, and 250 people in additional support and other roles.

Now, the most damaging revelation for Revanth Reddy - Swachh Bio is a firm that was incorporated just 16 days old, having been incorporated on July 21, registered with the Registrar of Companies in Hyderabad. And the contact email is jag.anumula@gmail.com, which is of one of the promoters of the company, Anumula Jagadeeshwar Reddy. And who is Jagadeeshwar Reddy? Revanth Reddy's younger brother, who had returned from the US during the last Assembly polls to help him campaign in Kamareddy. All these are details



sourced from multiple internet sources, including official ones, casting serious aspersions on the authenticity of the deals being signed by Revanth Reddy & Co. Swachh Biogreen Private Limited also has Jagadeeshwar Reddy as one of its directors, as per the CIN/FCRN details of the firm. Another director is Vedavalli Shivananda Reddy. A CIN is a unique identification number issued to Indian companies by the Registrar of Companies, while FCRN is a registration number given to foreign companies. Earlier in the day, Krishank had questioned the legitimacy of Walsh Karra Holdings, stating that it was incorporated only four months ago with just two directors, each holding fifty shares. Revanth Reddy & Co had signed an agreement with WKH on Monday for an investment of Rs.839 crore. Krishank pointed out that there were no financial statements regarding the company in public domain, unlike genuine companies. He also pointed out that Revanth Reddy had signed a deal with another such fraudulent company, Godi India, during his visit to Davos earlier.

CM Siddaramaiah had answered show cause notice by Karnataka Gov on same day



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has already answered the show cause notice issued by Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), sources in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Wednesday.

GNS News Agency, August 7

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has already answered the show cause notice issued by Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), sources in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Wednesday. Along with replying to the notice, the Chief Minister has also submitted all relevant documents to Governor Gehlot, the sources confirmed.

The CMO sources confirmed that the reply to the show cause notice was given on the day when it was

issued to CM Siddaramaiah. The Governor's office had sought some more documents related to the case and they were also made available to the Governor on Saturday. However, the reply does not include the advice by the Council of Ministers to the Governor to withdraw the notice issued to the CM and to reject the petition by the complainant TJ Abraham. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had personally met and provided an explanation to the Governor along with the records. Additionally, the Chief Minister has denied the allegations mentioned in the notice issued by the Governor. Regarding the distribution of the MUDA site, Siddaramaiah stated that he had no role or influence in the matter.

He has clarified that the site was legally allocated to his wife and has sent the relevant documents along with his response. CM Siddaramaiah expressed confidence that the Governor would accept the response already given to the notice issued in the MUDA case. Speaking to the media on Wednesday, he stated that, since the MUDA matter was handled entirely according to legal procedures, he was confident that the Governor would accept the government's response. He emphasised that he did not exert any influence in the distribution of MUDA plots and explained that, in accordance with legal procedures, his wife was allocated an alternate plot during the BJP government's tenure in 2021. Karnataka BJP on August 3 had said that the legal action against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would not stop if he did not answer the Governor's show cause notice. The petitioner TJ Abraham went to the Raj Bhavan and submitted additional information and clarification with regard to the alleged land scam on Tuesday.

KTR warns media outlets of legal action for spreading rumours on BRS merger with national party



GNS News Agency, August 7

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday warned media outlets against spreading false propaganda that the BRS was in talks with a national party for merger. He demanded them to publish a rejoinder for spreading malicious lies against the BRS or face legal action. "To those spreading baseless rumours with hidden agendas, let this be your final warning. Stop spreading baseless rumours. Publish a rejoinder to your malicious lies against the BRS, or face legal action," he posted on X. And yet, we prevailed. We fought tirelessly, and we achieved and built a state that has become a beacon of progress and pride. A...Rama Rao reiterated that the BRS would continue to serve the people of Telangana as it had been doing for over two decades. He reminded that for past 24 years, the party withstood hundreds of saboteurs and thousands of malicious propagandists and schemes with resilience and devotion. He stated that the party fought tirelessly, achieved and built Telangana, a State that became a beacon of progress and pride, and others aspire to emulate. "Millions of hearts beat together for one identity and emotion - Telangana! We fall, we rise, and we fight solely for Telangana! We will never bow down. Not now, not ever! (sic)" he said.

Centre must declare Wayanad landslide a national disaster: Rahul Gandhi

GNS News Agency, August 7

New Delhi: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday urged the Union government to declare the Wayanad landslide as a national disaster given the devastation it has left behind.

"I urge the Union government to support a comprehensive rehabilitation package for Wayanad. This package must include building disaster-resilient infrastructures to help the affected communities. The Union government should also enhance the compensation that people are getting. Importantly, the Union government should declare the Wayanad landslide as a national disaster," LoP Rahul Gandhi said while addressing the Lok Sabha.

He said that there is a need for a comprehensive assistance plan from the Union to rebuild Wayanad. The LoP also slammed the BJP MPs for not allowing the opposition to have a proper debate on the Wayanad issue in the Lok Sabha. "I am amazed to see that they are not allowing us to speak on Wayanad," he said amid a ruckus.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Protect the voiceless

THE alarming increase in wildlife crime in northern India is a stark reminder of the ongoing battle between conservation efforts and illegal activities. Over the past five years, a staggering 683 wildlife crime cases have been reported across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chandigarh. This data, obtained from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), reveals the grim reality facing our nation's biodiversity. Uttar Pradesh, with 425 cases, and Uttarakhand, with 152, are the epicentres of these crimes, highlighting the severe threats to local wildlife. These cases include poaching, forest fires, encroachments and the smuggling of animal body parts. Notably, Himachal reported cases involving the trafficking of snow leopard skins and bear gall bladders, underscoring the diverse and valuable wildlife targeted by poachers. While the WCCB's efforts, including cyber-patrolling and training enforcement officers, are commendable, they are not enough. The decline in cases in UP from 158 in 2019 to 19 in 2023 may suggest some progress, but it is also an indicator of the work that remains. The data points to the fact that while some states have seen a reduction, others continue to struggle, and emerging trends like the trafficking of exotic species at airports show that poachers are adapting and finding new ways to circumvent the law. The urgency to address wildlife crime cannot be overstated. Protecting our wildlife is not just about preserving individual species; it's about maintaining the ecological balance and ensuring a sustainable future for all. This fight requires a multifaceted approach, including stricter enforcement, public awareness campaigns and robust international cooperation. If investigative and enforcement methods do not evolve and stay ahead of poaching syndicates,

Immigration to get easier for some occupations; two Indian-origin men declared public safety risk



GNS News Agency, August 7

ImmigrationThe proposed amendment underscores the government's commitment to adapting Canada's immigration policies to better reflect the evolving economic landscape and support the diverse needs of the labor market. The Government of Canada has announced plans to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations to introduce a new permanent economic class for workers with experience in Training, Education, Experience, and Responsibilities (TEER) 4 and 5 occupations. This regulatory initiative aims to modernize the economic immigration system by broadening the selection criteria for permanent residents to include candidates with a diverse range of skills and experiences.

The proposed changes, slated for pre-publication in the Canada Gazette, Part I, in Fall 2024, followed by a publication in Part II, are part of the Forward Regulatory Plan: 2024-2026. The amendments will enable foreign nationals with Canadian work experience in TEER 4 and 5 occupations to transition more easily to permanent residency. This move is expected to enhance opportunities for these workers to continue contributing to the Canadian economy and address the labor market needs of Canadian businesses in these sectors. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has identified this initiative as a medium-term regulatory priority. The regulatory changes will not require domestic or international regulatory cooperation efforts.

The proposed amendment underscores the government's commitment to adapting Canada's immigration policies to better reflect the evolving economic landscape and support the diverse needs of the labor market. Abbotsford police issue warning about released Indian-origin gang members. On Thursday, Abbotsford police issued a public warning regarding two B.C. gang members who were released on bail just a day earlier. Vancouver Sun reported that the individuals, Anmol Sandhu and Navpreet Dhaliwal, have been under investigation since late 2022 for their involvement in a large-scale drug trafficking operation.

Both Sandhu and Dhaliwal are allegedly connected to the ongoing B.C. gang conflict and are considered to pose a significant public safety risk, according to police. Searches conducted at various residences in Abbotsford and Surrey uncovered nearly six kilograms of fentanyl, two kilograms of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, morphine, as well as numerous firearms and a substantial amount of cash. During the course of the drug investigation, Abbotsford police major crimes officers discovered evidence suggesting that Sandhu and Dhaliwal were plotting to commit murder. The two were apprehended on February 21 and charged with conspiracy to commit murder, along with multiple drug trafficking and firearms offenses. Despite these serious charges, they were released on bail.

TGCHHE revises DOST special phase admission schedule

GNS News Agency, August 7

Hyderabad: Thee Telangana Council of Higher Education on Saturday revised the DOST - 2024 special phase admission schedule. The registration with a fee of Rs.400 can now be done up to August 5 and web options can be exercised till August 5. Seats will be allotted on August 7.

Students have to self-report online and report at the allotted college on August 9.

India plans tougher ad curbs on liquor makers such as Carlsberg, Diageo, Pernod



GNS News Agency, August 7

LiquorThe changes threaten a seachange for liquor makers in India, the world's eighth-biggest alcohol market by volume, with annual revenues Euromonitor estimates at \$45 billion. India, which bans direct advertising of liquor, is set to announce sweeping rules that will bar even surrogate ads and sponsoring of events, which could force firms such as Carlsberg, Pernod Ricard and Diageo to redraw marketing campaigns. Such "surrogate ads" often get round the ban by ostensibly showing less desirable items instead, such as water, music CDs or glassware garbed in logos and hues linked to their key product, and often promoted by popular Bollywood film stars. Now they could bring fines for companies and bans for celebrities endorsing tobacco and liquor ads deemed misleading, according to the top civil servant for consumer affairs and draft rules being reported for the first time by Reuters.

"You can't take a circuitous way to promote products," the official, Nidhi Khare, told Reuters, adding that final rules were expected to be issued within a month. "If we find ads to be surrogate and misleading, then even those who are endorsing (products), including celebri-

ties, will be held responsible." For example, brewer Carlsberg promotes its Tuborg drinking water in India, with an ad showing film stars at a rooftop dance party and the slogan "Tilt Your World", which echoes its beer ads elsewhere, emblazoned with the message: "Drink Responsibly". Competitor Diageo's YouTube ad for its Black & White ginger ale, which has drawn 60 million views, features the signature black-and-white terriers from its scotch of the same name. The changes threaten a seachange for liquor makers in India, the world's eighth-biggest alcohol market by volume, with annual revenues Euromonitor estimates at \$45 billion. Growing affluence among its 1.4 billion people makes India a lucrative market for the likes of Kingfisher beer maker, United Breweries, part of the Heineken Group, which has more than a quarter of market share by volume. Popular for their whiskies, Diageo and Pernod, taken together, have a market share of about a fifth, while for Pernod, India contributes about a tenth of global revenues. The new rules call for "prohibition against engaging in surrogate advertisement", which extends to sponsorships and ads for products viewed as "brand extensions" that share the characteristics of an alcohol brand, the draft said.

Penalties under the new rules rely on consumer law, opening manufacturers and endorsers to fines of up to 5 million rupees (\$60,000), while promoters risk endorsement bans running from one to three years. Carlsberg declined to comment, while other companies did not respond to Reuters' queries, including those on sales of non-alcohol products. Members of the International Spirits and Wines Association of India, which represents Diageo and Pernod, "are committed to a compliant way of building brand extension businesses," said its outgoing chief executive, Nita Kapoor. The group was in talks with the government and supported advertising of "genuine" brand extensions, she added.

AAI spent Rs 796 cr for repairs, maintenance works of 101 airports last fiscal

GNS News Agency, August 7

Airports Authority of India (AAI) shelled out nearly 20 per cent higher amount of Rs 796 crore towards repairs and maintenance works of 101 airports in the last financial year, according to official data. Since the fiscal 2021-22, AAI's expenditure towards these activities at the airports has been on the rise. The amount rose to Rs 795.72 crore in the last financial year ended March 2024, from Rs 663.42 crore in 2022-23.

In 2021-22, the expenditure towards repairs and maintenance works was Rs 535.02 crore, as per the data shared by the civil aviation ministry with the Rajya Sabha. The expenditure figures have been provided for 121 AAI airports, and out of them, no money in this regard was spent for 20 airports, according to the data. Concerns regarding maintenance of airport buildings came to the fore following the collapse of the forecourt canopy at Terminal 1D of the Delhi airport amid rains on June 28.

Also, the kerb area canopy made of tensile fabric got torn at Jabalpur Airport on June 27 and at Rajkot Airport on June 29. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on July 29, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said all airport operators have been directed to carry out a third-party audit of the structural stability of airport buildings and associated infrastructures. "All the airport operators have also been directed to carry out a



thorough evaluation of all civil, electrical and technical aspects of the building, including the design, specifications and workmanship of the roof sheeting structure before the onset of monsoon every year," he had said. During the construction of an airport, various factors, including those in accordance with National Building Codes, are taken into consideration. Among other measures, the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) conducts inspections of licensed airports for airside infrastructure under its annual surveillance plan. AAI and public-private partnership (PPP) partners have planned a capital expenditure of over Rs 91,000 crore for the period from 2019-20 to 2024-25. The amount is for development. Airports Authority

Azam Khan Sarai, a 17th-century monument in Ahmedabad that served as inn, armoury, prison and more

GNS News Agency, August 7

Built in 1637, the caravanserai, known as 'the house of virtue and beneficence', was commissioned by the then viceroy of Gujarat, Azam Khan. In M S Commissariat's A History of Gujarat (1957), he says the Sarai, "along with the Shahi Bagh Palace, is one of the few secular architectural monuments in Ahmedabad". AZAM KHAN SARAIBuilt in 1637, the caravanserai, known as 'the house of virtue and beneficence', was commissioned by the then viceroy of Gujarat, Azam Khan. In M S Commissariat's A History of Gujarat (1957), he says the Sarai, "along with the Shahi Bagh Palace, is one of the few secular architectural monuments in Ahmedabad".

Every Sunday, the crowd of devotees coming to pray at the Bhadrakali Mandir inside the Bhadra Fort, the city centre of ancient Ahmedabad, swells. Adjacent to the temple is the Government Book Depot, housed in a Mughal-style building with a magnificent 18-foot-high entrance and Persian epigraphy carved inside the gate's recess. This building is what remains of Azam Khan Sarai. Built in 1637, the caravanserai, known as 'the house of virtue and beneficence', was commissioned by the then viceroy of Gujarat, Azam Khan. In M S Commissariat's A History of Gujarat (1957), he says the Sarai, "along with the Shahi Bagh Palace, is one of the few secular architectural monuments in Ahmedabad".

After the British government took over Ahmedabad in 1817, this structure was converted into a central prison for nearly a century. Eventually, it was transformed into government offices such as the Government Book Depot, offices of the joint director (Vigilance), Scheduled Castes welfare department, and the Archaeological Survey of India. After the British government took over Ahmedabad in 1817, this structure was converted into a central prison for nearly a century. Eventually, it was transformed into government offices such as the Government Book Depot, offices of the joint director (Vigilance), Scheduled Castes welfare department, and the Archaeological Survey of India. The building consists of a central block 240 feet long and 210 feet wide, with extensions on the north and south sides. The captivating entrance leads into an artistic octagonal hall. Above the hall is a projecting gallery in front of a low balcony made of open-cut stone.

