

INDIAN CHRONICLE

4 August, 2024 | Sunday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:150 | Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Rat faeces found in food storage shelves of restaurant in Shamshabad

Hyderabad: Rat faeces were found at a restaurant in Shamshabad on Friday. The fecal matter was observed on the shelves and floor, with food safety officials suspecting a possible rat infestation in the store room. Task force teams of the Food Safety Department, Telangana, conducted multiple inspections at restaurants in Shamshabad, recording hygiene and quality violations. Most of these establishments did not display the FSSAI true license copy on their premises. Medical fitness certificates for the food handlers, water analysis reports, and pest control records of the premises were also unavailable except for one of the restaurants inspected.

India's agri transformation a lesson for others: Modi



GNS News Agency, August 3

Inaugurating the triennial conference organised by the International Association of Agricultural Economists here on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's experience is valuable for discussions on transforming the food system and is sure to benefit the Global South. India is hosting the conference for the second time after a gap of 65 years. The Prime Minister said from a newly independent nation facing challenges to ensure food security 65 years ago, India has now become a food surplus country, the largest producer of milk, pulses and spices, and the second largest producer of food grain, fruits, vegetables, cotton, sugar, tea and farmed fish. He said during the last time the conference was held in India, the country's food security was a matter of concern for the world while today, India is providing solutions to global food and nutrition security. "Therefore, India's experience is valuable for discussions on food system transformation and is sure to benefit the Global South," Mr. Modi said. Reiterating India's commitment to global welfare, Mr. Modi said India does not view the health of humans, plants and animals "in silos". "Challenges before sustainable agriculture and food systems can only be tackled under the holistic approach of 'One Earth, One Family and One Future'," he said.

The Prime Minister said agriculture is at the centre of India's economic policies and said small farmers are the biggest strength of India's food security. He claimed that the positive results of promoting chemical-free natural farming on a large scale can be seen in the country. He told agricultural scientists from around the world who are attending the conference that India handed over 1,900 new climate-resilient varieties of seeds to farmers in the last 10 years. He also talked about "a huge campaign" for the digitisation of land where farmers will be given a digital identification number for their land and on the use of drones in farming. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Member of NITI Aayog Ramesh Chand, conference president Matin Qaim and Director-General of Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) Himanshu Pathak were present on the occasion. The theme for this year's conference is "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems". Professor Chand said agriculture has been a key focus area of development strategy in India, and the country has achieved historically the highest growth rate of 5% during the seven-year period from 2016-17 to 2022-23. "Agricultural growth in the last 15 years has saved many countries from economic collapse. Due to the poor effort of industry in pulling the labour force out of agriculture, the onus of remunerative employment for the large workforce still remains on agriculture," he said.

Indian Army intensifies relief operations in disaster-hit areas of Himachal



GNS News Agency, August 3

New Delhi: The Indian Army has intensified its ongoing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in Himachal Pradesh by mobilising several resources following the cloudburst and landslides in Shimla and Mandi districts. The Indian Army said on Saturday that, as part of the continuing HADR operations at flood-hit Samej, around 90 civilians were moved and treated at the Army's medical camp.

During the flood relief operations in the affected Samej village near Jhakri in the Rampur sub-division of Shimla district, an improvised footbridge has also been constructed for affected civilians and essential commodities, including food and medicines, are being provided to the affected civilians. "Road towards the incident site, blocked due to land shift, has been repaired by the Engineer Task Force. An improvised footbridge has been constructed, facilitating the movement of rescue teams towards the far bank of the river. A search and rescue dog team staged forward to Karcham," said the Ministry of Defence, adding that additional teams and resources have been mobilised and deployed for search and rescue operations. Several Army officials, who have briefed Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu about the operation,

Abuses, insults and derogatory language mar Budget Session of Telangana Assembly

GNS News Agency, August 3

Hyderabad: Seldom has Telangana witnessed its Legislative Assembly in such disorder, with chaos, abuses and insults, derogatory comments and Opposition MLAs not being allowed to speak. That was not all. In the 9 days that the Assembly met, spanning over 65.3 hours, including for one record 17 hour session till 3.15 am, speeches by 132 members and five bills passed apart from two short discussions, meaningful discussions were rare, with the Government refusing discussions even on topics like the much hyped job calendar. Those who protested were shuffled out by marshals, with veiled threats of being suspended being handed out by ruling party members, including by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. In fact, former Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy was not too far from the truth on Saturday when he, along with Huzurabad MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy, said the budget session was blatantly used to stifle the voice of the BRS and to threaten and offend Opposition members. Unbecoming moments and mentions that were highly contentious in nature were too many, with the Congress undermining the dignity and decorum of the house



as never before, they said. AIMIM Floor Leader and Chandrayangutta MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi too had said the same in the House itself, when he remarked that in his 25-year-long career as an MLA, never had he seen such brazen violations of the norms of a House in session. There was no dearth of misinformation and false narratives either. In fact, Revanth Reddy appeared to be 'leading from the front' in this aspect, when he said on the floor of the House that the previous BRS government had signed a tripartite agreement with the Centre agreeing to install smart meters to agriculture pump-sets. However, he was silent on the fact that agriculture services were excluded from the installation of smart meters under the Uday Scheme launched by the Centre, for which the State had signed the agreement. BRS MLA

T Harish Rao had pointed out this the same day. Several members had also complained that the agenda was sent to them very late, some times at 1 am, with even that agenda being changed without notice the next day. Prashant Reddy and Kaushik Reddy also pointed out that the session did not discuss key issues such as the Congress promise for paying Rs.4000 as Asara pension and assistance of Rs.2500 for women under the Mahalakshmi scheme. Neither was the Rs.4,000 monthly allowance for jobless youth discussed. Apart from passing remarks, there were no substantial discussions on budget allocations for important schemes like Rythu Bharosa/Rythu Bandhu or Dalit Bandhu. Even those remarks were just to target the previous BRS government. For the unemployed, it was with bated breath that they waited for

the job calendar. However, the same was released in the Assembly, but with no number of jobs specified and with just dates of when recruitment tests would be notified or conducted. Earlier, the Chief Minister had also claimed in the Assembly, apart from in public meetings, to have given 30,000 jobs, but kept quiet that he had just handed over appointment letters for posts that were notified and recruitment process completed by the previous BRS regime. Apart from these, the most disturbing aspect of the session was the lack of decorum. If women MLAs were offended in the house by both the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister making remarks that were least justified, their male counterparts saw Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender openly threatening to skin them alive! Nagender had in fact tried to lunge forward towards Kaushik Reddy, with a potential physical attack being avoided only because other Congress MLAs pulled Nagender back. Unfortunately, neither did the Chief Minister nor the Speaker reprimand him, with the Speaker just saying that Nagender's remarks would expunge. These were not just 'remarks', but abuses which the turncoat MLA blatantly tried to blame the Hyderabad lingo for.

KTR extends solidarity to GO 46 victims

GNS News Agency, August 3

Hyderabad: Expressing concern over the arrest of several youth by Bandlaguda police while protesting against GO No 46, BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Saturday assured them that the issue would be taken up with the Chief Secretary if needed by a delegation of BRS MLAs. The government order (GO) pertains to local cadre regulations for direct recruitment.



According to GO 46, local candidates will be given preference and will be assigned to 95% of the

positions to be filled through direct recruitment at any time in different cadres, according to each lo-

cal area's zonal breakdown. He visited the protesters whose job prospects were affected by the GO, while the students ask for the GO to be scrapped. Assuring his support to the youths who were on protest for nearly 30 hours, he appealed to them to call off the stir as their health and well being was also important.

He flayed the government for preventing Opposition leaders from meeting the protesters.

Sports Ministry provides 40 ACs to Indian Athletes for Olympic Village



GNS News Agency, August 3

New Delhi: Amid hot and humid conditions in Paris, the Sports Ministry provided India athletes with 40 air conditioners to ensure they have a comfortable stay at the Olympic Village. While taking into consideration the issues faced by India athletes at the Olympic Village due to the temperature and humidity in Paris, the Ministry of Sports discussed with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the French Embassy. After the discussion, it was decided to provide 40 ACs in the games' village rooms where the Indian athletes are staying. The decision was taken early on Friday. The cost is being funded by the Sports Ministry. The ACs are plug-and-play units, and athletes have already started using the ACs. It is expected that the India athletes will have a more comfortable stay and get better rest, which is much needed to deliver a good performance. In the ongoing Paris Olympics, India have secured three medals in shooting, with

all the medals coming in shooting, and all three are bronze. Manu Bhaker opened the nation's account with a bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol event, becoming India's first-ever woman shooter to win an Olympic medal in the event. After that, Sarabjot Singh and Manu won the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol (mixed team) event, which was India's first-ever medal in team shooting. Following his triumph, Kusale became the first Indian shooter to win a medal in the men's 50m rifle 3P event. Kusale's triumph marked India's best performance in shooting at the Olympics.

Harish Rao seeks water release to Mallanna Sagar, other Kaleshwaram reservoirs

GNS News Agency, August 3

Hyderabad: BRS leader and former minister T Harish Rao on Saturday requested Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy to pump water from Mid Manair to Annapurra reservoir, Ranganayaka Sagar, Mallanna Sagar and Konda Pochamma Sagar immediately. Making an appeal to the government on behalf of farmers under the Kaleshwaram projects to extend irrigation support to the ayacut by releasing water to the canals, he pointed out that the water levels in Annapurra (Ananthagiri) reservoir, Ranganayaka Sagar, Mallanna Sagar and Konda Pochamma Sagar in Siddipet district were critically low.

Visitors flock to Srisaillam dam amid release of flood water

As families arrived at the reservoir to enjoy the view cascading through the newly opened gates, traffic jams quickly formed on roads leading to the site. Many visitors chose to stop by the shrines of Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy before making their way to the reservoir, adding to the hustle and bustle of the weekend.

Currently, the Srisaillam reservoir is experiencing significant flooding, with a staggering 464,740 cusecs of water being discharged through the ten radial gates. In addition, 62,668 cusecs of water is being directed to Nagarajuna Sagar while electricity is being generated at both the right and left bank power stations. The inflow into the reservoir from upper catchment areas, including Jurala and Sunkesula reservoirs, has reached 481,246 cusecs.

CM Revanth unveils vision for transforming city into modern megalopolis



GNS News Agency, August 3

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday announced a slew of development works in the city and as part of this, the new Osmania Hospital Building would come up at 30 acres of land at police quarters in Goshamahal area in the city, a new suspension bridge on the Mir Alam Tank and others. The Chief Minister was replying to a Short Discussion on 'Activities for Sustainable Urban Development in Hyderabad Metro City' in the Assembly on Friday. The chief minister unveiled his plans of making Hyderabad a great city through his plans of HYDRAA.

Revanth Reddy said that the government while saving the old heritage building would take up construction of a new hospital building in Goshamahal area. He said that within 15 to 20 days he would visit the place and ensure the Police Quarters at Goshamahal is removed. The new building will come on 30 acres of land.

The Chief Minister said that the government would allow the restaurants and hotels in the city including in the limits of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda to be kept open till 1 am. However, the liquor shops will not be allowed to keep open beyond their prescribed time. "I will close liquor shops but not the restaurants. We are not going to do cosmetic policing but concrete policing. The law and order should be under control. Rowdies should be suppressed. All should support in law and order and we will make Hyderabad a top city in the world. I can't make tall claims like making an Old city as Istanbul," said Revanth Reddy. Hyderabad Eye on lines of London Eye, Suspension Bridge at Mir Alam Tank

The Chief Minister said that a 2.6 km long Suspension Bridge would come up at Mir Alam Tank. The project report would be out within 30 days. The bridge would come up between the Bengaluru Highway to PVNR Expressway. On the lines of London Eye, there will be a 'Hyderabad Eye' type of tower. "Our thought is to bring beauty to the real city that is the Old City," he said. He alleged that the former CM had done nothing special for the city except for Secretariat to go to office and Pragathi Bhavan for his residence. He has demolished the mosques and temples and now he is out of power, he added.

The Chief Minister said that HYDRAA was brought with great intention. The planning was for the core urban region where clusters and satellite, regional ring roads would come up. "HYDRAA would be of 2,000 sq km. There are many gram panchayats, municipalities beyond ORR and there is no watch on illegal constructions, encroachments, facilities. The city should be developed as an international city and reforms were brought in this regard. Disaster management will be pressed in the field in case of disasters like heavy rains," he said. "We know the big fish behind drug racket" The CM said that the government has details of big people involved in drug rackets. "We will discuss this issue when the opposition members are present. We have everyone's data, we are in government and in responsible posts hence we are not thinking of making it public," said Revanth. KCR gave water to Gajwel from Cong-made project. Revanth said that BRS Chief K Chandrashekar Rao brought water to Gajwel from the Sripad Rao Yellampally project, and that he had got water from the main trunk of the project.

Veteran Bharatanatyam dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy dies at 84



GNS News Agency, August 3

Bharatanatyam veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy died at the Apollo hospital in New Delhi on August 3. She was 84. "She was suffering from age-related issues and was in the ICU for the last seven months," Krishnamurthy's manager and secretary Ganesh told Yamini Krishnamurthy's mortal remains will be brought to her institute — Yamini School of Dance — at 9 am on August 4. The details of her last rites are yet to be finalised.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

End the burden

BY calling for the abolition of the 18 per cent GST on life and medical insurance premiums, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has raised a pertinent issue. This tax imposes an unfair burden on policy holders and runs contrary to the intent behind incentivising these vital policies. Insurance is fundamentally a tool for managing life's uncertainties. Levying a hefty tax on premiums is akin to penalising individuals for attempting to mitigate risks. This is especially troubling for the vulnerable sections who already find it challenging to afford adequate coverage. The impact of this tax has a detrimental effect on the accessibility and growth of insurance products. The insurance industry itself has long advocated for a reduction in GST to enhance the appeal of its products. Lowering the GST rate would not only make insurance more affordable but also stimulate its uptake contributing to broader financial security and health coverage. This is particularly pertinent given that insurance is more of a 'pull' product — consumers need to be drawn to it — rather than a 'push' one. As per the IRDAI's (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) data for 2022-23, insurance penetration in India is relatively low — around 3.2 per cent of the GDP for life insurance and 0.94 per cent for health insurance. Moreover, the current taxation policy is inconsistent with the government's broader objective of promoting social welfare and economic stability. By removing the GST on insurance premiums, the government can take a significant step towards ensuring that more citizens are protected against life's unpredictability without the additional financial strain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi must heed Gadkari's call that aims to safeguard people's wellbeing. The differences that the PM has had with Gadkari of late must be kept aside on this issue of fiscal policy and respect shown for well-meaning dissent within the party ranks.

Soon, AIIMS to have airport-like lounges for attendants of patients



GNS News Agency, August 3

AIIMS, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi AIIMS, AIIMS to have airport-like lounges, Delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India These lounges will be free, said officials.

In a huge relief for attendants of patients, All India Institute Of Medical Sciences Delhi (AIIMS) in Delhi has announced plans to set up three lounges. The government hospital receives around 15,000 patients daily in the OPD and an equal number of attendants come along with the patients. The three lounges will be set up for a cost of Rs 39.3 crore under a CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiative, said officials.

