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TGSRTC to operate special buses from Hyderabad to Nagarjuna Sagar

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) will be operating special bus services from the city to Nagarjuna Sagar. In view of the rains in the State, the flood water has been heavily flowing into the dam for the past one week. Due to this the water in the reservoir reached its full level and there has been a gradual increase in the number of visitors, particularly from Hyderabad. RTC officials said special deluxe buses are being operated from MGBS to Nagarjuna Sagar. These special buses will leave at 5 am, 6.45 am, 7.15am, 7.30am, 8am, 9.45am, 10.45am, 2.30 pm, 5pm and 5.40pm from MGBS to Nagarjuna Sagar.

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh granted 21-day furlough



GNS News Agency, August 13

Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted a 21-day furlough, official sources said on Tuesday. During his temporary release period, Singh will go to the Dera ashram in Barnawa in Uttar Pradesh's Baghat, they further said.

The Sirda-headquartered Dera sect chief was granted the temporary release days after the Punjab and Haryana High Court disposed of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's (SGPC) petition against Singh's temporary release. The high court on August 9 observed that a plea for temporary release by the Dera chief should be considered by the competent authority without any "arbitrariness or favouritism". In June, Singh moved the high court and sought directions to grant him a 21-day furlough. On February 29, the high court directed the Haryana government not to grant further parole to the Dera Sacha Sauda chief without its permission. He had been granted a 50-day parole on January 19. Singh is serving a 20-year sentence for raping two of his disciples and is lodged in the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak district. The Dera chief and three others were also convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist more than 16 years ago. In May, the high court acquitted Singh and four others in the 2002 murder of the sect's former manager Ranjit Singh, citing "tainted and sketchy" investigations in the matter. A special CBI court had sentenced them to life imprisonment in the nearly 20-year-old murder case. Singh had been held guilty of hatching a criminal conspiracy with his co-accused.

Telangana insists on Krishna water sharing on 50:50 ratio from 2024-25



GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: The State has requested the Krishna Waters Disputes Tribunal (KWDT -II) to issue orders for utilisation of waters available in the basin by both the Telugu States in the ratio of 50:50 with effect from the water year 2024-25 pending final decision.

Submitting its counter to the Statement of Case (SOC) filed by the Andhra Pradesh before the Tribunal, Telangana contended that formulation of an operational protocol for distribution of water can be thought of only after determination of the State-wise and project-wise shares. Hence the State-wise and project-wise shares of each State shall be determined first. Thereafter, an effective operational protocol can be developed either by an independent agency or otherwise only after completion of the mandatory finalisation of allocations. But ad-hoc water sharing arrangement in the ratio of 66:34 is meant only for one year. Until the Tribunal came out with its final verdict, the State has pressed for utilisation of the available waters in 50:50 ratio with immediate effect. Pursuant to its request, Telangana, by its letter dated May 13, 2023 wanted a meeting of the Apex Council to be convened to resolve the issue. The government of India, in response vide letter dated October 20, 2023, stated that this issue relating to water sharing is pending with the Tribunal. The State also wanted the water available due to diversion of the Godavari waters to Krishna to be permitted to be exclusively utilised by Telangana as this water has to be utilised in the in-basin projects upstream of Nagarjuna Sagar as per the agreement between the riparian States signed on August 4, 1978. As per the ad hoc arrangement, Telangana has been receiving 299 TMC as against 512 TMC by Andhra Pradesh. The KWDT-II is actively involved in resolving disputes between the two States. As per the statements of both States presented before the tribunal, Telangana has staked claim for 954.9 TMC and Andhra Pradesh had sought 1144 TMC. The water release is regulated by a committee consisting of Chief Engineers from both States and a Member-Secretary from the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB).

Home Minister Amit Shah participates in 'Har Ghar Tiranga' rally in Ahmedabad

GNS News Agency, August 13

Ahmedabad: Union Home Minister Amit Shah participated in 'Har Ghar Tiranga' rally in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. "This Tiranga Yatra is designed to ignite the spirit of patriotism among the youth across India. I urge everyone that on August 15 not a single house in Gujarat should be without our national flag. The next 25 years mark our 'Amrit Kaal', a period where the youth must unite to propel India to the top of the world stage," the Home Minister said. The yatra featured a 2,151-foot-long Tricolor carried by partici-



pants, including school teachers and personnel from various forces.

"Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, our flag now proudly flies on the Moon, a feat no other nation has achieved before. We've also triumphed over terrorism and led the glo-

Property worth lakhs gutted in Hyderabad's Puranapul warehouse fire mishap

Hyderabad: Property worth a few lakhs of rupees was gutted down when fire broke out in a warehouse of a decoration material supplying company at Puranapul on Tuesday. No casualties were reported in the incident.

According to fire officials, the fire broke out in the Swastik Supplying Company located at Puranapul in the afternoon. Except for one worker, the remaining workers who stayed at the place had gone out for some work. When the fire broke out, a worker Shaded Alam, who is a native of Bihar was asleep and woke up on being alerted by local people.

Land acquisition for Hyderabad RRR to be completed next month



GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: The Telangana Chief Secretary on Tuesday directed district Collectors concerned to complete land acquisition for Hyderabad Regional Ring Road (RRR) by the second week of September. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari asked the Collectors to give priority to land acquisition and complete the process by the second week of September.

She held a high-level meeting at the State Secretariat to review the progress of the construction of the Regional Ring Road. Santhi Kumari said that the RRR project is the most prestigious one for the state. She directed officials to speed up the acquisition of land pending at various stages. The Chief Secretary asked officials to focus on the issue of compensation for land acquisition and ensure that farmers losing their lands get fair compensation. The Collectors of the districts concerned were directed to constitute committees at the district level for land acquisition. Santhi Kumari said these committees should take steps to ensure that the farmers losing their lands for RRR get fair compensation as per the market value.

The Collectors were asked to also focus on court cases relating to land acquisition and take steps for their expeditious disposal. Vikas Raj, Special Chief Secretary, Roads & Buildings, Srinivas Raj, Advisor to Government, Navin Mittal, Principal Secretary, Revenue, Prashanti, Additional Secretary, Forest, Harichandana, Special Secretary, Roads & Buildings, Harish, Joint Secretary, Roads & Buildings, Collectors of Rangareddy, Medak, Sangareddy, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri and Siddipet districts attended the meeting.

In the State Budget for 2024-25, Rs.1,525 crores were allocated for Regional Ring Road, which will connect Hyderabad to other parts of the state. The northern road from Sangareddy-Toopran-Gajwel-Choutuppal will be 158.6 km long while the southern side will be 189 km from Choutuppal-Shadhnagar-Sangareddy. RRR will be constructed with the standards of the expressway. It was announced in the Budget speech that RRR will be initially constructed as a four-lane highway and will be extended to 8 lanes commensurate with the increase in traffic. The region between ORR and RRR will attract industries, services and transport parks. As per initial estimates, the northern part of RRR will cost Rs 13,922 crores and the southern part will cost Rs 12,980 crores.

Adivasi-Dalit groups call hartal in Kerala on Aug 21 over SC reservation verdict

GNS News Agency, August 13

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

They said the hartal will exempt Wayanad district due to the recent natural disasters. The outfits announced that the state-wide hartal is part of the Bharat Bandh called by Bhim Army and various Dalit-Bahujan movements. The primary demand is for Parliament to pass legislation overturning the Supreme Court verdict, according to the statement. Despite the BJP government's assurance that it will not implement the creamy layer, the central government has yet to acknowledge that the creamy layer division is the basis for categorising the list, they alleged.

Earlier this month, a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgment that state governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data. Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said that States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation. Justice Gavai penned a separate but concurring judgment in which the top court by a majority verdict said the states are empowered to make sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for granting quotas within the reserved category to uplift those who belong to the more underprivileged castes.

Calcutta HC orders CBI probe into Kolkata doctor's rape & murder

GNS News Agency, August 13

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday ordered a CBI probe into the alleged rape and murder of a woman junior doctor at the state-run R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital in Kolkata last week. Hearing a clutch of petitions in the matter, a division bench of the high court comprising Chief Justice T. S. Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya ordered a court-monitored probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), as demanded by the victim's family members. The bench also directed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Kolkata Police, which is currently probing the matter, to immediately handover all the relevant documents, CCTV footage, and evidence to the CBI officials. Examining the case diary submitted by the police, the division bench observed that the progress of the investigation has not been satisfactory. On Monday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said that the state administration will hand over the probe to the CBI if the SIT is unable to conclude the investigation by Sunday. However, on Tuesday, the counsels for the petitioners argued that that time-frame might have a negative impact on the investigation since there were chances of tampering with the evidence during the interim period.

The bench accepted the arguments and observed that during the last few days after the body of the victim was found in the seminar hall of the R.G. Kar MCH, there had not been any significant progress in the probe. The bench was also in agreement with the arguments that



further loss of time would leave chances for tampering with the evidence. The court also questioned the communication goof-up on the part of the hospital authorities, including keeping the victim's parents waiting for information even after her bruised body was found on the morning of August 9. The counsel for one of the petitioners, Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharya, pointed out that after the body was found, the victim's family members received a phone call from the hospital at around 10.30 a.m. informing that she was 'sick'. However, 15 minutes later, the victim's parents were told that their daughter committed suicide. The family members were also made to sit for three hours during which they were not allowed to see the body. There are also complaints that the police advised the family members to somehow 'settle' the matter," he argued.

KTR slams Congress's 'double standards' on Adani, questions Telangana investment



GNS News Agency, August 13

His remark came shortly after the Congress announced a nationwide protest on August 22 over the Hindenburg report alleging Sebi-Adani nexus. Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader KT Rama Rao on Tuesday lashed out at the Congress, accused the party of showing "double standards" on the Adani issue. KTR drew comparison between the Congress's attitude towards the Adani Group nationally and the Congress government's attitude towards it in Telangana.

His remark came shortly after the Congress announced a nationwide protest on August 22 over the Hindenburg report alleging Sebi-Adani nexus. "Glad that the Congress had called for a nationwide protest in light of the Hindenburg Report on Adani-Sebi nexus on Aug 22, but we at BRS see through their double standards," KTR said. He went on to ask, "If Adani is wrong for India, why and how is he right for Telangana?" Notably, Adani Group had inked four agreements with Telangana government in January this year to invest over Rs 12,400 crore across multiple sectors.

KTR questioned if Rahul Gandhi would demand Telangana Chief Minister and Congress leader Revanth Reddy to roll back Adani Group's investment in the state. "Or is it just about convenience and not about con-

viction?" KTR said, taking a swipe at Congress. He added, "BRS stands firm for Telangana's future—does Congress?" Hindenburg Research on August 10 alleged that Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged Adani money siphoning scandal. The allegations triggered a political slugfest, with the Congress and other INDIA bloc parties demanding her removal and a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the matter. The BJP, on the other hand, accused the Opposition of being a part of a conspiracy to create financial instability and chaos in India.

Ex-DMK functionary's brother arrested by ED in money laundering case

GNS News Agency, August 13

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday arrested Mohammed Saleem, the brother of expelled DMK functionary Jaffer Sadiq, in connection with the investigation into a money laundering case. He was remanded to judicial custody by a local court. Saleem has been detained under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, for his involvement in laundering proceeds linked to the Jaffer Sadiq case. The action follows an investigation by the Narcotics Control Bureau. It exposed Jaffer Sadiq Abdul Rehman, a former DMK functionary, as the mastermind behind a sophisticated scheme to smuggle pseudoephedrine to Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia, camouflaged as health-mix powder and desiccated coconut. The case also stands on previous seizures by customs authorities, including pseudoephedrine by Chennai Customs in 2015 and ketamine by Mumbai Customs in 2018.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A nuanced approach

THE Supreme Court's decision to partially stay the Mumbai college circular banning the hijab, while upholding restrictions on the niqab and burqa, strikes a commendable balance between respecting religious sentiments and addressing the pragmatic needs of modern education. It is a nuanced attempt to reconcile cultural traditions with the demands of contemporary academic environment. This decision underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive atmosphere while maintaining discipline and uniformity within institutions. By allowing the hijab but restricting face-covering attire like the niqab and burqa, the SC has set a precedent that other institutions with similar issues would do well to follow.

The court's approach recognises that education is not just about imparting knowledge but also about ensuring that students can participate fully in the academic experience. Face coverings can inhibit interaction, an essential component of the learning process. The order supports the idea that while religious freedom is fundamental, it should not come at the expense of the educational milieu. This decision offers a template for resolving similar disputes across the country. The Karnataka hijab case, for example, could benefit from this balanced perspective, avoiding the polarising outcomes seen in other states. Countries like Turkey, which have historically grappled with the role of religious symbols in secular institutions, might find the Indian approach instructive. This ruling emphasises that educational institutions should focus on empowering students rather than on imposing restrictive dress codes. By navigating the fine line between tradition and modernity, the SC has taken a significant step towards ensuring that educational institutions remain inclusive, respectful and progressive spaces for all students.

Police confirm homicide and sexual assault, say open to another agency conducting probe



GNS News Agency, August 13

The Kolkata Police Commissioner Saturday confirmed that a junior doctor who was found dead at the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital was raped and murdered. "This is an unfortunate incident. Yesterday, at 10:30 am, the Tala police station was informed that a lady was found lying in the seminar hall of the hospital," said CP Vineet Kumar Goyal.

"We are extremely sad, anguished and angered because of the incident. We are with the family members and the doctors. Whatever needs to be done from our end, we are following a transparent process of investigation. If there is a demand from the family for some other agency to conduct the investigation, we have no problem. By analysing CCTV evidence, proof from the place of occurrence, and a thorough interrogation of doctors and other witnesses, we have concluded that there is strong evidence as far as the accused is concerned," he said. Police have arrested one Sanjoy Roy in connection with the crime. The police chief said an SIT has been formed, and CCTV footage has been collected from the vicinity of the crime scene.