The Sarai, an inn built for travellers, was repurposed as an arsenal during the later period of Mughal rule in the middle of the 18th century. After the British government took over Ahmedabad in 1817, this structure was converted into a central prison for nearly a century. Eventually, it was transformed into government offices such as the Government Book Depot, offices of the joint director (Vigilance), Scheduled Castes welfare department, and

NDRF, Army, fire service teams deployed in wake of heavy rain, discharge from dams

GNS News Agency, August 7

Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), one column of the Indian Army, and multiple teams from the Fire Department have been deployed proactively for Pune city and surrounding areas due to heavy rain and discharge from various dams. Amidst continuous water discharge from several key dams in the Pune district, the district administration and municipal corporations of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporations have warned residents of flooding in low-lying areas.

An officer from the Talegaon-headquartered 5th Battalion of the NDRF said, "On Saturday night, discussions were held with district administration and civic officials. Due to continuous rainfall and red alert in Pune district, two teams have been proactively deployed in Balewadi and Pimpri-Chinchwad. These teams will respond to any situation in Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad and surrounding areas. Meanwhile, teams remain deployed in Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and coastal districts." Following the requisition from the Pune district collector, one column of the Indian Army, comprising engineering and medical components, has been moved for pre-positioning in the Ekta Nagar area on Sinhagad Road, which witnessed heavy flooding on July 25. Meanwhile, multiple teams from fire departments of Pune City, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) have been deployed in the low-lying areas.

Pune district authorities warn of waterlogging, floods as dams continue to release water due to heavy rain



GNS News Agency, August 7

Given the constant discharge of water from almost all the dams in the Pune district of Maharashtra, Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporations have warned residents of flooding in low-lying areas. Deputy Chief Minister and Pune Guardian Minister Ajit Pawar asked the district authorities to prepare on war footing to ensure no loss and inconvenience to the citizens.

Since Friday evening, Pune and its surrounding areas have experienced heavy to intense rain, especially in the ghat regions. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for the ghat regions of Pune and Satara districts. Pune city and the plains of the district have been placed under an orange alert. The IMD has predicted continuous rain in and around the city for 24 hours. In the last 24 hours, Lonavala has received 212 mm of rainfall. Thanks to the continuous rain, all dams in the district are either full or very near capacity, leading the irrigation department to release water from them. Due to heavy rains in the catchment areas, dams such as Khadakwasla, Temghar, Varasgoan, Panshet, Pavana, Mulshi, Mulshi, and Bhatghar are continuously releasing water. As a result, the river water levels are rising, posing an increased risk of floods in low-lying areas. Residents of Baner, Sinhagad Road, Warje, Dandekarpl, Patil Estate Slums, and other areas are at risk of water entering their homes and have been advised to take necessary precautions. Similarly, in Pimpri-Chinchwad, residents of Pimple Gurav, Sanghvi, Dapodi, Harris Bridge and other areas are in danger of flood waters entering their homes. Apart from the low-lying areas, many other parts of the city, especially places where natural streams have been encroached upon, could experience waterlogging. The IMD has issued a warning for drivers on the ghat section, as visibility will be low, and there is a high risk of landslides and rocks falling onto the road. The district authorities are on high alert, and citizens are advised to take precautions when going out.

TGSRTC plans to install AI-powered alert 'ADAS' in buses

GNS News Agency, August 7

Hyderabad: With the Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) devices providing positive results in reducing accidents, the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) is planning to install the concept in its buses on a large scale. This Artificial Intelligence-powered alert system installed in about 200 state transport buses as part of a pilot project has helped in reducing accidents on highways up to 40 per cent in the last one year. As a proactive measure to reduce road accidents on highways, the system was installed as a pilot project in buses plying on three national highways in the state, Hyderabad-Bengaluru, Hyderabad-Vijayawada and Hyderabad-Nagpur, in September 2022. It is learnt that the number of fatal road accidents, between March 2023 and April 2024, involving state transport buses on the selected highway corridors across the state was 40 per cent lower in buses which had ADAS devices when compared to non-ADAS buses. Intelligent Solution for Road Safety Through Technology and Engineering (iRASTE), is a collaboration between the Centre, INAI, an Applied AI Research Centre at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), Intel, and the Telangana government. Spearheaded by INAI — a joint initiative of IIT-Hyderabad, Telangana government, and Intel — the project focuses on using AI to address road safety and mobility, and healthcare challenges.

Dalit Congress leader who threatened to convert to Islam over son's assault booked under state terror act



GNS News Agency, August 7

Three weeks after Congress Dalit leader Rajesh alias Raju Solanki threatened to convert to Islam if the state government didn't take action against Gondal BJP MLA Geetaba Jadeja and her husband in connection with the alleged assault on his son, Raju and four of his family members were booked under the stringent Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GUJCTOC) Act, for allegedly running a crime syndicate since 2014, said police on Saturday. Based on a complaint filed by inspector JJ Patel, in-charge of Local Crime Branch (LCB), Junagadh district, an FIR under GUJCTOC Act Sections 3(1)(2), 3(4) — related to organised crime — and the Arms Act was registered at A Division Police Station in Junagadh Saturday morning.

In his complaint, Patel named Raju, his brother Jayesh alias Javo alias Savan Solanki, his sons Sanjay and Dev and nephew Yogesh Bagda as accused. Later in the day, police arrested Raju, his two sons and nephew. Jayesh is in judicial custody in an attempt to murder case involving a doctor. According to the complaint, the five were allegedly involved in crimes like attempted murder, assaulting policemen, theft, robbery, rioting, extortion, kidnapping, criminal intimidation etc for the past 10 years. The FIR while listing 10 criminal cases previously filed against Raju, also the president of SC/ST cell of Junagadh unit of Congress, said that he was "the gang's leader". As per the FIR, nine, six, three and two cases were registered against Jayesh, Sanjay, Yogesh and Dev respectively.

The offences registered under the GUJCTOC Act are non-bailable and the police can get remand of accused for up to 30 days continuously. Under the Act, the

police get six months to file a charge-sheet, penal provisions include life imprisonment and attachment of property which are proceeds of crime and confessions made before police officers are admissible as evidence. The case against Raju comes three weeks after he and others collected application forms from Junagadh collector office on July 11 for converting to Islam. Raju had demanded that the ruling BJP seek resignation of its MLA Geetaba and arrest her husband Jayrajsinh in a case of attempt to murder and kidnapping registered after his son Sanjay was allegedly assaulted, kidnapped and threatened by 11 men on the intervening night of May 30 and 31 this year.

Geetaba's son Jyotiradityasinh alias Ganesh and 10 others were later arrested in the case. Raju had threatened that if the state government didn't grant his demand by August 15 this year, he and his family members would convert to Islam. Rejecting the allegation of the case being a "retaliatory action", Superintendent of Police Harshad Mehta told The Indian Express: "The criminal cases against the five accused were not registered after the case filed against the MLA's son. These accused had formed a gang. Due to Raju's criminal activities, in the past also proposals were prepared to extern him from Junagadh but they didn't go through. On closer analysis of cases, we found that all the accused were acting as a gang and Raju was their leader. So, suggestions that the GUJCTOC Act case against them is a retaliatory action are not true," said the SP.

Despite the high-profile case involving Sanjay, the gang continued with their criminal activities. "Jayesh and three others assaulted and attempted to murder a doctor on June 11 over an old dispute. The doctor sustained serious injuries and is still in hospital. After that, Jayesh was absconding for over a month. He was finally arrested by LCB three days ago," said Mehta. Earlier, Junagadh police had filed a chargesheet against the 11 accused in the assault on Sanjay who is also president of Junagadh city unit of National Students Union of India (NSUI), the student wing of Congress. "We have conducted an impartial investigation into the case of kidnapping and attempted murder. We have found enough evidence suggesting the victim was kidnapped from Junagadh and was dropped back after a few hours and therefore a chargesheet has been filed," Mehta said.

Cong leader arrested for removing chair of IB officer, causing her to fall at Jignesh Mevani press conference

GNS News Agency, August 7

A Congress leader was arrested on Thursday after he allegedly removed the chair of a woman intelligence officer, who was present at the press conference of Congress MLA and Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani at Bhuj town in Kutch and caused the officer to fall on the ground. The incident happened in the conference hall of Umed Bhavan, the circuit house in Bhuj town where Mevani was addressing a press conference about giving possession of land allotted to Dalits in Kutch. Purported CCTV camera footage shows Hareesh Ahir removing the chair of Reena Chauhan, an assistant intelligence officer of Gujarat Intelligence Bureau (IB), as the officer tries to sit down after clicking photos of Mevani on her phone. Unaware that the chair she was earlier sitting in had been removed, the 34-year-old officer tried to sit down but fell flat on the floor.

As per an FIR registered at A Division police station in Bhuj town, Chauhan suffered minor injuries in her spinal cord and went to a hospital for treatment. In her complaint to police, Chauhan stated that after she fell down, Ahir laughed aloud and said that she didn't deserve a chair and that there can't be any chair for her. She added that Ahir, who is a coordinator of the Congress Kisan Cell, knew her and also knew that she was a Dalit. Deputy Superintendent of Police of Kutch East (SC/ST Cell) A R Zankar said that based on Chauhan's complaint, Ahir was booked under sections 121(1) (voluntarily causing hurt to a public servant discharging his/her official duty), 221 (obstructing a public servant from discharging his/her official duty) and 133 (assault or criminal force to a person, intending thereby to dishonour that person) of the Bharatiya Nayaya Sanhita and under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Zankar, the investigating officer of the case, said that the incident took place at the press conference when Chauhan was discharging her official duty.

"Hareesh Shivji Ahir, one of the persons present there, knew that she was a woman officer of IB and belonged to



SC/ST. While she stood up, he removed her chair and when she fell down, he laughed aloud, telling her she didn't deserve to sit in that chair. The officer is in shock and has slipped into depression," he said. He told The Indian Express that Ahir was arrested. The incident kicked off a political storm with BJP coming down heavily on Congress. Minister of State for Home, Harsh Sanghvi, said on X, "Congress' mentality has always been anti-women and anti-Dalit. At a press conference of Gujarat Congress MLA Jignesh Mevani, look at how his close friend HS Ahir intentionally removed the chair and injured a Dalit woman officer." This is a highly condemnable incident, he added. Yagnesh Dave, media convenor of BJP's Gujarat unit said that Ahir's action betrayed the anti-women mentality of Congress. Mevani, however, claimed that Chauhan had sneaked into his press conference. "The FIR registered against our Congress worker is motivated and baseless. Had I invited the Intelligence Bureau to my press conference in the circuit house of Bhuj? Is this your father's firm that you dare sneak into my press conference? Whoever that officer or employee may be, at my press conference, only mediapersons were invited," he said. Mevani, who himself is a Dalit, said that he initially empathised with Chauhan. "But I no longer feel that way now as she has misused the Atrocity Act by taking undue advantage of being a Dalit and filing a false complaint."

Officer shot in Chandigarh court: No stretcher, no ambulance, victim continued to bleed for 30 minutes

GNS News Agency, August 7

No stretcher, no ambulance and no paramedic came to his aid for nearly half an hour the 37-year-old Indian Civil Account Services (ICAS) officer remained lying in a pool of blood on the floor at the mediation centre on the Chandigarh District Court complex after being fatally shot by his father-in-law, a retired assistant inspector general of the Punjab Police, Saturday.

ICAS Harprit Singh, who was posted as the controller of accounts in the Ministry of Agriculture in New Delhi, was rushed to the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), where doctors proclaimed him dead upon arrival, police said. Chandigarh police said around 2 pm, they answered a distress call informing about the gunshot fired at the victim. According to onlookers, after being shot, the victim remained lying on the floor on the second floor of the service block on the District Court Complex, where he had gone for the mediation process in the matrimonial dispute with his wife Amitoj Kaur. A court employee said it was around 1.40 pm when the gunshot was fired in the corridor of the second floor. Since there was no stretcher, four persons took the victim to the ambulance of the Chandigarh District Bar Association (DBA) parked downstairs. However, onlookers said, the DBA ambulance parked at service block was non-functional, so an advocate with the help of others put injured Harpit in his private car, and drove to the PGIMER — nearly 8 km. According to PGI sources, the



victim was brought to the emergency ward at around 2.15 pm. Chandigarh District Bar Association (DBA) president Rohit Khullar said, "The only ambulance available at the district court is owned by the DBA. Since it's Bharat Stage (BS) IV model, we don't use it." Puneet Chhabra, an advocate at the Chandigarh District Court, said, "There was an appalling incident of firing on the court premises, claiming an innocent life. Had there been an ambulance on-site, the result could have been different. The incident raises concerns over the security measures in place at the court." "The safety and security of everyone on the court premises — be judges, lawyers, clients and the general public — is of paramount importance. The incident highlights no one is safe under the current security arrangements."

'Who says agriculture is not profitable': Meet Punjab carrot farmer who defies the notion



GNS News Agency, August 7

There is a common belief that farming is no longer a profitable endeavour in the country. Meet Phuman Singh Kaurra, a 64-year-old Punjab farmer who has defied the notion. Started with just 4 acres of his family land, Kaurra has expanded his holdings to an impressive 36 acres, all from the profits he earned from farming.

Kaurra attributes his success to his expertise in carrot cultivation and "carrot seed multiplication".

His innovative farming practices have not only enabled him to sell carrots and carrot seeds worth Rs one crore annually but also helped him diversify his crops during the Kharif and summer seasons. His success story stands as a testament to the potential for profitability in agriculture through dedication and strategic cultivation. "There is a notion that farming is dying now and a farmer cannot even earn a living. I challenge this narrative," Phuman Singh said. "In reality, it can be highly successful if one approaches it with mindfulness and proper management, just like any other business where one tracks their earnings." He emphasised that everything he has — his farmland, house, vehicles, and farm machinery — has been acquired from the money he earned from farming. Hailing from Allapur village, also known as Paramjitpura, in the Sultanpur Lodhi subdivision of Kapurthala district, Phuman Singh, as a child, witnessed his father's relentless hard work in the fields. "I discontinued my BA (Bachelor of Arts) in the final year to go to Germany in 1979, but I couldn't stay there for more than a few months. I returned and joined my father in farming, along with my two brothers," he recalled. He has also visited several foreign countries, including Spain and the USA. Despite the opportunities and allure of these foreign lands, his heart remained in the fields of Punjab, and he returned each time to continue his beloved job — farming. Festive offer Sharing the economics of carrot farming, Phuman Singh said the input cost per acre will be around Rs 30,000. The earnings, he said, can range from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh per acre. Singh said he has never earned less than Rs. 1 lakh per acre. Sharing the economics of carrot farming, Phuman Singh said the input cost per acre will be around Rs 30,000. The earnings, he said, can range from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh per acre. Singh said he has never earned less than Rs. 1 lakh per acre.

The turning point in Phuman Singh's life came in the early 1990s when he observed that some farmers in his village were growing carrots on small plots of land. Noting the fame of the area's carrots, he approached an elderly farmer who was cultivating carrots on a few kanals. The man told Phuman that carrot farming was not suitable for him and that it may end in failure. "The elder man's scepticism, however, ignited something within me—a strong determination to prove him wrong," Phuman recounted. "This challenge fueled my passion for carrot cultivation, leading me to grow carrots not just on a few kanals, but across the entire 4 acres of my family land."