These lounges, officials added, will be free and at par with airport lounges with a capacity to receive 5,000-6,000 attendants throughout the day. The attendants can utilise the facilities such as recliner chairs, toilets, and vending machines. Along with this, the institute has also announced plans to expand its electric bus fleet to provide last-mile connectivity for train and bus passengers to key areas within the campus. "Another set of these e-buses (20-seaters) with modern conveniences such as air-conditioning, low floor, and wheelchair access will be provided," said an official. The move comes amid complaints of difficulties being faced by patients, especially those with mobility challenges, to commute from nearby Metro stations and bus stops to various facilities within AIIMS. On the lounge facility, a doctor said, "The lounge facility is much required, especially for patients coming from far-off places to Delhi. They have to sit outside tackling the harsh weather as the waiting time can be long and can stretch for months. With these lounges, the attendants can sit and wait till the treatment is ongoing." At present, AIIMS has no such facility for attendants. The three guest houses at the institute can accommodate 5,000 people. Many attendants end up sleeping on the pavement outside the hospital and inside the subway while the patient undergoes treatment. The lounges have been financed by the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), and Airports Authority of India as part of corporate social responsibility. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed with the three organisations. "While Rs 11.73 crore has been received from Airport Authority of India, Rs 19.3 crore has been received from REC, and Rs 8 crore from NTPC," said an official. The three lounges will be set up at different locations — near the Mother and Child Block, at New Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (RAK) OPD, and above the underground parking near the RAK OPD.

Local train services hit after 5-hour blockade

GNS News Agency, August 3

Sealdah south, Sealdah south Local train services, train services, Bengal train services, Kolkata news, WEST Bengal news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India Eastern Railway CPRO Koushik Mitra said after holding talks with passengers railways officials "assured" them of "timely service", following which they agreed to lift the blockade around 10.30 am.

Train services in the Sealdah South section resumed on Wednesday morning, after protesters lifted their five hour-blockade on railway tracks at another station. In a bid to protest the regular delays in arrival of local trains, passengers squatted on the tracks of the Diamond Harbour station of South 24 Parganas district.

Broken causeways, pothole-ridden roads in Kandi area life-threatening: 'will observe fast unto death'



GNS News Agency, August 3

Residents of the Kandi area in Hoshiarpur district express their growing frustration over the crumbling road infrastructure severely impacting their daily lives, even forcing students to miss school when it rains. Accusing the Punjab government of harbouring an impervious attitude towards their problems, a local group called 'Diamond Youth Club Tappa' has threatened to observe fast unto death starting August 15. After facing the fury of the devastating flood last year, the Kandi area has been facing a worsening commuting crisis as the monsoon sets in, damaging already crumbling roads and causeways. On the other hand, the Punjab government remained impervious to the Public Works Department's (PWD) repeated demands of funds for the repair of these impassable roads, locals alleged.

Roads, including significant routes such as Hoshiarpur-Mehangrowal road to Kot Patial, Nangal Jarial Road up to the Himachal Pradesh border, Dholbaha to Kakanet, Dholbaha to Bari Khar, Hariana Katahar Shamchaurasi Road, Hussainpur to Guru Ka Lambra, Bullowal to Khabian, Hoshiarpur By-pass to Dagana Kalana, Hariana Behroon GT Road to Kothe Prem Bagar, and Sikri Adda to Hariana Mehangrowal road, among others, have become nearly impassable. The condition of causeways, crucial to connect rural communities, over seasonal streams Choes — swell unimaginably during the rainy season — is particularly dire, creating hazardous travel conditions.

kandi causeways The condition of causeways, crucial to connect rural communities, over seasonal streams

HC bars Haryana govt from felling century-old trees to set up police station, police line



GNS News Agency, August 3

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has restrained the Haryana government from cutting even a single tree out of the 150, many a century-old, for the construction of a police station and a police line in Sonipat, while noting, "we the people have suffered enough environmental degradation, and therefore, this Court would not like to be a part of any further deterioration." Hearing a petition filed by National Environment and Forest Protection Trust (Regd), the bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Vikas Suri advised the state government authorities to "find out an alternative site for the construction of a police line and a police station if they are unable to construct police station and the police line without cutting the trees".

In the petition, the Trust raised a public cause under a resolution passed by Thaska gram panchayat in Sonipat District in 2023, wherein it was decided to allot two acres for the construction of a police station and five acres for a police line. Trust counsel Harender Singh and Jasbir Mor told the HC that "the authorities are yet to execute the same, but the same will result in cutting of 150 trees standing thereon, which are said to be about 100 years

Armed Forces Tribunal has power to initiate contempt proceedings, rules larger bench



GNS News Agency, August 3

Armed forces Marathon hearings were held in the case in April and May this year with Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee along with Anil Gautam representing the Government and Colonel Rajiv Manglik (retd) representing the litigants. The Armed Forces Tribunal possesses powers of contempt to get its orders implemented in case of wilful non-compliance of orders, a 'Larger Bench' of the tribunal ruled Wednesday. The judgment will give much-needed teeth to the tribunal whose orders are routinely ignored by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The larger bench, comprising Justice Anu Malhotra, Lt Gen CP Mohanty, and Rear Admiral Dhiren Vig, was constituted in 2014 when a two-member bench at Delhi had expressed apprehensions in following a judgment of the Kerala High Court, which had directed the Kochi Bench to invoke powers of contempt in case of non-compliance by defence authorities. Marathon hearings were held in the case in April and May this year with Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee along with Anil Gautam representing the Government and Colonel Rajiv Manglik (retd) representing the litigants. The court had

Choes — swell unimaginably during the rainy season — is particularly dire, creating hazardous travel conditions. "These broken causeways and pothole-ridden roads are impassable, especially during rainy days. Children going to the school are the worst hit," Mehangrowal resident Sunita Rani said. "These roads are life-threatening to the children like my daughters, Class V and Class VIII students when inundated."

"How can we send our children to school?" asked another resident Amrit Singh, saying, "Last year, a school bus was badly stuck here, while a car was washed away." Residents have expressed disillusionment with the incumbent state government for showing "neglect" towards the Kandi region and warned their resentment will snowball into agitation if their problems are left unattended. "If the government does not address our issues promptly, we will launch a hunger strike starting August 15," a 'Diamond Youth Club Tappa' member said. Diamond Youth Club Tappa president Rakesh Sharma said, "The condition of these roads is so bad that during the rainy season, these villages are completely cut off from Hoshiarpur. Residents, including schoolkids, walk several kilometres in such dire conditions. Even a small amount of rain causes huge disruption as commuting becomes nearly impossible, and essential services like power and water supply are cut off." Kandi area roads Residents have expressed disillusionment with the incumbent state government for showing "neglect" towards the Kandi region and warned their resentment will snowball into agitation if their problems are left unattended. (Express Photo) Sharma said despite multiple complaints to the government, no solution was provided. "The government has neglected these villages. We have warned that if the CM and the Punjab Road and Transport minister fail to address these villages' issues, we will observe a fast unto death at the Dholbaha bus stand starting August 15." Sharma said, "The estimated cost of the repair work is just Rs 1.25 crore, even then the government is showing a lackadaisical attitude." PWD officials confirmed that they had submitted detailed estimates and repair requests last year, but no action was taken. Kamal Nain, Executive Engineer, PWD's Road and Building department, Hoshiarpur division, acknowledged "the dire situation" but cited "lack of funds as a barrier in initiating the repair work".

old". Meanwhile, a report submitted by Sandeep Goyat, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Sonapat, reveals: "The present writ petition is not maintainable in its present form. However, it is submitted that after receiving the letter from DDPO, Sonipat, respondent No.10 along with the Sarpanch of the village Thaska inspected the spot and found that there are approximately 150 trees of Jaal (Salvadora oleoides) standing over there and those trees are of a century-year-old and the Jaal tree is a rare species which is the heritage of the village. There is no justification in cutting such a rare species of trees." Hearing the matter, the bench said, "From the report of the Deputy Conservator of Forest, it is obvious that on the land in question, which has been allotted to construct a police station and police line, about 150 trees which are nearly a century old, are standing. The said affidavit further reveals that the benefit of the 'Haryana Pran Vaayu Devta Pension Scheme' is being extended concerning the said trees. However, execution of the said scheme has been put on hold due to a dispute between the parties." The bench added that it is obvious that about 150 trees, which are a century old, stand on the land allotted to construct a police station and a police line. On perusing the photographs of the concerned area, the HC found that there is also a water body next to the trees. The bench, thus, said, "We the people have suffered enough environmental degradation, and therefore, this Court would not like to be a part of any further deterioration. If the concerned authorities can construct the police station and the police line without cutting/damaging even a single tree out of the 150 trees standing on the spot, then the authorities are free to do so." The bench also said, "If the concerned authorities are unable to construct the police station and the police line without cutting the above trees, then they are restrained from cutting the trees and are well advised to find an alternative site for the construction of a police line and a police station."

appointed lawyers Rajshekhar Rao and Navdeep Singh from the Delhi and the Punjab and Haryana High Courts respectively to assist the larger bench as amici curiae. In the judgment running into more than 500 pages, perhaps the longest in the AFT's history, the larger bench has interpreted Section 29 of the AFT Act and Rule 25 of the AFT Rules to hold that the legislature did not intend keeping the AFT toothless. It observed that more than 5,000 of its orders are lying unimplemented without any stay from the high court or the Supreme Court. The bunch matter referred to the larger bench included cases filed by Lt Col (later Colonel) Mukul Dev in the year 2014 at the Kolkata Bench and suo motu contempt proceedings initiated by the Chandigarh Bench. It may be recalled that in the past, the Punjab and Haryana Court has come down heavily upon the MoD for non-implementation of the orders of the AFT. The Supreme Court and various high courts have also passed strong observations against MoD for filing frivolous appeals against disabled personnel and other pensioners in settled matters. The approach of the MoD has also been criticized by the Government's own panels and committees.

Veteran organisations and lawyers point out that since late 2023 the MoD and the defence services are flooding all high courts and the Supreme Court with thousands of cases against military pensioners, including on same subjects which were withdrawn from Courts on orders of the then Defence Ministers Manohar Parrikar and Nirmala Sitharaman. Lawyers point out on the condition of anonymity that writ petitions and appeals being filed by the MoD and the defence services are affecting the resources of the government and the Army disproportionately and are burdening the exchequer with high litigation costs besides clogging the courts all over the country with frivolous cases against a vulnerable section of the society such as disabled veterans and widows, also resulting in discontentment amongst the military community.

36 people missing after cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla and Kullu



GNS News Agency, August 3

Himachal Pradesh Shimla cloudburst Another cloudburst caused damage in the high mountains of Shrikhand Mahadev in Kullu district. At least three cloudbursts, including one at Rampur in Shimla and two in Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, were reported since Wednesday night with 36 people, including 17 women and 19 men, reported missing from these areas. As many as 33 people were missing from Rampur and three in Kullu after the very heavy and sudden rainfall in the areas, said officials.

According to officials, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has convened an emergency meeting in the state secretariat on Thursday to review the situation. Officials said the cloudburst near the hydroelectric power project at Samej Khad in Rampur also caused widespread destruction with a dozen structures, including a government school building, reportedly damaged.

District Disaster Management Authority officials said they were alerted about the cloudburst in Rampur early in the morning. A senior administrative officer said, "Initial reports indicate that 19 people are missing from the affected region, with unconfirmed reports suggesting additional missing persons in Kullu. So far, 33 people are missing. Due to road blockages, news of the incident was delayed, with the cloudburst occurring around 1 am on Thursday." Anupam Kashyap, Deputy Commissioner, Shimla, said teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), police, and local rescue units were immediately dispatched to the affected area. Kashyap and Sanjeev Gandhi, Superintendent of Police, are headed to the spot. Nishant Tomar, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Rampur, is also going to the spot.

Kashyap said relief efforts began immediately, with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Special Home Guard joining the operation. Ambulances and other essential services are also on-site. A coordination committee chaired by the additional deputy commissioner, which is comprised of the police, home guard, fire brigade, Sunni Dam management, and other departments, to streamline relief and rescue operations, has been established. Meanwhile, another cloudburst caused damage in the high mountains of Shrikhand Mahadev in Kullu district.

Pune Collector denies sexual harassment allegations by Puja Khedkar, calls them 'nonsensical'

GNS News Agency, August 3

Diwase had written to the state government about Puja Khedkar's alleged misbehaviour during her probationary period. Diwase had written to the state government about Puja Khedkar's alleged misbehaviour during her probationary period. Pune district Collector Suhas Diwase on Wednesday denied the allegations made against him by IAS probationer Puja Khedkar. Speaking to The Indian Express, Diwase said the allegations were "nonsensical and made as an afterthought." Diwase said Khedkar was attached to the district Collector's office from June 3-14. "During this time, I met her only three times and that too in the company of my officers and lawyers. Post June 14, she was attached to the office of the Divisional Commissioner," he said. Diwase said Khedkar had not made any allegations during her posting there. "In her letter to the state government, in response to my letter, she had not made any such allegations," he said. "The issue of harassment rose only when she went to Washim and was an afterthought," he said, denying all allegations. Diwase had written to the state government about her alleged misbehaviour during her probationary period. Following Diwase's report, she was transferred to Washim. Khedkar had then lodged a harassment complaint against Diwase. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Wednesday cancelled Khedkar's candidature in the 2022 Civil Services Examination (CSE) and barred her from appearing for any future examinations of the commission, after finding she had violated rules by appearing for the exam more times than what was allowed. Khedkar is facing multiple allegations, including submission of false disability and Other Backward Class (OBC) certificates. In an Additions Sessions court in Delhi, Khedkar has claimed that a case was being lodged against her because she filed a sexual harassment complaint against the Collector. She said the media had indulged in a witch hunt against her.

Drones to monitor movement of kanwariyas on Gurgaon roads

GNS News Agency, August 3

Gurgaon roads, Gurgaon, Kanwar Yatra, Kanwar Yatra Sanitation, Kanwar Yatra safety concerns, women pilgrims Kanwar Yatra, Delhi news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India The traffic police used drones at both Subhash Chowk and Rajiv Chowk to help kanwariyas cross the busy intersections. Following the accident on the Delhi-Jaipur highway that killed a kanwar pilgrim in the early hours of Wednesday, police said drones will be deployed to ensure smooth movement at busy intersections in the city amid the annual Kanwar Yatra.

Police on Wednesday launched the programme by flying drones in the sky at Subhash Chowk and Rajiv Chowk. "To ensure the smooth passage of the kanwariyas, the Gurgaon Traffic Police has been using drones from the beginning of the yatra. These drones help to safely navigate the Kanwariyas through crowded areas without any obstruction. The traffic police will continue to use these drones until the completion of the Kanwar Yatra on August 2.

Opened 8 lakh pension accounts since '17: UP CM Yogi Adityanath



GNS News Agency, August 3

PENSION ACCOUNTS for approximately eight lakh state government employees were opened in Uttar Pradesh since his government took office in 2017, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath told the legislative council. Adityanath highlighted this point in response to a question on the New Pension Scheme (NPS). Adityanath said, "The NPS was originally implemented in 2005 during the tenure of the SP government led by Mulayam Singh Yadav. While the BSP was in power from 2007 to 2012 and the SP from 2012 to 2017, not a single pension account was opened for employees during those periods."

He added that in 2018, upon finding issues with the pension accounts, his administration formed a committee chaired by the then finance secretary. The committee also included some experts on the matter and held discussions with employee organisations, addressing concerns that affected nearly eight lakh employees. The CM explained that the committee found it essential for the

government to increase its contribution slightly to provide 50 per cent of the employee's last drawn salary as pension. Assessments indicated that if both the government and employees deposited money on time and connected their contributions to a scheme, employees could receive approximately 60 per cent of their money as pension after retirement. "To address this, the government's share in the pension scheme was increased from 10 per cent to 14 per cent. The accounts of all employees were opened, and the contributions from 2005 to 2017, which had not been deposited due to the lack of accounts, were also credited," Adityanath added.