"On the basis of the evidence, one person has been arrested. The probe is still on. He will be produced in court today," said the CP. The police chief said that once information was received, the homicide department rushed to the spot. The forensic team was also called in, and for the inquest, the services of a judicial magistrate were requested. "In the presence of the judicial magistrate, the parents and the medical college students, an inquest was done," he said. "After the inquest, the post-mortem examination was done. A board was formed with three doctors, out of which two were women. The whole procedure was documented through videography. Students and family members were present as witnesses during the post-mortem proceedings," he said. Asked about the background of the accused, he said, "For us, he is a criminal of the highest order. We will see to it that he gets punishment of the highest order. We are collecting more evidence and examining more people. We will let you know once we get anything. We are interrogating him and trying to find the reason for him being present there at such a time," he said. This is not the conclusion of the investigation; it is at a preliminary stage. We are examining more people. Not even 24 hours have passed. We have cross-checked and it is confirmed that he was there," said the CP. Additional Commissioner of Police Murli Dhar said also said there were signs of sexual assault. "This is a sensitive case. As per Supreme Court guidelines, we cannot divulge each and every detail of the investigation before the media. This is a case of homicide as well as sexual assault," he said.

Admission process starts for UG at MANUU

GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: The Directorate of Admissions (DoA) of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) is inviting applications for admission into various Undergraduate courses. According to Prof. M. Vanaja, Director, DoA, Intermediate/12th passed students who have not appeared in CUET can also register and apply directly on MANUU admission portal link <https://manucoe.in/RegularAdmission/> from August 12 to 20.

Rescue teams bank on lessons from August 2023 Shiv Bawari tragedy amid ops following July 31 Himachal cloudbursts



GNS News Agency, August 13

Joint teams from agencies, including the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Civil Defence, and defence personnel are engaged in the rescue operation to locate over 55 people who went missing after five cloudbursts hit Himachal Pradesh in July. These teams are drawing on their past experiences, particularly those learnt in the aftermath of last year's August 13 Shiv Bawari Temple tragedy at Summer Hill in Shimla.

As many as 28 people went missing in the incident. Although the bodies of all 28 victims were eventually recovered — some recognizable and many beyond recognition — it took at least nine days of search and rescue efforts to spot them. Thirteen of the 28 bodies were found at a distance of around 6 to 9 kilometre from the Shiv Bawari Temple, which was buried under a major landslide. Sanjeev Gandhi, Shimla Superintendent of Police (SP), who supervised last year's search and rescue operation, on Saturday said, "On August 1, when the rescue teams reached the worst-affected village of Samej, we concluded that the victims might have been swept

away more than 20 km from where they had been residing." He added, "We divided the entire stretch of the Samej Khad rivulet, from the village of Samej to the confluence where it meets the Sutlej River, into six points. Two bodies were found between the village of Samej and the confluence point, but we had to extend the search area up to 85 km, reaching as far as the Sunni Dam on the Sutlej River. We have been following the same procedure we used last year to recover the missing victims of the Shiv Bawari Temple tragedy." Another aspect of the search and rescue operation is identifying the victims. Although DNA profiling of the victims' kin was considered during the Shiv Bawari tragedy, it wasn't needed as the victims were identified through their belongings. Gandhi said, "This year, when 34 people went missing from Samej in Shimla. We decided to collect DNA samples from the kin of the missing people on the second day of the rescue operation. A mutilated body of a woman has been identified through DNA profiling. DNA samples were collected by a team of forensic and medical experts. Our search and rescue operation is based on five aspects: rescue, food and shelter, restoration and rehabilitation of displaced families, search and retrieval of the living and the dead, and identification and handling of post-mortem investigations." The five cloudbursts, including three in Kullu and one each in Mandi and Shimla, occurred on the night of July 31. The village of Samej in Shimla witnessed the most casualties, followed by the districts of Mandi and Kullu. Over 55 people, including 34 in Shimla alone, are missing. The bodies of 28 victims have been recovered so far, 15 of which were found by rescue teams in Shimla. Meanwhile, Commandant of the 14th Battalion of NDRF, Baljinder Singh, visited all the areas affected by the cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh. The NDRF personnel from the 14th Battalion have been deployed in Shimla, Kullu, and Mandi.

The last major agitation by doctors in Bengal that started from NRS Medical College: a recap

GNS News Agency, August 13

Kolkata doctor killed protest The earlier agitation was triggered by an attack on two doctors at Kolkata's NRS Medical College and Hospital by the neighbours and relatives of a patient who died during treatment on June 10, 2019. The recent agitation by doctors in West Bengal bears similarity with the week-long protests that rocked medical colleges in the state in 2019.

The ongoing protest started after the semi-naked body of a woman postgraduate trainee (PGT) doctor was discovered inside the seminar hall of the government-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital on Friday. The deceased was on duty the previous night, and her body was found the next day. The earlier agitation was triggered by an attack on two doctors at Kolkata's NRS Medical College and Hospital by the neighbours and relatives of a patient who died during treatment on June 10, 2019. The subsequent strike called by doctors affected most health services, including OPDs, in state-run hospitals.

Expressing their inability to contain the crisis, the then-principal of the NRS Medical College and Hospital, Saibal Kumar Mukherjee, and the medical superintendent-cum-vice-principal, Saurabh Chattopadhyay, resigned from their posts. On June 13, agitating doctors



defied Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's ultimatum to join work by 2 pm, and declared that the agitation would continue till their demands related to security matters in government hospitals were met. A team of doctors also met former West Bengal governor Keshari Nath Tripathi in Raj Bhavan and said the chief minister's reaction to their protest was unexpected. However, the doctors withdrew their protest after meeting CM Banerjee at Nabanna a couple of days later. Banerjee also announced steps to scale up security in hospitals.

Himachal changes parameters of judging performances of bureaucrats, HPPSC officers



GNS News Agency, August 13

Under the new system, performance appraisals would be directly linked to the work outputs of all officers. Under the new system, performance appraisals would be directly linked to the work outputs of all officers. In a significant development, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu decided to change the parameters to access Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers posted in Himachal Pradesh and the officers of Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (HPPSC) officers from Saturday.

The traditional descriptive categories such as 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', and 'Average' would be replaced with a numerical grading scale and officers would be assessed based on three key indicators: the accomplishment of their annual work plan, other work-related attributes and personal and functional attributes.

Sardar Sarovar dam crosses 133-metre mark with steady inflow from Madhya Pradesh

GNS News Agency, August 13

The Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat's Narmada district recorded a water level of 133.02 metres on Saturday, a rise of six metres in the last two days. Following the development, officials of the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL) said they would decide on opening the radial gates of the dam for a safe filling up to the Full Reservoir Level (FRL) of 138.68 metres, once the water level crosses the 134-metre mark. At 133.02 metres on Saturday afternoon, the Sardar Sarovar dam was 80 per cent full with a gross storage of 7,525 Million Cubic Metre (MCM), of which 3,825 MCM is the live storage of the dam. SSNNL officials said the inflow from the Indira Sagar and Omkareshwar dams in Madhya Pradesh was recorded at 4.8 lakh cusecs while the discharge from the Narmada dam was 55,760 cusecs after the generation of power.

Interestingly, the reforms also introduce negative marking, with officers potentially losing two points from their overall grade, on a scale of 1-10, for non-compliance of government orders or advisories. CM Sukhu said, "From now on, all officers, including administrative secretaries and deputy commissioners posted in districts, would be evaluated solely on their performance for their APARs." Under the new system, performance appraisals would be directly linked to the work outputs of all officers. The reforms aim to enhance accountability and transparency by linking officer evaluations directly to their work outputs, he added. Sukhu highlighted transparency as a key feature of the system noting that officers would receive their finalised evaluations which would foster professional development and encourage improvement in their work performances. The APAR process would now be entirely online, streamlining operations and enforcing a December 31 deadline for submissions. He said that these changes were designed to ensure a fair and objective evaluation process, particularly for field-level officers, whose performance would be closely tied to meeting quantitative targets. He said that the higher management officers would continue to be assessed on qualitative aspects and personal attributes. According to CM Sukhu, these reforms were a crucial step toward strengthening governance and further enhance the accountability within the state administration. Recently, CM Sukhu government decided that government officers applying for study leaves will be entitled of their 40 per cent salary, instead of 100 per cent.

Classmate stabs 17-year-old student multiple times in Surat school for talking to ex-girlfriend

GNS News Agency, August 13

As soon as the accused left the classroom, the other students reported the matter to the class teacher who in turn informed his father. As soon as the accused left the classroom, the other students reported the matter to the class teacher who in turn informed his father. A 17-year-old teenager was stabbed in his classroom by a fellow student of the school for talking to the latter's ex-girlfriend at a school in Surat's Nanpura area on Friday afternoon. The teenager is currently undergoing treatment at the ICU of a private hospital, the police said.

A case has been registered and the police are investigating the matter. According to the police, the victim, a Class 12 student, was having tiffin during the short break when his classmate approached him and picked up a fight. A police officer said, "Things escalated quickly and the boy's classmate began to stab him multiple times on his neck, head and his left hand. When another student tried to intervene, the accused hit him too, resulting in minor injuries." As soon as the accused left the classroom, the other students reported the matter to the class teacher who in turn informed his father. The school authorities rushed the victim to a nearby private hospital where he was admitted to the ICU for treatment. The police reached the spot after learning about the incident. The victim's father then lodged a complaint against the accused. A case under BNS Sections 118 (1) (Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons) and 352 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) has been registered. A senior police officer said, "The accused in this case is a minor and we will carry out the due procedure in such cases. The condition of the victim student is stable."

Pune doctors' band to perform for soldiers on I-Day eve

GNS News Agency, August 13

Practice sessions go on late into the night for this team of reputed doctors preparing for a milestone in their calendar. This Independence Day, the 17-member Doctors' Orchestra for Charity and Social Service (DOCS), will perform for the armed forces stationed along the Western border. Setting those scalpels and stethoscopes aside, the doctors have taken up their favourite guitars, drums and keyboards to perfect melodies they will play for the brave soldiers on the frontlines.

From August 13 to 18, the team of specialists including an onco surgeon, paediatrician, radiologist, and dentist among several others, will pay tribute to the Tricolour by singing patriotic songs and performing musical pieces dedicated to soldiers at Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer. Last year in April, DOCS had for the first time been invited to visit Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and entertain soldiers at Missamari, Tenga and Tawang. Impressed with their performance the DOCS band has now been invited to perform for soldiers stationed at the Western border.

This year too they continue to extend the theme 'Romance ke Rang, DOCS ke Sang' and includes belting out popular numbers like 'Gulabi Aankhe Jo Teri Dekhi', 'Ruk Ja O Dil Diane', 'Kajare Re' to 'Senorita' and Rang De Basanti among others.

DOCS has had several doctor-musicians join and leave the band in the last 24 years, but the orchestra is never short of enthusiastic singing doctors. Leading from the front are the dedicated founding members, oncosurgeon Dr Kamlesh Bokil and paediatric surgeon Dr Dasmith Singh, who have showcased the musical skills of the team in more than 250 performances. "Music has been such a stress buster. We are fortunate to utilise our talent and not only perform for audiences but also raise several lakhs so that physically challenged patients from Tara, Society of Friends of Sassoon General Hospital and many others can be assisted," Dr Bokil said.

The team gathers at Dr Bokil's nursing home, where a specially designed sound-proof room has become their go-to place for rehearsals. Without compromising on their performances, the doctors also use the platform to deliver important health messages. Dr Bokil, who is the bass guitarist, said "It is important to create awareness about some of the non-communicable diseases and this is a fun way to give tips to the audience." With a final short rehearsal on Saturday, the team that includes lead singer Dr Supriya Bildikar, Dr Vibha Deshpande, Dr Dhanashree Kondhare, Dr Vajiyanti Gadre, Dr Chandrakant Athalye, Dr Sachin Athalye, Dr Abdul Khan, Dr Vinod Shelar, Dr Sudhir Sonawane, Dr Tejas Joshi, Amruta Thakurdesai, Sanjay Khadye, Chandrashekhar Gaikwad, Dr Manasi Arkadi and Dr Prasanna Gadre are now all set to leave their homes and put on their best musical show for the soldiers. "This is our way of expressing our sincere gratitude on behalf of our countrymen to our soldiers who protect our borders. We live because they are prepared to die," Dr Singh points out.

DRI Hyderabad seizes Rs.60 lakhs worth Ephedrine

GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) Hyderabad unit caught two persons who were attempting to send ephedrine drug valued at Rs. 60 lakh to New Zealand on Friday.

According to the officials, the two persons had come to the city carrying the white powder in two packets. "Upon thorough examination of the said package, two vacuum sealed transparent packets were recovered. A white substance in powder form was recovered from both the packets and, when tested with field test kit, indicated positive for Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine," said the DRI officials.

The packets containing 3 kg Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine valued at Rs.60 lakhs (illicit market value) have been seized and two individuals have been arrested under the provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985, the officials added.

Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine are classified as controlled substances under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. These chemicals serve as precursors for the illicit manufacture of amphetamine and methamphetamine, collectively referred to as Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS).

‘Despicable, loss personal’ — As pressure mounts over doctor’s death, CM Mamata Banerjee promises action



GNS News Agency, August 13

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Saturday called the death of a 31-year-old junior doctor whose body was found in a Kolkata Hospital “despicable”, saying that the loss “felt personal”. She also said the doctors protesting over the incident were “free to approach any other agency if they had no faith” in the state government. Speaking to a television channel Saturday, Banerjee said she had extended her “full support” to the doctors who have been holding protests over the incident. The woman doctor’s body was discovered inside the seminar hall of the government-run R G Kar Medical College & Hospital Friday. She had been on duty the previous night. One person has been arrested in the case.

The remarks come at a time when the pressure mounts on Banerjee’s Trinamool Congress state government to take immediate action that Opposition claims is one of rape and murder in the case. “Their anger and demand are justified. I support it. Police have also accepted their demands,” she said. Banerjee said she was

at Jhargam when the body was discovered. “However, I was keeping track of all the developments. I spoke to the family of the victim and assured them of proper action. I have directed for the case to be taken to a fast-track court. If needed, the accused will be hanged, even though I am not pro-capital punishment. But they should be given the strictest punishment,” she said. Banerjee added that those who were protesting were “free to approach any other law enforcement agency” if they had no faith in the state administration. She was referring to the demands of getting a central agency to investigate the doctor’s death. The CM also said there would be a probe to find out if there was any negligence on the part of the hospital.