Six doctors, 17 nurses for 1,000 patients: Delhi's Asha Kiran shelter reels under 'severe staff crunch, overcrowding'

GNS News Agency, August 7

Half a dozen doctors, 17 nurses, 50 auxiliary nurses, and midwife (ANM) professionals have been tending to an estimated 1,000 inmates at the Delhi government-run Asha Kiran Home, a shelter for the intellectually challenged, which has reported at least 25 deaths so far this year, said government sources. Of these, 14 inmates died in July. Even as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) took suo motu cognisance of the matter on Saturday, demanding a report on the deaths within four weeks, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government and Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena's office sparred over the appointment of a 2012-batch Dadra and Nagar Haveli (Civil) Services (DANICS) officer — who remained under suspension for five years after being convicted in a bribery case in 2016 — as the 'Administrator' of the facility after his return to the service.

Reeling under a "severe staff crunch" despite gradual overcrowding over the years, government sources, quoting the initial findings of a probe into the deaths, said there were glaring discrepancies in the sanctioned, and actual staff strength at the Rohini-based facility. "In 2013, following the then-Lieutenant Governor's order, posts for 10 doctors, 249 nurses, and 62 ANMs were created at the facility. However, currently, there are only six doctors, 17 nursing staff, and 50 ANMs to take care of 1,000 inmates. The posts for multiple medical staff have also been lying vacant," the official said. The shelter could accommodate around 400 inmates, as per officials.

Both Delhi L-G Saxena and Revenue Minister Atishi had, after reports of deaths at the facility surfaced, on Friday, questioned the quality of caregiving and issues related to the nutritional needs of the inmates at the facility in separate sets of instructions. On Saturday, senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj accused Saxena of failing to suspend key officials at Asha Kiran despite "serious corruption allegations," adding that 'services' were under the domain of the L-G's Office. He also alleged that the Delhi Legislative Assembly's Petition Committee composed of selected AAP MLAs had attempted to conduct a probe into the incident but was "blocked by the Administration" which had been "neglecting the residents' basic needs" so far. L-G House officials contended that Social Welfare, which had control over the facility, was a "totally transferred subject" under the minister concerned as well as the Delhi Chief Minister. "Almost all the people living in this shelter are intellectually challenged... and often suffer from disabilities... they are not able to take full care of their food and drink... in such a situation, it is very important that

His newfound passion for carrot farming profoundly shaped his future. "My two brothers and I have worked tirelessly and began leasing additional land to expand our carrot cultivation. Over the years, we have gradually increased the area of cultivation and using our earnings we bought a total of 30 acres," he explained. "When we divided the land among ourselves later, each of us ended up with 10 acres.

Despite this, I continued carrot cultivation and even started producing carrot seeds to sell to other farmers and now I have 36 acres of land," the proud farmer said. Phuman Singh is now a major carrot seed supplier in Punjab, according to Dr Harinder Singh, associate director, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kapurthala. Dr Singh added that many agricultural experts and farmers visit him to learn about his successful carrot venture. Sharing the economics of carrot farming, Phuman Singh said the input cost per acre will be around Rs 30,000. The earnings, he said, can range from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh per acre. Singh said he has never earned less than Rs. 1 lakh per acre. Phuman studied the crop in depth, learning about soil conditions, optimal sowing times, and harvesting techniques. He found that unlike traditional crops such as wheat and paddy, carrots require a more nuanced approach but offer significantly higher returns.

"One needs 2.5 kg of seeds per acre if sowing from mid-September to mid-October. From one acre, one can harvest 200 to 250 quintals of carrots. If we sell the carrots at Rs. 7 per kg, it is not a lost venture, and at times, when prices reach Rs 10 to Rs 15 per kg, the profits are even higher," he noted. Phuman still leases land to grow carrots, managing at least 50 acres in total, including his 36 acres. His farm now produces enough seed for cultivation in around 650 acres, thereby helping farmers across Punjab in growing high-quality carrots. He manages to produce 16.50 quintals (1650 KG) of carrot seed every year from just 3 acres, enough to cover 650 acres. On an average, he sells the seeds at Rs. 1,200 to Rs. 1,300 per kg, thereby earning Rs 20 lakh annually.

The high quality of his produce has attracted the attention of traders. Initially, they bought his carrots from Jalandhar vegetable markets, but now several traders procure the produce directly from his farm, where carrots are cleaned, graded, and packed before being sent to the market. His 36 acres of land is equipped with various types of farm machinery, and his family plays an integral role in its operation. His two sons, who had pursued careers abroad, chose to return to Punjab, joining their father in farming. One of them runs a dental hospital, while the other, a postgraduate, who was doing business in the USA, assists him in farming, ensuring that the family legacy continues.

Apart from carrots, Phuman Singh grows a hybrid short-duration paddy that is ready for harvest in early September. He then sows carrots in September, with harvesting beginning in December and continuing until March. Singh sows seeds in February in his vacant fields and harvests them in May for distribution to other farmers and for his own use. "Phuman Singh's success challenges the notion that farming in Punjab is no longer profitable," said Dr Harinder Singh. "Three generations of his family are now involved in carrot cultivation. Phuman is an inspiring figure for all farmers, especially small and marginal ones. His story demonstrates that with dedication, innovation, and a willingness to take risks, even a small-scale farmer can achieve success." Phuman has also started growing black carrots, known for their high antioxidant content. Although the acreage is currently limited due to niche market demand, he has found a market for them in Chandigarh and Ludhiana.



Half a dozen doctors, 17 nurses, 50 auxiliary nurses, and midwife (ANM) professionals have been tending to an estimated 1,000 inmates at the Delhi government-run Asha Kiran Home, a shelter for the intellectually challenged, which has reported at least 25 deaths so far this year, said government sources. Of these, 14 inmates died in July.

whoever is appointed here to take care of them, should have a spirit of service," he said. "What were the thoughts of the L-G in giving the responsibility of this centre to the current administrator... He is the same Rahul Agarwal who was arrested in 2016 in a bribery case... I want to ask L-G sahab — On what basis did you give the responsibility of its administration to this corrupt officer?" he asked. Reacting to Bharadwaj's claim, officials at L-G House said the administrator of the Asha Kiran Home was "appointed internally" by Social Welfare which is "a fully and totally transferred subject" under the control of the CM and Minister. "He was not appointed by L-G. He was of course posted to the Social Welfare Department being a DANICS officer on 15.02.2021, after approval of the then L-G. Thereafter, the Minister posted him as Administrator... The press statement issued by AAP is blatantly wrong and arrogantly misleading," officials said. Hitting back, Bharadwaj accused the L-G's office of lying. "The L-G office is lying. All transfers and postings are done by L-G or officers under L-G. No such file comes to ministers. L-G office should show the file where the Administrator of Asha Kiran shelter home was appointed by the Minister." In response to this, L-G House officials said the Social Welfare Department has not had a Minister ever since Raaj Kumar Anand, who has since joined the BJP, resigned. "CM Arvind Kejriwal even when out on bail, found time to accept his resignation and forward it to the L-G, but did not deem it to appoint a new Minister in a sensitive department that more than any other requires political oversight. And Saurabh Bharadwaj has the shameful audacity to talk of accountability?" officials asked.

Some relief for 112 Khyber Pass residents, Delhi HC gives them till Sep 30 to vacate



GNS News Agency, August 7

On Friday night, residents of Khyber Pass in Civil Lines went to bed thinking it would be the last night in their homes. A day earlier, government officials had announced they needed to vacate their houses as all buildings in the area would be demolished in the next two days. Over 250 houses in the inner part of the residential cluster were first demolished on July 16; officials announced that the remaining 112 residences would be demolished Saturday. However, residents were relieved after they woke up to the news that the Delhi High Court granted them time till September 30 to vacate.

Amongst those being evicted was national pistol shooting coach Samaresh Jung, who returned Thursday from the Paris Olympics where he guided shooters Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh to victory. He said, "We were never opposed to vacating, we were only opposed to the hasty manner in which we were being asked to leave... it was getting really difficult to pack all our belongings in a day so we were thinking of leaving some behind... it's good we can respectfully vacate now." Shamli Yadav (42), a resident, said, "We packed all our belongings but we didn't have a place to go; it's a relief we now have more time to look for a place." "We have been living here for the last 53 years, two generations of my family have stayed here... it is difficult to leave... but we are happy with the High Court's decision," said another resident, Ravinder Juneja (32).

Earlier this year, 10 petitioners approached the HC

challenging a March 1 notice issued by the Land and Development Office (L&DO), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, directing occupants of 32 acres of Khyber Pass to vacate "all unauthorised occupation and remove illegal construction from the land immediately" by March 4. While an interim stay was granted by the court of Justice Subramonium Prasad, in a verdict dated July 9, he refused to quash the L&DO notice. The petitioners claimed they were lawful occupants; their fathers or grandfathers were allotted the residences about 70 years ago, when it was in the occupation of the Ministry of Defence, and were provided as residential accommodation to officers of the Armed Forces.

The petitioner — Sanjay Kumar and others — had then moved the HC division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, appealing against the single judge's verdict. The division bench, in a verdict dated July 29, upheld the single judge's decision; it said the L&DO's action cannot be held to be illegal or unconstitutional.

Subsequently, another group of 22 petitioners — Laxman and others — moved the HC on July 29, challenging the eviction notice. However, during court proceedings on July 31, in light of the division bench's verdict in the earlier batch of petitions, the petitioners said they would like to "unconditionally withdraw" their plea while requesting that the petitioners be afforded "reasonable time" of two months to vacate their premises, "on humanitarian grounds", citing that they need time to make alternate arrangements as well as in light of the ongoing monsoon season. The 22 petitioners, espousing the cause of 112 residents of Khyber Pass hostel, were granted relief by the court of Justice Sanjeev Narula; the court directed that the 112 residents shall give an undertaking on affidavit that they shall vacate their premises by September 30, and that they are unconditionally withdrawing their challenge to the proposed eviction/demolition. According to sources, the previous batch of petitioners moved the HC Friday, seeking that they too be granted a similar relief of a reasonable time. The court, while refusing to grant any immediate relief or stay on the eviction notice, has kept their matter for consideration on August 5.

Six doctors, 17 nurses for 1,000 patients: Delhi's Asha Kiran shelter reels under 'severe staff crunch, overcrowding'

GNS News Agency, August 7

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Reeling under a "severe staff crunch" despite gradual overcrowding over the years, government sources, quoting the initial findings of a probe into the deaths, said there were glaring discrepancies in the sanctioned, and actual staff strength at the Rohini-based facility. "In 2013, following the then-Lieutenant Governor's order, posts for 10 doctors, 249 nurses, and 62 ANMs were created at the facility. However, currently, there are only six doctors, 17 nursing staff, and 50 ANMs to take care of 1,000 inmates. The posts for multiple medical staff have also been lying vacant," the official said. The shelter could accommodate around 400 inmates, as per officials. Both Delhi L-G Saxena and Revenue Minister Atishi had, after reports of deaths at the facility surfaced, on Friday, questioned the quality of caregiving and issues related to the nutritional needs of the inmates at the facility in separate sets of instructions.

On Saturday, senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj accused Saxena of failing to suspend key officials at Asha Kiran despite "serious corruption allegations," adding that 'services' were under the domain of the L-G's Office. He also alleged that the Delhi Legislative Assembly's Petition Committee composed of selected AAP MLAs had attempted to conduct a probe into the incident but was "blocked by the Administration" which had been "neglecting the residents' basic needs" so far. L-G House officials contended that Social Welfare, which had control over the facility, was a "totally transferred subject" under the minister concerned as well as the Delhi Chief Minister.

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lectually challenged... and often suffer from diseases... they are not able to take full care of their food and drink... in such a situation, it is very important that whoever is appointed here to take care of them, should have a spirit of service," he said. "What were the thoughts of the L-G in giving the responsibility of this centre to the current administrator... He is the same Rahul Agarwal who was arrested in 2016 in a bribery case... I want to ask L-G sahab — On what basis did you give the responsibility of its administration to this corrupt officer?" he asked. Reacting to Bharadwaj's claim, officials at L-G House said the administrator of the Asha Kiran Home was "appointed internally" by Social Welfare which is "a fully and totally transferred subject" under the control of the CM and Minister. "He was not appointed by L-G. He was of course posted to the Social Welfare Department being a DANICS officer on 15.02.2021, after approval of the then L-G. Thereafter, the Minister posted him as Administrator... The press statement issued by AAP is blatantly wrong and arrogantly misleading," officials said. Hitting back, Bharadwaj accused the L-G's office of lying. "The L-G office is lying. All transfers and postings are done by L-G or officers under L-G. No such file comes to ministers. L-G office should show the file where the Administrator of Asha Kiran shelter home was appointed by the Minister." In response to this, L-G House officials said the Social Welfare Department has not had a Minister ever since Raaj Kumar Anand, who has since joined the BJP, resigned. "CM Arvind Kejriwal even when out on bail, found time to accept his resignation and forward it to the L-G, but did not deem it to appoint a new Minister in a sensitive department that more than any other requires political oversight. And Saurabh Bharadwaj has the shameful audacity to talk of accountability?" officials asked.

A week on, drain desilting underway at Rajinder Nagar, pumps still at Rau's basement

GNS News Agency, August 7

Delhi coaching centre deaths, drain desilting, Rajinder Nagar, Rau's IAS Study Circle, delhi MCD, lack of monsoon preparedness, delhi basement flooding, delhi drains desilting, Delhi High Court, UPSC aspirant deaths CBI probe, Indian express news Students held a candlelight vigil in protest against the three deaths at Rau's, on Saturday. A week after three students died due to drowning in the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar, the pumping out of the water at the basement continues. "It's almost done. It was flooded again after it rained three days back," an official of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) said on Saturday.

Amid much criticism over the desilting of the drains in the area and lack of monsoon preparedness, The Indian Express Saturday found workers clearing the drain opposite Rau's. This came a day after the Delhi High Court pulled up the MCD for oversight, and the Delhi Police for lapses in the investigation into the deaths of the students. The court handed over the probe on Friday to the CBI.

At the site, two MCD supervisors said that the drain, which is being cleaned, will be reconstructed. "We would have done this even if students didn't protest. We clean it

up every year. But there are too many people in too little a space now at this place (Old Rajinder Nagar)," one of them said. However, Yuvraj Singh, a student from a coaching centre in the locality, claimed he never saw civic officials carrying out the desilting work in three years. "We have never seen MCD trucks come here and clean the drain," he said. Rahul Jain, the manager of Raj Malhotra's IAS coaching centre near Rau's, shared that MCD gave him the notice to remove a board at his centre, as it was longer than the permissible height. "The whole area was waterlogged. The drain was overflowing. But they noticed our board. Now, after student protests they are opening up the drain to unclog it," he said. At Rajinder Nagar police station, it seemed like any other Saturday. The staff strength was thin with some policemen deployed for the demonstration by students, which has entered its second week. An officer said that they sympathise with demonstrators but police could not be blamed. "If we start checking every building in Rajinder Nagar, who will keep a watch on crime? It's not our job," he said. In the evening, a candlelight vigil was carried out by the protesting students in front of Rau's. It was followed by a sit-down as protesters observed a period of silence for about 10 minutes till 8 pm.