He informed that approximately 70,000 employees, who were in the final stages of being appointed when the NPS was implemented in 2005, have been retained under the Old Pension Scheme, with many of these employees being teachers. The CM added that the government has taken serious note of complaints about the NPS funds being deposited in private banks. He assured that actions have been taken to rectify this, and efforts are underway to ensure the return of these funds. He emphasised that it is a priority for the government to ensure that money from any government scheme is deposited only in nationalised banks. The Chief Minister also congratulated Lal Bihari Yadav on becoming the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council.

He quipped, "I hope you always remain the Leader of Opposition." He highlighted the "diverse representation" in the Upper House, where members come from various societies, including local bodies, teacher constituencies, graduate voters and nominations by the Governor.

National panel nod for MBBS course in 7 new medical colleges: Govt

GNS News Agency, August 3

MBBS course, medical colleges, up medical colleges, Uttar Pradesh medical colleges, National Medical Commission, Indian express news, current affairs. Additionally, 350 seats will be available for counselling in three new PPP-mode medical colleges. In total, counselling will be conducted for 10,500 MBBS seats across government, private, and PPP-mode medical colleges in the state. THE NATIONAL Medical Commission (NMC) has approved the launch of MBBS programmes in seven new medical colleges in Uttar Pradesh for the 2024-25 academic session. A government spokesperson said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had discussed with Union Health Minister JP Nadda regarding the recognition of 13 new medical colleges in the state. Following these discussions, the National Medical Commission has issued Letters of Permission (LoP) for seven government medical colleges for the 2024-25 academic session.

At the same time, the remaining six medical colleges would appeal to the NMC again and they are likely to receive their LoP soon, the spokesperson added. Also, approval has been granted to increase the number of seats in various medical colleges across the state, including those operated under government, private and PPP models. Following this, the department of medical education has begun preparations for counselling to accommodate 10,500 MBBS seats for the current academic session. Director General of Medical Education Kinjal Singh said, "For the academic session 2024-25, Letters of Permission have been issued for the autonomous state medical colleges in Bijnor, Bulandshahr, Kushinagar, Pilibhit, Sultanpur, Kanpur Dehat and Lalitpur. Counselling will be conducted for 600 MBBS seats across these seven medical colleges. Additionally, the government medical colleges in Agra and Meerut have had their seat



counts increased by 72 and 50, respectively, bringing the total to 200 seats at Agra Medical College and 150 seats at Meerut Medical College." According to Kinjal Singh, the PPP-mode medical colleges in Shamli, Maharajganj, and Sambhal have also received Letters of Permission for 150, 150, and 50 MBBS seats respectively, for the 2024-25 session. "Similarly, a new medical college in Gorakhpur, a private institution, has been granted LoP for 50 MBBS seats for this academic session. G S Medical College in Hapur has also been allowed to increase its MBBS seats by 100, bringing the total to 250 seats. "In the previous academic session, there were 3,828 MBBS seats available for counselling in government medical colleges. For the 2024-25 session, this number has increased by 722, totaling 4,550 seats. The private sector, which previously had 5,450 MBBS seats, now has 5,600 following a 150-seat increase. Additionally, 350 seats will be available for counselling in three new PPP-mode medical colleges. In total, counselling will be conducted for 10,500 MBBS seats across government, private, and PPP-mode medical colleges in the state.

Azam acquitted in 2019 forcible eviction case



GNS News Agency, August 3

A SPECIAL MP/MLA court in Rampur on Wednesday acquitted senior Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan and five others, including a retired deputy superintendent of police, in a case of trespass and vandalism related to an alleged property grab attempt in the Dongarpur area of Rampur in 2016. Several FIRs related to this incident were filed only in 2019 at the Ganj police station. This is the fifth case in which Azam Khan, currently lodged in Sitapur district jail, has been acquitted in the past two years. He has been convicted in six other cases.

Azam Khan appeared before the court on Wednesday via video-conferencing citing health issues, while the other five accused appeared in person. Retired deputy superintendent of police Aley Hasan and contractor Barkat Ali, who are lodged in jail in connection with another case, were brought to court from jail amid police security. Government counsel Seema Singh Rana, who confirmed Azam and others have been acquitted, said, a total of 12 prosecution and two defence witnesses were examined by the court. According to the prosecution, a local resident registered a police complaint against six persons, alleging that they forcibly entered his house, threw out his belongings, and demolished his home in the Dongarpur area on December 6, 2016. The name of Azam Khan was included in the case during investigation. The case was filed under various sections of the IPC, including 447 (punishment for criminal trespass), 452 (house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault, or wrongful restraint), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), and 120-B (criminal conspiracy).

The houses in Dongarpur were allegedly demolished to develop Asaraa Colony in 2016 during the

Samajwadi Party government. In 2019, a total of 12 cases were registered against Azam and his associates in connection with the Dongarpur incident, accusing them of allegedly grabbing properties after trespass and vandalism. Since the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, a total of 81 cases have been registered against Azam Khan, who is also a former MP, in Rampur district. The charges range from land-grabbing to cheating and criminal trespass.

Sumul Dairy bypolls: BJP suspends Bardoli leader for anti-party activities

GNS News Agency, August 3

The BJP on Wednesday suspended its Bardoli taluka panchayat vice-president Bipinchandra Chaudhary for "anti-party activities" after he independently filed his nomination for the Sumul Dairy bypolls even as the leader refused to back down saying he is "ready to bear the consequences".

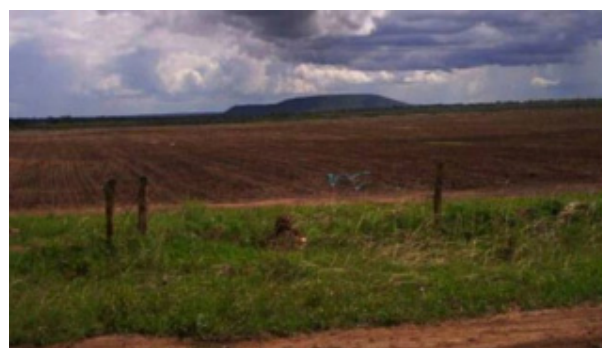
The BJP is backing Jitendra Patel from the Bamni Village Milk Cooperative Committee for the Bardoli seat which was lying vacant for the past two years after its director Ajit Patel resigned.

Confirming his suspension, Surat district BJP president Bharat Rathod told The Indian Express that the party leaders tried to convince Chaudhary to withdraw his form but he declined and filed his papers.

"During the party's coordination meeting, it was decided that the party will support Jitendra Patel. Bipin Chaudhary was also present in the meeting and still he filed his papers for the Sumul Dairy bypolls. He has been suspended from the party for anti-party activities."

Rathod said, "Our party rules the Bardoli taluka panchayat (TP) where Bipin Chaudhary held the post of vice president. In the next couple of days, the elected party members of Bardoli TP will submit a proposal of no-confidence motion against Chaudhary before Bardoli TP president Jamnaben Rathod. A meeting will be called to vote against him and later his post will also be snatched. His wife is Balda gram panchayat Sarpanch and we are moving ahead to bring her down."

BJP MLA opposes UP government Bill on Nazul land: 'We are telling poor families to get out'



GNS News Agency, August 3

Taking everyone by surprise in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, BJP MLA from Prayagraj Harshvardhan Bajpai on Wednesday spoke against his government's Bill preventing the conversion of Nazul land into private freehold. The objections by the ruling party MLA put the treasury benches in an awkward situation with the Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna making an intervention while Bajpai was speaking. "Aap samajh nahi rahein ho. Pahle padh toh lo (You are not getting it. First, go through it)," Khanna told Bajpai. Bajpai, 40, the first-time MLA from Allahabad (North), however, won thumping appreciation from the opposition benches.

Under the Uttar Pradesh Nazul Property Bill, 2024, Nazul land — land owned by the government but often not directly administered as state property — in the state can no longer be converted into private ownership. Any court proceedings or applications requesting the transfer of full ownership of Nazul land to private individuals or institutions will be cancelled and automatically rejected. In case, payments have been made in anticipation of such ownership changes, the amounts will be refunded with interest calculated at the Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR) set by the State Bank of India from the date of deposit. The government may choose to extend the leases of current leaseholders of Nazul land, provided they are in good standing, regularly paying rent, and have not violated lease terms, the Bill stated.

Speaking in the Assembly, Bajpai said: "...If the government takes one or two (properties), nothing will change. But I am talking about those who live in one or two-room in slums. In Prayagraj, they are called 'Sagar Peshwa'. This term 'Sagar Peshwa' has come from the British Raj era. The British gave space to their working staff to live

near their bungalows and called them 'Shagird Peshwa' (followers in service). "These families are living there since the time of the British rule... over 100 years ago... On one hand, we are giving houses to the poor under the PM Awas Yojna, and on the other hand, we are telling thousands of families to get out. We are taking the land. Ye nyaangat nahi hai (This is not lawful)," Bajpai added. "I met a homemaker whose house is located on hardly sau gaj (100 yards) area. She said, what the government will get of this sau gaj land... Our top leadership wants that the property rights of the people should be clear. Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi has also spoken many a time to bring a law to bring clarity in property rights and intellectual property rights," the ruling party MLA said. As he continued to speak on the "adverse impact" of the Nazul Property Bill on the poor and kept receiving thumping support from the Opposition, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna stood up and told Bajpai, "Aap samajh nahi rahe ho. Pahle padh toh lo (You are not getting it. First, read it)."

Amid chaos from both the treasury and opposition benches, Bajpai concluded by saying, "There should be a provision in the law that those possessing Nazul land and where the poor live, they should get a chance to get these lands converted to freehold." Another BJP MLA from Prayagraj district, Sidharth Nath Singh, also flagged the Bill, saying his suggestions should be taken into consideration. Singh said that those with bonafide ownership of Nazul land should get their lease renewed. Samajwadi Party chief whip Kamal Akhtar, Congress MLA Aradhana Mishra and Jansatta Dal leader Raghuraj Pratap Singh also criticised the Bill and demanded that it should be sent to the Select Committee. The Nazul land Bill, which the government had promulgated as an ordinance earlier this year, was passed by the Assembly.

The State Capital Region (SCR) Bill passed. Lucknow: The state Assembly on Wednesday passed the Uttar Pradesh State Capital Region and Other Regional Development Authorities (Formation) Bill, 2024, which aims to establish a State Capital Region akin to the National Capital Region (NCR) encompassing Lucknow and its neighboring districts — Unnao, Hardoi, Sitapur, Raebareilly, and Barabanki. The Bill aims to establish the UP State Capital Regional Development Authority and other regional development authorities. The Regional Development Authority will collaborate with relevant development authorities, corporations, local bodies, and various government departments to create a comprehensive regional plan, the Bill said. ENS

After a week of rain, dams have 52.42% of water stored

GNS News Agency, August 3

Vadodara, Gujarat rains, Gujarat dams, Gujarat Water Resources and Water Supply Department, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India. Of the 206 dams, 48 are completely filled, including 35 out of 141 dams in Saurashtra, six of 13 in south Gujarat and one in central Gujarat. Till Wednesday morning, Gujarat recorded total 60.78 per cent rain this season even as most of the state regions have logged over 50 per cent water storage as water bodies in south Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra recorded over 10 per cent rise between July 22 to 31. According to the Gujarat Water Resources and Water Supply Department data, until July 31, the 206 major dams in addition to Sardar Sarovar dam in Narmada have a collective reserve of 52.42% out of the total capacity of 25323 million cubic meters (MCM), as against 45.21% recorded on July 22.

The available live storage in the major water bodies of the state is also up to 41 per cent on July 31 as against 32.06 per cent on July 22. No exceptional rise has been recorded in water storage in central and north Gujarat due to "lower rainfall" compared to other regions. According to the state rain data, Kutch has so far received 410.10 mm rain, making a total of 84.57 per cent of its average expected rain while Saurashtra received 75.06 per cent rain at 53.85 mm. South Gujarat received 69.99 per cent rain until Wednesday morning with a total rain of 1044.30 mm. However, despite heavy rain lashing parts of north and central Gujarat last week, the two regions received only 43.43 per cent and 42.60 per cent average rainfall respectively. As a result, Kutch logged an increase of 22.91 per cent in its water storage capacity between July 22 and 31.

With six of the 20 dams in the region completely filled, the percentage filling in the region went up from 29.15 per cent on July 22 to 52.06 per cent on July 31. In Saurashtra, the water storage increased to 51.27 per cent on Wednesday from 44.50 per cent on July 22 while south Gujarat, with six of its 13 dams completely filled, has seen an increase of close to 17 per cent, currently positioned at 58.15 per cent. The Sardar Sarovar Dam in Narmada — known as the lifeline of Gujarat — has been witness-



ing a steady inflow from Madhya Pradesh. With an average inflow of 71000 cusecs, the Sardar Sarovar Dam stood at 121.6 metres on Wednesday and 55.05 per cent of filling. The current available gross storage of Sardar Sarovar is 5207 MCM, which is in deficit of about 1712 MCM compared to the storage recorded on July 31, 2023. Officials said that in order to prepare for the possibility of heavy rainfall in Narmada basin in August, the dam level is being maintained to mitigate flood risk with the Riverbed Powerhouse (RBPH) as well as the Canal Head Powerhouse (CHPH) running to generate power and release water. The dam has a gross storage capacity of 9460 MCM water, out of which 5760 MCM is live storage capacity. Dams in north Gujarat have recorded a total storage of 27.76 per cent on July 31, including four districts of Aravalli, Banaskantha, Mehsana and Sabarkantha, which is in deficit of about 810.71 MCM compared to the water storage data of July 31, 2023. On July 22, the available water storage in north Gujarat was 26.54 per cent. On the other hand, central Gujarat has recorded only a slight increase in the overall storage as well as the live storage in the dams in the regions. Central Gujarat has a gross storage of 42.38 per cent on Wednesday, as against 35.43 per cent on July 22. Of the 206 dams, 48 are completely filled, including 35 out of 141 dams in Saurashtra, six of 13 in south Gujarat and one in central Gujarat. Patan and Saraswati taluka in Patan district saw heavy rain in last 24 hours at 129 mm and 115 mm respectively while Abdasa in Kutch recorded 108 mm rain. Visnagar and Jotana in Mehsana recorded 101 mm and 86 mm rain respectively.

Kutch industry association demands international flights from Bhuj airport

GNS News Agency, August 3

Rajkot, Federation of Kutch Industries Association, FOKIA, Bhuj airport, Bhuj airport international flights, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India. To overcome this, FOKIA demanded that a new green field airport be developed near Kandla, while highlighting that Kandla and Mundra together handle 35 per cent of India's sea-borne cargo.

Federation of Kutch Industries Association (FOKIA), a chamber of industries in Kutch, have demanded international and cargo flights from Bhuj airport as well as expansion or relocation of Kandla airport to cater to the growing need of connectivity of thriving industrial units in the border district. In a statement, FOKIA managing director Nimish Phadke said on Wednesday that the industry chamber has made representations to the Airport Authority of India and the civil aviation minister, demanding that international flights to Dubai and east African countries be launched from the airport in Bhuj, the district headquarters of Kutch.

The chamber also demanded that Bhuj-Mumbai flight be restored and Bhuj-Delhi and Bhuj-Ahmedabad flights be launched as "many industrial units with headquarters in Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi require effi-



cient morning and evening connectivity for business commuting". At present, Air India and Alliance Air operate daily Mumbai-Bhuj-Mumbai flights while Star Air operates Ahmedabad-Bhuj-Ahmedabad flight on a daily basis. The FOKIA underlined that passenger traffic at Bhuj has jumped from 36,240 passengers in 2022 to 59,456 in 2023 and further to 66,683 by end of June this year. Further, FOKIA highlighted that factories in Kutch produce goods worth approximately Rs 5 lakh crore annually and cargo flights services from Bhuj airport can give a boost to agricultural and horticultural produce while also generating cargo handling business worth Rs 300 crore per annum.