“We want proper and thorough investigation and stringent punishment for the culprits. Just as we have a responsibility, the hospital’s superintendent too has a responsibility. We will also probe if there was negligence on any part. Meanwhile, one accused has already been arrested. We have ensured that not a single doctor who is protesting faces any kind of problem,” she said. At the same time, she also appealed to the doctor to resume their jobs. “The doctors can keep protesting, but at the same time, they should also treat the patients... The person arrested in the case used to work there. There should be proper vigilance,” she said, adding that she would order the principal secretary and the police commissioner “if needed”. Banerjee’s remarks come at a time when pressure is mounting on her establishment for action, with principal opposition BJP calling it a case of rape and murder. While Kolkata Police’s Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigates the case, the hospital has set up its own 11-member internal inquiry committee.

Meet the Tunnel Man of India who transformed barren Karnataka hill into bountiful farms



GNS News Agency, August 13

Speaking of tunnels in Bengaluru’s context can possibly be ‘disastrous’ as pointed out by some, but for Dakshina Kannada’s Amai Mahalinga Naik, 79, tunnels have been a tipping point of agricultural success and a story of great perseverance. Naik, a farmer from the small village of Adyanadka, has transformed a once-barren hilltop into a lush, thriving oasis. Known as the ‘Tunnel Man of Karnataka’, Naik is credited for transforming an arid sloping hill into a fertile farm through the innovative zero-energy micro-irrigation system. Naik’s early life was far from easy. Born in 1945 in a remote village in Dakshina Kannada, Naik grew up without the privilege of formal education. Naik said that he usually spent his early years working as an agricultural labourer. He would pluck areca nuts and coconuts in and around his village, eking out a meager living through sheer hard work and determination. Despite the hardships, Naik’s sincerity and work ethic did not go unnoticed. In 1978, Amai Mahabala Bhat, a local landlord, recognised Naik’s dedication and gifted him two acres of barren land perched atop a hill. The land, though barren and desolate, represented an opportunity—an opportunity that Naik was determined to seize.

The land Naik received came with one significant challenge: the absence of nearby water sources. For a farmer, water is life, and without it, the land was virtually useless. But Naik, undeterred by the odds, set out on a mission to find water where none seemed to exist. The idea of digging tunnels to access groundwater was not new in the region. In fact, there was an age-old tradition in the area of digging horizontal tunnels into hillocks, known locally as Surangas to tap into underground water sources. However, the process was labour-intensive, risky, and often yielded little success. Nevertheless, Naik took up the challenge with unwavering resolve.

Six attempts and a breakthrough Naik’s early attempts at digging tunnels were met with disappointment. He dug five Surangas, each extending at least 35 meters into the hillside, only to find that they were dry. With each tunnel, he learned more about the land and its hidden secrets. Finally, in his sixth attempt, Naik struck water. The tunnel, which extended 315 feet into the hill, tapped into a reliable source of groundwater. This moment was

a turning point for Naik and his farm. The water from the tunnel was channeled through a zero-energy micro-irrigation system that Naik had ingeniously developed, allowing him to cultivate the land and transform it into a green oasis. “When faced with barren land and a lack of resources, many would have given up. But I saw it as an opportunity to prove that with determination, even the harshest environment can be transformed,” said Naik. But Naik’s work didn’t stop there. After securing a consistent water supply for his crops, he dug yet another tunnel, this time to provide water for drinking and household use. His relentless pursuit of water, combined with his innovative irrigation system, earned the moniker ‘The Tunnel Man of Karnataka’.

With water now flowing through his land, Naik set about transforming the barren hilltop into a thriving agricultural haven. He single-handedly constructed around 300 percolation trenches in the surrounding hills, ensuring that rainwater was captured and stored to recharge the groundwater table. He also built two stone revetments and a 12,000-litre capacity tank to manage and distribute the water effectively. Today, his farm is a lush landscape of areca nut palms, coconut trees, cashew trees, banana saplings, and pepper vines. The once-desolate plot of land has become a model for sustainable farming, attracting over 1,000 visitors each year, including farmers, environmentalists, and tourists from around the world. “People often ask me how I managed to dig tunnels through solid rock without any formal training. My answer is simple: nature is both our greatest challenge and our greatest ally. It tests us, but it also rewards those who respect it and work in harmony with it. My tunnels were not just about finding water – they were about understanding the land and listening to what it needed,” said Naik. Step farming and honey bee farming

One of the major highlights of Naik’s farm is the adoption of ‘step farming’ that incorporates a series of steps on the slopes known as terraces or steps. This helps in conserving soil and water and additionally reduces the dependency on electricity for irrigation of crops. “One of the major advantages of step farming is that it increases the surface area of sunlight needed for the crops. Moreover, irrigation can be carried out without the help of electricity. It also reduces soil erosion and sedimentation,” said Naik. Further, if you are in Naik’s farm you cannot escape the buzzing of the bees. His farm is home to 10 honey bee boxes, which are integral to the pollination process. They carry the pollen from one plant to the other aiding in the pollination process contributing for a good yield in his farm. “I believe in living a minimalistic and simple lifestyle. My wife and I consume what we grow and we depend very little on the outside market for our daily essentials. I strongly believe in passing on this organic and sustainable farming practices to the upcoming generations and encourage more youngsters to take up sustainable farming models to make the world a better place,” said Naik.

For the first time in Pune, get a glimpse into the mind of National Award-winning craftsman Maneklal Gajjar

GNS News Agency, August 13

There is a story about master craftsman Maneklal Gajjar from when he was invited to Belgium, shortly after receiving a National Award from the then President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy in 1979. At 6’2” and strikingly handsome, Gajjar always made it a point to dress well, which meant wearing a dhoti and kurta with elan. But, he did not want to visit Europe in a dhoti and kurta so he borrowed a safari suit for his first plane ride. When his cousin arrived at Ahmedabad station to wish Gajjar bon voyage, he could not find him. It was only after he returned dejected that the cousin found out that Gajjar was at the station all along, surrounded by a crowd, but unrecognisable in his Western wear.

This is one of the anecdotes about Gajjar that Mala Pradeep Sinha, a textile designer from Vadodara, Gujarat, and Suchitra Balasubrahmanyam, faculty member of the School of Design, Ambedkar University, Delhi, enjoy telling. Gajjar, who died in 2012, was a textile block-maker and master craftsman whose practice redefined the understanding of craft and design and cemented a rich legacy.

On August 10, Sinha and Balasubrahmanyam will make a presentation about the legacy of Gajjar in Pune, titled ‘Layers Upon Layers’. The event is being organised by the India Foundation for the Arts, which gave Sinha a grant under the Arts Research programme, and Parijat Foundation. “I am coming to Pune 45 years after I started my journey in crafts from the city to talk about craft to an audience who, we believe, is not very oriented with the craft of Maneklal Gajjar,” says Sinha. She had known Gajjar since her student days at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. Sinha would go to him very often at his house in Pethapur, Gujarat, and he, too, came to the



institute so that the students developed a deep relationship with him. “In the 1960s, Ahmedabad was undergoing a cultural renaissance after it became a capital of Gujarat after the Bombay Presidency was dissolved. Institutions were being built and stalwarts from every field were being invited to create iconic works of architecture and art. Maneklal, who was in touch with the people at the forefront of change, realised that the world was rapidly transforming and he needed to do the same to make his craft relevant,” says Sinha.

Her work reveals the “aesthetics, social moorings and the questions around tradition, craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, design, patronage and their interrelationships” of one of India’s leading craftspeople. It helped that Gajjar was a meticulous recordkeeper and archivist of his creations. But, it was when Sinha began research that she realised that, despite being friends with him, she was only now getting to know him really well. The session in Pune is a part of sharing what she found.

House party busted at posh Noida society, flat owners arrested

GNS News Agency, August 13

He said that students had not taken prior permission to host the massive party and had instead organised it by themselves. He said that students had not taken prior permission to host the massive party and had instead organised it by themselves.

A house party, organised by college students at a posh housing society in Sector 94 of Noida, was busted late on Friday night, said police. “We have arrested the flat owners. There were around 40 to 50 college students in the age group of 18 to 20 at the party,” said Bhopinder Singh, Station House Officer, Sector 126. Police recovered several alcohol bottles and cigarette packets from the flat where the party was organised. Singh said that students had not taken prior permission to host the massive party. “We have found that the number of students was huge in the gathering,” said Manish Mishra, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Noida.

Singh said that a resident of the society informed the police about the house party after a wine bottle fell in the common area. “There was loud music and someone



threw a glass bottle in the common area,” said Singh. The invite for the party was sent via a WhatsApp message that read: “A house party that is going to be a total blast! Join us at our crib this 9th August at 6 pm and let us make some memories that last!”. The invite also mentioned that the female entry would cost Rs 500, couples would need to pay Rs 800, and Rs 1,000 for males.

Show-cause notices issued to 2 former Vadodara municipal commissioners in Harni boat tragedy case: Gujarat Govt informs HC

GNS News Agency, August 13

The state government on Friday informed the Gujarat High Court bench hearing the Harni boat capsize case that it issued show-cause notices to two former municipal commissioners of Vadodara – Vinod Rao and H S Patel – who had a role in awarding a contract to Kotia Projects to redevelop and manage Harni lake. Fourteen people including 12 students of the New Sunrise School died after a boat capsized in Harni lake on January 18. Patel was the commissioner when bids for the redevelopment of the lake were submitted. While Rao was the commissioner when the Kotia Projects’ bid was evaluated and forwarded to the standing committee and the general body for approval.

Advocate General Kamal Trivedi informed the division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Pranav Trivedi that show-cause notices were issued on July 19, following the July 9 order of the Gujarat HC directing the state government that “disciplinary action” initiated by the government based on a fact-finding report “shall be brought to its logical conclusion by adopting due procedure of law, and the result of the same shall be brought before the Court”.

Trivedi also informed the Court that Rao had approached the Supreme Court, challenging the July 9 order of the Gujarat HC. The advocates appearing for the families of the Harni boat tragedy victims also informed the Court that notices issued to Kotia Projects and the New Sunrise School on July 12, seeking them to be re-



spondents in the case for “exemplary compensation” for the victims, have gone ‘unserved’ as no entity was present at the registered addresses to accept the notices.

The Court directed that fresh notices be issued to both parties and asked the Vadodara district collector to ensure that the notices were served. The fact-finding committee had recorded in its inquiry report that the entire process of granting the contract to Kotia Projects in the second attempt after the company failed to qualify in the first attempt “is what is generally followed at Vadodara Municipal Corporation as also similar to what is followed in other urban local bodies and, therefore, no fault can be found in the process.” The Court expressed its dissatisfaction with the committee’s effort “to mellow down the affairs of the Corporation”.

Indian Railways begins survey for less steep Mumbai-Pune route that will reduce travel time

GNS News Agency, August 13

Central Railway is in the middle of a survey to work out a lower-gradient alternate rail route to the present Pune-Mumbai connectivity through the steep Bor Ghat. The Railway Board has approved a project that will reduce travel time by 20-30 minutes, but it will be longer in length than the present alignment and won’t require additional engine strength to manoeuvre trains, officials with Central Railway said. “The survey commenced about five months ago. It’s an elaborate survey to decide alternate routes that will make the ghat section alignment less steep. The present alignment between Mumbai and Pune in the ghat section is very steep with a gradient of 1.37. The aim of the project is to bring down the gradient to 1.100,” said Swapnil Neela, chief public relations officer, Central Railway.

Neela said that the reduced gradient will reduce the need for a banker locomotive while manoeuvring trains through the ghat’s steep slopes. “Passenger coach trains may not require the banker locomotives due to the reduced slope. They might be used for goods trains,” said Neela. He said that the survey will throw up available options and then decisions will be made about the most feasible route alignments. “It may be slightly longer than the present route but



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will take a shorter time,” said Neela.

The alignment that exists now between the two cities came about in the middle of the 19th century. The work carried out by Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) involved laying railway lines and carving out tunnels through rugged terrain and deep ravines of the Bor Ghat with the limited tools that were available then. The rail link, which was crucial for connecting Mumbai (then Bombay) to the Deccan Plateau and beyond, was seen as an economic and military mile-

stone for the British Government as it facilitated the movement of goods, troops, and people. According to historical records, approximately 24,000 workers were involved in construction supervised by European engineers and it is estimated that several hundreds to 2,000 workers lost their lives due to accidents, harsh working conditions, and diseases like malaria during the project. The engineering team had to face many unprecedented challenges while working in Bor Ghat and had to come up with ingenious local solutions – one of them was

the Reversing Section near Khandala. Designed to help trains navigate the steep gradient, the section consisted of zigzag or switchback tracks where the train would move forward in one direction, then reverse onto another track, and continue in the opposite direction. This zigzagging helped the train manage the steep gradient more safely by reducing the angle of ascent or descent. The section was used for most of the 19th century and well into the 20th century and became obsolete as more powerful locomotives came to be used by the railways.

Maldives opposition party backs President Muizzu's recalibration of India policy



GNS News Agency, August 13

The Maldivian Democratic Party has welcomed President Mohamed Muizzu-led government's "sudden recalibration" of its India policy and said Male has always been confident that India will always be the first responder any time the Maldives "dials an international 911". Abdulla Shahid, the president of the main opposition, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), made remarks after he met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday.

The MDP president said that his party "calls on the Muizzu government to issue a public apology for the actions, lies and irresponsible comments from its officials which have resulted in significant damage to the Maldives' foreign and economic outlook." Jaishankar is on a three-day official visit to the Maldives to reset the bilateral relationship, the first high-level trip from India after the archipelago nation's pro-China President Muizzu assumed office last year. "Great pleasure to warmly welcome and meet Indian External Affairs Minister @DrSJaishankar to the Maldives with my colleagues from @MDP Secretariat," Shahid, the former foreign minister, said in a statement posted on 'X' late Saturday night.

"The Maldives has always been confident that India will always be the first responder any time the Maldives 'dials an international 911'," he said. He said the "current government's initial stoking of anti-India sentiments through aggressive slogans, mockery and the branding of a time-tested friend and development partner as a regional bully, has caused a decline in the Maldives international standing, economic loss, and many other unnecessary difficulties, and challenges." "With this in mind, the MDP welcomes the sudden recalibration of the Maldives-India policy of President Muizzu's government, from its previous India Out policy," Shahid said. India's relationship with the Maldives has come under severe strain since Muizzu took charge as the President late last

year.

Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel manning three aviation platforms gifted by India to the Maldives. After talks between the two countries, the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians. On Saturday, President Muizzu described India as "one of the closest allies" and reaffirmed his administration's full commitment to strengthening the historic and close connections between the two countries. "The MDP hopes that this shift will not be temporary or superficial, but consistent and meaningful in the best interests of the people of the Maldives," Shahid said. In a separate statement, the MDP welcomed Jaishankar's visit to the Maldives. "The Maldives-India relationship has always been based on the principles of mutual respect, respect for international law, territorial integrity, a common desire for regional security, and an open and peaceful Indian Ocean, it said.

The MDP thanked India for its steadfast support of the people of the Maldives

"The MDP welcomes the exchange of notes during this visit, to train a further 1000 civil service officers - a key human resource programme initiated during (former) president (Ibrahim Mohamed) Solih's government." MDP also welcomes the signing of the MoU between the Ministry of Economic Development and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), on enhancing and expanding digital and integrated payment systems - another MoU that was discussed and finalised during President Solih's administration," it said. "The MDP welcomes with gratitude to India, the inauguration and handover of six High Impact Community Development Projects, implemented with grant assistance from the Government of India, and signed and implemented during President Solih's administration," the statement said. It said the High Impact Community Development Project scheme is a highly successful and beneficial grant assistance scheme initialised in 2019.

"The Party further welcomes the handover of water and sewerage projects in 28 islands financed through the EXIM Bank of India," the statement said. It said these projects were undertaken through the USD 800 million Line of Credit extended by the Government of India, during the first State Visit of former president Solih to India, in December 2018, and inaugurated during his administration. The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean region and the overall bilateral ties, including in the areas of defence and security, witnessed an upward trajectory under the previous government led by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

As a new era dawns over Cantonments, a look at one of the first ones in Ambala



GNS News Agency, August 13

The Raj-era cantonments spread across the country are preparing to don a new look with excision of civilian areas from them. It is time to look back in history on how the 'modern' cantonments came into being in the middle of 19th century in India. And it all began right here in this region called Ambala. In May 1843 a young Captain in the Bengal Engineers was busy laying down the first bricks of what would come to be known as the Umballa (later Ambala) Cantonment. Rushed from Darjeeling to Karnal to scout location for a new cantonment, Capt Robert Napier, later rose to the rank of Field Marshal and was Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.

The fact that Karnal in Haryana was also a cantonment once upon a time has largely been forgotten. An important outpost of the then British empire in Punjab, Karnal and Sirhind Cantonments ceased to exist in the mid-1800s and their military establishments moved to Ambala. The primary reason for Karnal to be abandoned was the spread of disease which caused large number of deaths among the British rank and file.

It is for this reason that Robert Napier laid out an extensive and extravagant design, by the standards of his time, of Ambala cantonment which stands testimony even today to the designers idea of open spaces to ensure that a repeat of Karnal does not take place. Napier was convinced that one cause of disease at Karnal had been the want of adequate ventilation. The massive old bungalows built in several acres of land, the bazars and havelis criss cross Ambala cantonment and the titles to these properties are embroiled in a maize of litigation which has been going on for decades. At the heart of the legal battles is the ownership of the land which rests with the Army and the residents have the properties on lease which continues from the times of the British. Interestingly, it was Robert Napier who also designed the cantonment of Kasauli along with another one in nearby Subathu. The details of Napier's endeavours are mentioned in his biography 'Field Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala, a Memoir' written by his son Lt Col HD Napier. What makes Ambala cantonment and its bungalows special is the fact that this was the first place where the British adopted the vast expansive style of building bungalows and barracks. The success achieved here in reducing fatalities due to illness made them replicate the style in other cantonments across India. The size of plots of the bungalows varies from 1.2 acres to 2.6 acres.

The vast acreage of these bungalows is what makes them a very lucrative possession today even though the residents have no ownership rights over the land and only the superstructure built on the land is legally accepted as theirs to dispose. "Convinced that one cause of disease at Karnal had been the want of adequate ventilation, Napier conceived the bold and novel idea of laying out the lines in echelon, so as to secure the maximum of air to all the buildings. The result proved so satisfactory that the government subsequently adopted this system in other cantonments," the memoirs mention.

The memoirs further say, "...the wide roads and spacious gardens and the lofty barracks of 'Umballa' constituted the beginning of a new epoch in the structure of Indian Cantonments... the shady avenues of that station were all planted by Napier... while the Napier barrack for the British soldier was cited in those days as a patent example of the innate extravagance of the Engineer. It is now (1890) recognised to be in reality of a most economical kind." Ambala-based Eva Prasher has done extensive research on the bungalows of Ambala. The study titled 'Bungalows and their Typology in the Colonial Town: Ambala Cantonment' explores the history of these bungalows and their design

Prasher says Ambala cantonment was originally designed with two major grid layouts, one housing all the basic requirements of a garrison and the other as the civic area, which was occupied by thirty-six odd families of different professions as a support system. "The bungalows of Ambala Cantonment were constructed in and after the year 1843 and by this time; the bungalows had flourished as a typology. Thus, these bungalows bear the basic elements of what had developed as a style for this particular part of the country. Typically, the bungalows are placed in the middle of the plot with gardens on all sides. This feature grants the bungalow its gigantism and authoritative ambience. Besides this, the gardens or the open green spaces on all sides help tackle the harsh summers in the composite climate of Ambala. Unlike the indigenous houses, the shophouses, the bungalows did not have the central courtyard to bring down the temperature of the rooms and keep the air circulating. It was rather the green space around that brought in the fresh and cool air to the interior spaces," says Prasher in her study. As is usual in all Cantonments, Ambala also has an imposing church and a very old graveyard. The foundations of St Paul's church were laid around 1852 and it was consecrated in 1857. The imposing structure of the church still survives to this even though it was partially destroyed in bombing in 1965 Indo-Pak war. As with the man who laid the foundations of Ambala cantonment, Capt Robert Napier, the church too was designed by an officer of the Bengal Engineers, Capt George Atkinson. Interestingly, apart from designing Army buildings in Ambala, Atkinson also devoted time to writing books on Indian cooking. Some of his writings include 'Curry and Rice on forty plates—the ingredients of social life at our station in India' and 'Indian spices for English Tables, or, A rare relief of fun from the Far East'. Today, Ambala cantonment has come a long way from being just a tract of land lying between the rivers "Ghuggar (now Ghaggar) and Sursuti (Saraswati), about 4 miles south of the town of Umballa," as mentioned in Napier's memoirs. A cantonment which awaits new beginnings after 180 years of existence.

Hockey team visits Golden Temple after winning bronze at Olympics

GNS News Agency, August 13

Speaking to the media, team captain Harmanpreet Singh expressed gratitude for the opportunity to pay respects at Sri Harmandir Sahib. (Express Photo) Speaking to the media, team captain Harmanpreet Singh expressed gratitude for the opportunity to pay respects at Sri Harmandir Sahib. (Express Photo) The Indian hockey team, which won a bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics, returned to the country on Sunday and visited Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar to pay their respects.

Upon their arrival in Punjab, the players were welcomed at Sri Guru Ram Dass International Airport by Punjab ministers Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, and Harbhajan Singh ETO. A large gathering of parents, hockey enthusiasts and senior officials from Hockey Punjab was present to greet the team. Lok Sabha member Gurjeet Singh Aujla also congratulated the players. Among those who arrived at Amritsar airport were team members Manpreet Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Gurjant Singh, Shamsheer Singh, Mandeep Singh, Jarnanpreet Singh Ball, Sukhjeet Singh, and Jugraj Singh. Team captain Harmanpreet Singh attributed the team's success to the blessings of Guru Sahib and prayed for even better performances in the future. (Express Photo) Team captain Harmanpreet Singh attributed the team's success to the blessings of Guru Sahib and prayed for even better performances in the future. (Express Photo) Speaking to the media, team captain Harmanpreet Singh expressed gratitude for the opportunity to pay respects at Sri Harmandir Sahib. He attributed the team's success to the blessings of Guru Sahib and prayed for even better performances in the future.

Harjinder Singh Dhani, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, honoured the players at the Information Center by presenting them with a



golden model of Sri Harmandir Sahib, religious texts, and a siropa (robe of honour). Harjinder Singh Dhani, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, honoured the players at the Information Center by presenting them with a golden model of Sri Harmandir Sahib. (Express Photo) Harjinder Singh Dhani, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, honoured the players at the Information Center by presenting them with a golden model of Sri Harmandir Sahib.

Advocate Dhani remarked that it is a matter of pride that whenever the Indian hockey team had included a substantial number of players from Punjab, they had achieved great successes, including the recent bronze medal win. He congratulated the players and offered prayers for their future accomplishments, noting that Punjab players have revived the state's historic connection with hockey. Harmanpreet also expressed gratitude to the SGPC for the honour bestowed upon the team. Other players, including Mandeep Singh and Jugraj Singh, along with the team's coach and family members, were present during the visit.

Our life, finances an open book: Sebi chief, husband deny Hindenburg allegations

New Delhi: Capital markets regulator Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband on Saturday denied allegations levelled against them by short-seller Hindenburg as baseless and asserted that their finances are an open book. In a statement, Madhabi Puri Buch and Dhaval Buch also said it is unfortunate that Hindenburg Research, against whom Sebi has taken an Enforcement action and issued a show cause notice, has chosen to attempt character assassination in response to the same.

US short-seller Hindenburg Research alleged that Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal. In a blogpost, Hindenburg said 18 months since its damning report on Adani, "SEBI has shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged

undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities." Citing "whistleblower documents", it said, "Madhabi Buch, the current chairperson of SEBI, and her husband had stakes in both obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal." Responding to the allegation, Buchs said in their statement, "In the context of allegations made in the Hindenburg Report dated August 10, 2024, against us, we would like to state that we strongly deny the baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report. The same are devoid of any truth. Our life and finances are an open book. All disclosures as required have already been furnished to SEBI over the years." Buchs further said they have no hesitation in disclosing any and all financial documents, including those that relate to the period when we were strictly private citizens,

Karnataka seer claims government diverting welfare funds meant for SCs, STs

GNS News Agency, August 13

Valmiki seer Prasannananda Puri has alleged that the Karnataka government is diverting the welfare funds meant for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and using them to fulfill the schemes of the five guarantee schemes. "We won't hinder your welfare schemes. We won't oppose your government's stand. The country's development is people's development. The poor, SCs, STs and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) must prosper," the seer said in Chitradurga.

"To uplift them, you made promises in your manifesto and implemented it. We don't oppose that. We oppose the funds reserved in the budget for SCs and STs being misused," he added. The five guarantee schemes, a major plank of Congress during campaigning for last year's assembly polls, are: Shakti (free bus rides for women), Anna Bhagya (additional five kilos of rice to ration card members), Gruha Lakshmi (monthly allowance for women heads of family), Gruha Jyothi (free power to households) and Yuva Nidhi (a monthly unemployment dole of Rs 3,000 for graduates and Rs 1,500 for diploma holders).

Meanwhile, the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government is accused of diverting over Rs 14,000 crore funds from the SCs and STs welfare plans for "other purposes". The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) issued a notice to the Karnataka government over allegations that it was diverting funds from the



SCs and STs for fulfil its five guarantee schemes. The notice came after a media report claimed the diversion of Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) funds in the state. In its notice to the Chief Secretary, the NCSC highlighted that the state government has decided to reallocate Rs 14,730 crore, originally earmarked under SCSP and TSP, to implement various welfare schemes known as the "five guarantee schemes".

Reacting to the NCSC notice, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that everything was being done as per the law and there was nothing wrong with it. "We have made a law in the state that a particular amount of money will be spent on a particular community. There is nothing wrong with it. Earlier, Andhra Pradesh had brought a similar law," he said.

Uddhav's convoy targeted in Thane after attack on MNS chief Raj Thackeray



GNS News Agency, August 13

A day after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray's convoy was attacked by Shiv Sena (UBT) workers with betel nuts in Beed district, MNS supporters retaliated by pelting Uddhav Thackeray's convoy with dung, tomatoes, coconuts, and bangles in Thane on Saturday evening. The incident occurred as Uddhav's convoy was en route to the Gadkari Rangayatan Hall, where he was scheduled to address party workers. MNS supporters raised party flags and chanted slogans against Uddhav, leading to a commotion that required intervention from the Thane police, which detained several MNS workers, including women. MNS leaders defended the protest, describing it as a spontaneous reaction to the earlier attack on Raj's convoy during his Marathwada tour, which was related to Maratha reservation.

Following the attack on his convoy, Raj Thackeray had warned of retaliation if such incidents continued. "The protesters were office-bearers of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP SP, and they had nothing to do with Maratha reservation. They are using the issue for their political benefit. I urge them not to fuel tensions between communities... Do not cross my path in the future, or you will not be able to hold any election rallies in the state. I cannot

predict what my supporters will do if they start retaliating," he told reporters on Saturday. The attack on Uddhav's convoy in Thane, a stronghold of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, came shortly after Raj's statement. Shinde commented on the incident, stating, "The protest by MNS workers was a response to the actions of the Shiv Sena (UBT). Whenever there is an action, a reaction follows."

Adani terms Hindenburg allegations malicious, manipulative of selective public info

GNS News Agency, August 13

New Delhi: The Adani Group on Sunday termed US short-seller Hindenburg Research's latest allegations as malicious and manipulative of select public information, saying it has no commercial relationship with the Sebi Chairperson or her husband. "The latest allegations by Hindenburg are malicious, mischievous and manipulative selections of publicly available information to arrive at pre-determined conclusions for personal profiteering with wanton disregard for facts and the law. We completely reject these allegations against the Adani Group which are a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in January 2024," the group said in a filing.

Hindenburg on Saturday stated that Sebi head Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband invested in offshore entities that were allegedly part of a fund structure managed by India Infoline and in which Vinod Adani, Gautam Adani's brother, also had investments.