Toll rose in Delhi shelter as alarm bells rang on medical care, negligence



GNS News Agency, August 7

ON JULY 16, before the month's toll climbed to 14, a doctor had flagged some "preventable conditions" — including "dietary deficiency" and "collapse in personal care" — as among the reasons behind the death of an inmate at Asha Kiran, the Delhi government-run shelter for those with intellectual disability. Besides symptoms of malnourishment and nutritional deficiency, the inmate also showed signs of personal hygiene negligence, The Indian Express has learnt.

At the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, where the patient was taken for treatment of bed sores, the medical summary pointed out that she had lost significant weight in a year, dropping from 52 kg to 42 kg. "This shows chronic malnutrition and nutritional deficiency," said the summary. The doctor who was treating her noted the deficiency in diet as well as personal care. "The question is why these ailments developed and finally culminates in deaths. Who will be responsible for these preventable conditions?" the doctor wrote in the summary. Of the 14 who died in July, three were found to be suffering from malnutrition, three from anemia and one from "nutritional deficiency". At least five were found to have "loose motion", eight reported "seizure disorder", three were found to have "breathing difficulty", and three had "complaints of unconsciousness". Over the last six months, the facility has seen 25 deaths, including 14 in July. At least seven of the inmates who died before July also suffered from malnutrition and anemia.

According to the medical summaries for the deaths last month, the first death was reported on July 1 — a 26-year-old who was found to be suffering from hepatitis, seizure disorder, gallstones and "came in unconscious

state". Two days later, a 24-year-old died, reporting "seizure disorder, megaloblastic anemia" among other issues. There was a brief lull before the next death on July 12, of a 14-year-old who complained of "loose motion". This was followed by a string of deaths over the next few days: a 37-year-old with pulmonary tuberculosis on July 14; a 23-year-old with seizure disorder, hyperthyroidism, complaints of vomiting, breathing difficulty and drowsiness, on July 15; a 32-year-old with chronic malnutrition, difficulty in breathing and drowsiness on July 16; a 21-year-old with anemia, thrombocytopenia, nutritional deficiency and urinary tract infection on July 17.

On July 19, there were two deaths: a 20-year-old with malnutrition, "low BMI for more than two years", and complaints of loose motion; and a 25-year-old with seizure disorder and complaints of loose motion. There were three deaths on July 20: a 38-year-old with seizure disorder, complaints of loose motion, showing signs of shock and acute gastroenteritis; a 45-year-old with complaints of unconsciousness; another 45-year-old with seizure disorder, post TB sequelae, complaints of unconsciousness and loose motion.

On July 25, a 22-year-old who died reported seizure disorder, malaria, "bed sores since September", complaints of loose motion and mild fever. And on July 28, a 21-year-old who died was found to have anemia, complaints of convulsion and episode of seizure. A police officer said the shelter houses about 900 inmates, while its capacity is 350-400. According to the officer, the chief medical officer decides whether an inmate will be treated in-house, or taken to the BSA Hospital. "In the case of these deaths, the patients were administered treatment for varying amounts of time," the officer said. Meanwhile, the AAP government in Delhi and Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena's office engaged in a blame-game over the appointment of the facility's administrator — Rahul Aggarwal, a 2012-batch DANICS officer who was earlier suspended for alleged corruption. In a related development, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognizance of the deaths and sought a report in four weeks. Meanwhile, official sources said the bodies of the inmates were handed over to the magistrates who then cremated them. "These inmates were brought to Asha Kiran by strangers and their records showed no details of their family members, hence they were cremated by the magistrate's office," sources said.

Chomsky's criticism of PM in PhD proposal: Sri Lankan envoy flagged concern over SAU action against professor

GNS News Agency, August 7

The South Asian University's action against a PhD scholar and his Sri Lankan supervisor over a research proposal on Kashmir that included, among its citations, noted linguist Noam Chomsky's criticism of the NDA government has prompted the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to call the situation "extremely disconcerting" and urge the university president to resolve the matter "in a fair and amicable manner in the spirit of academic freedom." As first reported by The Indian Express, on July 27, SAU issued notices to the research scholar in May and PhD supervisor Lankan sociologist Sasanka Perera, in April, demanding an explanation regarding the choice of PhD topic. The notice issued to the research scholar also flagged a private YouTube video of an interview with Chomsky, cited in the scholar's proposal, in which the linguist is heard saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes from a "radical Hindutva tradition" and is attempting to "dismantle Indian secular democracy" and "impose Hindu technocracy." SAU is an international university sponsored by eight SAARC countries, and Sri Lanka is a member state of its Governing Board. Perera, who taught sociology and was a founding member of the department at SAU, left the institution after an inquiry was initiated against him. He was the only Sri Lankan professor on campus. There are about 55 teachers at SAU, of whom roughly six, including Perera until recently, are foreign faculty.

The action against Perera prompted Sri Lankan High Commissioner Kshenuka Senewiratne to intervene on April 23 in a meeting with SAU President KK Aggarwal, in which she is learned to have expressed her "concerns" regarding "an intended inquiry" against Perera. During this meeting, the High Commissioner is learned to have conveyed that she hoped the matter would be "resolved in a fair and amicable manner in the spirit of academic freedom safeguarding the reputation of the person and the University," and suggested that "the research project could be easily rejected at that juncture, as it remained a mere proposal."

Following the April 23 meeting, Senewiratne wrote to Aggarwal on May 12, to state: "With Sri Lanka being a member state of the Governing Board of South Asian University, you would appreciate that as its Government representative, this situation is extremely disconcerting. I am constrained to observe that to date there has been no detailed response regarding the status of the inquiry, which is understood to have taken place. In fact, there was a paucity of information even when I originally



broached the subject during the meeting (on April 23)... She further wrote that she would be "thankful to be informed of the present status and relevant details of the inquiry..." The letter also mentioned that the "intended inquiry" against Perera, apart from the research proposal, was also related to the "screening of an award-winning Sri Lankan movie 'Whispering Mountains.'" The screening of the film, which is about young people in Sri Lanka committing suicide en masse and the government blaming it on a supernatural virus, was organized by the professor for a limited number of students on April 9. One student is learnt to have complained about the selection criteria for attending the screening. The Sunday Express reached out to Perera, who declined to comment.

The university did not respond to this newspaper's questions on the issue, especially the meeting and letter written by the High Commissioner. When contacted, a spokesperson for the Lankan High Commission declined to comment saying this was an ongoing inquiry. The spokesperson said: "The High Commission's association with this matter is based on Prof Sasanka Perera being a Sri Lankan national and the only Sri Lankan academic at SAU." A cultural anthropologist, Perera holds a Master's and PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has been Chairman of the Department of Sociology (2011-2014), the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (2011-2018), and the Vice President of SAU (2016-2019). Prior to that, he was with the Department of Sociology at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, for 20 years. Perera was also the Founding Chairman of the Colombo Institute for the Advanced Study of Society and Culture (2003-2010). Perera is known to have taken voluntary retirement from the university and July 31 was his last day on campus. The PhD scholar, who was also issued a show cause notice, has apologised to the university administration.

Delhi man dials PCR to report father's murder, turns out to be the killer: Cops

GNS News Agency, August 7

Delhi POLIC Delhi man dials PCR, delhi police, father's murder, delhi cops, New Ashok Nagar, fathers murder plotted, property dispute, man stabbed father to death, Indian express news The PCR call was received at 8.40 am. A PCR call by a man from Delhi's New Ashok Nagar Saturday about his father's murder "by two intruders" at their home turned out to be an attempt to mislead police, and eventually led to his arrest, said officers.

Identified as Mahesh Thakur, the caller allegedly plotted the murder following a property dispute. The PCR call was received at 8.40 am. At first, Mahesh tried to pin the blame on "intruders" at his home, alleging that two men had broken into his house early in the morning and stabbed his father to death.

He claimed that he heard noises coming from his

father's room at 6.15 am. When he went to check, he found two men who panicked when they saw him and attacked him with a knife, resulting in an injury on his left hand. The "intruders" fled, and his father, Gautam Thakur, a retired MTNL employee, was lying lifeless in his bed, he told police. "During the initial investigation, several inconsistencies were found and there were discrepancies in his story," said Apoorva Gupta, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East). "After questioning, he said his father had sold some property two years ago. From the proceeds, his father helped his elder son purchase property in New Ashok Nagar but Mahesh received nothing," DCP Gupta added. Further, he claimed his father along with Mahesh's elder brother was "secretly planning to sell the house" where the family was living. Feeling betrayed, Mahesh allegedly killed his father while the rest of the family was asleep. The murder weapon — a kitchen knife — was hidden in a water tank on the roof of a nearby house.

32 killed as protesters and ruling party supporters clash in Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, August 7

Violent clashes between protesters and the ruling Awami League supporters in Bangladesh on August 4 left 32 people dead and hundreds injured on the first day of a non-cooperation movement announced by the students' movement demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. The clashes broke out this morning when protesters attending a non-cooperation programme to demand the government's resignation faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists. "So far, 32 people have been killed in clashes in 13 districts across Bangladesh," Prothom Alo newspaper reported.

Giving details, the paper said at least five people were killed in Feni, four in Sirajganj, three in Munshiganj, three in Bogura, three in Magura, three in Bhola, three in Rangpur, two in Pabna, two in Sylhet, one in Comilla, one in Joypurhat, one in Dhaka and one in Barisal. The Home Ministry decided to impose an indefinite country-wide curfew from 6 pm on Sunday. A government agency has ordered the shutdown of Meta platforms Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram. The mobile operators were ordered to shut down 4G mobile internet, the paper added.

The platform Students Against Discrimination has called for an all-out non-cooperation movement from today with the one-point demand of the government's resignation. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hasina said that those engaging in sabotage across Bangladesh in the name of protest are not students but terrorists and asked people to suppress them with a firm hand. Ms. Hasina called a meeting of the National Committee on Security Affairs at Ganabhaban, the paper reported citing sources from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Those engaging in sabotage in the name of protest across the country are not students but terrorists, she said. "I appeal to the countrymen to suppress these terrorists with a firm hand," she said. The meeting was attended by the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, police, RAB, BGB, and other top security officers. The meeting came as renewed violence spread to several parts of the country. Most of the shops and malls in Dhaka were closed now amid the protest. Hundreds of students and professionals had gathered at Dhaka's Shahbagh, blocking traffic on all sides. The protesters under the banner of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement chanted slogans calling for Prime Minister

Hasina's resignation and justice for those killed in the recent violence surrounding the quota reform protests, Bdnews24 news portal reported. Protesters also gathered at the Science Lab intersection of the capital on the first day of the non-cooperation movement. They chanted anti-government slogans.

According to the Daily Star newspaper, several vehicles at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) were torched on Sunday by unidentified people. People carrying sticks were seen vandalising private cars, ambulances, motorcycles, and buses on the hospital premises, triggering fear among the patients, their attendants, doctors and staff, the paper said. Protesters have dismissed Ms. Hasina's invitation for dialogue aimed at quelling escalating violence and consolidated their demands into a unified call for the government's resignation. Protest coordinators had called on students from schools, colleges, universities, private universities, and madrasas, as well as workers, professionals, political activists and other public members to participate in the protests. An activist waves the Bangladesh flag during a protest march against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government to demand justice for the victims killed in the recent countrywide deadly clashes, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Nahid Islam, a coordinator of the anti-government protests, announced said they will stage a demonstration and mass sit-in on Monday to press home their one-point demand. On Monday, they will unveil Martyrs' Memorial plaques across the country in memory of people killed recently centring the quota reform movement, he said in a statement. On Saturday, while a large students' rally in Dhaka to announce their demand for a single-point agenda proceeded without incident, clashes erupted in various other parts of the country. A trader was killed and at least 20 others were injured in these incidents. There have been reports of vandalism and arson attacks on police vehicles and government buildings in multiple locations.

In Chattogram, the residences of Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel and Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, as well as the office of AL MP Md Mohiuddin Bachchu were attacked. In an apparent retaliation, the homes of several Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders, including Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, were targeted. The BNP and its allies, along with numerous political, professional, and cultural groups have thrown their support behind the student-led movement that had been launched to demand reforms to quotas reserved for government jobs. Prime Minister Hasina offered to sit for talks on Saturday with the coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. However, the movement's coordinators rejected the proposal. The fresh round of clashes erupted days after over 200 people were killed in violent clashes between the police and mostly student protesters demanding an end to the controversial quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971.

Fears of Middle East war grow after Hamas leader's killing

GNS News Agency, August 7

Middle East tensions soared on August 3 as Iran and its allies readied their response to the assassination of Hamas's political leader, blamed on Israel, spurring fears of a regional war. Israel's ally the United States said it would move warships and fighter jets to the region, while Western governments called on their citizens to leave Lebanon — where the powerful Iran-backed Hezbollah movement is based — and airlines cancelled flights.

The killing this week of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, hours after the Israeli assassination of Hezbollah's military chief in Beirut, has triggered vows of vengeance from Iran and the so-called "axis of resistance". Iran-backed groups from Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria have already been drawn into the nearly 10-month war between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza. Israel on Saturday again traded fire with Hezbollah, carried out a deadly raid in the occupied West Bank, and struck a school compound in Gaza City in an attack that the Hamas-ruled territory's civil defence agency said killed at least 17 people. Numerous schools turned into displacement shelters have been hit across Gaza in recent weeks, with Israel insisting the facilities had been used by militants. Hamas denied using civilian infrastructure for military activities. Haniyeh was buried on Friday in Qatar, where he had been based. Israel, accused by Hamas, Iran and others of carrying out the attack, has not directly commented on it. Iran said on Saturday it expects Hezbollah to hit deeper inside Israel and no longer be confined to military targets.

The Pentagon said it was bolstering its military presence in the Middle East to protect U.S. personnel and defend Israel. It said an aircraft carrier strike group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln would be deployed, as well as additional ballistic missile defence-capable cruisers and destroyers and a new fighter squadron. U.S. President Joe Biden, at his beach home in Delaware, was asked by reporters if he thought Iran would stand down.

"I hope so," he said. "I don't know." Soon after, Hezbollah announced it had fired dozens of Katyusha rockets at the northern Israeli settlement of Beit Hillel. They said it was in response to an Israeli attack on Kfar Kela and Deir Siriane in southern Lebanon which, it said, had injured civilians. Earlier Saturday, Hezbollah announced the deaths of two of its fighters, including a 17-year-old from Deir Siriane. Take 'any ticket available'

In Beirut, 20-year-old student Diana Abu Aasel told AFP she feared "something bad will happen to my family and friends." If there is war, I don't think I will be able to bear staying in Lebanon, she said. Crowds of thousands rallied Saturday in Morocco, Jordan and Turkey to denounce Haniyeh's killing and show solidarity with Palestinians, AFP correspondents reported. Mourners and Hezbollah fighters carry the coffin of their top commander Fouad Shukur who was killed by an Israeli airstrike on July 30, during his funeral procession in a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon. Mourners and Hezbollah fighters carry the coffin of their top commander Fouad Shukur who was killed by an Israeli airstrike on July 30, during his funeral procession in a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon. | Photo Credit: AP/Haniyeh's killing is among a series of attacks since April that have heightened fears of a regional conflagration.