Middle class consumption going down, big challenge to create formal jobs, says CII Gujarat chairman



GNS News Agency, August 3

Arvind Limited, Kulin Lalbhai, CII Gujarat chairman, CII Gujarat, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, Indian express India news, Indian express India According to him, the one big challenge for the industry and the government was to create jobs. He said that Gujarat would need to create 7 lakh to 8 lakh of the 150 lakh jobs in the country in a year "to take the economy to the next level". Chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Gujarat and Executive Director of Arvind Limited, Kulin Lalbhai, on Wednesday raised con-

cerns about "middle class consumption" going down and the challenge of creating more "formal jobs".

Asked about the one expectation not met in the 2024-25 Union Budget at a media interaction on Wednesday, Lalbhai said, "One of the things India needs is to get consumption going. This K-shaped recovery (where some industries rebound and others struggle, especially post-pandemic) is worrying. The middle class has to consume. I think jobs will finally help but it will take time. Is there a way to get consumption going faster — would be the one thing we can think of in the next year or two because the middle class is not consuming." He attributed this to reasons like "EMI pressures, indebtedness" and the focus on services rather than goods. "People want experiences rather than things so it is a complex topic," said Lalbhai. According to him, the one big challenge for the industry and the government was to create jobs. He said that Gujarat would need to create 7 lakh to 8 lakh of the 150 lakh jobs in the country in a year "to take the economy to the next level". Of these, the majority need to be "formal jobs", Lalbhai said, as they "give comfort and security to an individual" and also a very different strength to the economy. He said his big takeaways from the Budget were "faith in corporate India, fiscal discipline, infra focus, focus on employment and capability gap and skilling".

Mumbai police to get back its galloping force as govt gives nod to revitalise mounted unit

GNS News Agency, August 3

Mumbaikars are set to see friendly horses patrolling their neighbourhood once again as the state government has approved a proposal from the Mumbai police to revitalise its depleted horse mounted unit. This comes nearly four years after the Mumbai police first launched the project and inducted 13 horses. However, it is now left with just two of them. On July 26, the state government approved the proposal sent by the Mumbai police commissioner and allocated a budget of Rs 36.53 crore to re-establish the unit and sanctioned another Rs 1.88 crore for recurring expenditure.

As per the government resolution (GR) dated July 26, the Mumbai police will now purchase 30 horses and house them at a permanent stable in Marol. "The decision was taken after it was presented and approved in the cabinet meeting held on July 5," the GR said. A similar proposal was approved in 2018 and 13 horses were recruited to the police force over the next two years — seven were bought from the race course while another six were donated by a private firm. The fleet of horses were to be used to aid policemen in efficiently patrolling during a protest or on crowded stretches of Mumbai's beaches and promenades. Officials from the Mumbai police said that mounted policemen will be more effective in patrolling during protests and crowded locations.

"When a policeman is atop a horse, it enhances his vision range and it will help reduce crimes at tourist locations as well as on beaches. It is also easier to navigate on horses in crowded places and narrow city streets as compared to a motor vehicle which often gets stuck. It can also help disperse a crowd gathered to protest," said a senior police officer. While 13 horses were recruited in 2018, over some time, six of them died due to illness and another five were transferred to police academy in Nashik. At present, only two are with Mumbai police and they are housed in a makeshift stable in a police camp at Andheri's Marol area as on some occasions, these horses are used to patrol on Mumbai's beaches. While 30 horses are set to be inducted this time, an officer said, "About Rs 34 crore will be spent on constructing a stable that will be built in two phases. Nearly Rs 1.2 crore would be used on procuring the 30 horses and the remaining funds will be utilised to buy saddlery, sports equipment, training, ceremonial uniform and other transportation expenditure." The official added that the Rs 1.88 crore sanctioned for recurring expenditure would be utilised to pay salaries of groomers, buying fodder for the horses, veterinary and medicine, vaccination, blood check-ups and other materials required to clean the horses and their stable.

The Mumbai police officials revealed that the first proposal sanctioned by the home department in March 2019 was Rs 1.5 crore. It included recurring as well as non-recurring expenditures. "We did not have any experience in running a horse mounted unit due to which a proposal was submitted accordingly, based on which the amount was sanctioned," said a senior police officer. With



Rs 1.5 crore in the bank, the Mumbai police built a makeshift stable, while the government set a capping of Rs 50,000 to buy one horse. "With that amount, we could only get horses that had already crossed nine years of age," an officer said. The police then approached the Mahalaxmi Race Course and after a team visited their Pune unit, the department bought seven thoroughbred horses. On the other hand, six other Indian horses were donated by a private company under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) scheme. "The horses that succumbed to illness were once used for races at Mahalaxmi and their diets were different. Performance or energy enhancement boosters were being fed to them and these boosters impact them as they grow old. Similarly, these raced horses started getting ill and succumbed while they were in our custody," an officer revealed.

In order to avoid such issues, police said that they have now approached horse stud farms in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Haryana for young non-raced horses so that they can be trained as required. The officials said that before sending the fresh proposal in August 2023, a team visited their counterparts in Kolkata, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab and the National Police Academy in Hyderabad. "We realised that there were a lot of loopholes in our previous proposal and since the unit was on the verge of being disbanded, we decided to do some groundwork before sending the fresh proposal. So our team visited the states where mounted police are already in force and accordingly prepared a budget and presented it to the government," said an officer. It was proposed that 65 personnel will be allocated for the unit while 15 groomers will be hired on a contract basis along with a trainer and a doctor. A police officer said that this time a routine would be followed. "We will prepare the diet after seeking advice from experienced players. Once they are procured, the horses and their riders will be trained for six months after which they will start patrolling Mumbai's streets once again," the officer said.

Meet the young shooters of Pune with Olympic dream

GNS News Agency, August 3

In the heart of the historic city of Paris, the Olympic Shooting Range stands as a silent battlefield where marksmen and markswomen from diverse backgrounds converge with a singular goal: to hit the bullseye and etch their names in Olympic history. Among them are seasoned veterans and young prodigies, each with a story to tell and a dream to fulfill. After Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh's spectacular performances, India was on a high yet again for Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar and Swapnil Kusale, who featured in the men's 50m 3P, cleared the qualification round. Kusale, a shooter from Pune on his Olympic debut, advanced to the final after finishing seventh with a score of 590-38x. Tomar, from Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand, ranked 11th with a total of 589-33x. With both of them making it to the qualifying round, they are all set for the finals, which is scheduled for August 1 at 1pm.

"First of all, the journey to the Olympics is not a one day dream. It costs years of dedication and a decade of international tournaments. Secondly, shooting of any kind is expensive. Each bullet costs fifty bucks and Swapnil needs two hundred of them daily for his practice. With no help from the state, it gets hard for athletes," says Akshay Ashataputre, Swapnil Kusale's mentor in Pune. "Right before the Paris Olympics 2024, the Maharashtra government promised Rs 50 lakhs to the selected Olympians from the state. We haven't received a penny till date, even after submitting all the documents for the same. I have seen Swapnil give up on a lot for his commitment to the game and to this country. A little help from the government in form of financial aid can be game changer for athletes like him," said Ashataputre. Speaking to The In-

dian Express, young national shooters based in Pune shared their dreams of representing India at the Olympics.

Ujjwal Patil (21), a national pistol shooter and cousin of Swapnil Kusale says, "I now aspire to be a part of the Indian rifle team so that I can participate in the international event and finally aim for the big apple which is Olympics." Patil has been training since 2019 when he was 17 and now after getting the qualifying points at the 66th National Shooting competition in Bhopal, he has been certified as a nationally renowned shooter. For his aim towards the Olympics, he has been consistently practising for the last two years without a break while managing his academics as a BA LLB student at Fergusson College in Pune. Patil shares how one can manage finances and get sponsored. He tells that Prabodhini in Maharashtra sponsors athletes under the age of 18. Above that, like in the case of his brother Swapnil, he explains, "In the movie MS Dhoni, we all saw that he was focusing 50 per cent of his time in the job and 50 per cent time on sports. Now, it is not like that. If your performance is consistent, you get full year holiday, just have to go once in a month for signature, you get all the equipment also. Swapnil too got a job as a TC and has been playing for the railways," he said. Niranjan Bhandari, a BA geography student at Fergusson College who too qualified for the nationals at the 66th National Shooting Competition in Bhopal, says, "One must have their priorities straight if they want to aim for any international tournament. Being a national shooter, there are days when I have to give up on college events or classes for my training... It's extremely important to be headstrong about sports and have proper family support, along with finances.

Deadline for first round of RTE admissions extended to Aug 5



GNS News Agency, August 3

RTE admissions, RTE admissions Deadline, Right to Education (RTE), RTE admissions extended to Aug 5, Indian express news, current affairs In July, the HC instructed Maharashtra government to resume RTE admissions in its original format wherein 25 per cent of total seats are reserved in private unaided schools for children coming from underprivileged sections of society. The move comes as only 40,020 out of the total 93,009 selected candidates have confirmed their admissions so far.

Sharad Gosavi, Director of Education (Primary),

whose office conducts the RTE admissions, said, "Considering that many students are yet to confirm admissions on their allotted seats, the deadline has been extended." "Considering the delay in the RTE admissions this year, it is anticipated that many students have gone ahead with admissions in other schools. But this extension in the deadline is to ensure that no student is left behind. After this a couple of more rounds will be held to provide opportunity for those who are in the waiting list currently," he added. As many as 2,42,516 students have applied for school admissions under the RTE this year. After the allotment in the first round, 71,276 more students are in the waiting list for allotment of seats in the following rounds of admissions.

The RTE admissions have witnessed significant delay in Maharashtra this year following the amendment to RTE implementation rule and subsequent court case. As per the amendment, private schools having government or aided schools within 1 kilometer radius were not obligated to give RTE admissions. After parents of several students moved the Bombay High Court against the amendment, the court stayed the admissions process. In July, the HC instructed Maharashtra government to resume RTE admissions in its original format wherein 25 per cent of total seats are reserved in private unaided schools for children coming from underprivileged sections of society.

ED searches locations in Mumbai, Karjat, Baramati and Pune over sugar mill's bank loan fraud case

GNS News Agency, August 3

Enforcement Directorate (ED), Karjat, Baramati and Pune, sugar mill bank loan fraud case, bank loan fraud case, Indian express news, current affairs ED's probe has so far revealed that the company M/s Shree Shiv Parvati Sakhar Karkhana Limited (SSPSKL) availed Rs 100 crore loan from banks, but failed to contribute its share of Rs 71.19 crore for the project which was one of the conditions for availing the said loan. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches at various locations in Mumbai, Karjat, Baramati and Pune in a money laundering case linked to a bank loan fraud case against Shree Shiv Parvati Sakhar Karkhana Limited, M/s. Hitech Engineering Corporation India Pvt. Ltd. and their directors Nandkumar Tasgaonkar, Sanjay Awate and Rajendra Ingawale.

The agency carried out the search operations under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 and seized various incriminating documents, digital devices and cash of Rs 19.5 lakh, the central agency said on Wednesday. The ED has started investigation in the matter based on the FIR registered by CBI, EOW-1, New Delhi against M/s Shree Shiv Parvati Sakhar Karkhana Limited and its directors and others for falsifying the accounts, forging and fabricating documents



in order to make unlawful gains. ED's probe has so far revealed that the company M/s Shree Shiv Parvati Sakhar Karkhana Limited (SSPSKL) availed Rs 100 crore loan from banks, but failed to contribute its share of Rs 71.19 crore for the project which was one of the conditions for availing the said loan. Subsequently, through its directors and sister concerns M/s Tasgaonkar Construction Ltd, M/s Tasgaonkar Industries Ltd. and its associate M/s Hitech Engineering Corporation India Pvt. Ltd. major part of loan funds was siphoned off leading to loss to the exchequer and corresponding gains to themselves, the agency stated in a statement.

Chinchpokali suburban station to look like a Metro station after revamp

GNS News Agency, August 3

Chinchpokali suburban station, Chinchpokali station, Mumbai metro station revamp, Mumbai Metro station, Mumbai news, Mumbai current affairs, Maharashtra news, Indian express, current affairs The deck will be connected to the platform through escalators for entry and exit. Whereas, the commercial rooftop space on deck is likely to be rented out to cafes and restaurants considering the area is surrounded by big corporate offices. The tender for the much-awaited Chinchpokali station revamp is likely to be floated by the mid of this month. A senior official confirmed the development, and said that once the construction is over, the station will resemble a modern Metro station.

The proposed station revamp will generate 600 square metres of space for commercial use at the roof of the station deck. The rooftop amenities will come at a height of nine metres from track level, giving a panoramic view of Mumbai's skyline. The existing platform, which is 270 metres long X 8 metres wide, will have an elevated deck for passengers while space on the roof of the deck will be used for commercial purpose.

Interestingly, the existing pedestrian pavement on the road overbridge will also be expanded giving much more space for movement of passengers alighting at station. Additionally, at the time of Ganeshotsav, the expanded foot overbridge will also be useful for devotees to take a glimpse of large idols passing by, including the popular Lalbaughcha Raja. Currently, the public gather



on the ROB. The deck will be connected to the platform through escalators for entry and exit. Whereas, the commercial rooftop space on deck is likely to be rented out to cafes and restaurants considering the area is surrounded by big corporate offices. Notably, one of the most important stations of mainline of the Central Railway, Chinchpokali station was opened on December 9, 1867. In 1896, during the Bombay plague epidemic, this station was converted into medical transit place. Currently, over 36,000 passengers use this station daily to commute to adjacent localities like Arthur Road, Saat Rasta, Lalbaugh areas where highrise residential as well as commercial towers have surfaced in the recent past, prompting railways to revamp this station under Amrit Bharat station redevelopment scheme with a budget of Rs 41 crores.

Relieving traffic at Malad's Mith Chowki: Eyeing December deadline, BMC conducts girder launch

GNS News Agency, August 3

On Tuesday night, the civic body launched two girders of the final span of the flyover which passes over the main Mith Chowki junction, while two final girders are set to be launched in the next 3-4 days, said a civic official. On Tuesday night, the civic body launched two girders of the final span of the flyover which passes over the main Mith Chowki junction, while two final girders are set to be launched in the next 3-4 days, said a civic official. (File Photo)

With its eyes glued towards meeting the year-end target, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) launched two girders on the T-shaped flyover being constructed to relieve traffic over Malad's Mith Chowki on the night of Tuesday, with the civic body slated to launch the pending girders in the coming days. In what will usher in a big relief to motorists traversing through the jam-packed Mith Chowki junction, the BMC is aiming to open one arm of the bridge by November, while a target of December has been set for the opening of the entire flyover.

Infamous for its traffic snarls, Mith Chowki is a four-arm junction that witnesses the heavy flow of traffic from Madh Island, Kandivali, Borivali, Andheri, and Versova coming from its four sides. Seeking to bring relief from the high-waiting durations at the choke point, the civic body is constructing a T-shaped flyover, exclusively for light-weight vehicles, which will enable motorists commuting towards Malad station and Western Express High (WEH) to skip the traffic island through the bridge's eastern arm.