UK 'dine and dash' couple flaunts Rs 12,000 meal on Facebook, ditches bill



pretext of a cigarette break and disappearing. Restaurant co-owner Mauricio Spinola said, "It was probably about 10 minutes after they went outside we realised they had gone." Spinola said the incident was a financial blow to the small business and that police have been notified.

"It's a big hit for a small business like ours, we just can't afford to lose over £100 in the current climate. We can't ask people to give us their phone or wallet when they go out for a cigarette. The vast majority of our customers are great and would think that is weird," said Spinola. A waitress who served the couple described them as energetic and noted that the woman was intoxicated. She said, "He was with a blonde woman who had heavy red lipstick and wore a white top under a white dress... We were keeping a close eye on them especially when it came to serving them drinks." Co-owner Enocely Fernandez criticised the couple for brazenly boasting about their free meal on Facebook, calling their actions "silly." Since the incident, other local eateries have come forward claiming similar experiences with the pair. The couple is also suspected of a dine-and-dash incident at the Urban Garden restaurant in Bournemouth, where they allegedly ordered £170 worth of food and drink.

A British couple has been accused of leaving a restaurant without paying a £120 bill (approximately Rs 12,000) after enjoying a lavish meal and posting photos of it on Facebook. A British couple is accused of dining and dashing at a local restaurant, racking up a £120 tab (approximately Rs 12,000) before fleeing and posting photos of their meal on Facebook, the Mirror reported.

The pair allegedly enjoyed gourmet burgers, halloumi fries, and cocktails at the Lazy Fox restaurant in Westbourne on August 5, before stepping outside on the

Drone attack in Syria leads to injuries among US, coalition troops: Report

GNS News Agency, August 13

Several US and coalition personnel were wounded in a drone attack on Friday in Syria, a US official told Reuters, in the second major attack in recent days against US forces amid soaring tensions in the Middle East. The US military initially assessed no casualties in the drone attack, but a more in-depth review found that some personnel had minor injuries including smoke inhalation and moved some to a different location. The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity on Saturday, said none of the injuries were serious but some personnel were also being examined for traumatic brain injuries. Several troops were moved to a different location for further evaluation, the official added. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, the official said, but similar attacks in the past have been carried out by Iran-backed groups.

The injuries from the drone attack followed a rocket strike by suspected Iran-backed militia on Monday that wounded five US personnel at Ain al-Asad airbase in western Iraq on Monday. News of the latest injuries came as the Middle East region braces for a possible new wave of attacks by Iran and its allies. Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Iran-backed Hamas, was killed in the Iranian capital Tehran on July 31, an attack that drew threats of revenge by Iran against Israel, which is fighting the Palestinian Islamist group in Gaza. Iran blamed Israel for the killing. Israel has not claimed responsibility. The assassination and the killing of the senior military commander of the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, Fuad Shukur, by Israel in a strike on Beirut, have fueled concern the conflict in Gaza was turning into a wider Middle East war. Iran has said the US bears responsibility in the assassination of Haniyeh because of its support for Israel. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has said the United States would not tolerate attacks on US personnel but Washington was also trying to de-escalate tensions in the region. Friday's attack took place at Rumayn Landing Zone, which hosts US troops along with those from the US led coalition. The US has 900 troops in Syria and 2,500 in neighbouring Iraq, who it says are on a mission to advise and assist local forces trying to prevent a resurgence of Islamic State, which in 2014 seized large swaths of both countries but was later pushed back.



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Bangladeshis vow to protect 'Bengali identity' amid attack on Hindus

GNS News Agency, August 13

As Bangladesh tries to limp back to normalcy following weeks of deadly protests that saw the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as Prime Minister, locals in Dhaka disapproved of the attacks and looting of houses belonging to Hindus and temples. They claimed those involved in such attacks did not belong to their community.

Speaking to India Today TV, the locals said Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamic party, wants to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh and stated that the Bengali identity will not be allowed to be tarnished. "Whatever happened in the past few days was not good. Those who attacked Hindus and temples were not our people. The Jamaat wants Islamic rule, but the identity of Bengali-speaking Bangladesh will not change," a local said. "We believe in Islam and we want it to be kept in the forefront. But here, Hindus and Muslims are brothers and everyone will live together," the local said. Another local said he was disappointed with the way Sheikh Hasina handled the students' protests that began over a controversial job quota system but later became an anti-government movement. "Sheikh Hasina did the wrong thing. She should have engaged more with the students. She is also from this country. Dialogue, not repression, was needed," he said. Amid student protests, violence erupted on August 5 after Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to



neighbouring India, where she is currently staying. During the violence, houses and businesses belonging to Hindus and temples were vandalised, looted and set ablaze. On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, who took charge as the chief adviser of the interim government, to ensure the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in the crisis-hit country. On Saturday, thousands of Hindus staged protests in Dhaka and Chattogram, demanding protection and justice after a series of attacks on their temples, homes, and businesses. Yunus condemned the attacks on minorities, labelling them as "heinous", and reiterated that restoring law and order remains the top priority.



League party. A letter by Hollen and five other congressional Democrats was sent to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, urging sanctions on those officials. The State Department said it did not preview sanction-related actions. "I welcome the swearing in of Dr. Muhammad Yunus to lead the interim government in Bangladesh. The United States supports his call for calm and peace," Blinken said separately on social media. Human rights groups had accused Hasina of using excessive force against protesters, a charge she denied. Since her departure, the student protests have widened to demand the exit of more officials appointed from her time in office. Hasina went to New Delhi after leaving Bangladesh, ending her uninterrupted rule of 15 years in the nation of 170 million people. Hasina's fall triggered both jubilation and violence.

Top officials forced out of office, Hindus protest attacks



GNS News Agency, August 13

Bangladesh continues to grapple with widespread unrest as student protests force key officials to resign and minority communities, including Hindus, demand protection in the face of targeted violence. Members of the Bangladeshi Hindu community hold banners and chant slogans against violence targeting the country's minorities during a protest in Dhaka. Bangladesh remains in a state of turmoil as student-led protests forced key officials to resign, including the country's Chief Justice and central bank governor. The unrest has also sparked massive demonstrations by the minority Hindu community, who have become targets in the ongoing violence.

On Saturday, thousands of Hindus staged protests in Dhaka and Chattogram, demanding protection and justice after a series of attacks on their temples, homes, and businesses. Interim leader Muhammad Yunus condemned the attacks on minorities, labelling them as "heinous", and reiterated that restoring law and order remains the top priority. Here are the top developments in the Bangladesh crisis: The law and order situation in Bangladesh remains precarious, with several Hindu temples, households, and businesses vandalised and at least two Hindu leaders killed since Sheikh Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and fled to India.

Members of the Hindu community, facing attacks, have taken to the streets demanding the creation of special tribunals to expedite trials of those who persecute minorities. They also sought the allocation of 10 per cent of parliamentary seats for minorities and the enactment of a minority protection law. Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor to the newly formed caretaker government, condemned the attacks on minority communities and urged the youth to protect them. "You have been able to save the country; can't you save some families?... They are my brothers; we fought together, and we will stay together," he stated.

The political crisis has forced several top officials out of office. Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, appointed last year and seen as a Hasina loyalist, was compelled to resign on Saturday after students surrounded the Supreme Court in Dhaka and threatened "dire consequences." Bangladesh Bank governor Abdur Rouf Talukder also resigned amid the upheaval, although his resignation has not yet been accepted. ASM Maksud Kamal, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, where the student protests initially burgeoned, stepped down from his post, reported Reuters. In response to the crackdown that left at least 300 people dead, US lawmakers have called for sanctions against key figures in Hasina's government. Senator Chris Van Hollen and five other congressional Democrats have urged the Biden administration to impose sanctions on former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader. Home Affairs Advisor Brig Gen (ret) M Sakhawat Hossain expressed optimism that law and order would be restored within the next three to four days. "Some initiatives have already been taken, but the police have not yet been able to fully mobilise," he said. The ongoing unrest has seen many police officers targeted and killed by vengeful mobs. "It is completely illegal. If any officers are found to have acted improperly, it will be tried through investigations," Hossain said.

Ukraine military ops in Russia's Kursk region is 'to restore justice': Zelenskyy

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged for the first time on Saturday that Ukrainian forces were fighting in Russia's Kursk region and said the operation was part of Kyiv's drive to restore justice after Russia's 2022 invasion. Russia said Ukrainian forces pushed into Kursk region last Tuesday and Russian military bloggers have acknowledged they made some headway, while saying the situation had since stabilised.

Zelenskyy had previously stayed silent about the operation. In his nightly video address, the president said he had discussed the operation with top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskiy, while not forgetting the battles troops face on the difficult eastern front. "Today, I received several reports from commander-in-chief Syrskiy regarding the front lines and our actions to push the war onto the aggressor's territory," he said. "I am grateful to every unit of the defence forces for ensuring that. Ukraine is proving that it can indeed restore justice and ensure the necessary pressure on the aggressor." Zelenskyy had previously alluded to the operation, praising the military's ability "to surprise" and thanking them for taking Russian



soldiers prisoner to be used in future negotiations, specifically referring to the past week. In paying tribute to Ukrainian forces along the 1,000-kilometre front line, Zelenskyy made special mention of actions in northern Sumy region, across the border from Russia's Kursk region. Russia has stepped up its attacks of guided bombs and other aerial strikes in Sumy, prompting mass evacuations.

Celine Dion slams 'unauthorised use' of Titanic song in Trump rally

GNS News Agency, August 13

The Republican presidential candidate has been lampooned on social media after playing the 1997 track "My Heart Will Go On" at a rally in the US state of Montana on Friday, as a video of Dion performing the song was shown on a big screen. Celine Dion took a jab at Donald Trump on Saturday for using at an election rally the song she wrote and sang for the disaster movie "Titanic," about the ocean liner's sinking.

The Republican presidential candidate has been lampooned on social media after playing the 1997 track "My Heart Will Go On" at a rally in the US state of Montana on Friday, as a video of Dion performing the song was shown on a big screen. Dion's management team and her record label, Sony Music Entertainment Canada, said in a statement on X the use of the song and video was "in no way" authorized. Today, Celine Dion's management team and her record label, Sony Music Entertainment Canada Inc., became aware of the unauthorized usage of the video, recording, musical performance, and likeness of Celine Dion singing "My Heart Will Go On" at a Donald Trump / JD Vance campaign. Users on social media have made analogies between Trump's campaign and the sinking ship at the heart of the James Cameron film. Trump has appeared on the back foot since Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden in the US election race for the White House. The former president appeared on track to win back the White



House before Biden dropped out of the race on July 21, but Harris has made big gains since replacing Biden at the top of the ticket and announcing Tim Walz, Minnesota's governor, as her running mate.

"My Heart Will Go On" was released on Dion's album "Let's Talk About Love" and the soundtrack to Cameron's film "Titanic." It became one of the biggest songs of all time, selling 18 million copies and earning Dion an Oscar, a Golden Globe and several Grammys. Dion, 56, was forced to cancel a string of shows in 2023 and 2024, saying she was not strong enough to tour after being diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder. But she delighted fans last month by singing from the Eiffel Tower at the opening of the Olympics in Paris.

US veteran pawns jewellery for sick wife's care, gets surprise from TikToker

GNS News Agency, August 13

A TikToker user raised \$320,000 for a 90-year-old air force veteran in the US who was selling off his jewellery to take care of his wife suffering from dementia. Her noble act left the nonagenarian pleasantly surprised. In a heartwarming display of kindness and generosity, a TikToker has raised over \$320,000 (approx Rs 2.68 crore) for a 90-year-old air force veteran struggling to take care of his wife battling dementia. The veteran, Donald, was filmed at a pawn shop in New Hampshire's Manchester in the US, where he was trying to sell his cherished jewellery to cover his wife's escalating medical bills. The video, which went viral, showed Donald's desperation and the sacrifices he was making to ensure his wife received the care she needed. Moved by his story, TikToker user, Jenelle Marie, decided to help the air force veteran, The New York Post reported. She created a GoFundMe page to raise money for Donald and his wife, hoping to alleviate some of the financial burden they were facing. The campaign quickly gained momentum, with thousands of people donating to support the couple. The GoFundMe

page hit a staggering \$320,000. Jenelle Marie met Donald at the pawn shop, where she learned about the couple's struggles. They had no children and no immediate family to rely on, making their situation even more dire. Donald's landlord had recently raised the rent, adding to their financial woes. Moved by their story, Jenelle Marie initially gave Donald an envelope containing \$1,200 (around Rs 1 lakh) she had raised. Donald was initially hesitant to accept the money but was overcome with gratitude when he finally did. On seeing the envelope full of cash, an emotional Donald said, "I could kiss you. Oh my goodness." Jenelle Marie responded, saying, "I know you're struggling. I know you're trying to take care of your wife. I appreciate your (military) service." The outpouring of support was not limited to financial donations as many people were inspired by Donald's love and dedication to his wife, and the kindness shown by Jenelle Marie. Donald retained the jewellery after receiving \$1,200 from Jenelle Marie and paid off a debt of \$80 (Rs 6,716) to his landlord, according to The New York Post. Praising Jenelle Marie for her kind gesture, the nonagenarian said,

Finance Minister to banks: Innovate, focus on small deposits to plug gap with credit growth



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, credit growth, small deposits, low deposit growth rate, Reserve Bank of India, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, RBI Central Board of Directors, structural liquidity management issue, Indian express FM Nirmala Sitharaman addressed RBI Central Board in the presence of Governor Shaktikanta Das need to take the old-fashioned route to bring back focus on mobilising "small deposits" and not just big deposits in order to reverse the flagging deposit growth rate, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Saturday.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das echoed the same, stating that it is an "advance cautioning to the banks" so that the trend of low deposit growth rate does not go unattended and result in "structural liquidity management issue". Sitharaman, after addressing the Central Board of Directors of the RBI at the customary post-Budget meet, said the bread and butter of banks lies in mobilisation of small deposits, and huge bank deposits have always been a lazy banker's job. "It's right that credit is going through digital format and collection of deposits is not. Huge big deposits have always been a very lazy banker's job but the trickles which come are going to be the bread and butter money to lend regularly. So that trickle (small deposit mobilisation) was the emphasis a long, long time ago...the requisite small deposits, that's also one of the very critical jobs of the bank. It might be grinding monotony but that's where your bread and butter lies," she said.