His death came hours after Israel struck south Beirut, killing Hezbollah military commander Fouad Shukur. Both



Britain and the United States on Saturday urged their citizens in Lebanon to leave immediately. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas in retaliation for its unprecedented October 7 attack which triggered war in Gaza and resulted in the deaths of 1,197 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Militants also seized 251 hostages, 111 of whom are still held captive in Gaza, including 39 the military says are dead. Israel's campaign against Hamas has killed at least 39,550 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry, which does not give details of civilian and militant deaths. Haniyeh was Hamas's lead negotiator in efforts to end the war. His killing raised questions about the continued viability of efforts by Qatar, Egyptian and U.S. mediators to broker a truce and exchange of hostages and prisoners. Hamas officials but also some analysts and protesters in Israel have accused Netanyahu of prolonging the war to safeguard his ruling hard-right coalition. Protesters in several Israeli cities Saturday renewed their calls for a hostage-release deal.

Disease spreading in Gaza. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke separately with his French and British counterparts on Saturday about the situation in the Middle East, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said. Blinken, U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy and French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne all agreed on the need for restraint on all sides in the region, Miller said in a statement. Violence has also surged in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Palestinian official sources said two Israeli air strikes killed nine people in the north of the territory Saturday. The military said it had "eliminated terrorist cells". The war in Gaza has caused widespread destruction and displaced almost the entire population of the territory where, the UN said on Friday, public health conditions "continue to deteriorate". It said nearly 40,000 cases of Hepatitis A, spread by contaminated food and water, have been reported since the war began. Hezbollah has been exchanging near-daily cross-border fire with Israeli forces since October, saying it is acting in support of Hamas.

A supporter of the Islamist Hamas movement carries her son, who holds a machine gun toy during a protest in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon to condemn the killing of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh. A supporter of the Islamist Hamas movement carries her son, who holds a machine gun toy during a protest. Several airlines have suspended flights to Beirut and Tel Aviv. Flights to Beirut by Air France and low-cost carrier Transavia France will remain halted until at least Tuesday, their parent company said Saturday.

Turkish Airlines on Saturday cancelled its night-time flights to Tehran for the second night running, AFP correspondents noted.

U.S. university admission forgery: Indian student arrested for submitting fake records to return to India



GNS News Agency, August 7

A 19-year-old Indian student, who was arrested and charged with falsifying records to gain admission to a United States university, will have to return to India under a plea deal entered into with American authorities. Aryan Anand had submitted fake documents to secure admission into Lehigh University, a private research university in Pennsylvania for the 2023-2024 academic year. A report in the Lehigh University's student newspaper The Brown and White, said last month that a police investigation had found that Anand had falsified admission and financial aid documents. "He had even 'faked his father's death certificate' as part of the conspiracy to obtain admission and scholarship," it added. Anand was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Jordan Knisley on June 12, with a bail of \$25,000. He pleaded guilty to one count of forgery.

As part of the plea deal, he was sentenced to one to three months in Northampton County Prison, "which amounted to a time-served sentence," reports said quoting Defence Attorney Molly Heidorn. As part of the deal, Anand is required to return to India and Lehigh chose not to seek restitution of about \$85,000. He was released to the custody of the U.S. Immigration and Customs En-

forcement. "According to a release issued by the office of Northampton County's District Attorney Stephen Baratta, Anand had created a fake email address impersonating a school principal," the report said. The release said Anand's father is alive and is in India.

His forgery came to light after a post he shared on the social media site titled 'I have built my life and career on lies' prompted the investigation into his case. In that anonymous post, he had laid out the details of his fraudulent scheme. The Brown and White report said the investigation began when a Reddit monitor notified Lehigh's Admissions Department of the post on April 26. "The criminal complaint revealed that the thread was authored by someone with the username 'transportationOK4728,' and 'the creator was following only one University group of Reddit and that University was Lehigh University,'" the report said.

Further investigation by the Lehigh police identified Anand as the author of the post, which has since been deleted but in which he had outlined his scheme. Anand had indicated that he "created a fake email address in the format of principal@schoolname.com for his application, submitted a death certificate for his father to acquire additional hardship financial aid, falsified tax documentation, altered his secondary school year 1-3 transcripts and created a false 'Senior School Certificate Examination' to show success in his final year of secondary school", the report said. He said it was "all for the purpose of securing admission and financial aid to attend a university in the United States." The criminal complaint filed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 30 accused Anand of violating the statutes of forgery, tampering with records or identification, theft by deception, and theft of services. "He was arrested and charged with a second-degree felony for forgery and tampering with records or identification, a third-degree felony for theft by deception, and a third-degree felony for theft of services," the report said.

Two Israeli airstrikes in West Bank kill nine Palestinian militants as violence flares again

GNS News Agency, August 7

Two Israeli airstrikes in the West Bank killed nine Palestinian militants on August 3, Israel's Army said, as violence flared again in the Israeli-occupied territory with tensions high over the war in Gaza and a potential regional escalation. "Cease-fire discussions on Gaza continued, with an Israel delegation led by the Mossad chief briefly visiting Cairo," an Egyptian official said. The U.S. has urged Israel to seize the chance for a cease-fire after the shocking killing of Hamas' political leader in Iran, which Tehran blames on Israel. Killing of Hamas leader and Israel's assassination of a Hezbollah commander in Lebanon have the region holding its breath for retaliation against Israel on either front, or both, after Iran and its proxies vowed to act. Hamas said its command had begun discussions on choosing a new leader. In the northern West Bank, the Israeli Army said its forces first struck a vehicle in a rural area outside the city of Tulkarem early Saturday, killing the five occupants. The Army said they were on their way to carry out an attack. Hamas identified all five as militants with the group, including a local commander. According to an Associated Press journalist and witnesses, the blast took place along a road connecting the Palestinian villages of Zeita and Qaffin.

"We came to the site and found a young man martyred here on the street and half of his face was missing," said Taiser Abdullah, a Zeita resident. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said four bodies were "burned and charred beyond recognition." Later on August 3, Israel's military said it killed four other Palestinian militants in the Tulkarem area shortly after they opened fire on Israeli troops. No further information was immediately available. "More than 590 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began in Gaza in October," according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Most have been killed during Israeli raids and violent protests. Tulkarem is regularly raided by Israeli forces, and Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, are active there. "A strike in central Gaza early on August 4 hit a tent area in the courtyard of Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital, killing four people, including a woman, and injuring others," health officials said.

An Associated Press journalist filmed men rushing to the scene to help the injured and retrieve bodies, while trying to extinguish the fire. The hospital in Deir al Balah is the main medical facility operating in central Gaza, and thousands of people have taken shelter there after fleeing their homes in the war-ravaged territory. Concerns about a full-fledged regional war are high after the assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday and top Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Beirut the evening before. Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, vowed to retaliate against Israel, which said it killed Shukur but has not confirmed or denied its role in Haniyeh's death. Iran's Revolutionary Guard said a short-range projectile was behind the killing and accused the United States of supporting the attack. The Pentagon said on Friday the U.S. military will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier in the region. The U.S. Embassy in Lebanon encouraged citizens who wish to leave to "book any ticket available," noting that several airlines have suspended or canceled flights. The British government called on its citizens in Lebanon to "leave now." Jordan did the same. President Joe Biden on August 1 said he had urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seize the chance for a cease-fire with Hamas, adding that Haniyeh's killing had "not helped" efforts to negotiate an end to the war. Mr. Netanyahu has vowed to destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities.

"On August 3 midday, an Israeli delegation led by Mossad chief David Barnea arrived in Cairo," an Egyptian official said. "The delegation, which also included Ronan Bar, chief of Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet, was to meet with Abbas Kamel, head of Egypt's General Intelligence Service, for talks on the Philadelphia corridor along the border with Egypt and the Rafah crossing point," the official said. "The delegation left Cairo hours later and there was nothing new," said the Egyptian official, who has direct knowledge of the Gaza cease-fire negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorised to brief reporters. There was no immediate comment from Israeli officials. Mr. Netanyahu's office on August 2 said he ordered the negotiation delegation to leave for Cairo on Saturday or Sunday. Egypt's Foreign Minister had calls with counter-



parts in Iran and Lebanon about the "dangerous" escalation in the region. As protesters in various countries marked 300 days of the war in Gaza and expressed support for Palestinians, the death toll inside the territory is nearing 40,000. At least 39,550 have been killed in the nearly 10 months since Hamas' brutal October 7 attack on Israel. That's according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. Israel has accused Hamas of embedding in the civilian population and putting it at risk. In the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza City on Saturday, witnesses told the AP an Israeli strike targeting a school killed an unspecified number of people. Israel's military said it struck a Hamas command centre. Most of Gaza's population of about 2.3 million is displaced, many people multiple times, as Israel's military returns to areas where it says Hamas militants have regrouped. Health services and sanitation have largely collapsed across the territory as hunger grows. Families of hostages taken on October 7 and others again held protests on Saturday night in Israel seeking a deal to end the war. "Most of the military targets were achieved, there is no reason to continue this war," said one protester Naama Weinberg.

Imran Khan says Pakistan's army should apologise for 'abducting' him

GNS News Agency, August 7

Islamabad: Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan has refused to apologise for the May 9 riots that erupted after his arrest last year and claimed that it was the Army that owed him an apology since he was "abducted" by the paramilitary rangers on the day of the violence. Khan, 71, was on May 9, 2023, arrested by the Pakistan Rangers from the Islamabad High Court premises during his appearance in a corruption case. His arrest sparked nationwide protests and riots by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters who damaged civilian as well as military installations across the country. Army spokesman Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif on May 7 this year said any dialogue with the PTI could happen if the party apologised for its "politics of anarchy". The statement was followed by calls from different quarters that Khan founded PTI to apologise for the "Black Day" violence. Khan during a media talk on Saturday at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi when asked whether he would tender an apology for the May 9 violence, said he had no reason to apologise, further adding that he was arrested by the rangers headed by a serving major general from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, the Dawn newspaper reported. The former premier, who over the past few weeks has repeatedly expressed his willingness to talk to the army and not with the government, reiterating his position, said he would only hold talks with the "real authority" as negotiations with the government were "a futile exercise". He alleged that talks with the government would be counterproductive as there is an unannounced martial law in the field. The cricket-turned-politician also added that talks with "people in the power corridors" would be within the ambit of the Constitution. Dawn further reported that responding to a question that senior politician and his ally Mahmood Khan Achakzai has declined to become the focal person for proposed talks with the establishment, Khan said the senior leader had been nominated to negotiate with political parties. Earlier this week, the former premier said his party was ready for talks with the military establishment but laid down pre-conditions: the return of his party's "stolen mandate", the release of all detained party workers, and the holding of transparent elections.

FinMin asks insurers to speedily disburse claims for Wayanad victims



Finance Ministry news, public sector insurance companies, finance ministry, Kerala landslide victims, Life Insurance Corporation of India, LIC news, Wayanad landslide news, Wayanad victims, Indian express news The global average for insurance protection is 54 per cent. The finance ministry Saturday asked public sector insurance companies including Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to expedite disbursement of the claim amount to landslide victims and their families in Wayanad and other districts of Kerala.

The insurance companies have initiated efforts for reaching out to their policyholders through various channels (local newspapers, social media, company websites, sms, etc) to provide the contact details for assistance in the districts of Wayanad, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Thrissur, where a significant number of claims are being reported, the finance ministry said in a post on X. Over 350 people died and nearly 200 others are still missing in the major landslide that occurred on July 30. Properties worth hundreds of crores were destroyed in the landslide.

However, insurance sources said normally less than

10 per cent of the people and property are covered in any region in India, leaving a huge gap without protection. They will have to depend on the government and other agencies for compensation and rebuilding of houses. The global average for insurance protection is 54 per cent. "In view of the unfortunate landslide incident and heavy rains in Kerala, the government has mandated the Public Sector Insurance companies (PSICs), including LIC, National Insurance Corporation, New India Assurance, Oriental Insurance, and United India Insurance to extend all possible support to the victims of the calamity so that the insurance claims can be expeditiously processed and paid," it said. LIC has been asked to speedily disburse the claim amount in respect of the policyholders under the PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, it said.

The documentation required for processing of claims has been relaxed comprehensively to ensure speedy dispersal of the claim amount, it said. It further said, the General Insurance Council will coordinate with the insurance companies to ensure that claims are processed and paid expeditiously and will host a portal for all insurers to report claim status daily. The central government and finance ministry remain committed to supporting the victims of this calamity and ensuring they receive the necessary assistance without delay and trouble, it added. People have suffered heavy losses in natural calamities in India in the past. "In India the intensity and frequency of natural calamities, especially cyclone, have increased manifold. Further, the cyclones in west coast (Maharashtra, Gujarat) in increasing, which has not been witnessed in the past. However, around 8% of the total losses are covered. So, there is around 93% protection gap during the period 1991 to 2022. So, early intervention is needed to close the protection gap, which are in all lines of insurance," said a report from State Bank of India.

After GST notice for FY18-22 to Infosys, DGGI withdraws demand of Rs 3,898 crore

In a partial reversal from its earlier position, Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities have withdrawn notice of Rs 3,898 crore to tech major Infosys out of the total tax demand of Rs 32,403 crore raised last week for the five-year period starting 2017-18. The company informed stock exchanges late Saturday about having received a communication from Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) about closure of "the pre-show cause notice proceedings for the financial year 2017-2018". "The Company had received and responded to a pre-show cause notice issued by DGGI for the period July 2017 to March 2022. The Company has now received a communication from DGGI closing the pre-show cause notice proceedings for the financial year 2017-2018. The GST amount as per the pre-show cause notice for this period was Rs 3,898 crore," Infosys said in its filing on stock exchanges.

While the filing doesn't mention about the status of the tax demand notice for rest of the years out of the total five-year period of 2017-18 to 2021-22, officials said the demand notice for the rest of the years is also likely to be withdrawn in the coming days. A decision could also happen at the adjudication stage, an official said. The DGGI had slapped a Rs 32,403 crore notice on Infosys for services availed by the company from its overseas branches over a five-year period starting 2017. Bengaluru-based Infosys, in a stock exchange filing Wednesday, had called the missive from the tax department a "pre-show cause" notice and said it believes the GST is not applicable on the expenses in contention. On Thursday, the company informed stock exchanges that Karnataka state GST authority had withdrawn its notice. The company is now required to respond to only DGGI on the matter.

In its notice, the GST probe wing has invoked reverse charge mechanism, where the recipient of goods/services assumes the responsibility for tax payment, instead of the seller. In its exchange filing, Infosys had said GST payments are eligible for credit or refund against export of IT services. Infosys had said that as per a recent Circular (circular number 210/4/2024 dated June 26,



2024) issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on the recommendations of the GST Council, services provided by the overseas branches to the Indian entity are not subject to GST. The particular circular referred to by the company (No.210/4/2024) issued in June, while flagging the case of import of services by a registered person in India from a related person located outside India, stipulates that "the tax is required to be paid by the registered person in India under reverse charge mechanism".