Meanwhile, the flyover's southbound arm, which gives the structure its T-shape, will enable commuters to breeze past the congestion towards Infinity Mall, Andheri, Juhu and Bandra. On Tuesday night, the civic body launched two girders of the final span of the flyover which passes over the main Mith Chowki junction, while two final girders are set to be launched in the next 3-4 days, said a civic official. "The entire flyover is divided into six spans, of which two pass over the junction while four spans are for the approach roads. Each span comprises four girders. Earlier this week, we launched some girders on Sunday while two girders over the junction were launched on Tuesday night. Meanwhile, the pending girders will also be launched in the upcoming days, which will mark the completion of all the girder launches," said a civic official. Fabricated in Ahmedabad, each girder weighs 20 tonnes and were assembled in the city before their launch. To facilitate the process on the heavily jammed junction, the civic body diverted traffic along the route and conducted the launch between 1 am and 4 am. Following the completion of girder launch, BMC is slated to commence civil works pertaining to concreting of slabs. "While the opening depends on several factors like rainfall, we are aiming for a target of November-end for one lane to ensure that the commuters get relief to some extent. The right arm of the bridge is the more challenging aspect as it has a curve but despite all odds, we are working with the aim of completing work on the entire flyover by year end," added an official privy to the project developments.

Video appears to show Thomas Crooks running across roof, taking position before shooting



video obtained by Fox News shows. All the while, Trump speaks on the stage, addressing the crowd, unaware of the danger. The clip cuts out before the shooting unfolds. Crooks was killed by Secret Service snipers after he opened fire. Trump was wounded by Crooks, and firefighter Corey Comperatore was killed. Meanwhile, two bullets hit Copenhaver, 74, and another two struck 57-year-old attendee David Dutch. Both of them are recovering.

Meanwhile, the FBI has revealed that Crooks is believed to have shared "antisemitic" ideas and embraced "political violence" on social media, but the "investigative team is still working to verify this account to determine if it did in fact belong to the shooter." Between 2019 and 2020, the account left about 700 comments online, Deputy FBI Director Paul Abbate told Congress. "Some of these comments, if ultimately attributable to the shooter, appear to reflect antisemitic and anti-immigration themes, to espouse political violence and are described as extreme in nature," Abbate said, according to New York Post. In latest developments, acting Secret Service director Ronald Rowe admitted at a joint congressional hearing this week that he was "ashamed" of the lapses that led to the shooting at the rally. "As a career law enforcement officer, and a 25-year veteran with the Secret Service, I cannot defend why that roof was not better secured," he added.

GNS News Agency, August 3

New footage from Donald Trump's Pennsylvania rally shows a figure running across the AGR International roof outside the rally grounds shortly before the shooting was carried out. The chilling video was taken by James Copenhaver, who was eventually gravely wounded in the shooting. The footage, captured on July 13 at 6:08 pm, which is minutes before shots were fired, appears to show gunman Thomas Matthew Crooks running along the rooftop. He appears to be in clear view of the former president, who was on the stage at the time.

The figure is seen running across the rooftop and then crouching down to take position over the rally, the

Big H-1B lottery rigging racket exposed in US, Indian American 'linked' to bluffing the system, denies allegations

GNS News Agency, August 3

H-1B visa lottery scheme- America's biggest foreign worker employment policy is being manipulated and exploited by staffing and outsourcing companies, according to an explosive report by Bloomberg.

The report highlights how in 2023, 446,000 people sought H-1B visas and only about 85,000 were available. It further adds, over 11,600 visas went to multinational outsourcing companies, with vast overseas workforces that flood the lottery with entries. Another 22,600 went to IT staffing firms. In all, nearly half the H-1Bs in Bloomberg's analysis went to outsourcing or staffing companies and as its investigation reveals many of them cheated on a massive scale by submitting multiple entries for the same worker. How the rigging of the H-1B Lottery System works

The data from 2020 - 2023 obtained by Bloomberg as a result of a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security reveals how certain staffing firms have ingeniously exploited the H-1B lottery system through a practice known as "multiple registration." This tactic involves submitting multiple entries for a single individual to enhance their chances of securing a visa—a manipulation the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) characterizes as "fraud". The findings indicate that about 15,500 visas, or roughly one in six awarded last year, were obtained through such fraudulent means. In a particularly egregious case, one operator of a staffing firm utilized up to a dozen companies to submit the same applicants as many as 15 times, acquiring hundreds of H-1B visas while many others were left empty-handed. The USCIS appears hamstrung in its ability to enforce regulations effectively, raising critical questions regarding the agency's enforcement capacity. H-1B rigging racket: Curious case of Kandi Srinivasa Reddy

Bloomberg investigation led to Kandi Srinivasa Reddy, an Indian American man who came to US in early 2000s and earned a master's degree. In 2013, he started his own outfit called Cloud Big Data Technologies LLC. Reddy's operation involved submitting multiple applications for the same individuals under different company names, thereby increasing their chances of being selected in the lottery. According to Bloomberg's investi-



gation, Reddy controlled several entities, including Cloud Big Data Technologies LLC, Machine Learning Technologies LLC, and others with similar names and overlapping addresses. These companies submitted numerous entries for the same workers, resulting in over 3,000 entries in total and securing hundreds of H-1B visas since 2020. In one year alone, Reddy's firms accounted for more than 300 successful H-1B applications, significantly more than any previous year.

Report further asserts, after winning an H-1B, Reddy's company rented the workers on contract to corporations such as Meta Platforms Inc. and HSCB Holdings Plc., visa applications show. The company's advertisements claimed that it collected 20% or 30% of the worker's pay, an amount that could reach \$15,000 or more each year for a typical worker. Lucas Garrison, a Texas lawyer representing Reddy, told Bloomberg a number of the companies' visas had been challenged by the USCIS for abusing the lottery system. However, the agency hadn't followed the proper procedures for prohibiting the activity, nor did it have proof that Reddy's companies broke the rules. How the H-1B Lottery System Works Originally designed to allocate H-1B visas on a first-come, first-served basis, the USCIS switched to a lottery system due to overwhelming demand with a cap of 85,000. Each year, the lottery draws names randomly from the pool of applicants, which has nearly doubled in recent years, making the chances of securing a visa increasingly slim.

JD Vance's controversial criticism of Simone Biles' 2021 Tokyo exit resurfaces after Paris win



GNS News Agency, August 3

As Simone Biles basks in the glory of her recent gold win at the Paris Olympics, an old clip of JD Vance criticising her Tokyo exit has resurfaced, stirring controversy. Trump's VP pick, who remains in the headlines due to his multiple past comments, harshly rebuked Biles at the time for stepping back from the 2021 Games—a decision widely praised for its emphasis on mental health. On July 31st, the 27-year-old won her 8th Olympic gold medal. The gymnast broke the record for the most awards in American gymnastics history after the

women's US gymnastics team won gold in the all-around finals, but back in 2021, it was a totally different story.

Yet another round of ill-timed comments from the Ohio senator has surfaced, this time aimed at the decorated star of U.S. gymnastics who is soaking in a deluge of praise and congratulatory messages from around the world. The 2024 win marks her triumphant return to the Olympics after her dramatic withdrawal from the Tokyo 2021 Games due to mental health challenges.

In 2021, after Simone Biles announced her withdrawal, Vance expressed

his bewilderment at how the media and public were portraying her decision to leave the Olympic team as an act of heroism rather than a tragic moment. "It's understandable that she was going through an incredible amount of pressure," the Ohio senator at the time told Fox News in an interview. "What I find so weird about this — and it reflects on the media more than it does on Simone Biles — is that we've tried to turn a very tragic moment, Simone Biles quitting the Olympic team, into this act of heroism," he added. What Vance said about Simone Biles' "weakest moments" after leaving the 2021 Olympics due to

mental health issues, Biles later explained that she was actually dealing with "the twisties." This serious condition left her disoriented and unable to sense her position in the air, which can be very challenging for gymnasts. However, the senator turned Trump's vice-presidential pick at the time, argued that it reflects poorly on their therapeutic culture. He suggested that instead of praising people for their strength and heroic moments, we are instead celebrating their weakest moments. "Being an athlete at that level is incredibly tough," he accepted. "A normal response at this moment would be to say, 'It's just a shame that she's going through this. It's a shame that she quit,' but instead, what our press has done, I think, is turn this into this weird therapeutic moment. 'Let's praise her for doing this.' And I think that's really where the problem herein lies," the Hillbilly Elgy author added. This isn't the first time Vance has faced backlash for his past remarks. Previously, the 39-year-old Republican sparked outrage after a 2021 resurfaced clip showed him referring to Vice President Kamala Harris as a "childless cat lady."

Indo-Canadian minister gets embroiled in fresh controversy over Diljit Dosanjh tour



GNS News Agency, August 3

Toronto: Indo-Canadian Cabinet Minister Harjit Sajjan has become the subject of a fresh controversy after a media report that he requested that 100 soldiers to serve as "backdrop" to a performance in April in Vancouver by Indian entertainer Diljit Dosanjh. That request was turned down by the Canadian Armed Forces and that denial relayed to Sajjan's office by the Department of Defence. Sajjan, the Minister for Emergency Preparedness, forwarded the request for the presence of the soldiers for the Vancouver show from Dosanjh's manager Sonali Singh, according to the news outlet Globe and Mail.

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) "determined that meeting this request would not be feasible due to the tight timeline and personnel availability", the outlet quoted a spokesperson as saying. She added, "Additionally, it is crucial that participation in such events does not impact domestic and international operations, and our operational readiness must be sustained at all times." A spokesperson for Sajjan defended the request, saying, "Minister Sajjan agreed the concert would be a good opportunity for the Canadian Armed Forces to engage with and expand connections to a diverse community of young Ca-

nadians, along the lines of the CAF outreach and recruiting events at professional sporting events."

She also said, "Diljit Dosanjh is the biggest Punjabi artist in the world and was on the verge of making history as the first Punjabi artist at a sellout concert at one of the largest stadiums in Vancouver." Sajjan was enmeshed in another controversy recently, when the same news outlet revealed that following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021, as the then Minister of National Defence, he "instructed" special forces undertaking evacuation of Canadians and others, to make the rescue of 225 Sikhs a "priority". In an editorial in early July, the Globe and Mail said, "Mr Sajjan's actions hampered efforts to evacuate Canadians and people who risked their lives to help Canada, and who should have come before anyone else. It was his mission to get those people to safety. He compromised that mission." Sajjan's office stated he had not ordered the forces to shift their priority but to also take into account vulnerable groups like the Sikhs. He also accused the outlet of racism, as he said, "I can only surmise that if I did not wear a turban, no one would question whether my actions were appropriate."

Sajjan was appointed Canada's Defence Minister when the Liberal Party Government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau first came into power in 2015. He remained in the post till 2021 when he was replaced by another Indo-Canadian Anita Anand, after a sexual misconduct crisis came to the fore during his tenure. The current Defence Minister is Bill Blair. Dosanjh's Canadian shows, part of his Dil-Luminati tour, started at the BC Place venue in Vancouver on April 27, and attracted a crowd of over 50,000, a record for a Punjabi performer. It concluded on July 13 at Toronto's Rogers Center where Trudeau appeared with him backstage prior to the show. Trudeau was criticised in India for only identifying as "a guy from Punjab" without mentioning his nationality or country of origin.

14 arrested in human trafficking sting at Comic-Con, officers worked undercover as sex buyers to rescue victims

GNS News Agency, August 3

As many as 14 people were arrested as part of a human trafficking operation at Comic-Con in San Diego over the weekend, according to state officials. The task force reportedly went undercover and posted advertisements soliciting sex to get to the suspects. Some officers even worked undercover as sex buyers in an attempt to identify potential victims and contact them. As part of the operation, authorities were able to successfully recover 10 sex trafficking victims, including a 16-year-old girl. The victims were given support services. According to a statement from California Attorney General Rob Bonta's office, the team was on the lookout for "sex buyers using the San Diego Comic-Con Convention to seek out potential victims." Los Angeles Times reported. The huge convention was targeted by state and local authorities who were working through the San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force. Every year, more than 100,000 people come to San Diego to attend Comic-Con, which is a gathering of fans of comic books and pop culture. "Unfortunately, sex traffickers capitalize on large scale events such as Comic-Con to exploit their victims for profit," said Bonta, according to ABC7. "These arrests send a clear message to potential offenders that their criminal behavior will not be tolerated."

This year's Comic-Con concluded Sunday, July 28. The event takes place every summer at the San Diego Convention Center. "When people use these events as an opportunity to prey upon minors, (Homeland Security Investigations) HSI and our law enforcement partners will find you and bring you before a court of law to face criminal charges," Christopher Davis, acting special agent in charge for HSI San Diego, said in a statement, according to USA Today. "There is no place for alleged predators to



operate in our city."

"There is no more insidious crime than human trafficking"

The investigation was conducted over a period of three days. Support services, child welfare services and juvenile support service advocates were present at the scene to help. "There is no more insidious crime than human trafficking," San Diego County Sheriff Kelly Martinez said in a statement. "The coercion and violence which enslaves people for profit and places them into forced labor or sex is criminal." The event organisers stressed that they had no knowledge of the operation until after it was done. "Obviously we find this very disturbing," Comic-Con International wrote in a statement. "While we were not made aware of this operation, it is our understanding that the arrests were made outside of the event." The organisers added that they work closely "with a variety of law enforcement entities throughout the year and stand ready to assist in any way we can."

King Charles 'fears' what Prince Harry will do when money runs dry; William will never...

GNS News Agency, August 3

A soon-to-be-released biography by royal correspondent Robert Jobson, titled Catherine: The Princess of Wales, unveils King Charles' deep concerns regarding Prince Harry's future once his financial assets are exhausted. The book discusses the monarch's unease about what will happen when Harry runs out of his substantial earnings from his various business deals with companies like Netflix and Spotify, which he and Meghan Markle have been involved with. The worry grows further as William is 'adamant' about not helping the Sussexes in the future.

According to a recent report by PEOPLE, Charles and Harry are 'not on speaking terms' ever since Duke's last trip to the UK to see his ailing father. Now, Jobson alleges in an excerpt of his book that the 'Harry problem' is still messing things up for the king even though he's trying to keep his distance from his estranged son.

"What worries His Majesty and his top team," a palace official said, "is what is going to happen when all the money runs out." As per Jobson, the couple is "trying to find an income stream (jam, anyone?) that doesn't involve dishing the dirt on the Royal Family." As per the NY Post Jobson thinks Harry and Meghan, are looking for ways to make money that don't involve launching scathing remarks against the Royal Family. He thinks people are getting fed up with their never-ending complaints. He also thinks there's a "Sussex-shaped void in the Royal Family," which has never been so noticeable referencing to the Royal Family's diminishing appeal and workforce following the departure of Harry and Meghan from their senior royal employment positions. Prince William 'adamant' to not help Sussexes Despite signing new Netflix deals and launching podcasts, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex face scepticism about their projects' success. Many believe their initial documentary exhausted the potential for royal-related controversy, leaving them to explore other income streams. During his 2021 interview with Oprah Winfrey, Harry reportedly said that these media deals were a financial safety net necessitated by his father's withdrawal of financial support. However, despite the void, that the Sussexes left behind, Jobson suggests that William is "adamant about refusing to help the Sussexes in the future." King Charles will 'never shut the door' for Harry Recent claims suggest that the monarch is



giving his youngest son the silent treatment. "His calls go unanswered. He has tried to reach out about the King's health, but those calls go unanswered too," according to an insider. However, the Royal book author thinks that the King is still concerned about Harry and that "he'll never shut the door on his second child, though there seems little chance of a meaningful reconciliation for now."

After over 20 years, main plotter of 9/11 attacks agrees to plead guilty

GNS News Agency, August 3

Washington: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, accused as the main plotter in al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, has agreed to plead guilty, the Defense Department said, pointing to a long-delayed resolution in an attack that altered the course of the US and much of the Middle East. He and two accomplices, Walid Bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi, are expected to enter the pleas at the military commission at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as soon as next week.