The Finance Minister further said that at present, even those families who have small savings, they also have got new options to invest even if via stock markets and banks have to compete with those options to attract deposits. "More portfolios are available for more returns

on money, that's why retail investment in markets has gone up. When they have so many options, banks also have to make use of innovative portfolios for attracting investment and deposit mobilisation," she said. Sitharaman said she would be meeting banks to discuss the priority sector lending areas, some government schemes, as well as the importance for them to revert to deposits collection in the old fashioned way. She is likely to hold a meeting with heads of public sector banks on August 19. RBI Governor Das said rates, both on credit and deposit sides, are deregulated and it can be "very retrograde and distortive going back on economic reforms". Das said there is always some mismatch between deposit and credit growth but it's a proactive caution to banks to arrest the slide in deposits. "Two questions arise: what is the gap in the growth rate between deposits and loans. Second thing is how persistent it is and how long it is going on. In our case, we have been witnessing a 300-400 basis points gap between deposits and credit growth, deposits are lower, it has been observed in the last few months...going forward this may create structural issues with regard to liquidity management. As it stands today, we don't see a crisis or anything but it has to be attended to and dealt with by the individual banks. If it goes on like this unattended, it can lead to a potential structural liquidity management issue. So it's an advance cautioning to the banks," he said. On Thursday during the monetary policy review address, Das had expressed worries over banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) not following regulatory norms while offering top-up loans on other collateralised loans such as home and gold loans and the need for lenders to garner deposits amid concerns over a shift in household savings from banks to alternative investment avenues.

Garment sector facing uncertainty, normalcy may return soon: Sitharaman

The Indian garment and knitted fabric sector is seeing a "bit of uncertainty" amid the ongoing political developments in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. "I have held discussions on our textile garment investments in Bangladesh, many of which are from Tamil Nadu. The investments went there in good faith and they did well having gone there; exports from Bangladesh did also increase. The garment and knitted fabric sector is currently seeing a bit of uncertainty," she said at the media briefing held after the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

She expressed hope that the interim government there will settle things "sooner rather than later", adding that efforts are being taken to ensure that borders with the neighbouring country are safe.

She said the textile industry particularly from Tamil Nadu has made investments there in good faith. "The exports from Bangladesh also increased because of the duty and quota liberal approach that we have towards low-income countries. They (Indian garment industry based in Bangladesh) could even export to India." The garment and knitted fabric sector is seeing a bit of uncertainty because of the political upheaval in the neighbouring country. "I hope that the investments are all safe... it's too early for me to see what kind of an impact this situation in Bangladesh will have on our economy. I hope that the interim government will settle things sooner rather than later so that both the people of Bangladesh



and India can get back to normalcy," she said.

Earlier this week, political turmoil happened in Bangladesh when Sheikh Hasina resigned as the Prime Minister and fled the country. Soon after Parliament was dissolved leading to the creation of an interim government. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath on Thursday as the head of the interim government. Ready-made garments represent more than 85 per cent of Bangladesh's merchandise exports and over 70 per cent of its total exports. In trade terms, Bangladesh is India's biggest partner in the subcontinent, and India is Bangladesh's second biggest partner in Asia after China. Their total bilateral trade amounted to \$13 billion in the financial year 2023-24, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Sebi chief Madhabi Buch had stake in Adani offshore entities, hence didn't act: new Hindenburg report; She says 'baseless', 'our finances an open book'

IN WHAT RAISES questions of conflict of interest related to the market regulator, the US-based Hindenburg Research on Saturday alleged that "it suspects SEBI's unwillingness to take meaningful action against suspect offshore shareholders in the Adani Group may stem from SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch's complicity in using the exact same funds used by Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani." Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch said in a statement that they strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report". "The same are devoid of any truth. Our life and finances are an open book," they said in a joint statement. In an exchange filing, the Adani Group said: "The latest allegations by Hindenburg are malicious, mischievous and manipulative selections of publicly available information to arrive at pre-determined conclusions for personal profiteering with wanton disregard for facts and the law. We completely reject these allegations against the Adani Group which are a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in January 2024." This report by Hindenburg Research comes almost 18 months after it had first kicked up a political storm in January 2023, al-

leging the Adani Group of "brazen stock market manipulation" and "accounting fraud". The port-to-energy conglomerate had denied all these allegations; the Supreme Court had rejected the demand for a CBI or court-monitored probe. Continuing with the saga and quoting "whistleblower documents", Hindenburg Research has now claimed that the Sebi chairperson "had stake in obscure offshore entities used in the Adani money siphoning scandal." To date, SEBI has taken no action against other suspect Adani shareholders operated by India Infoline: EM Resurgent Fund and Emerging India Focus Funds, it alleged. While Congress said the Hindenburg revelations only reinforced its demand for setting up a "joint parliamentary committee to investigate the full scope of the Adani mega scam", the Trinamool Congress said the Sebi chairperson must resign. "This raises fresh questions about Gautam Adani's two 2022 meetings in quick succession with Ms Buch shortly after she became SEBI chairperson. Recall that SEBI was supposedly investigating Adani transactions at the time," Congress's Jairam Ramesh said. "Sebi Chairman should be suspended in no time pending Supreme Court monitored investigation and look out notices to be issued to all airports and interpol from preventing her and the husband to leave the country,

Curious kids: Why do I need to yawn when someone else yawns?

Yawning happens when you open your mouth, take a deep breath and take in air without even thinking about it. You might be tired, bored or waking up. Most people yawn six to 23 times a day – even animals yawn! You may have noticed that you often yawn after you see someone else yawn. This is called "contagious yawning".

Contagious yawning feels automatic, like a reflex you don't have to think about. But scientists know it's not completely automatic because we are not born knowing how to do it. In fact, contagious yawning only starts around ages four or five, which is when kids begin to develop better empathy. Empathy means understanding and sharing the feelings of others. So, without even thinking about it, seeing someone yawn can make you want to yawn, too.

How do scientists know this?

Scientists have noticed that people yawn more when the other person they see yawn is someone they know well – like a best friend or a parent.

This supports the idea that empathy plays a big role in contagious yawning. When you see a friend or family member yawn, your brain understands their feelings, and you might yawn, too. Contagious yawning can also help strengthen social connections and coordination within a group. In other words, it's one way our brains help us connect with others. In fact, some animals like dogs and chimpanzees also experience contagious yawning. When a chimpanzee sees another chimpanzee yawn, it often yawns, too. Like for us humans, this helps them build social connections with each other. Scientists found that both in humans and in animals like chimpanzees and bonobos, contagious yawning is more common among those who share a strong bond. This means you're more likely to catch a yawn from your best friend or family member than from a stranger.



As people get older, they become better at understanding others' feelings, and they yawn more when they see others yawn. However, this ability to catch yawns might decrease in very old age. This is seen in both humans and chimpanzees. Humans can have a contagious yawn from many different types of animals – not just their pets that they love and know well. This shows that yawning helps us connect and understand each other, whether it's with another person or an animal.

What happens in the brain when we catch yawns?

Your brain has special cells called mirror neurons. These neurons activate when you see someone do something, and they make you feel like doing the same thing – for example, yawning. It's like your brain is mirroring what the other person is doing. So, the next time you see someone yawn and feel the urge to yawn too, you'll know it's your brain's way of building a connection with your friends, family and even pets.

Want to decrease your daily caffeine intake? Try this lemon balm tea as an alternative

While coffee can be a great stimulant for boosting your energy in the morning, it isn't always the healthiest option. Even if you aren't the buzziest bee on social media, you must be aware that there are plenty of alternatives for caffeine to elevate your energy levels. We recommend this dietician-approved lemon balm tea to replace your caffeine temptations. For this simple lemon balm tea, all you'll need to do, is steep 1-2 tsp dried lemon balm leaves in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Next, add lemon or honey to taste.

Why lemons, though?

Well, lemons are "high in water content", says Kannika Malhotra, Dietician, and Diabetes educator, which can help combat dehydration, a common cause of fatigue. They're also rich in antioxidants which support overall health, including immune function, which can indirectly affect energy levels. Caffeine primarily "stimulates the nervous system", leading to a quick but temporary energy surge. In contrast, morning tonics like lemon balm teas, particularly those containing "adaptogens", influence the body's hormonal response to stress, promoting a more balanced energy output. Additionally, many herbs support overall health and well-being, which can indirectly contribute to sustained energy levels.

What are the drawbacks of drinking coffee every day?

Just 8 minutes of TikTok 'thinspiration' content is enough to affect body image

Nearly half of Australian young people are dissatisfied with the way their body looks. Social media have only made body image issues worse for young people, leading them to compare themselves with others and strive for often unattainable – and unhealthy – beauty standards. TikTok, which allows people to create and consume short videos, has amassed more than 1 billion users. Harmful content, including videos that glamorise disordered eating and extremely thin bodies, circulate readily on the platform.

Given most TikTok users are young, we wanted to explore how such content affects young women's body image. Our new study found watching just eight minutes of TikTok content focused on dieting, weight loss and exercise had an immediate negative effect on body image satisfaction. Body image and beauty standards We recruited 273 female-identifying TikTok users aged 18 to 28 and randomly allocated them into two groups. People with a past or current eating disorder diagnosis were excluded from the study.

Participants in the experimental group were shown a 7-8 minute compilation of "pro-anorexia" and "fitspiration" content taken directly from TikTok. These video clips featured young women restricting their food intake and giving workout advice and dieting tips, such as describing their juice cleanses for weight loss. Participants in the control group watched a 7-8 minute compilation of TikTok videos featuring "neutral" content such as videos of nature, cooking and animals.

Using a series of questionnaires, we measured levels of body image satisfaction and attitudes towards beauty standards before and after participants watched the TikTok content. Both groups reported a decrease in body image satisfaction from before to after watching the videos. But those exposed to pro-anorexia content had the greatest decrease in body image satisfaction. They also experienced an increase in internalisation of beauty standards. Internalisation occurs when someone accepts and identifies with external beauty standards. Exposure to harmful social media content doesn't always result in harm – it's when this content is internalised that body image is likely to suffer.

Before the video experiment, we asked participants some general questions about their TikTok use. We also measured preoccupation with "healthy" eating and symptoms of disordered eating. We found participants who used TikTok for more than two hours a day reported more disordered eating behaviours than less frequent users. However, this difference was not statistically significant. This means the difference between groups did not meet the threshold required for us to conclude it was unlikely to be due to chance.

On a scale used to rate eating disorder symptoms,



"Increased risk of heart disease", says Kannika, "high blood pressure" and "anxiety" when consumed in excess, are the resulting factors. Disrupted sleep patterns, dependency and withdrawal symptoms can also arise. Moreover, increased risk of "osteoporosis" is an additional by product which can occur. Many herbs in these tonics also work synergistically to provide a sustained energy release, promoting alertness and focus without the jitters often associated with caffeine.

participants who reported high (2-3 hours a day) and extreme (more than 3 hours a day) rates of TikTok use averaged scores just below the cut-off for clinically significant eating disorder symptoms. This suggests more than two hours a day of exposure to TikTok content may be linked to disordered eating, but further research is needed to explore this. Body everyday users can circulate dangerous diet-related videos without the backlash a celebrity or well-known influencer might receive for sharing socially irresponsible content.

The content we showed participants in the experimental group is widely circulated on TikTok, not just within "pro-ana" communities. "Clean" eating, detoxing and limited-ingredient diet trends are the wolf in lamb's clothing of disordered eating, allowing diet culture to be rebranded as "wellness" and "self-care". This content, alongside fitspiration, often rewards and gamifies excessive exercise and disordered eating. Social media wellness influencers play an important role in normalising disordered eating and fitspiration content. But hashtags like #GymTok and #FoodTok allow any TikTok user to create and consume content around theirs and others' daily eating routines, weight-loss transformations and workout routines. What's more, everyday users can circulate dangerous diet-related videos without the backlash a celebrity or well-known influencer might receive for sharing socially irresponsible content.

Our study only looked at short-term consequences of exposure to this sort of content on TikTok. Longitudinal research is needed to see if the negative effects we observed endure over time. It remains difficult to censor TikTok users have limited control over the content they're exposed to. Because they spend much of their time on a personalised "For You" page formulated by an algorithm, a user doesn't need to search for or follow disordered eating content to be exposed to it. In our study, 64 percent of participants reported seeing disordered eating content on their For You page.

Examples could include videos portraying binge eating, laxative use or excessive exercise. Paradoxically, searching for body positivity content may make users vulnerable to seeing disordered eating content. The most important thing TikTok users can do is to be aware that following or searching for any kind of content related to food, body or exercise may lead to inadvertent exposure to distorted body ideals. Limiting time on TikTok will limit exposure, but our findings show even less than ten minutes can have a negative effect. Ultimately, online safety for young people depends on appropriate social media regulation. Without this, upskilling young women on how to avoid harm on social media is a bit like giving them an inflatable life jacket, then leaving them to swim indefinitely against a rip.

Video of Shah Rukh Khan pushing an old man on the red carpet of Locarno Film Festival goes viral, netizens say, 'Old friends'



GNS News Agency, August 13 Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has added a new feather in his cap. On Saturday, SRK became the first Indian to receive the prestigious Pardo alla Carriera award at the Locarno Film Festival. The actor's acceptance speech and dapper appearance were the talk of the town. However, a brief red-carpet

moment has ignited a social media storm. A video clip surfaced on X (formerly Twitter) showing Shah Rukh apparently "pushing" a person to clear space for a solo photo. Netizens quickly condemned the actor's behaviour, labeling it as "arrogant" and "rude". One tweet read, "He pushed that old man!!! Shame on you, Shah Rukh Khan," while others accused him of arrogance and rudeness. Some fans said King Khan was in a fun mood and he didn't seriously push the man in question. After the video was widely shared on social media, fans rushed to the actor's defence, claiming the man in question was a long-time friend and the interaction was playful. Undeterred by the controversy, Shah Rukh's charm was undeniable. His acceptance speech, filled with wit and warmth, left the audience spellbound. Dressed to impress in a sleek black ensemble, the actor was the epitome of style. On the work front, Shah Rukh Khan will be seen next in the Sujoy Ghosh directorial King. The movie will also star SRK's daughter Suhana Khan in a pivotal role.