While noting that in such cases, the registered person in India is required to issue self-invoice under Section 31(3)(f) of CGST Act and pay tax on reverse charge basis, the circular then goes on to clarify that "...in cases where the foreign affiliate is providing certain services to the related domestic entity, and where full input tax credit is available to the said related domestic entity, the value of such supply of services declared in the invoice by the said related domestic entity may be deemed as open market value in terms of second proviso to rule 28(1) of CGST Rules." In cases where full input tax credit is available to the recipient, if the invoice is not issued by the related domestic entity with respect to any service provided by the foreign affiliate to it, the value of such services may be deemed to be declared as nil, the circular had said.

India assures Taiwan of policy stability in semiconductor sector

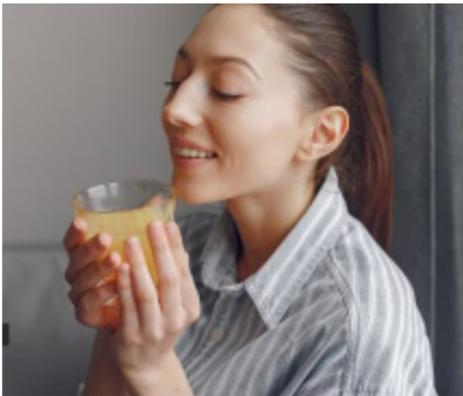
As Taiwanese businesses and government officials take a cautious approach towards India's semiconductor ambitions, New Delhi has mobilised officials to the island territory bearing a key message: an explicit assurance of policy stability. The Indian Express has learnt that senior officials from the IT Ministry have met with industry executives in Taipei and government officials, to assure them of policy stability, especially with regard to changes in rules governing imports and tweaks in customs duties on inputs. "IT Ministry representatives met Taiwan government officials and representatives of (Powerchip) PSMC in June. Assurances regarding policy stability, New Delhi's continued support for investments in the chips' space were made, and we conveyed to them that there will not be any ad-hoc changes to rules regarding material imports and customs duties" a senior government official said, requesting anonymity. The first commercial fab in India, which is being opened by Tata Electronics in Gujarat, will start operations due to technology support from Taiwanese chipmaker PSMC. But, PSMC does not have any equity stake in the operations as its partnership is limited to a technology collaboration. It is also one of Taiwan's smaller chipmakers that fabricates legacy logic and memory chips.

The Indian Express had earlier reported that the reason the company has taken this conservative approach is because key players want to play it safe. PSMC is a relatively smaller company and so has "negotiated a model where they would not need to put money on the table. I'm not sure how this model progresses," a Taiwanese executive had said. New Delhi hopes that with constant engagement with Taiwanese chip firms and the government, there could be a possibility in the future that some companies enter the Indian market with more skin in the game, and take equity partnership in a chip joint venture with an Indian company, or open up an independent operation in the country. There is a major reason behind New Delhi's outreach to Taiwanese officials: the strategic island territory is home to some of the leading names in chipmaking, including the likes of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), which counts Apple and Nvidia among its clients, and United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC). More than 90 per

cent of the world's most advanced chips required for almost all electronic equipment such as smartphones, car components, data centres, fighter jets and AI technologies, are made in Taiwan.

Chips, or integrated circuits, that are at the heart of most modern-day semiconductors, are essentially a set of minute electronic circuits comprising transistors and diodes, capacitors and resistors, and the interconnections between them, layered on a thin wafer sheet of silicon. Fabs are the highly-specialised semiconductor manufacturing facilities that print the miniaturised integrated circuits from the chip design onto the silicon wafers. The fabrication process is intricate and the cleanrooms are required to maintain sterile conditions to prevent contamination by particles in the air. There could be between 500 and 1,500 steps in the overall manufacturing process of semiconductor wafers, requiring multiple inputs, including silicon wafers, commodity chemicals, specialty chemicals, and other infrastructural prerequisites such as clean water supply and uninterrupted power supply. India's chip incentive plans are focused on boosting all three aspects of the semiconductor ecosystem — packaging, assembly and testing facilities (called ATMP and OSAT units), and full-scale foundries that can manufacture chips. From a Taiwanese perspective, there are yawning gaps in the policy support extended by New Delhi, which is a major reason firms from the territory are yet to commit serious investments in India. Joseph Wu, Taiwan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, had earlier cited the issue of a "cumbersome" administrative structure, lack of experienced engineers, high tariffs for electronics component imports, as challenges that India needed to address before chip companies from the island nation can commit serious investments to New Delhi. "India is known to be very cumbersome in its administrative structure and it would require for the Indian government to look at that too, to streamline all kinds of laws and regulations to help semiconductor investors coming to the country... In order to get the major semiconductor production to move to India, we need to think about the whole supply chain coming together... a whole cluster, rather than just one company.

Dietician recommends starting your morning with this healthy drink



Social media is a wonderful source of infotainment. And sometimes, the nuggets of wisdom that we collect can indeed help turn our lives around. According to digital creator, this concoction of fenugreek and fennel seeds added in warm water and turmeric and cinnamon added to the mix can apparently improve immunity and gut health. For those on the hunt for a power drink, look no further! Indianexpress.com spoke to Kanikka Malhotra, Consultant Dietician and Diabetes Educator, and found out the health benefits and the ideal frequency of taking this drink in your regular diet.

What are the health benefits of these ingredients?

"Methi or fenugreek seeds are rich in fibre, which promotes regularity and feeds good gut bacteria. It might also soothe inflammation in the digestive tract," shared Malhotra. "Fennel seeds, which are popularly known as saunf have carminative/anti spasmodic properties, which

help relieve bloating and gas. It may also relax the digestive muscles, aiding digestion," she added. According to her, cinnamon possesses anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties that can benefit gut health. Studies suggest it might help regulate gut microbiota composition. She said that it can also help regulate blood sugar levels, which indirectly supports gut health by maintaining overall metabolic balance. According to Malhotra, haldi or turmeric is an anti-inflammatory spice. "Curcumin, the active compound in turmeric, may improve gut health by reducing inflammation and promoting a healthy gut microbiome. It has been shown to enhance gut barrier function, potentially preventing leaky gut syndrome," she said. She shared that this drink promises to improve digestion and reduce bloating, gas, and inflammation. It balances gut flora by supporting good bacteria and reducing inflammation, contributing to a healthier gut microbiome, she added.

Here's how to incorporate this drink into your routine?

Malhotra recommended taking this drink in the morning on an empty stomach or after meals to aid digestion. According to her, 1-2 times a day is generally safe for most people. Some precautions to keep in mind: "Pregnant or breastfeeding women should consult their doctor before consuming this drink due to the potential effects of fenugreek on uterine contractions. People on blood thinners should also beware since cinnamon might interact with blood-thinning medications." She suggested discussing with your doctor before including it in your diet. Even though this drink is a complementary approach to gut health, she shared that it's important to maintain a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein for optimal gut health. "If you have persistent gut issues, consult a doctor to identify the root cause and get personalized recommendations," added Malhotra.

This drink promises to cleanse your colon — does it deliver on the hype?

Colon cleansing is a common medical fad circulating the internet, with many digital creators sharing homemade drinks that claim to detoxify your gut. One such concoction of pineapple, cucumber, ginger, lemon, and water caught our attention. Indianexpress.com consulted functional nutritionist Preety Tyagi to understand whether natural ingredients can effectively cleanse the colon.

"The process of cleansing the colon is very effective for overall health and maintaining a healthy gut. It also helps in weight loss and detoxification," shared Preety Tyagi, lead health coach and nutritionist, and founder of MY22BMI. According to her, the above concoction can truly help cleanse the colon, increase energy levels, and promote weight loss when combined with healthy exercise and a fit lifestyle. However, this drink is not suitable for those allergic to pineapples or any of the other ingredients. All the ingredients mentioned above are high in antioxidants, which makes it ideal to lose weight and look young, said Tyagi.

"Pineapples are high in vitamin C and fibre, which helps you not only cleanse your system but also helps in getting better skin and youthful looks. Ginger is a great anti-inflammatory food that helps you keep the inflammation under control and improves your immunity to make you feel and look great," Tyagi said. "Lemon juice is an excellent source of Vitamin C, is a great cleanse food and is also a diuretic, which helps in removing excess water from your body and removes water retention. Cucumber is again a green vegetable high in water content and rich in fibre," she said.

Is it really possible to cleanse the colon effectively?

It is indeed possible to cleanse your colon effectively, but it is not a one-day task. It's important to maintain healthy bowel habits and ensure your body can



cleanse itself daily. This can be achieved through a healthy and balanced diet. A healthy lifestyle also includes regular exercise to burn extra calories. Avoiding sugar and sugary drinks can significantly contribute to this process, leading to higher energy levels and better overall health.

How often should this drink be taken in a regular diet?

Tyagi advised that any detox drink incorporated into your diet should not be taken for longer than two weeks. "This is to avoid making the body habitual to it and to prevent excess consumption. However, the same drink can be included in your diet again after a period of time, say two weeks," she added. She said that a colon cleanse is most effective in the first few days of starting a new drink and may take a while to achieve noticeable results. "These drinks can also come with health risks. People with compromised gut health or acute gastric issues should avoid this drink, so be cautious when trying it out," Tyagi said.

Expert reveals some prevalent plus-size fashion myths and the importance of embracing body diversity

The fashion industry has long been criticised for neglecting plus-size individuals, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and limiting style options. However, a growing number of designers and brands are challenging these misconceptions and embracing body diversity. Nidah Merchant, a fashion expert and founder of Nemah, sheds light on some prevalent myths surrounding plus-size fashion.

Oversized clothes and body image

One common misconception is that oversized clothing will make plus-size individuals appear larger. According to Merchant, this is not necessarily true. "Social media has made oversized clothes cool again, she explained, emphasising that the key lies in selecting the right fit and style for one's body shape. It's all about shopping for what suits your body and not what the trends say should suit you."

The myth of sleeveless apparel

Another misconception is that sleeveless tops accentuate arm size. Merchant dismissed this claim, stating that clothing cannot alter the appearance of body parts. "While certain styles like v-necks and scoop necks can draw attention away from the arms, she believes individuals should feel comfortable and confident in their choices. Merchant asserted that Clothes cannot change how or what a particular body part looks like."

Short skirts and dresses for plus-size women

The notion that short skirts and dresses are unsuitable for plus-size women is also addressed by Merchant. She emphasised comfort and confidence as the primary factors in choosing attire. She said that it's all about wearing clothes that bring you comfort, adding that personal style should not be dictated by societal norms. The belief that vertical stripes are exclusively flattering for plus-size individuals was challenged by Merchant. While vertical stripes can create a lengthening effect, she highlighted the importance of individual preference and body confidence. "We are always looking for ways to improve...but it really comes down to if you feel beautiful when you look at yourselves in the mirror," she explained.

Merchant also addressed the misconception that swimsuits or bikinis are inappropriate for plus-size women. She argued that swimwear should primarily serve a functional purpose, protecting the wearer from the sun



and water. However, she acknowledged the societal pressures associated with body image and emphasised the importance of self-acceptance. Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder and that be only you. In addition to these common myths, Merchant highlighted the issue of inconsistent sizing in the plus-size fashion industry. The lack of standardised sizing can be frustrating for consumers. Merchant has attempted to address this problem by using numerical sizing instead of traditional labels. Common styling mistakes and solutions

Merchant warned against blindly following fashion trends without considering personal body shape and style. She emphasised the importance of knowing one's body type and choosing clothing that flatters it. Additionally, she advised against relying solely on size labels and suggests using measurements for a better fit.

The need for inclusivity While there has been progress in the plus-size fashion industry, Merchant pointed out that some brands still charge higher prices for larger sizes and offer limited options in categories like swimwear and sports wear. She stressed the importance of "inclusivity and providing a wide range of choices for plus-size individuals." As the demand for plus-size fashion continues to grow, brands and designers need to prioritise diversity and create a more inclusive environment for all consumers.

Batman Caped Crusader review: Mature, moody, and meticulously crafted Dark Knight revival series is a rewarding nostalgia trip



scores of masked lunatics running around town, but the rampant corruption that has infected the very soul of Gotham.

These aren't exactly fresh themes, especially in the context of these characters. Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises* dealt directly with ideas of class-warfare and income-inequality, while Reeves' own *The Batman* presented Gotham almost like a damsel in distress, desperately in need of saving from the gangsters that had been holding it hostage for decades. Like that movie, *Caped Crusader* explores the detective elements of the Batman mythos; every episode in the show, for instance, is centred around a self-contained investigation. Each chapter also features a new villain, and not all of them are A-list members of Batman's famous rogue's gallery. While Catwoman makes a suitably seductive appearance, alongside a gender-swapped Penguin and a bi-curious Harley Quinn, other episodes feature more obscure villains, such as Firebug, who is humorously misnamed by a cop, and Onomatopoeia, who is someone that most audiences might never have even heard of. Episode two, framed around the disappearance of a movie starlet and a tragic anti-hero, is particularly memorable for its emotional plot. It's this show's equivalent of *The Animated Series'* classic *Heart of Ice* episode.

But it's the larger narrative that stands out. *Caped Crusader* might be episodic, but it's also a sweeping epic about urban decay, and how societal collapse can fracture both minds and bodies. The characters aren't merely disturbed; they're grotesque to look at. Nearly everybody in a position of power, we are told, is beyond redemption. As is Gotham itself. *Caped Crusader* focuses not only on Batman — perhaps the city's last line of defence against absolute annihilation — but also a handful of characters who remain, literally, uncorrupted. Commissioner Gordon, his daughter Barbara, and the resourceful Renée Montoya all serve as foils to the likes of baddies such as Bullock, Flass, and Rupert Thorne.

By denying itself the luxuries afforded by someone like, say, the Joker, *Caped Crusader* challenges itself to do better, to tell stories that lay the groundwork for more in-depth character work in future seasons. Bruce Wayne comes across as slightly entitled this season, and not just in a put-on way. But that's only because the show revisits his past trauma only superficially. This isn't a Batman who has become disillusioned or desensitised at all; the mere mention of 'Crime Alley' in one episode persuades him to punch a guy in the face. His anger hasn't yet subsided. Maybe it never will. *Caped Crusader* doesn't offer too drastic a reinvention of lore that has arguably taken on the kind of popularity you'd normally associate with religious texts, but it's a departure from the contemporary norm. And that's more than enough.

The singer's voice turned Rajesh Khanna into a star, became the soul of his songs



fused was a suspense that I learned later and my affection for him as a singer grew immensely," the Bandhan actor said in an interview.