Pentagon officials declined to immediately release the terms of the plea bargain. The New York Times, citing unidentified Pentagon officials, said the terms included the men's longstanding condition that they be spared the risk of the death penalty.

BCCI tells NCLAT it has settled dues with Byjus, proposal opposed by US-based creditor



heard further on Thursday, with NCLAT stating that a Committee of Creditors will not be formed until then. Arguing for GLAS, former Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi said, "Byju is unable to pay his staff. He is unable to pay salaries. Coaching centres are closed. Where is he getting this money?... Is he paying from money (owed to Glas Trust)?" Appearing for BCCI, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta pointed out that the amount was a relatively small issue (compared to the dues to Glas Trust) and their intervention should not come between two parties settling the issue. Mehta said Riju Raveendran, Byju Raveendran's brother and largest Byju's shareholder, is making the payment, and he was not restrained by any order or embargo.

Mukul Rohatgi argued further, "The finding (by a US court) is that Mr Byju and his brother conspired to divert more than \$500 million of our money and... his brother is also commented upon. It is our money that has been withdrawn by these fellows (to pay BCCI)." Rohatgi raised doubts regarding the idea that Riju Raveendran was paying with his own money as opposed to money from his brother. Earlier this month, the Bengaluru bench of NCLAT admitted BCCI's application for initiation of corporate insolvency proceedings against Think & Learn Private Ltd, the parent company of Byju's, for defaulting on an amount of Rs 158.90 crore.

The matter is set to be heard further on Thursday, with NCLAT stating that a Committee of Creditors will not be formed until then. The matter is set to be heard further on Thursday, with NCLAT stating that a Committee of Creditors will not be formed until then. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday informed the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) it has reached a settlement with Byju's on the repayment of over Rs 158 crore due to it by the edtech company.

However, the settlement was opposed in court by the GLAS Trust Company LLC, one of Byju's US-based creditors, which questioned the provenance of the funds that Byju's would pay BCCI with. The matter is set to be

Bank credit growth declines, gold loans rise 30.5%, credit card outstanding rises by Rs 51,000 cr

Overall bank credit growth drops; sharp rise in gold, housing loans. Analysts have attributed the slower rate to RBI measures such as higher risk weights on unsecured loans, a higher base effect and banks' focus on managing the credit-to-deposit ratio. An Unfavourable base effect brought down the overall non-food credit growth of the banks to 13.9 per cent at Rs 163.46 lakh crore as of June 30, 2024 as against 16.3 per cent in June 2023, even as gold and housing loans rose sharply, according to the Reserve Bank's latest data.

The growth in credit card outstanding, meanwhile, declined during the 12-month period.

Analysts have attributed the slower rate to RBI measures such as higher risk weights on unsecured loans, a higher base effect and banks' focus on managing the credit-to-deposit ratio. Gold loan outstanding jumped by 30.5 per cent to Rs 123,776 crore as of June 2024 from Rs 94,872 crore (19.3 per cent growth) in June 2023. Credit card outstanding rose by Rs 51,000 crore to Rs 273,044 crore, showing a slower growth of 23.3 per cent as against 37.6 per cent a year ago, according to RBI data. "The rise in gold loans could be due to the sharp rise in gold prices in the last one year which prompted people to pledge gold to raise finances," said a banking source. Gold loan NBFCs also hold a sizeable gold portfolio with Muthoot Finance alone accounting for a loan asset portfolio of Rs 63,200 crore in 2023. Overall growth in the personal loan segment was lower at 16.6 per cent (Rs 50.91 lakh crore) in June 2024 as compared to 21.3 per cent a year ago, largely due to moderation in growth recorded in 'other personal loans' and 'advances against fixed deposits'. However, credit growth to housing, the largest constituent of the segment, accelerated by 18.2 per cent at Rs 24.27 lakh crore in June 2024 from 14.8 per cent (Rs 20.52 lakh crore) a year ago, RBI data shows.

RBI measures to check the unprecedented growth in unsecured loans had slowed down the growth in the segment. In November 2023, the RBI had increased risk weight on the exposure of banks towards consumer credit, credit card receivables and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) by 25 per cent up to 150 per cent. The move was aimed to address build-up of any risks in these segments. RBI data shows that credit growth to agriculture and allied activities remained robust at 17.4 per cent



(y-o-y) in June 2024, but it was lower compared with 19.7 per cent a year ago. Credit to industry grew at 7.7 per cent to Rs 37.12 lakh crore in June 2024 as compared with 7.4 per cent in June 2023. Among major industries, while y-o-y growth in credit to chemicals and chemical products, food processing and infrastructure was higher in June 2024, credit growth to basic metal and metal product, petroleum, coal products and nuclear fuels and textiles moderated, RBI says.

However, credit growth to services sector moderated substantially to 15.1 per cent in June 2024 from 26.8 per cent a year ago, primarily driven down by lower credit growth in non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and trade segments. According to CareEdge Ratings, if the credit and deposit inflows over the past 3 months and 6 months are studied, credit offtake at 5.3 per cent for six months and 2.3 per cent for 3 months has lagged the deposit growth numbers of 6.0 per cent and 3.4 per cent for a similar period. Meanwhile, in absolute terms, deposits expanded by Rs. 23.9 lakh crore over the last 12 months and reached Rs. 211.8 lakh crore as of July 12, 2024. Deposit growth is expected to be prominent in FY25 as banks intensify efforts to strengthen their liability franchise. The banks are also sourcing funds via certificates of deposits (at a relatively higher cost) which have shown significant traction. This aims to prevent constraints on credit uptake due to deposit growth. The absolute growth in credit offtake stood at Rs 8.4 lakh crore for six months and Rs 3.8 lakh crore for 3 months has lagged the deposit numbers of Rs 11.9 lakh crore and Rs 7 lakh crore for the similar period, CareEdge said.

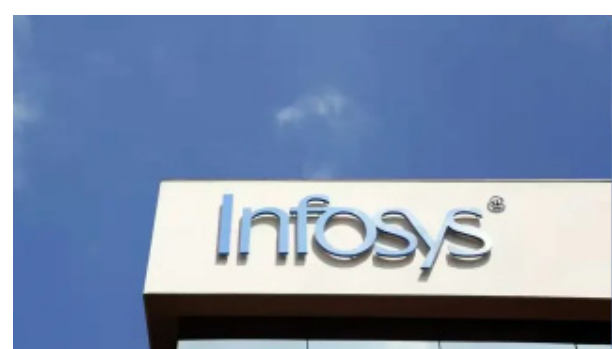
Infosys slapped with Rs 32,403 crore GST demand notice, says it has paid all dues

Infosys slapped with Rs 32,403 cr GST demand notice, says it has paid all dues. In its notice, the GST probe wing has invoked reverse charge mechanism, where the recipient of goods/services assumes the responsibility for tax payment, instead of the seller. The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has slapped a Rs 32,403-crore notice on Infosys for services availed by the company from its overseas branches over a five-year period starting 2017. Bengaluru-based Infosys, in a stock exchange filing Wednesday, called the missive from the tax department a "pre-show cause" notice and said it believes the GST is not applicable on the expenses in contention.

The IT company said the Karnataka State GST authorities have issued a pre-show cause notice for payment of GST of Rs 32,403 crore for the period July 2017 to March 2022 towards the expenses incurred by overseas branch offices of Infosys Limited, and added that it has responded to the pre-show cause notice. "...the Company has also received a pre-show cause notice from the Director General of GST Intelligence on the same matter and the Company is in the process of responding to the same," the filing stated. The company believes that as per regulations, GST is not applicable on such expenses. The DGGI is the intelligence and investigative agency for matters relating to violation of the Goods & Services Tax, Central Excise Duty and Service Tax.

"The Company believes that, as per regulations, GST is not applicable on these expenses. Additionally, as per a recent Circular (circular number 210/4/2024 dated June 26, 2024) issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs on the recommendations of the GST Council, services provided by the overseas branches to the Indian entity are not subject to GST," Infosys said. In its notice, the GST probe wing has invoked reverse charge mechanism, where the recipient of goods/services assumes the responsibility for tax payment, instead of the seller. A detailed query sent to the DGGI did not elicit a response.

In its exchange filing, Infosys said GST payments are eligible for credit or refund against export of IT services. "Infosys has paid all its GST dues and is fully in compliance with the central and state regulations on this matter." The particular circular referred to by the company (No.210/4/2024) issued in June, while flagging the case



The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has slapped a Rs 32,403-crore notice on Infosys for services availed by the company from its overseas branches over a five-year period starting 2017.

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

Why green almonds deserve to be on your plate this season



During the rainy season, your body needs extra care and nourishment to stay healthy. It is the time of the year when you must consume healthier foods to up your immunity against monsoon-related illnesses. And, one of the best ways to do so is by having seasonal foods like green almonds.

So, we decided to find out more about hare badam. "Green almonds or sweet green pods are a superfood you must consume to maintain perfect health," Dt Divya Gopal, consultant dietician and nutritionist, Motherhood Hospitals, Banashankari, Bengaluru said. Green almonds are a very good source of essential vitamins and minerals, like vitamin E and magnesium. "These work together to improve the hair follicles and reduce hair fall. With regular intake, you will have enhanced shine and strength in your hair during the humid monsoon season," said Divya. The high vitamin E content in green almonds also benefits the skin. Vitamin E is a potent antioxidant that fends off free radicals, thereby preventing skin damage and the subsequent process of ageing. "Green almonds nourish the skin from within to make it soft, supple, and

glowing. It can also help reduce acne and other skin problems that flare up during monsoons," said Divya.

Monsoon is when the risk of infection is higher. According to the expert, green almonds are full of antioxidants and essential nutrients that build the immune system and let your body fight against common ailments and monsoon infections. "With regular consumption, it will keep you healthy and energetic throughout this season," said Divya. Helps in lowering bad cholesterol. According to Divya, green almonds help lower the levels of bad cholesterol. "They hold monounsaturated fats when they are close to the stage of ripeness, those that are excellent for heart health. Soaking green almonds can help in decreasing the risk of cardiovascular diseases as it helps lower the level of low-density lipoprotein," said Divya. Strengthens bones and teeth. Green almonds are rich in calcium and magnesium, core minerals essential for bone and teeth health. "Their regular consumption will make your bones and teeth stronger, thus reducing the risk of osteoporosis and other bone diseases," said Divya. Excellent for digestion. The fibre content in green almonds aids digestion and promotes a healthy gut. "Its consumption, therefore, will keep digestive problems like constipation, away during the monsoon when diets and routines change, at bay," said Divya. Green almonds are powerhouses of cell-damage-preventing antioxidants. These antioxidants have a prominent role in reducing inflammation and preventing chronic diseases. How to have them? Be it as a mid-day snack, in salads, or for smoothies, green almonds are versatile and delicious. "Embrace the goodness of green almonds for strong hair, glowing skin, and immunity, along with that extra impetus needed for well-being during the monsoon season," said Divya.

Mom-to-be Masaba Gupta just made a Public Service Announcement: 'Ragi-jowar-sweet potato paratha is...'

Healthy doesn't have to be bland; it can be bursting with flavours. The same was recently proven by mom-to-be Masaba Gupta who swears by all things healthy. "Public service announcement — ragi, jowar, and sweet potato paratha is yummier than basic aloo paratha," the designer, who is extremely particular about her diet and fitness, wrote on Instagram Stories. Taking a cue from the Masaba Masaba actor's revelation, let's understand what makes ragi-jowar-sweet potato a nourishing, yummy combination.

Dr Priyanka Suhag, consultant, dept of obstetrics and gynaecology at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi shared that ragi-jowar-sweet potato paratha is a nutritious alternative to the traditional aloo paratha, making it an excellent choice for pregnant women. "This paratha is packed with essential nutrients: ragi (finger millet) is rich in calcium, iron, and dietary fibre, crucial for bone health and preventing anaemia during pregnancy; jowar (sorghum) provides complex carbohydrates and protein, contributing to sustained energy levels, and sweet potato is an excellent source of beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A, essential for fetal development," said Dr Suhag. Additionally, the lower glycemic index of this paratha helps manage blood sugar levels, reducing the risk of gestational diabetes, Dr Suhag added.

What more? The high fibre content in ragi and jowar promotes healthy digestion, preventing constipation, a



common issue during pregnancy. Moreover, sweet potato is rich in healthy antioxidants and vitamins that support overall health and immunity. "Incorporating ragi-jowar-sweet potato paratha into your diet can enhance nutrient intake, support digestive health, and maintain steady energy levels, making it a superior choice for pregnant women," said Dr Suhag. Experts like Susmita N, clinical nutritionist, Cloudnine Group of Hospitals, Bengaluru also suggest that adopting a diet that excludes raw foods can be a beneficial practice for pregnant women. "It's essential to maintain a balanced diet by incorporating a variety of cooked vegetables, fruits, grains, and proteins to ensure adequate nutrient intake," said Susmita.

5 silent warning signs of high blood pressure in the mornings

High blood pressure, often called the silent killer, can pose a significant health risk. But did you know that morning blood pressure readings can hold valuable clues about your overall cardiovascular health?

Dr Sameer V Pagad, Senior Consultant-Interventional Cardiologist at Gleneagles Hospitals, Parel, explains the importance of morning blood pressure and the silent warning signs you shouldn't ignore.

"Our blood pressure naturally fluctuates throughout the day. However, consistently high readings upon waking, a condition known as morning hypertension, can be a cause for concern," he said in an interaction. This can be influenced by your body's natural rhythm, stress hormone levels, and even sleep disturbances, according to Dr Pagad. While occasional spikes are normal, persistently high readings could indicate underlying health issues or unhealthy lifestyle habits that disrupt your body's natural blood pressure regulation.

High blood pressure, Lifestyle, Diet, Potassium Uncontrolled high blood pressure silently harms your body. Silent warning signs: Don't miss these morning cues. High blood pressure often has no noticeable symptoms, making it crucial to pay attention to subtle changes in your well-being, especially in the mornings. Here are 5 silent warning signs Dr Pagad highlights: Persistent Morning Headaches: High blood pressure can strain your blood vessels, leading to headaches upon waking. Unexplained Nosebleeds: The delicate blood vessels in your nose are susceptible to rupture due to elevated pressure, causing



sudden nosebleeds. Constant Fatigue: Feeling persistently drained in the mornings could be a sign of high blood pressure affecting your energy levels. Restlessness: Difficulty relaxing or feeling agitated in the morning can be linked to morning hypertension. Morning Dizziness: Experiencing dizziness upon waking can sometimes be caused by fluctuations in blood pressure. By understanding the importance of morning blood pressure readings and recognizing the warning signs, you can take proactive steps to manage your health. Remember, consulting your doctor for regular checkups and personalised guidance is crucial for maintaining optimal blood pressure control and reducing your risk of cardiovascular complications. Don't wait for the silent killer to speak volumes — take charge of your mornings and safeguard your heart health!