Abdu Rozik to join Salman Khan on Bigg Boss 18: 'Thrilled to be back in a new role'

As the new season of Bigg Boss is all set to return, the buzz around Salman Khan's reality show has only been getting stronger. Indianexpress.com reported last week that Bigg Boss 18 would premiere on October 5 on Colors TV. While the house is being readied for the new season, a tentative list of contestants has also caught the attention of the audience. Now, a new development on the Bigg Boss 18 front is that Salman Khan will have Abdu Rozik join him as a co-host this season. The Tajikistan-based singer confirmed this news while talking to Times Of India.

Abdu Rozik had appeared on the reality show as a contestant on Bigg Boss 16 and now as he returns to Bigg Boss 18, the singer is very excited about his new role. Abdu told TOI that he will be seen hosting some special segments on the show, and is thrilled to be back. Recalling his time on Bigg Boss 16, Abdu said it was a beautiful time, but now he is excited to bring his 'energy and passion' to these special segments. Planning to give his best to this opportunity, Abdu also shared that he is working on his language and vocal skills.

While Abdu is excited to show the audience what he has in store for them, this new responsibility feels like 'coming home' for Abdu. Revealing that this season will be full of excitement, Abdu shared that is looking forward to the 'surprises and engaging moments' that have been



planned for the latest season. Earlier this year, Abdu Rozik had announced that he will tie the knot on July 7. However, his wedding was later postponed. Abdu had jokingly shared that he wanted to earn more money for his wife which is why he decided to push the wedding. As for the Bigg Boss 18 contestants, the tentative list features names like Splitsvilla 15 finalists Digvijay Singh Rathee and Kashish Kapoor, Surbhi Jyoti, Arjun Bijlani, Karan Patel, Sameera Reddy, Pooja Sharma, Shoaib Ibrahim, Dallijet Kaur, Abhishek Malhan, Mr. Faisu, Deepika Arya, Dolly Chaiwala, Maxtern, Thugesh. Bigg Boss OTT 3 contestants Vishal Pandey, Adnaan Shaikh, Kritika Malik, and Shivani Kumari have also been reportedly approached for the show.

Karan Johar recalls getting schooled by Shabana Azmi for getting gender politics wrong in Kuch Kuch Hota Hai: 'I feel cringy'



GNS News Agency, August 13

Karan Johar has frequently acknowledged his missteps in portraying gender politics in his iconic film Kuch Kuch Hota Hai. In a recent conversation with comedian Zakir Khan on his show Aapka Apna Zakir Khan, the filmmaker recalled how veteran actor Shabana Azmi had schooled him on the flawed gender dynamics in his debut film. Karan also shared that he had apologised to her for those shortcomings. He said, "I don't like any of my films, I find a lot of mistakes in my films. I feel cringy while watching Kuch Kuch Hota Hai now. I feel, 'What have I made?' Kuch Kuch Hota Hai has a lot of mistakes. From where do I start? I remember Shabana ji had called me

and asked me, 'What is the gender politics of this film? When Kajol's character had short hair, Shah Rukh Khan's character didn't fall in love with her but when she grew her hair long and she became beautiful, he fell in love with her. What do you have to say on this?' I responded. 'I will want to say I am sorry. I didn't know.'

Earlier, at an IIMUN event, Karan Johar criticised Kuch Kuch Hota Hai and said that it "propagated wrong gender politics". He said, "I feel like I have grown as an individual. The first film that I made, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, I firmly believe that the gender politics of that film was all wrong. It is propagating incorrect gender politics, there is a lot of surface-ness in that film. Of course, there is nostalgia so you love it, but you don't scratch the surface of the film and see that what Rahul is doing is actually not what I would want all the Rahuls in the audience, or all the boys in general, to do." Kuch Kuch Hota Hai centers around a love triangle between college students Anjali (Kajol), Tina (Rani Mukerji), and Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan). Anjali, initially portrayed as a tomboy, secretly falls in love with her best friend, Rahul. However, Rahul falls for Tina, a new student who is both beautiful and charming. After Tina's untimely death, years later, Rahul reconnects with Anjali, who has since embraced her femininity. This time, Rahul realizes his love for Anjali, leading to their marriage.

Keerthy Suresh on Baby John: 'Samantha Ruth Prabhu effortlessly played a really beautiful role in the original'



National Award-winning actor Keerthy Suresh is currently busy with the promotions of her upcoming Tamil film, Raghu Thatha, which marks The Family Man writer Suman

Kumar's directorial debut. In an interaction with Galatta Plus, Keerthy opened up about her big Bollywood debut with Baby John. A remake of Theri, the maiden collaboration be-

tween Vijay and director Atlee, Baby John stars Varun Dhawan in the lead role, and is directed by Kalees. Keerthy, who steps into the shoes of Samantha Ruth Prabhu from the original, spoke about the

changes that have been made in Baby John. "Samantha's character in Theri is very beautiful, and she played it so effortlessly. It is generally scary to do a remake, but for Baby John, I am not scared because the character itself has been done beautifully. It has been pictured very well, and the role has come out very well too," said Keerthy, who went on to talk about the changes in Baby John. "Well, the story, and everything about it is actually the same. But the remake is releasing eight years after the original. So changes to accommodate the time and space have been made. Also, what really worked in Tamil doesn't necessarily have to work in Hindi. So, those kinds of changes have been made too."

Akshay Kumar reveals he took action sequence references from Tom and Jerry cartoon: 'It's unbelievable to see the kind of action they have'



Actor Akshay Kumar has had a series of flops off-late, with films like Mission Raniganj, Bade Miyan Chote Miyan and Sarfira failing to strike gold at the box office. While he is going through a rough patch, his spirit to entertain doesn't seem to fade. Akshay, who is gearing up to once again showcase his comedy chops in Khel Khel Mein which releases on August 15, is also celebrated as an action star in Bollywood. During a recent interview, Akshay revealed how the cartoon Tom and Jerry has given him major action references.

During an interview with Pinkvilla, when his Khel Khel Mein co-star Fardeen Khan mentioned how Tom and Jerry has been one of his all-time favorite comedies, Akshay Kumar corrected the Heeramandi actor and said that more than comedy, the content in the cartoon quali-

fies as violence. Akshay also revealed that he took many action scene references from Tom and Jerry.

"Tom and Jerry is not comedy, it's violence. Today I will tell you one secret. So many action scenes I have done, a lot of times I have taken it from Tom and Jerry. That whole helicopter scene, I took it from Tom and Jerry. Another idea I took was from National Geographic, but with Tom and Jerry, it is unbelievable to see the kind of action they have," Akshay said. During the interview, Akshay Kumar also shared that whenever he is stressed he watches Charlie Chaplin or the sitcom Friends. He even spoke about his film Garam Masala saying it was the toughest comedy film for him to do. When asked about the sequels of his iconic comedies Hera Pheri and Garam Masala, Akshay said he is hopeful that they do get made someday.

When Priyanka Chopra said she and Sunny Deol stayed 'reserved' during The Hero shoot: 'We sat in different corners'



Priyanka Chopra began her acting career alongside Vijay in the Tamil film Thamizhan. Her second movie, The Hero: Love Story of a Spy, featuring Sunny Deol in the lead role, marked her Hindi film debut. Recently, an old video of the actor resurfaced on the internet, where she discussed her

experience working with the Gadar star and how the two maintained a reserved demeanour during the shoot.

"I was excited to work with Sunny Deol. He is a senior actor and I respect him a lot as an actor," Priyanka said in the interview. She elaborated on

how she and Sunny kept their distance while shooting the film. "I was very reserved from Sunny. We would sit in different corners. We would just 'Hello' and 'Hi' and that's all. Even when I would talk to him, I would look down and look up and look down while speaking to him. But once

we got comfortable with each other, then it was all good," she said.

The Hero: Love Story of a Spy didn't fare well at the box office and received harsh criticism. However, Priyanka's second film Andaaz with Akshay Kumar gained acclaim and made her an overnight sensation. The film was also a box office success. Following her successful stint in Hindi films, Priyanka Chopra transitioned to Hollywood, where she starred in the American TV show Quantico in 2015. Since then, she has appeared in Hollywood films such as Baywatch, Matrix: Revolutions, Love Again, Citadel, and more. Priyanka recently wrapped up filming her upcoming Hollywood project, The Bluff. She also has Head of State in the pipeline, which also stars John Cena and Idris Elba.

John Abraham says he doesn't charge above his 'aukaat'; reveals producers ignore his messages: 'They don't have faith in me'

John Abraham has been a prominent figure in the Hindi film industry for over two decades, yet the actor still feels that producers lack confidence in him and his filmmaking process. In a recent interaction, John shared his ongoing struggle to convince production studio heads to support his movies, revealing that they often overlook his messages. In an interaction with Ranveer Allahbadia, he said, "I produced Vicky Donor. I did films like Madras Cafe, Batla House – but till today I have to convince studio heads that this is a different film and please fund my process. Till today they don't have 100 per cent faith and they tell me that budget is too much."

The actor also talked about his fees and how he doesn't charge over his 'aukaat'. He said, "As an actor, my fee doesn't put a load on the film. I feel if the film makes money, I will make money. I don't want to load the film. Toh meri jo aukaat hai, jo mera standard hai, I make films according to that. I am very proud of my content," he explained. Further delving into his challenges, John Abraham revealed that studio heads often don't respond to him, especially because he doesn't use WhatsApp. He said, "First, I don't have Whatsapp so if I send an SMS to people, they don't respond to me. I don't get a reply for very long. I had texted a studio head and he told me that he will circle back but it has 4.5 months and he hasn't responded. I don't feel bad but I deserve one reply. I believe that if people believe me a little, I would want to try and change Indian cinema a little. I am not saying I am a game changer but I want to try." John also spoke about his upcoming projects and his deep interest in geopolitics. He said, "I want to make entertaining films and something in geo politics because I am interested in that. My upcoming films like Tehran and Diplomat, these are outstanding films. I want to package them in an interesting way and show it to the audience." He revealed that Diplo-



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mat is based on the life of Indian diplomat JP Singh, with John playing the titular role. Currently, John Abraham is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film Vedaa, which also stars Sharvati in the lead role. Directed by Nikkhil Advani, the movie tackles the subject of caste discrimination and is set to hit theatres on August 15.

Why was Prakash Padukone justified in his blunt assessment of Lakshya Sen's medal miss?



GNS News Agency, August 13

There are many ways to interpret Prakash Padukone's blunt assessment of the performance of Indian athletes, though his focus was on badminton returning with no medals. Mercifully, the one man who this was meant for, later stated he was "determined to reflect on what went wrong and where I need to improve." Lakshya Sen knew the bronze was there for the taking, and he couldn't nail it down. He is self-aware and not particularly foolish to not know it was an opportunity badly missed.

Shuttlers – the very old and the young elite alike – really aren't too fond of theatrics and public meltdowns, be it when they split with coaches or when coaches honestly lay out the facts, post failures. You will not get a "you are still a winner" platitude from Padukone, Vimal Kumar or Pullela Gopichand, because their time and mindspace is heavily and obsessively invested in getting the shuttlers to win internationally, planning, plotting and scything through severely difficult playing fields. They neither mince words, nor sugarcoat what needs to be done to dust up from defeats and start the grind again. It's why India had three medals from three Olympics and 10 straight World Championship medals every single edition since 2011. Missing a medal in the 2024 Olympics, despite receiving the highest financial and coaching support, will sting at least till the next Olympic medal is secured. Satwik-Chirag and Lakshya Sen are bona-fide successes on the international circuit and will carry forward their ambitions, and the likes of Priyanshu Rajawat and Treasa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand will need to step up, and deliver in the next Olympic cycle. But Padukone's disappointment and urgency in hauling up Sen, soon after his bronze playoff loss, needs to be understood in the context of a larger reality. The men's singles circuit is terribly competitive and will remain extremely tough to crack even in coming years. HS Prannoy was the only Indian singles male to win a Super 500 level title in the last two years, Sen was tending to myriad injuries and not in form for most part. His defensive game style is dazzlingly gritty, but so bruising and brutal on his body, that he cannot be expected to be a year-round workhorse aiming for every title. One nasty back / shoulder injury can set him back by years. His fitness just won't permit a round-the-year calendar. Sen will need to prioritise Olympics over mindless pursuit of Tour titles and points, just like PV Sindhu did in her early years.

Having peaked for the Olympics, he did well to reach

semifinals. An opportunity to fight for bronze isn't a guarantee at Los Angeles in a sport like badminton, where 70 percent of the top names in both singles, were nursing niggles, and felled by fitness. Carolina Marin had recovered, and re-emerged, but still went out in tears to injury on the brink of the final. Tai Tzu Ying just couldn't move in her final effort. The male Chinese and Indonesians, in the 23 to 29 age bracket, were soundly thrashed. So when you earn the chance to gun for bronze and are at your fittest like Sen was, a set and 8-3 up too, but still flub the opportunity due to nerves, your straight-shooting coach isn't going to mollycoddle. With badminton and its bustling Top 15, you just cannot sit back, tell yourself you are still young, fit and raring, with time on hand, and project a hopeful medal four years from now. Coaches seethed in Paris, because they pretty much know 24x7, 365 days, 4 years, how excruciatingly tough medalling is. There's a reason they don't waste their time penning pretty inane inspirational scribbles on Twitter and instead honestly parse through what went wrong, instead of promising a medal next time. So for Satwik-Chirag and Sen, this was a sucker punch. Padukone is a legend who slogged without any support, in times when there was none on offer, to win his All England in 1980, before he got roundly criticised for chiding Lakshya, a player whom he had talent-scouted and singled out for perhaps the maximum funding made available to anyone who was in Paris, for the last 12 years.