He added, "Shaktida told me that Kishore Kumar had turned down to sing for me but would agree if I met him. I reached his bungalow the next day. Kishore Kumar looked in a solemn mood. He asked me the reason for joining the film profession. I candidly replied that it was my passion and through cinema I wished to serve society through entertainment. The answer impressed him and he got into his usual jolly mood." In reality, Kishore wanted to observe how Rajesh spoke, his body language and his mannerisms so that he could infuse the same emotions into the songs and sing as close to his voice. Impressed by the actor's simplicity and his desire to serve the country through his art, Kishore promised to sing for him as he wished him to succeed. Rajesh Khanna was also famously possessive of Kishore Kumar's voice. There was a time when the superstar refused to let any other singer lend their voice to his characters. But an unpredictable Kishore refused to sing an important song for the 1972 blockbuster film, *Dushman*. The song, "Wada Tera Wada" in question was destined to be a chart-topper, but Kishore, believing it was better suited for Mohammad Rafi, initially refused to sing it. "Jao Mohammad Rafi se gawa lo gaana (Go and get it sung by Mohammad Rafi)," he said, stressing that Rafi's voice would do justice to the playfulness of the foot-tapping qawwali song. When Rajesh learned of Kishore's decision, he was adamant that he only wanted Kishore to belt out the number, and despite several attempts to persuade him, the singer didn't budge. Music director duo Laxmikant-Pyarelal cleverly suggested dropping the song altogether if Kishore didn't change his mind. Journalist and writer Chaitanya Padukone, in his interview with the *Times of India*, recalled Laxmikant told Kishore that if he didn't sing, they would have to drop the song. Rajesh also echoed a similar sentiment. Reluctantly, Kishore gave in to the pressure. The song "Wada Tera Wada" went on to become an iconic number due its infectious energy and Kishore's signature style. *Dushman* was a phenomenal success, earning Rajesh the Filmfare Best Actor Award. The film's impact was so profound that it was remade in multiple languages. It's a testament to the extraordinary chemistry between Rajesh and Kishore, a partnership that defined an era. In 1971, when Rajesh Khanna, the quintessential romantic hero, effortlessly lip-synced to Kishore Kumar's exuberant and unconventional "Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana" while riding a motorcycle and yodelling in Andaz, it marked a seismic shift in Hindi cinema. The joyous abandon of the song, combined with Rajesh's charismatic screen presence, challenged the established norms of the era. It felt as if the old guard, epitomised by Shashi Kapoor and the vocal prowess of Mohammed Rafi, had been momentarily eclipsed. With this single performance, Kishore had irrevocably cemented his status as a pop culture phenomenon. Their destiny was intertwined in more than one way. Sure, he helped him attain success and stardom by belting out hit numbers like "Bheegi Bheegi Raaton Mein" "Pyar Deewana Hota Hai" "Chingari Koi Bhadke" "Kuch Toh Log Kahenge" and many more, but the Padosan actor, unknowingly, gave Khanna one of the most important films of his career, 1971's *Hrishikesh Mukherjee* film *Anand*. The movie was initially offered to Kishore. According to Gulzar, Kishore, popular for his mischief and giving a 'tough time' to his directors and producers, was initially set to star in *Anand*. But just a few days before the shoot, Kishore, in a meeting to discuss his look in the film, shocked everyone by turning up completely bald. Poet-lyricist Gulzar, who penned the lyrics for *Anand*, in his book, *Actually... I Met Them: A Memoir*, spoke about how he avoided playing the titular hero.

Kishore Kumar's voice was the soul of countless characters and actors, breathing life into them in ways that even the actors themselves couldn't fully encapsulate, but his collaboration with Rajesh Khanna changed the late actor's career in a way that he didn't imagine. Shakti Samanta's musical drama, *Aradhana*, was the first time Kishore had sung for Rajesh, still a 'newcomer' then, but it was the beginning of a new era. The film was one of the highest-grossing films of 1969, establishing Rajesh as a superstar. Its hit music was a phenomenon in itself. "Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Ayegi Tu," "Roop Tera Mastana," "Kora Kagaz Tha Yeh Man Mera," and "Safal Hogi Teri Aradhana" became instant classics. Kishore's voice, in particular, played a pivotal role in the film's success, with "Roop Tera Mastana" earning him a Filmfare Award for Best Male Playback Singer. Rajesh's meteoric rise to stardom was closely intertwined with Kishore's unparalleled talent as a playback singer with their collaboration resulting in some of the most memorable songs in Bollywood history. Kishore's voice perfectly complemented Rajesh's on-screen persona, and the success of their songs played a crucial role in his films' blockbuster status.

Kishore Kumar holds the unparalleled record of singing an astonishing 245 songs picturised on Rajesh Khanna across 92 films. Rajesh, in an old interview, published on Anil Kumar Pandey's YouTube channel, said, "Aradhana se mera janam hua hai (I was born after Aradhana)." Rajesh was captivated by the magic of Kishore's voice, and Kishore, in turn, was enamoured with Rajesh's charming on-screen presence. Soon, the two began collaborating on almost every project Rajesh Khanna worked on. The actor recalled that when he heard Kishore da, as he was lovingly called, for the first time, he thought it was his own voice. "Jab maine Aaradhna ka pehla gaana, 'Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Ayegi Tu?' suna, mujhe aisa laga ki yeh gaana Rajesh Khanna khud gaa raha hai... jaise do jism aur ek jaan ho gaye (When I first heard 'Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Ayegi Tu' I was astonished. I felt I was singing the song... as if we two bodies were entwined in one soul)." Kishore Kumar, who lived to sing, was also a great actor, who wowed the audience with his performance in films like *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi*, *Half Ticket*, *Jhumroo*, *Padosan*, and *Pyar Kiye Jaa*, and therefore, it is said that it also the actor in him which helped him 'act' through his voice. In the case of Rajesh Khanna for who he sung "Yeh Sham Mastani" (Kati Patang), "Chingari Koi Bhadke" (Amar Prem), "Oh Mere Dil Ke Chayan" (Mere Jeevan Saathi), "Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana" (Andaz), "Jeevan Se Bhari Teri Aankhen" (Safar), "Zindagi Ke Safar Mein Guzr Jaate Hain Jo Muqaam" (Aap Ki Kasam) and countless hit numbers, their voices became almost indistinguishable with Rajesh's expressive eyes and playful demeanour complementing Kishore's vocal artistry.

Rajesh's films in the late 1960s and 1970s were emblematic of a transformative period in Indian cinema, ushering in the era of the romantic hero archetype and soft romanticism. The actor was the face of the era, but it's debatable whether his 'exaggerated style' would have achieved the same iconic status without the perfect counterpoint of Kishore's versatile vocals. Kishore da's ascent to stardom mirrored Rajesh's meteoric rise. By deftly imitating the actor's signature style — head nodding and eye-closing gestures — the singer infused his vocals with a similar warmth and tenderness. While their collaboration will be remembered for decades if not centuries, to come, Kishore Kumar, who was already a revered singer-actor and known to be 'eccentric,' gave a tough time to his producers, and had a condition before he agreed to sing for Rajesh Khanna in *Aradhana* — he wanted to meet the actor he was being asked to sing for. "It is true that Kishore Kumar had earlier refused Shaktida to give playback for me in the movie *Aradhana* but why he re-

"We were all shocked! On top of that, Kishore da went around the office dancing and singing. 'What will you do now, Hrishi?,' he wrote in his book, adding, "Consequently, Rajesh Khanna was finalised for the role in a very short time. Perhaps Kishore da never wanted to play the character. Nevertheless, I have never seen someone cutting off their nose to spite their face in such a manner," recalled Gulzar. Rajesh Khanna's portrayal of *Anand*, a terminally ill cancer patient with an unyielding zest for life, showcased his exceptional acting prowess. *Anand*, also starring Amitabh Bachchan, won several awards, including the Filmfare Award for Best Film in 1972.

Kishore Kumar holds the unparalleled record of singing an astonishing 245 songs picturised on Rajesh Khanna across 92 films (Express Archive Photo) Kishore Kumar holds the unparalleled record of singing an astonishing 245 songs picturised on Rajesh Khanna across 92 films (Express Archive Photo) The synergy between Rajesh Khanna's suave charm and Kishore Kumar's one-of-a-kind singing style was nothing short of cinematic alchemy. Like Yin and Yang, the two complemented each other, with Kishore's rich vocals giving life to Rajesh's heartthrob persona on screen, resulting in an alluring symphony that transcended time. Kishore was more than just a singer for Rajesh; he was the emotional architect of his on-screen persona. From the exuberant joy of "Zindagi ek safar" to the melancholic introspection of "Kuch toh log Kahenge," Kishore's voice mirrored the intricate nuances of Rajesh's characters. He transformed Kamal's despair in "Aap Ki Kasam" into a haunting melody and Arun's passionate love for Sharmila Tagore in *Aradhana* into a fiery anthem.

A de-aged Vijay and a new-age Meenakshi Chaudhary take centrestage

Tipped to be actor Vijay's penultimate film before he plunges into active politics, *The Greatest of All Time (GOAT)*, directed by Venkat Prabhu, is easily the most-hyped movie in Tamil cinema today. With just a few weeks left for release, the expectations have reached feverish heights. To take it up a notch, the makers released the third single from the Yuvan Shankar Raja-composed album. Titled, "Spark", the song is written by Gangai Amaren, and sung by Yuvan himself alongside Vrusha Balu. The peppy dance number is also the first time the makers have decided to showcase the digitally de-aged Vijay, who is said to be playing dual roles in the sci-fi action film.

While the first two singles, "Whistle Podu" and "Chinna Chinna Kanga", featured Vijay in his present-day look, "Spark" has sparked quite a conversation for the digitally de-aged Vijay. Netizens are divided among themselves about the efficacy of the de-aging work, and both the troll machinery, and the hype train are working

on overdrive to prove their respective points. If the 'look' of Vijay wasn't enough of a conversation starter, the 'sound' of "Spark" has created a stir too.

The GOAT album, which marks just the second collaboration between Vijay and Yuvan Shankar Raja after *Puthiya Geethai* (2003), is receiving mixed responses with some labelling it 'gets better with every listen' and others calling it the 'worst album of Vijay in quite a while'. However, one thing that unites them all is the belief that this Venkat Prabhu directorial would be more background score oriented, and from what they've heard in the teaser, GOAT is indeed 'A Yuvan Shankar Raja Magical'.

The Greatest of All Time, which features top stars like Prashanth, Prabhudeva, Sneha, Laila, Jayaram, Mohan, and Yogi Babu among others, is slated for a release on September 5. Backed by AGS Productions, the Venkat Prabhu directorial has cinematography by Siddharth Nuni, and has been shot in various locations including Chennai.

Zaheer Iqbal blames Sonakshi Sinha's 'punctuality' after they arrive an hour early at a party: 'Killing time...'



asked for her father's availability and they went ahead with their wedding plans. Zaheer shared that he was quite "nervous" before he sat down with Shatrughan as they had never had a one-on-one chat before this. He recalled that as soon as they started talking, they "became like friends".

Sonakshi shared that even she was "very nervous" to talk to her father about Zaheer. She recalled asking her father, "Aren't you worried about my marriage because you haven't asked me about it?" When Sonakshi told him about Zaheer, her father said that he had read about it in the media and said, "You guys are grown-ups, miya biwi raazi toh kya karega qazi." She found him to be "really supportive" about the relationship and shared that he was "very emotional" during their wedding.

After keeping their relationship under wraps for years, Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal finally tied the knot in June, and fans have since been delighted to see the goofy side of the Bollywood couple. Recently, Sonakshi shared a hilarious video of them arriving early at a party and spending time together while cracking jokes.

Zaheer posted an Instagram story where he complained about how they were an hour early to a party due to the Dabangg actor's punctuality. He wrote, "Killing time coz we r 1 hour early to a party as usual cause of baby's punctuality." He took a video zooming in on Sonakshi, who is seen resting her head on Zaheer's shoulder. As the camera zooms in on her, she immediately got up and jokingly rebuked Zaheer for zooming in on her. Sonakshi reposted Zaheer's Instagram story and wrote, "You have fun na? even though at my expense." The Notebook actor shared another clip where he gave a sound effect of an evil laugh to Sonakshi's laughter. Sonakshi reposted this and wrote, "Guts on toast."

Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal faced trolling after their interfaith marriage. Rumours also circulated that Sonakshi's father, veteran actor Shatrughan Sinha, didn't support of their marriage. However, his presence at their intimate house wedding squashed all such speculations. Recently, in an interview, the couple revealed how they broke the news of their relationship to the actor's father. In an interview with *The Times of India*, Sonakshi explained that as soon as she decided to get married to Zaheer, she

Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha box office collection day 2: Ajay Devgn's film falls behind Maidaan, mints Rs 4 crore



Ajay Devgn and Tabu-starrer *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha* has failed to show the 'Dum' at the box office. After a disastrous opening of Rs 1.85 crore, which was even lower than Akshay Kumar's recent debacle *Sarfira*, the film showed a slight growth on

Saturday. According to early estimates by Sacnilk, it minted Rs 2.15 crore on Saturday, bringing its total domestic collection to Rs 4 crore.

However, this slight growth isn't sufficient to help the Ajay Devgn-starrer

maintain healthy box office numbers. *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha* has even fallen behind Ajay's last film *Maidaan*, which was a massive box office failure, collecting only Rs 71 crore worldwide against a reported budget of Rs 235 crore. While *Maidaan* had

collected Rs 7.25 crore within the first two days of its release (excluding the paid previews), Ajay's latest outing has struggled to match this number. Ajay has tasted success only with *Shaataan* the year. That film minted Rs 176.05 crore in India. Comparing it to *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha*, *Shaataan* had minted Rs 33.5 crore within just two days of its release.

Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha released alongside Janhvi Kapoor and Gulshan Devaiah's *Ulajh*. The latter has performed even worse than the Ajay Devgn-starrer, minting Rs 2.85 crore within two days of its release. *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha* is facing stiff competition from the Hollywood film *Deadpool and Wolverine*, which shows no signs of stopping even in its second week.

Rajasthan's Maheshwari Chauhan, Anant Naruka finish fourth in skeet event



GNS News Agency, August 7

A shooter, who started shooting after looking at the guns of her landlord grandfather and father, and another shooter from a royal family in Rajasthan teamed together to finish in fourth place for India in the mixed team skeet event after a loss to China at the Chateauroux range in Paris Olympics on Monday evening. While 28-year-old Maheshwari Chauhan's shooting journey began in Siana village in south-west Rajasthan, 26-year-old Anant Naruka's shooting journey began in the royal village of Uniara in Rajasthan and the duo ensured a creditable fourth-placed finish, India's third after Arjun Babuta (10m Men's Air rifle) and Manu Bhaker (Women's 25m pistol) in this Olympics for India. "We are a family of landlords in Siana village in Rajasthan and like other landlords, me and my father Ganpat Singh were fond of shotguns. A young Maheshwari too would see us shooting and that's how her shooting journey started. Tracking a moving target and shooting that fascinated her right from the beginning and I remember a young Maheshwari telling me, "Papa, look I have shot the clay target," said Pradeep Singh Chauhan, father of Maheshwari Chauhan, while speaking with The Indian Express from Siana.

If accompanying her grandfather Ganpat Singh Chauhan, a gun collector and a double trap shooter, to the skeet range built by Chauhan senior started Maheshwari's interest in shooting, a young Naruka would often hear the shooting tales of his grandfather Rao Raja Rajendra Singh of the royal seat of Uniara in Tonk district in Rajasthan. Naruka also accompanied his father Rao Raja Dalpat Singh Naruka to shooting competitions in nearby villages before his father decided to train him at Jaipur. A senior national appearance in 2015 was followed by a maiden appearance in Junior World Championships in Grenada, Spain apart from a silver medal in Junior Asian Championships the same year for Naruka. "Anant would often spend time with me understanding about the various parts of the big bore guns owned by our family. Initially, he started shooting with my shotgun before he asked us to get a new one for him. We would travel daily from Uniara to Jaipur as there was no shooting range nearby. There were days when we would start early from the village and reach back home late in the evening but Anant took it with ease. Late at night, we would be reading books about guns before he would get ready the next morning early to start the trio to Jaipur," says Naruka's father Rao Raja Dalpat Singh Naruka.