As 7-month pregnant Egyptian fencer competes at Paris Olympics, we ask expert if combat sport during pregnancy is safe

Updates from the Paris Olympics 2024 are getting interesting by the day, and we get to read about some defining and incredible moments. One such news has been about Egyptian fencer Nada Hafez who competed while being seven months pregnant. The 26-year-old athlete, who hails from Cairo, took to Instagram to share her experience, writing: "What appears to you as two players on the podium, were actually three! It was me, my competitor, and my yet-to-come-to-our-world little baby!" "My baby and I had our fair share of challenges, be it both physical and emotional. The rollercoaster of pregnancy is tough on its own, but having to fight to keep the balance of life and sports was nothing short of strenuous, however worth it. I'm writing this post to say that pride fills

my being for securing my place in the round of 16!" added Hafez, who was competing in her third Olympics. Though her progress was halted in the last round by South Korea's Jeon Hayoung — who defeated her 15-7 — Hafez's grit and determination to compete at such a crucial juncture during her pregnancy has been extremely inspiring. Taking a leaf out of her Olympics diary, we reached out to an expert to understand how safe combat sports during pregnancy are. Engaging in combat sports, like fencing, during pregnancy carries a number of serious health concerns, said Dr Priyanka Suhag, consultant, dept of obstetrics and gynaecology, CK Birla Hospital (R), Delhi.

Aishwarya Rai and Aaradhya Bachchan make a stylish return to Mumbai after New York vacation.



Bollywood actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and her daughter Aaradhya Bachchan made a stylish return to Mumbai in the early hours of Thursday after holidaying in New York. The mother-daughter duo was spotted at the airport, radiating glamour and flashing their smiles. Aishwarya looked effortlessly chic in an all-black ensemble, while Aaradhya opted for a cute lavender sweatshirt paired with black trousers. The duo was all smiles as they waved at the paparazzi, who captured their arrival. In the videos that surfaced, the Taal actor is seen holding Aaradhya close as they head towards their car.

Aishwarya and Aaradhya, who had been enjoying a vacation in New York for the past few days, left Mumbai closely after attending Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's star-studded wedding festivities which was also attended by Abhishek Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Shweta Bachchan Nanda, Nayva Naveli Nanda and Agastya Nanda. During her vacation, the former Miss World even managed to meet a lucky fan during her trip. A fan named Jereeya Reyna, who is also an aspiring actor shared a heartwarming post on Instagram, expressing her excitement about meeting her idol, Aishwarya twice. Sharing a 'then-and-now' photo, Reyna wrote, "Meeting your idol twice in one lifetime deserves a spot on the grid. swipe to see me at my most unhinged. Aish, thank you for always being so kind to me. You listened so intently as I told you about the impact you've had in my life. it was always my dream to thank you for it. I wish you all the happiness and joy in this world (sic)."

On the work front, Aishwarya's stellar performance in Mani Ratnam's historical drama Ponniyin Selvan 1 and 2 continues to be the talk of the town. The actress also made a stunning appearance at the Cannes Film Festival, accompanied by her daughter Aaradhya.

Aamir Khan says he was 'very stressed' about son Junaid Khan's debut Maharaj: 'He never accepted any help from me ever'

Aamir Khan's son Junaid Khan recently made his debut in the film industry with the YRF film Maharaj. While the film released without any promotions, the team started speaking about the film after it came out. Aamir, who has not been a part of Maharaj promotions, has now said that he was "very stressed" about Junaid's debut and added that Junaid never "accepted any help" from him.

Speaking at the song launch of 'Kooriye', Aamir was quoted by News 18 as saying, "When Junaid's film Maharaj was released, I was very stressed whether people would like his work or not. Junaid has worked really hard for himself and he never accepted any help from me in any way ever. So I'm very proud and happy that he made it on his own terms, in his own way and you know, and I can see that."

Junaid had previously said that Aamir was supportive of his career choices and added that his father does not interfere and force his opinions on to his children. In an earlier chat with Siddharth Kannan, Junaid said that his father has "the best solution for everything" related to films. "There is a lot to learn from just how he conducts himself. Failures affect him, but he takes the time to process it and then move on to learning from it. He will figure out what went wrong and proceed from there, so that's his process which is probably the best way to go about it," he said. In the same chat, Junaid said that his mother Reena "shaped" his personality. He shared, "My mother



has a huge impact on my life. She is the one who brought me up. Papa is a very loving father, but he would be busy a lot in life. So, the one person who has shaped me the most as a person is my mother. But if there is a difficulty that I am going through, I can call anyone, maa, papa, Ira. They are always one phone call away. Even papa, who is incredibly busy, if you need to get a hold of him, it will not take you more than a couple of minutes, and if you need it, he will have all the time in the world you want. I have a supportive, open family." Even before the release of Maharaj, Junaid was working on two more Hindi films. His next has him starring with Sai Pallavi. Another film has him starring alongside Khushi Kapoor.

Years after accusing Sanjay Leela Bhansali of being physically, verbally abusive, Ranbir Kapoor revisits his 'anger' on Black set



Actor Ranbir Kapoor spoke about starting out in the film industry as an assistant to director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, at a time when 'every filmmaker' in Bollywood had expressed their desire to work with him. Ranbir said that his father, the late Rishi Kapoor, felt that he was getting too much attention, and sent him abroad to study. When Ranbir returned, he enrolled in the best 'film school' that he could find – Bhansali's set. In an interview with entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath, he recalled what a tough taskmaster Bhansali was, and how the experience 'hardened' him for the future. Ranbir went on to make his acting debut with Bhansali's 2007 film, Saawariya. Asked about his beginnings, he said, "When I came back (to India), every director in the film industry wanted to launch me. But I was a big fan of Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I was like, 'If every director wants to work with me, why isn't Sanjay Leela Bhansali offering me a movie?' Maybe he wasn't aware of me. So, I made a resume and went and sat outside his office."

Ranbir said that the filmmaker agreed to meet him the next day. "Reading my name (on the resume), he understood who I was. I told him I'm a big fan; Devdas had just released. On the first day itself, he told me that he wanted to make a film with me, so my ambition was achieved right there. But those one-and-a-half years that I spent assisting on Black was actually the biggest film school of my life." Ranbir recalled Bhansali's famous temper, and said that it prepared him for the future. "He was a very hard taskmaster. We were working 14-15 hours a

day. There were 10 other assistants, but I wasn't (treated like) some special kid because of who I was. I was like everybody else. He was... very short-tempered. There was a lot of anger coming our way, and I think that really hardened me. It really prepared me for anything in life."

At an event in 2021, Ranbir had accused Bhansali of being physically violent with him when they worked together on Black. "When I assisted Mr (Sanjay Leela) Bhansali (on Black), he used to really treat me as an assistant director. I used to be kneeling down for hours, he used to hit us, he used to abuse us... that only hardens you and prepares you for the world," he said. Ranbir also told Neha Dhupia on her show that he walked out of the project, and vowed to never work with Bhansali again. "He was beating me... after a point it got so heavy and I felt so tortured that I had to quit the film at a point... I think it was like 10 or 11 months into my job and I am like 'listen I can't do this, its getting to me' I think I am too sensitive and emotional and he got to know me so well and he kind of kept poking into that... he got too much, went crazy as far as I was concerned," he said. In a recent interview, Bhansali addressed complaints about his temper, and told India Today, "If I'm not getting what I want, even if I lose my temper, what is wrong in it? If you're not getting a shot, and if someone is spoiling it, what will you do? People have made stories that I'm angry, that I'm badly behaved..." Despite this, Ranbir and Bhansali are set to work together on the film Love & War, which will also feature Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal.

Anurag Kashyap used to be an 'imaandar aadmi', don't know what he's like now: Piyush Mishra on doing 5 jobs in Gulaal for Rs 2 lakh



Writer-actor Piyush Mishra spoke about doing Anurag Kashyap's Gulaal for a very reasonable amount of money, and said that everybody cut their quotes at the time because they wanted to support Anurag. He said that the filmmaker used to be a very honest person, but added that he has no idea if Anurag has changed in recent times. They've reportedly fallen out due to ideological differences, and both have spoken about their prickly relationship in recent interviews. Speaking to Dainik Jagran, Piyush Mishra was asked about performing various duties on the film Gulaal for very little money. He said, "Yes, but nobody asked for money. It was during Anurag's struggle phase, and everybody wanted to help him out. His film Paanch had been stalled, Black Friday

was in trouble, and he was everybody's laadla. I took Rs 2 lakh in total, for music, singing, lyrics, acting, and my own dialogues. The most important thing at the time was that his film gets released."

He continued, "Sabka laadla tha, jiss tarah ka aadmi tha woh. Abhi kaisa hai mujhe maalum nahi, lekin uss waqt toh bahut hi imaandar aadmi tha (Everybody loved him, that was the kind of person he was. I don't know what he's like now, but he used to be a very honest man)." In an interview with The Lallantop last year, Piyush Mishra didn't mince words while describing his complicated relationship with Anurag. He said in Hindi, "My relationship with him is such that we meet after a few years, but we run out of things to talk about after 15 minutes. We have a coffee and cigarette, and our relationship ends. I run out of things to say, he runs out of things to say, so the conversation ends. Our thoughts don't match, our political views don't match, our ethical views don't match. Our emotional views are the same though. He's like this bone, stuck in my throat. I can't swallow it, and I can't spit it out. That's our relationship. I can't sit with him for too long. We don't have anything to talk about. He's a cinema buff, and I don't watch films. What shall I speak to him about?" Piyush Mishra went on to work with Anurag on the landmark Gangs of Wasseypur movies. Despite their differences, Anurag launched Piyush's autobiography last year.

Jonathan Majors 'heartbroken' over Robert Downey Jr's return to Marvel as Doctor Doom: 'I love Kang, Doctor Doom is wicked'

Jonathan Majors, the embattled star of Loki and Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania, is openly expressing his disappointment over Marvel Studios' decision to replace him as the MCU's next big villain after it announced Robert Downey Jr's return to the studios. Majors, originally set to portray Kang the Conqueror in Avengers: The Kang Dynasty, slated to be released in 2026, was dropped from the project following a domestic violence conviction.

Recently Marvel announced at the San-Diego Comic-Con that Robert Downey Jr. would be returning to the franchise as Doctor Doom, with Avengers: The Kang Dynasty now retitled Avengers: Doomsday. In a recent interview with TMZ, Majors admitted to being "heartbroken" over the news. "I love Kang. Doctor Doom is wicked, though," he added with a touch of bitterness.

For the unversed, in December 2023, Marvel dropped Majors after a New York jury convicted him of assault and harassment of his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari, following a trial. Both Robert Downey Jr and Miller have faced legal issues but they continue to work in big budget films. While Downey Jr, despite serving a jail time in the late '90s for possessing drugs, went on to star in the Iron Man series, Avengers franchise and Oppenheimer, for which he won an Oscar, Miller acted in The Flash and the Fantastic Beast franchise after being arrested.

The actor couldn't help but draw comparisons between his situation and the treatment of other Hollywood stars with troubled pasts. "I think it's fair that Mr. Downey is being and has been treated with patience and curiosity and love and that ... Miller's gotten the same treatment and they're being allowed to work their art and be creative at that level," Majors said, referencing both Downey and Ezra Miller. "I didn't really get that," adding, "They're being allowed to work their art and be creative at that



level," Majors. Despite the setback, Majors remains optimistic about his career. He's currently filming the revenge thriller Merciless and hasn't ruled out a return to the MCU as Kang in the future. "Hell yeah, I love [Kang]," he reacted. "If that's what the fans want, if that's what Marvel wants, let's roll. Hell yeah." When Downey Jr hung up his boots as Iron Man from MCU in the 2019 film, Avengers: Endgame, it left his fans teary-eyed as his character died in the film. When fans had made peace with the fact Downey Jr's iconic character has retired from MCU, five years later, at the San Diego Comic-Con, Marvel announced that the actor would return to the MCU as Doctor Doom for Avengers: Doomsday and Avengers: Secret Wars. Reacting to the news, his Iron Man co-star, Gwyneth Paltrow, who played Pepper Potts, said, "I don't get it, are you a baddie now?" The character of Doctor Doom first appeared in The Fantastic Four in 1962 and is depicted as the monarch of Latveria whose goal is to bring order to humanity through world conquest. The character has also come into conflict with other superheroes in the Marvel Universe, including Spider-Man, Iron Man, Doctor Strange, Black Panther, X-Men, and the Avengers.

House of the Dragon Season 2 finale leaked online, HBO blames 'third-party distributor': 'We are aggressively removing the clips'

Fans of House of the Dragon were dealt a major blow this week when significant portions of the season two finale were leaked online just five days before the episode's scheduled release, on August 4. A TikTok account uploaded nearly 30 minutes of footage from the highly anticipated conclusion. Despite swift action to remove the leaked content, duplicate clips quickly spread across social media. Fans eager to avoid spoilers have been advised to be cautious on social media and mute relevant hashtags. The TikTok account shared 14 videos from the Season 2 finale, each garnering thousands of views, reported Variety.

This isn't the first time the series has faced such a setback. A similar leak occurred during season one, prompting speculation about a breach within the distribution chain. The final episode of season one of the series was also leaked online two days before its premiere in October 2022. The previous leak was said to have come from a distribution partner in Europe, the Middle East or Africa, according to HBO.

Regarding the episode leak which happened on Tuesday, HBO has yet to pinpoint the exact source, but they have confirmed it originated from an "international third-party distributor." HBO also said that it is actively working to remove the leaked content. "We are aware that clips from the House of the Dragon season finale have surfaced across social media platforms. The clips were posted after an unintentional release from an international third-party distributor. HBO is aggressively monitoring and removing clips from the internet, and fans can watch the episode in its entirety this Sunday night on HBO and Max," read a statement from HBO's spokesperson, as reported by IGN.

Game of Thrones also had to encounter similar situations where episodes from several seasons, especially the finale season were leaked online ahead of release. House of the Dragon Season 2 premiered in June, and plunged fans back into the fiery family drama. Season two picked up shortly after the first season's finale, where Rhaenyra Targaryen's claim to the throne was dismissed in favour of her half-brother Aegon, leading to the murder of her son Lucerys by his uncle Aemond.



Set 200 years before the events of Game of Thrones, House of the Dragon aims to match its predecessor's grandeur with epic battles and action sequences.

Hyderabad Metro commuters to experience 'Mass Surprise' from 'Mr. Bachchan' Ravi Teja

Hyderabad: In a unique marketing move, the team behind Ravi Teja's upcoming film 'Mr. Bachchan' has planned a special "mass surprise" for Hyderabad metro travelers starting Wednesday. Taking to their social media accounts, the movie team said: "Dear Hyderabadis, Mass Maharaaj @RaviTeja_offl will accompany you on your metro train rides with his voice. Wait for the 'MASS SURPRISE' in your journey from today (sic)". Post the announcement, fans are excited with speculation is rife that Ravi Teja himself might lend his voice to the metro announcements, and are eager to learn how it would sound. Many opine that this adds a special touch to the daily commute if it continues. Directed by Harish Shankar, and produced by TG Vishva Prasad under the People Media Factory banner, 'Mr. Bachchan' gears up for a global theatrical release on August 15.

'Rohit Sharma will go down as one of the best captains ever alongside MS Dhoni', says Shastri



GNS News Agency, August 3

With the T20 World Cup final win over South Africa in June, not only did Rohit Sharma break India's ICC title but the India captain also became the first T20I skipper to win 50 matches in the format.

Ever since he took over the mantle, Rohit has relished a splendid run as captain across formats. Rohit led India to the ICC World Test Championship and ODI World Cup finals in 2023, even as they eventually finished runners-up behind Australia. Interestingly, Rohit has only lost 12 of the 62 T20Is he has led India in, boasting a win percentage of 79.03, the best among all captains who have led in at least 60 games. Rohit had also surpassed MS Dhoni's tally of 42 wins for India during the recent T20 World Cup where his side went unbeaten across nine matches for the title. Former India head coach Ravi Shastri hailed Rohit's nous as a tactician, placing him on par with Dhoni who is considered the most accomplished Indian captain with three ICC titles to his name.