Sen's coach Vimal Kumar had stood on the court for high-intensity multi-feed shuttle sessions till age 60. One of the sharpest feeders, the ace coach had plotted gameplans for every Olympic and All England upset Sen has scored. And Pullela Gopichand got India the first two Olympic podiums, besides multiple World Championship medals, both with 6 am sessions, and analysing on the spot opponents barking out pinpoint instructions in competition crucibles that helped Nehwal, Sindhu, Srikanth, Sai Praneeth and Prannoy nail down wins. Even double Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen was brought down at the 2023 Worlds for Prannoy's medal with Gopichand plotting. You don't need to give him credit, but players will acknowledge his timely interventions that nick a point in sticky 17-17 kind of situations. And nail down career-defining medals. He missed his own, hence knows how much it hurts when you can't win the podium knockouts. Badminton medals have always needed strong tactical backroom work. These coaches know what they're doing, and are also aware of the crucial difference between a medal and a non-medal. They live the disappointment with the player, unlike fans with their hot-takes, before moving onto the next topic to mutter. The same is true for players. Olympic medals matter to athletes. They are the stamps of recognition tattooed onto your identity, which nobody can take away from you. No amount of sentimental Twitter poetry of loyal legions can replace that medal on the mantelpiece. This explains Neeraj Chopra's disappointment at missing the gold and Padukone's outburst after Sen's loss in the bronze-medal play off. Sen might see a lifetime of opportunities ahead of him in his young life, Padukone knows how fate can be fickle. The medal matters.

India finish events with 6 medals after Reetika Hooda shows promise but exits 76 kg wrestling class



GNS News Agency, August 13

Aman Sehrawat would be the only Indian wrestler to pick up a medal from the Paris Olympics after women's 76 kg grappler Reetika Hooda failed to go past the quarterfinals of her category, finishing at the wrong end of a 1-1 bout against two-time World Championship medalist Aiperi Medet Kyzy of the Kyrgyz Republic. Hooda's exit from the 76 kg competition meant that India's medal count at the Paris Olympics stood at 6, a number that could go up or stay the same depending upon the Court of Arbitration for Sport's (CAS) decision on Vinesh Phogat's appeal for a shared silver medal. At 21, Hooda came into her maiden Olympics as a wildcard of sorts. She had beaten Blades only last year for the U23 World Championship crown, but was unseeded at this Olympics – a dangerous proposition for many seeded wrestlers. Once the draw came out, it became clear that she would have to go through some of the best wrestlers in the 76 kg category to medal in Paris.

Over a minute into their bout, the Hungarian had the passivity timer struck against her. She immediately tried to earn a takedown by tripping Hooda first, but the Indian wrestler kept control of Nagy's left arm as they both went to the floor. Once her opponent's arm was out of the way, it was a quick scramble and two points were awarded in the Indian's favour, which soon became four when she rolled Nagy over. With nine seconds left in the first period, Nagy attempted a takedown of her own, grabbing Hooda's left leg and converting the position into two points right as the buzzer rang. It would be the last bit of offence she would be allowed in the entire match. Hooda is the first woman from India to make the heavyweight categories at the Olympics and comes from Sakshi Malik's stable at Sir Chhotu Ram Stadium in Rohtak. And even though she occupies the topmost weight category in the women's division, her insistence on remaining an offensive wrestler makes her a dangerous opponent in her weight category. At the Asian Olympic Qualifiers, the scores of her four bouts read 10-0, 11-0, 9-6 and 7-0. Relentless offence

The second period against Nagy showed that Hooda had the endurance to continue charging forward. Less than a minute in and she had control of her opponent's left hand again and pushed her sideways until Nagy lost control and found herself giving up another two points. The Hungarian, knowing her Olympic dreams were about to fizzle out, dropped to grab Hooda's legs and managed to lunge forward. But the Indian, once again, didn't give

an inch and converted what could have been a potential takedown against her into a counter, which earned her two points and then almost converted that position into a pin. Nagy managed to wriggle out of trouble, but not before giving up another two points. With the score at 10-2, and 45 seconds remaining in the bout, Hooda managed to land the final two points to win by technical superiority and move on to meet the Worlds silver medalist.

Against the Kyrgyz wrestler though, Hooda's constant pressure found its match. Kyzy started off on a better note, gathering Hooda's leg and almost converting the position into two points. But the Indian held on and defended the position well. From there, she closed all doors for the Kyrgyz and the referee soon started the passivity timer on the Asian Games gold medalist. The Indian went into the first period with a slender one-point lead. In the second period, Hooda had her chances to capitalise and possibly add some more points to the board. But her offence never really got going, like it had in her previous bout. Soon it was her turn to land an attack or lose a point and even with the timer against her, a takedown never materialised. A point apiece, the 21-year-old from Rohtak desperately needed to either push Kyzy out of the mat or land one of her attacking moves. Neither happened as the second period ended with the Kyrgyz wrestler controlling the Indian's head and holding off any chance of an attack. The score was 1-1 but Kyzy went through to the semi-finals on account of having scored the last technical point of the match. She then lost to Blades 8-6 to end Hooda's maiden Olympics.

China pip USA to go on top of Paris Olympics medal tally, India on 71st



GNS News Agency, August 13

Paris: China moved past USA to sit on top of the Paris Olympics medal tally, enter the concluding day of the Games on Sunday with 39 golds, 27 silver and 24 bronze medals. The USA, on the other hand, with 122 medals, including 38 gold, 42 silver, and as many bronze medals, are placed second. Australia are on third with a total of 50 medals, including 18 gold, 18 silver and 14 bronze. Japan, however, jumped to fourth with 18 gold, 12 silver, 13 bronze for a total of 43 medals.

Bling of Imane Khelif boxing Gold could soften the blows of bullying she faced



GNS News Agency, August 13

As Algeria's Imane Khelif began her quest for a dream Olympic gold, little did she know that during the course of that journey, her life would change. On Friday, in the background of a fortnight-long furor over who she is and what she represents, the shrillness of the polarised online outrage was replaced by the roars of the Algerian diaspora in France that made themselves known in a 15,000-strong crowd at Court Philippe Chatrier at Roland Garros, as Khelif stormed past China's Yang Liu to win the women's 66kg boxing gold.

Of course, it is not boxing that has fast-tracked Khelif into the limelight. An unorthodox conclusion to one of her bouts kicked off an unorthodox debate, which, at its core, put her womanhood on trial. In reality, there is little to suggest anything other than a mix of bad and good-faith actors, fighting for women's sport, health and inclusion, weighing in on a divisive isolated incident from a sport they might know little to a lot about, while repeating their agendas. Gold medalist Algeria's Imane Khelif poses during a medals ceremony for the women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics Gold medalist Algeria's Imane Khelif poses during a medals ceremony for the women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP) For the uninitiated, Khelif, and Taiwan's Lin Yu Ting who will fight in the 57kg final on Saturday, were at the centre of a gender row. The duo had been disqualified by the International Boxing Association (IBA) from last year's World Championships in New Delhi for failing IBA-administered gender tests.

Opinions are iron-clad and voiced with conviction but the facts remain blurry. In a press conference in Paris this week, the IBA chief executive Chris Roberts said that Khelif had failed a "sex chromosome test", but since he could not reveal the details of the test, he prompted those listening to "read between the lines". The International Olympic Committee (IOC) rejects these tests as "arbitrary" and "illegitimate", instead using eligibility rules that were in place in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2021 which do not include gender testing. IOC president Thomas Bach stood firm on the Committee's stance ahead of the two boxers' gold medal bouts. "This is not a question of inclusion. This is a question of justice," he said. "This is not as easy as some in this cultural war may now want to portray it."

He added that he was uncomfortable with the uncertainty of the IBA's testing formula: "If somebody is presenting us a scientifically solid system how to identify men and women, we are the first ones to do it." Algeria's Imane Khelif, left, fights China's Yang Liu in their women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP) For the uninitiated, Khelif, and Taiwan's Lin Yu Ting who will fight in the 57kg final on Saturday, were at the centre of a gender row. The duo had been disqualified by the International Boxing Association (IBA) from last year's World Championships in New Delhi for failing IBA-administered gender tests.

Legendary shooter Abhinav Bindra says Vinesh Phogat's disqualification most brutal moment in Indian sports; CAS extends deadline for decision

GNS News Agency, August 13

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat is likely to know whether she will be awarded a silver medal or not only on Tuesday, two days after the end of the Paris Olympics. This, after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) extended time till 6 pm, Paris time — 9:30 pm IST — on August 13 to come to a decision on the wrestler's appeal. It was the second time on Saturday that the sports court sought more time to arrive at a decision. Phogat has challenged her disqualification after she failed to make the weight for her 50 kg final against USA's Sarah Hildebrandt last Wednesday. The Indian wrestler was found 100grams overweight on the morning of the final and was subsequently disqualified from the competition. Earlier in the day, the president of the CAS ad-hoc division extended the time limit for the panel to give a verdict until 6 pm on Saturday. Minutes after the deadline, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said in a brief statement that an extension of another two days was made.

The ad hoc division of CAS has extended time till 6 pm on August 13, 2024, for Sole Arbitrator Hon. Dr Annabelle Bennet in the Vinesh Phogat vs. United World Wrestling & the International Olympic Committee to issue a decision. The reasoned order will be issued at a later date," the IOA said. The hearing in the case took place on Friday. As per the CAS rules, the ad hoc panel 'shall give a decision within 24 hours of the lodging of the application. In exceptional cases, this time limit may be extended by the President of the ad hoc Division if circumstances so require.' Dismayed and heartbroken at the turn of events and her dreams of a gold medal shattered, Phogat subsequently announced her retirement from the sport. Even as the wait continued for the decision, Beijing Olympics gold medalist Abhinav Bindra termed her disqualification from the Paris Games on the morning of the 50 kg final as the 'most brutal day in the history of Indian sport'.

Bindra, who received the IOC's Olympic Order award during the Session on Saturday, told The Indian Express he felt like throwing up after learning about Phogat's disqualification from the Games. "It was a very brutal day. (My first reaction) was of disbelief. Shock. I wanted to vomit. Early in the morning, somebody sent me a message. Frankly, I had no idea what was going on. It was crazy," Bindra said.

Bindra acknowledged that from 'a sports perspective, it is governed by rules and regulations'. "I am referring to the human side. She has gone through a tough time over the course of the last year and a half. To come back, qualify for the Games and come up with this perfor-

governance. The IBA has hit back, often accusing their accusers of the same. The initial row between Khelif and Italian Angela Carini, precipitated a tussle between rival factions with rival national benefactors — the IBA backed by Russia, the IOC by the global West. What is also clear, though, is how the tussle villainised a sportsperson who did little wrong other than competing with ferocity. And even as the noise around this was allowed to reach a deafening pitch, despite the claims and counterclaims about the reasons for her natural strength, Khelif has won this gold medal despite the odds stacked against her. Coming from nothing

Khelif, 25, picked up boxing while growing up in the rural village of Tiaret in Algeria. Coming from a conservative family and little to no wealth, things were never too easy. The pugilist claimed that it was dodging the punches of boys on sports fields at 16 that got her into the sport. Travelling 10km to the nearest gym to train and finding the money for her routines were obstacles, but ones she could only overcome once she got the approval of her family, with her father believing boxing is not a sport for girls (the irony is lost, but must not be lost). Eventually, they came around and found the money to fuel her aspirations. "I started with nothing and now I have everything. Both my parents come to support me. They are my biggest fans," she was quoted as saying by UNICEF, with whom she became an ambassador earlier this year. "It's being able to overcome the obstacles in my life," she said, in response to a question about which of her accomplishments she is most proud of. Algeria's Imane Khelif celebrates after defeating China's Yang Liu to win gold in their women's 66 kg final boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP)

The larger sporting world has been roped into this scandalous drama, and, otherwise obsessed with rags-to-riches folktales of inspiration, has forgotten to acknowledge the two people at the centre of this. Lin and Khelif have been active boxers for years. The former, too, was born and raised as a girl in Taiwan. Back home, she has a big following too — fans call her 'Ting' (meaning graceful) on Taiwanese social media — and they have been prompted into action to protect their icon as these allegations have been made against her. Khelif has already overcome tough tides to represent Algeria at the grand stage a few times and is finally in the form of her life. She neither prompted nor deserved this storm around her. After winning gold by a unanimous 5-0 decision following a fascinating final bout on Friday, Khelif stood defiant. "I am fully qualified to take part in this competition. I'm a woman like any other woman. I was born a woman, I lived a woman, I competed as a woman, there's no doubt about that," she was quoted as saying by The Guardian. "As for the IBA... they hate me and I don't know why. I send them a single message: with this gold medal, my dignity, my honour is above everything else." The storm may have made Khelif a sporting success in Algeria, as videos emerged of fans celebrating the victory, including a raucous blowout in Tiaret according to a video published by AP. The Algerian president, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, honoured her too. "We are all proud of you, Olympic champion Khelif, your victory today is Algeria's victory and your gold is Algeria's gold," he said on X.

Perhaps storming to victory in this event and these celebrations will do little to change the enormous hate and bullying she has faced this fortnight; how her life has turned upside down. But the bling of the gold, one hopes, softens the blow.



The hearing in the case took place on Friday. As per the CAS rules, the ad hoc panel 'shall give a decision within 24 hours of the lodging of the application. In exceptional cases, this time limit may be extended by the President of the ad hoc Division if circumstances so require.'

mance. Incredible. To have misfortune, bad luck... Sport as life can be brutal. And I think it was perhaps the most brutal day for Indian sport in our history. I don't think there could be anything that could even come close," he added. Support has been pouring in for Phogat from the world over. On Saturday, it was Japan's Rei Higuchi who showed solidarity. Few would understand Phogat's plight better than the 57 kg gold medal winner, who had missed his home Olympics in Tokyo three years ago after being found 50 grams overweight. "I understand your pain the best. same 50g. Don't worry about the voices around you. Life goes on. Rising from setbacks is the most beautiful thing. Take a good rest," he wrote on X.

Members of the IOC's athlete safeguarding committee, too, have checked on Phogat's well-being. On Thursday morning, Bindra — the vice chair of IOC's Athletes' Commission — travelled to the Olympic Village, where Phogat is staying, to meet her. He called the former Asian Games champion his 'hero'. He admitted there wasn't a lot to say to console her. "What can I tell her? To be there for another athlete, another human being. To show empathy. For her to understand that, you know, there's one thing about winning on the field of play. There's another thing of gaining the respect of not just the entire country, but immense support flooding in from across the world. I just wanted her to realise that. "But of course, she is an athlete and her mission here was not to win hearts but to win a gold medal. Frankly, no words, nobody can do anything for her. I don't know what the CAS ruling will be. Only time can be a healer in this situation," Bindra said.