For Chauhan, the loss of her grandfather in 2012 meant that she wanted to take up shooting as a career and after starting as a trap shooter, took up skeet, the more complex of the two. A student of Mayo Girls School, Ajmer, Chauhan would spend her summer vacations under coach Amardeep Singh Rai with a Beretta 686 of her father before she got her own Beretta 686 in 2013. The same year, Chauhan would return with a top-20 finish in the ISSF World Cup in Mexico apart from a tenth place finish in Asian Championships in 2016. A bronze in the Asian Championships following year saw Chauhan cementing her place in the senior national team over the next few years. "When she started shotgun shooting in 2012, her height was almost that of the shotgun (Laughs). But then she would tell us that that's what she wants to do her whole life. Her mother Hemant Chauhan would sit for hours with Maheshwari at the range and was never worried about her daughter shooting with such a big gun. We made some changes in the stock of the rifle to add more balance so that the shotgun does not fall. In her first nationals, she shot a series of 18 out of 25 and she would be happy about the fact that she completed the round," remembers Chauhan senior. With the Italians dominating the skeet world, both Chauhan and Naruka too have been spending time under Italian coaches since long. While training under coaches Pietro Genga and 1996 Olympics champion Ennio Falco in Italy for Naruka, Chauhan too spent her time training under Italian coach Ricardo Filippelli at Arizto. The Rajasthan shooter trained along with the likes of Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Diana Bocosci in Italy and coach Filippelli had talked about the time spent in Italy for Chauhan. "In Italy, we worked a lot on the movement of the gun at the start apart from getting Maheshwari in her comfortable zone, be it mentally as well as the conditions. The Italians dominate skeet shooting and one of the major factors is that they see this as fun. That's what we wanted Maheshwari to understand and that's what she has done. Training along with somebody like Bocosci helped her to follow what they do from close and imbibe the vibe as well" coach Ricardo Filippelli had told The Indian Express earlier.

Naruka had also shared with this paper about his experience of training in Italy. "When I decided to train under Genga and Falco, I knew that my task would not be easier. Both have been experienced shooters in skeet with Falco being the 1996 Olympics champion. Staying for most of the time at the ranges in Capua and Taranto in Southern Italy, we would often spend time watching shooters like 2016 olympic champion Gabriele Rossetti and others and would also note down our observations. Both the coaches told us to develop our own shooting style and that is what I always follow," Hangzhou Asian Games silver medalist Naruka had shared with Chauhan had got married last February to Adhiraj Singh Rathore, a hotelier from Rajsamand near Udaipur and the Rathore family too got Chauhan made a range at their village. "Her father-in-law Raghvendra Singh Rathore along with her husband have been too supportive and got her all what she required to shoot with a free mind," says Chauhan senior.

Lakshya Sen misses out on bronze medal, less than 24 hours after semi-final heartbreak

GNS News Agency, August 7

Lakshya Sen vs Lee Zii Jia: Lakshya Sen came close but was unable to etch his name in Indian badminton history by clinching the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics in the men's singles event. The young Indian shuttler, who had narrowly missed out on making the cut for the gold medal match on Sunday by losing to former World No 1 Viktor Axelsen, won the first game but went on to lose the next two to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in the bronze medal match. Sen missed out on joining an elite group of Indian badminton players who have medaled at the Olympics, which includes PV Sindhu who has two medals and Saina Nehwal. This, in his debut Games.

"I had my chances in the second set. I could've definitely done better. Credit to him, he played better," Sen told JioCinema afterwards. "I think I came well prepared for this game. It has been quite a tough week overall. I was ready to give my 100 percent." Sen, who picked up an elbow injury during the game, also believed that it impacted his overall performance. "In between the points, the blood was on the floor. Sometimes, it takes away the momentum. Just having that break in the game." A near-miss at a podium finish at the Olympics goes with what has been an impressive resume for the 22-year-old who hails from Almora in the Uttarakhand state. Lakshya had announced his arrival at the world stage with a bronze medal at the 2021 World Championships in Huelva. The following year saw him play a crucial role in India's historic Thomas Cup triumph and win a gold medal in the men's singles event at the Commonwealth Games. Last



year, at the Asiad in Hangzhou, Lakshya was part of the Indian team that won a silver in the men's team event.

On Sunday, the Indian shuttler had come second best despite a three-point advantage in the first game and a 7-0 lead in the second to surrender 20-22 14-21 to the two-time world champion Axelsen in a 54-minute semi-final clash. "If I would have closed the first game, then I would have had better chance of closing the match. In the second game also, I started well but couldn't keep the lead," Sen would tell the broadcasters after the contest. Axelsen, who made it to the final, also had high praise for Lakshya, whom he sees being the favorite to go all the way at the LA Olympics, four years later. "Lakshya is an amazing player. He has shown in this Olympics that he is a very, very strong competitor and I am sure in four years from now, he will be one of the favorites to win the gold," Axelsen told Jio Cinema.

Dinesh Karthik named SA20 League Ambassador

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Johannesburg: Former India wicketkeeper Batter Dinesh Karthik was on Monday appointed the league ambassador of the SA20 League. Karthik, who is the first Indian player to be associated with the South African tournament, retired from all forms of cricket earlier this year. "The league has been electric in the first two seasons with some of the world's best players on show and exciting young talent putting up their hands on the global stage," Karthik was quoted as saying in a media release. "Karthik will be working very closely with fellow SA20 ambassador AB de Villiers and the management team to help strengthen the league's global fan base and reinforce brand awareness across key strategic markets in India and the United Kingdom," the release added. Former South Africa captain and league commissioner Graeme Smith expressed, "His exceptional cricketing talent and personality make him the perfect fit for our league and his involvement will undoubtedly elevate the league's status globally and in India." The SA20 comprises six franchises — MI Cape Town, Joburg Super Kings, Durban Super Giants, Paarl Royals, Pretoria Capitals, Sunrisers Eastern Cape, all of which are owned by the owners of IPL teams.

Brazilian dribbling dazzler Marta seeks to win elusive Olympic football gold



GNS News Agency, August 7

In the raised right hand of Espen Eksas, Marta saw the end of her unfulfilled football dream in Paris. The Brazilian, a six-time world footballer of the year, one of the greatest forwards in the game, had flung her left foot dangerously close to Olga Carmona's head in a group game against Spain. The referee brandished a red card, a deserving one despite the protests that soon became begging, Spain went onto win the game, pushing Brazil to the brink of an exit. At 38, Marta had specified that this would be her Olympics farewell. But Marta did not lose hope. She must have told herself what she always did: "You've already fought, Marta. You're stronger than you realise." She had said in another context: "I never give up hope. If I had, I wouldn't be playing football." As fate would wink on her, Brazil snuck into the quarterfinal on better goal difference, then scraped past hosts France and face Spain in the semifinal. The match could be her last, but she would be the last one to forsake hope. Marta, of course, would be back, and her teammates are determined to help the legend kiss the medal that has always eluded her. Twice she came close, in 2004 and 2008, when she consoled herself with silver. Gabi Portilho, the goalscorer against France would say after the game: "We have just one dream, to realise the dream of Marta. Without her, we wouldn't be here." A fan displays a banner with the portrait of Brazil's Marta during the women's Group C soccer match between Nigeria and Brazil at the Bordeaux stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics. A fan displays a banner with the portrait of Brazil's Marta during the women's Group C soccer match between Nigeria and Brazil at the Bordeaux stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics.

She was not alluding to Marta's contribution in them reaching within the distance of gold, but her role in uplifting the women's game in the country. Brazil could be football's romantic abode, but it had banned women from playing the game for four decades, till 1979. Even after the ban was lifted, women were discouraged from embracing the sport that was the country's identity. Marta, growing up near the cane-cutting county of Dois Riachos, 1600 kilometres north of Rio de Janeiro, was told football was meant for boys. Her elder brother beat her up for playing with his friends; a coach of an opposite club refused to let his team take the field because a girl was on the other team. Later he claimed he was concerned about her getting brutally tackled. But Marta wrote in Player's Tribune that she could see rage seething in his eyes and he threatened: "Take the girl away, so that the boys could play." From the next year, it became a boys only tournament. The neighbours would tell her mother, who worked as a labourer in a coffee plantation: "She isn't normal. It's odd for a girl to be playing. Why do you let her

do that? She is called the man girl." But her mother was far too perturbed by livelihood realities, so she let Marta be herself. Watching and playing football, barefoot and in oversized jerseys, all through the day.

Brazil's Marta, center, is congratulated after scoring a goal, which was disallowed, during the women's Group C soccer match between Nigeria and Brazil at the Bordeaux stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP) Brazil's Marta, center, is congratulated after scoring a goal, which was disallowed, during the women's Group C soccer match between Nigeria and Brazil at the Bordeaux stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP) Every day she came home crying. But she began to ask herself: "Why would God give me this talent, if no one wants me to play? Use that for strength and motivation. Use it to fight, Marta. Fight against it — the boys, the people who say you can't. Fight to be accepted." From self-questioning arose the decision to secretly leave her hometown and join a rare football club for women in Vasco da Gama, near Rio. In the drunken revelry of a carnival night, she took the three-day bus ride to the capital, where her sympathetic cousin Robert had arranged for a stay at a friend's place. All she had was a battered phone thrown away by her brother and some money to sustain two meals a day in her journey. The cousin's friend gave her a pair of boots, though it was too large for her. It didn't matter, as she stuffed newspapers at the toe to make them fit. Days and weeks passed on as she waited for some club, any club, to call for trials.

The call finally came, but she froze in the field of city-raised teenagers, who called her bicho do mato, or someone from the woods. There were days when she felt knackered. But the monologues with herself refuelled her. "Let my skills do the talking." So they did, and three years on, she was wearing the famous canary yellow of her country. Like Pele, Romario, Ronaldo. But she saw a wider responsibility: "I wanted to be the pioneer of change, in my country, in the world." Two decades later, she stands as not only a legend of the game, but a path-breaker in women's football, a metaphor of change in the women's game in her country and world. She earned a famous nickname, Pele in Skirts, to which she sarcastically replied: "Women don't play in skirts any longer." Her career would take her to clubs in Sweden and the USA, she would become one of the most recognisable and richest in women's football, the UN made her a football ambassador and the first trip she volunteered was to the then (2011) poorest country in the world, Sierra Leone. In a charity game for impoverished children by UNESCO, she was the lone female player among Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo, Robert Pires, Claude Makélélé, Paolo Maldini, Luis Figo and Pavel Nedved. She didn't flinch and only garnished her reputation. She scored 119 goals for her country and 182 for the clubs. But nothing filled her with as much joy as visiting her village after six years, in 2006, since the bus trip. "They welcomed me with tears in their eyes and joy on their faces. That moment would stay with me till the last," she would emotionally say. The town, the country and the world anxiously wait for a fitting farewell to one of women's football's totemic figures. It could render her career a circularity that it has lacked—it is one of several nearly moments. A defeat, though, wouldn't tarnish her legacy. But perhaps this time, she wouldn't muster the courage to tell herself what she had always told herself: "You've already fought, Marta. You're stronger than you realise."

Brutal, precise shotmaking, perfect combination of resolute defence and calculated aggression: How Novak Djokovic defeated Carlos Alcaraz

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In 'Serve to Win,' the autobiography/lifestyle guide/cookbook authored by Novak Djokovic in 2013, somewhere in between the chapters in which he gives horrifying accounts of his war-torn upbringing and prescribes eating honey from bees that feed on the Manuka trees of New Zealand, he reveals his favourite proverb. Roughly translated to English, it goes: "When nothing hurts, put a little stone in your shoe and start walking." On Sunday, Djokovic completed the set. In a vintage performance of brutal, precise shotmaking and the perfect combination of resolute defence and calculated aggression, he defeated Carlos Alcaraz, the reigning Roland Garros and Wimbledon champion, 7-6 (3), 7-6 (2) to win the gold medal at the Paris Olympics — the one tennis achievement that has evaded a resume that contains 24 Majors, all nine Masters 1000 titles, and triumphs at the ATP Finals and Davis Cup.

As the top seed and most legendary presence on the tour, that may not come as a total surprise. But to put the achievement, given where his tennis has been over the last year, in context; to understand why he defies all convention as a tennis champion, go back to his favourite proverb. Some time around last year, Djokovic's shoes became a bit too comfortable. The Serb won three of the four Majors in 2023 and reached all four finals. He ended all debate by becoming the outright leader in the all-time Grand Slam leaderboard, winning at least three titles at each of the four tournaments. After reaching the highest of highs, the burning fire began to flicker. Paris 2024 men's singles tennis final: Djokovic in action Paris: Novak Djokovic of Serbia in action against Carlos Alcaraz of Spain during the Men Singles gold medal match of the Tennis competitions in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, at the Roland Garros in Paris, France, 04 August 2024. A few pesky pebbles would make it into his boots over the next six months. After a sluggish start to 2024, recovery from a knee injury, and subsequent surgery, a few weeks prior to Wimbledon may have been a big hurdle, but he responded by reaching the final. Humiliation from a 16-years-younger challenger in the summit clash may have fuelled all sorts of uncertainty, but Djokovic found a new source of motivation to thrive on. Few players, if any, have shared Djokovic's aptitude of turning adversity into steel. The begrudgingly polite Parisian crowds would witness every bit of that aptitude this past week.

On four previous attempts in Beijing, London, Rio, and Tokyo, Djokovic had come close but left with only a single Olympic bronze. Playing to join history-makers — only Steffi Graf, Andre Agassi, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams have won the 'career Golden Slam' (all four Majors and Olympic gold) — the Serb produced his best



tennis in the year gone by. With revenge on his mind against the best player in the world, he put up one of the most ruthless, clinical performances he has ever played in a final.

After winning four Majors, including the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back, Alcaraz's star has risen at a pace faster than the hefty expectations that have followed him ever since he became a teenaged World No. 1. On Sunday, he was not even mildly off the pace, but on an intense, high-wired afternoon, Djokovic found his very best at the crucial moments, and typically found another gear to go to in the two tiebreakers, to outplay him for the win. Paris 2024 Tennis men's final: Djokovic consoles Alcaraz Paris 2024 Olympics — Tennis — Men's Singles Gold Medal Match — Roland-Garros Stadium, Paris, France — August 04, 2024. Novak Djokovic of Serbia and Carlos Alcaraz of Spain react after their match.

This was an enthralling baseline contest; the first set alone lasted nearly 100 minutes. Unlike the beleaguered straight-sets loss at Wimbledon a month ago, Djokovic went toe-to-toe with Alcaraz from the baseline even when the Spaniard was finding big mileage behind his forehand and moving with speed to cover all corners of the court. Both players failed to blink — Alcaraz saved five break points and Djokovic saved eight — but it was the mammoth ninth game of the first set in which Djokovic raised his level, saving five break points, and never looked back. As it went to a breaker, Djokovic locked down and Alcaraz let his level fall just enough for the Serb to take advantage. Neither player let their levels fall too much in the second, even as the Spaniard faced a mountain to climb. A few fascinating, intense exchanges followed and a second breaker ensued in which Alcaraz raised his baseline game only for Djokovic to up the ante further and slap a few huge groundstrokes and see out the win. Ultimately, the precision of Djokovic's racquet — the pinpoint T-serves, the lunging forehand winners, the error-free tiebreakers — propelled him to a deserved win.