"As a tactician, let's not forget that he's (Rohit) been an outstanding guy. He'll go down as one of the best captains ever alongside Dhoni," Shastri told on The ICC

Review. "If you ask me who's better, I'd say both are on par when it comes to tactics in the white-ball game. I can't pay a bigger compliment to Rohit than that because you know what MS has done and the titles he has won." White-ball giant Shastri, who played a crucial role in resurrecting Rohit's Test career by promoting to open during the inaugural WTC cycle in 2019, also hailed the Mumbaier's astounding presence in limited-overs cricket. The 37-year-old has amassed over 14,000 runs across ODIs and T20Is with 36 hundreds, including three double-centuries, and 87 fifties. "I think a giant in the white-ball game. One of the all-time greats. One of the best who have ever played. Will walk into any white-ball team they pick, irrespective of the era. Just because of the dynamic ability he has at the top," Shastri told about the India opener who retired from T20Is at the end of the World Cup. "Rohit explosive, Virat is finesse"

Shastri also said that Rohit's explosive batting sets him apart from the rest of the modern-day batters, including Virat Kohli who relies on fitness and ground-strokes. Rohit leads the charts in terms of international sixes, with 612 sixes in 509 innings. Rohit has also smashed five T20I hundreds, the joint-most alongside Glenn Maxwell. "The thing with Rohit Sharma is he plays the big shots, he scores quickly, but they're all cricketing shots. What amazes me, there's not an element of sloppiness. I mean, it just shows how much time he has on his hands to play the best and the power — people forget that this man is explosive. He's got power." "Compared to Virat Kohli, you know, Virat Kohli is more finesse, he's starts along the ground. This man is explosive. He's got the power to clear any ground in the world and take on the fast bowlers. He's got the shots for the quicks and he can destroy spin as well," Shastri concluded. Rohit will return to action leading India in the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka, starting in Colombo on Friday.

Israel-Palestine conflict's shadow on Olympics: Athletes withdraw instead of competing against Israelis, players booed, anthems jeered



GNS News Agency, August 3

The Judoka Tohar Butbul emerged from the tunnel slapping his face and arms, letting out a roar. With much purpose, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist marched to the centre of the mat, where he turned and stood facing the entrance, waiting for his opponent to emerge. He waited and kept waiting. But no one stepped out. Messaoud Redouane Dris, from Arab-majority Algeria, did not want to compete against Butbul, who is from Israel. Officially, Dris did not pass the weigh-in; he was 400 grams heavier than the permissible weight in the 73 kg category. But in reality, the instance that took place on Monday morning at Le Arena Champs de Mars was another instance of an athlete from Israel being snubbed at the Paris Olympics in the backdrop of the conflict in Gaza. At the Paris Olympics, Team Israel isn't exactly 'Bienvenue-d'.

Days before the opening ceremony, a Member of the Parliament representing the La France Insoumise party, Thomas Portes said Israeli athletes 'are not welcome at the Paris Olympics'. Inside the Paris metro network, stickers demanding a 'ban' on Israel were pasted on the doors of many trains with a statement, in bold and caps, that read: "Genocide is not an Olympic Sport". When Israel's football team took the field for their first match of the Games at the Parc des Princes, against Mali last week, the country's national anthem was so loudly jeered that the volume of the stadium's speakers had to be increased to drown out that noise. And at the swimming arena, 100m women's backstroke specialist Aviv Barzelay walked out for her heat to a smattering of boos.

Wherever they went, the 88 Israeli athletes competing at the Paris Olympics have been made to feel unwelcome. That morning at the Champs de Mars was just another day in the life of an Israeli athlete at the Games. "Unfortunately, I already experienced this at the

last Olympics against another athlete," Butbul told reporters after he lost in the second round. In Tokyo, two of his potential opponents, Algeria's Fethi Nourine and Sudan's Mohamed Abdalrasool were ready to give up their Olympic dreams rather than facing an Israeli. Butbul added: "It's hard because I want to fight, to express myself. It's my job. I am an athlete. He's a sportsman too, I'm sure he wanted to fight, he also worked hard to get to this point. But he, like the others, is the victim of decisions that are not his."

In the overall context, an opponent withdrawing must be the least troubling issue for Israeli athletes, who have faced death threats and been targets of cyber attacks. Earlier this week, Le Monde reported that the French police opened an investigation into death threats received by three Israeli athletes at the Paris Games. The newspaper added that the incident came days after 'Israel's foreign minister warned his French counterpart of an alleged Iranian-backed plot to target Israeli athletes and tourists during the Paris Olympic Games.'

The incident occurred when France's cybercrime unit, which goes by the acronym OFAC, was asked to remove the private data of Israeli athletes. According to the Agence France Presse, data — including blood test results and log-in credentials — were published on social media, with the hackers allegedly also revealing the military service status of Israel's athletes only.

"Pharos, a platform that reports unlawful content online, has called on the OFAC to remove the athletes' details," the AFP reported. The Israeli contingent has been provided high-level security at the Games. Unlike athletes from other nations, a lot of them are escorted to and from events by elite security units and have been given round-the-clock protection, including at the Village. Israel's internal security service, Shin Bet, is also helping with the team's security and the sportspersons have been cautioned over how to react against any possible provocations directed at them. The local French authorities, meanwhile, also shifted a memorial ceremony for the Israeli athletes killed in the 1972 Olympics from Paris' City Hall to Israel's embassy. Inside the Games Village, meanwhile, Israel's athletes said they are mingling with other athletes, going to the dining hall and freely wearing their country's colours. "I am feeling very safe and very good here because of the security," badminton player Misha Zilberman, who is participating in his fourth Olympics, told The Indian Express. "At the Olympic Village, we are all athletes there. There is no pressure. It is quite comfortable. I can walk freely, no escorts. In Paris, too, we can walk freely."

to be. I've heard the rumblings, but at the end of the day we're here to race," Ledecy said.

We've heard about badminton courts being slow or fast. But how can a pool be slow?

Experts have pointed out that the La Défense Arena pool's depth of 2.15 meters is causing slower times. How? As long-time swim analyst Byron McDonald explained to Canada's CBC News recently, most pools around the world that host world championships or the Olympics have had a depth of 3 metres since the 2005 World Championship.

Even though the two temporary Olympic pools inside the La Défense Arena were constructed by Italian company Piscine Castiglione which built pools for the past Olympics in Atlanta, Beijing, London, Rio and Tokyo, the depth for the Paris 2024 pool is much shallower, at 2.1 metres. Thanks to lesser depth, the water is more turbulent when you swim at the La Défense Arena. More turbulence means more resistance and friction. The deeper the pool, the calmer the water. McDonald also pointed out that there was plenty of recording equipment at the bottom of the pools leading to more turbulence.

'End of a Cycle': Rafael Nadal uncertain about tennis future after Paris Olympics exit



GNS News Agency, August 3

Rafael Nadal's Paris Olympics campaign ended with a screeching halt in the men's doubles quarter-finals as the 22-time Grand Slam champion and young sensation Carlos Alcaraz was trumped by the American pair of Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram on Wednesday. A 6-2, 6-4 defeat for the hit 'Nadalcaraz' duo fuelled Nadal's retirement talks, days after he was outwitted by his fierce rival Novak Djokovic in the second round of the singles competition. The 38-year-old had entered the competition with injury concerns. Nadal had also suffered a first-round exit at the French Open earlier this year, a Slam he had won a record 14 times. The former World No. 1, however, remained undecided on his imminent playing career, stating that he will take time to reflect after the 'end of a cycle' at the Games. "This doesn't affect anything. In the end, my future as a professional depends on my desire and feelings when I have to make the decision or not. For me, a stage has ended; I had set the Olympics as a goal since the beginning of the year. "Has this cycle ended? I'll go home, disconnect, and once I have a clear idea of my next stage, whether with a racket in hand or not, I'll let you know," Nadal was quoted as saying by BeIN Sports.

"I believe I've always put in enough effort to finish this journey with the personal satisfaction of having done everything possible and the peace of mind of having given

my all on the court. I'm at peace. When I have clear motivations and desires, or on the contrary, if I don't feel the motivation and ability to continue, I'll take another path," Nadal said. Nadal and Alcaraz went down to USA's Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram in straight sets. Nadal also admitted that he had not hit the levels that would have placed him in the contention for a medal. "It's been a fun week, positive in many ways, even if it didn't end the way I dreamed. But that's sports, right? In the end, I wasn't at the level needed to fight for medals individually, and in doubles, I think we played very well. Today, we weren't sharp. As I've said every day, matches go by quickly, and any detail can make a difference; we didn't start well and couldn't take the match to the limit," he remarked. The 2008 gold medalist, one of the torchbearers at the Opening Ceremony of the Games this year, lauded his newly-formed partnership with Alcaraz.

"It's a beautiful memory of playing with a player who is going to be one of the best in history, I have little doubt about that if his body holds up, which ultimately also depends on that. Playing together here, with the atmosphere in every match we've played, representing Spain at the Olympics, is a unique and beautiful experience. I've enjoyed it as much as I could," Nadal said. While he noted that a return to Roland Garros as a player looks unlikely, Nadal did not commit to the same.

Though he has been listed on the US Open entry list, Nadal said he was uncertain of travelling to the Flushing Meadows. "It looks like not but I'm going to let you know soon. For me now, I can't give you a clear answer, I need some time. But for me it looks difficult." Nadal is, however, slated to play at the Laver Cup in Berlin in September, a venue where his long-time rival Roger Federer had hung up his boots in 2022. "It was disappointing to not bring back a medal for Spain but that's it. I tried my best in every single minute that I was on court, but it was not enough to achieve our goals. If that's the last time, it's an unforgettable feeling and emotions," he added.

Sreeja Akula squanders 9 game points in 2 games against World No. 1 Sun Yingsha, loses in Rd of 16

GNS News Agency, August 3

The what ifs will surely stay with her for a long time. On her 26th birthday, India's Sreeja Akula had incredible chances to give herself the best birthday gift — a win over World No. 1 Sun Yingsha. But a total of nine game points squandered in the opening two games meant that the Indian World No. 25 was knocked out of the women's singles in the Round of 16 at the Paris Olympics. The 4-0 (12-10, 12-10, 11-8, 11-3) scoreline may show it was a routine win for the World No. 1, but it was anything but that. Sreeja was right there, going paddle-to-paddle with the best in the world. Using her pimply rubber on her backhand, Sreeja played it short to Yingsha who struggled to reach. With the return coming slightly high, Sreeja executed a perfect turn to unleash her forehand topspin that got her a number of points. The trouble with pimply rubber is that it doesn't work so well when the opponent is able to generate a ton of power. That's exactly what Yingsha did when she was down four game points in the first game. She followed the same syllabus when down five game points in the second. Flustered after letting those two games go and with her confidence surely taking a beating, it was going to be tough for Sreeja to come back into the match. Yingsha simply switched



gears in the third and fourth games to win the match, though Sreeja did show glimpses of a fight. The match may have been lost, but Sreeja once again showed that Indians are capable of competing with the Chinese, and that they no longer fear them. The Indian women's paddlers' historic run in the women's singles in Paris ended, with Manika too losing her Rd of 16 match earlier in the day. Sreeja and Co. can exact revenge at the team event next week, where they will only meet China if both reach the final.

Anshuman Gaekwad obituary: Gutsy batsman, no nonsense coach and selector

GNS News Agency, August 3

Former opening batsman and ex-Team India coach Anshuman Gaekwad passed away in Vadodara on Wednesday. He was 71. A veteran of 40 Tests was suffering from blood cancer and had recently returned after having treatment in London. He also served as a selector and head coach of the national side

Gaekwad's long ailment brought many of his erstwhile colleagues forward, either offering financial help or asking the BCCI to release some funds. Board secretary Jay Shah had recently released Rs 1 crore for his treatment. "It's a loss to the cricket fraternity. He was a great taskmaster. Always passionate and loved talking about cricket. I had met him one month ago and his situation wasn't nice. We looked up to him when we were young. I played under him too," former India wicketkeeper Kiran More said. "My deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr Anshuman Gaekwad. Heartbreaking for the entire cricket fraternity. May his soul rest in peace??

"He never liked players reaching late at the ground. He always had a great vision for cricket and was a student of the game. One doesn't find people anymore. He continued to play a role in the administration. He was a gem of a person. He helped me during my early days in cricket. He was like a lion in Baroda those days." More added. "I was privileged to play with three of the bravest cricketers in Indian cricket. Eknath Solkar, Jimmy (Mohinder) Amarnath and Anshuman Gaekwad. We had heard about the bravery and guts of Nari Contractor playing with a broken rib and going on to score 81 at Lord's. That was inspirational to budding cricketers that when it comes to playing for your country you must take all the blows and keep fighting for your team. That's exactly what Ekki, Jimmy and Charlie as Anshuman was known, did when they donned the India cap. Very depressing news but Charlie showed here again that he wasn't going to give his life's wicket easily and fought right till the end. May his soul rest in eternal peace," batting legend Sunil Gavaskar said.

Shah also expressed his grief at the demise of the former cricketer. "My deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr Anshuman Gaekwad. Heartbreaking for the entire cricket fraternity. May his soul rest in peace," he wrote on X. In an international career spanning 12 years, Gaekwad also appeared in 15 ODIs and was known as a gutsy and courageous batsman, never hesitant to take blows on the body for the team. What he lacked in stroke-play, he made for up in bravery against the fearsome pace bowlers of that period. An average of just over 30 with two Test hundreds may not appear too

special, but he did have a double hundred against Pakistan in Jalandhar in 1983, an innings that lasted 671 minutes, the slowest 200 in first-class cricket at that time. His only other ton at Test level came against West Indies in Kanpur in 1979, against an attack that included a young Malcolm Marshall. But Gaekwad is likely to be known more for his determination and guts in scoring 81 against the Caribbean speedsters in the infamous 1975-76 Test in Kingston, Jamaica. That innings — played against the likes of Michael Holding, Wayne Daniel, Vanburn Holder and Bernard Julien — lasted 450 minutes before the opener was pinned on the ear by a Holding bouncer that punctured his eardrum, necessitating an operation. Those were the days before helmets and bouncer restrictions, and the West Indies were coming off the perceived humiliation of their inability to defend a 400+ target in the fourth innings in the previous Test at Port of Spain, Trinidad.

His opening partner Gavaskar recalls the incident in his book Sunny Days. "On the dot of lunch, Anshuman, who had taken many blows on the body and his hands, was hit just behind the left ear. It was yet another short ball and it went like a guided missile knocking Anshuman's spectacles off... Anshuman Gaekwad represented the splendid fighting spirit of our team. When he was forced to retire, much against his wish, our will to fight also got knocked out."

Gaekwad also had a decent stint as Team India head coach during the second half of the 1990s. He was there when India defeated Mark Taylor's Australia 2-1 in a home Test series, and soon afterwards, beat them to win a tri-series in Sharjah. That tournament is memorable for the two back-to-back hundreds from Sachin Tendulkar against Steve Waugh's men. The first one, during which a dust storm blew over the venue, is popularly referred to as the 'Desert Storm'.

Gaekwad was also the coach when Anil Kumble took all 10 wickets in an innings against Pakistan, led by Wasim Akram, at Delhi in 1999. That victory helped India, led by Mohammad Azharuddin, to level the two-match Test series. The previous Test had seen the visitors prevailing by 12 runs in a heart-stopping climax, after a late-order collapse subsequent to one of the greatest Tendulkar hundreds. The other highlights of Gaekwad's stint as coach were the 1998 Independence Cup triumph in Bangladesh and India making it to the final of the inaugural ICC Champions Trophy, then played in a knockout format, in Kenya in 2000, where they lost to New Zealand.

At the first-class level, Gaekwad had 34 hundreds, the last of which came in his last game.