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Instagram influencer faces action over viral Reel of tossing cash on busy Hyderabad road

Hyderabad: Instagram influencer Harsha, who gained notoriety and lots of 'views' for tossing wads of cash in air amidst bustling traffic, is now facing multiple legal charges, for rash driving and creating public nuisance in Kukatpally and KPHB areas. Following the videos that went viral on several social media platforms, the Kukatpally police have registered a case against him, charging with reckless driving, creating public nuisance, and wrongful restraint. Disturbed by his dangerous stunts, the traffic police complained to the Sanathnagar police station, which led to the registration of an additional case.

Women's Commission seeks report from Nagarkurnool police

Hyderabad: After different sections condemned the attack on two women journalists at Kondareddy, the native village of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, on Thursday, the Telangana State Commission for Women sought a report from the Nagarkurnool police.

With people, especially journalists associations and women journalists, condemning the incident and seeking action against the perpetrators, the Telangana State Commission for Women took cognizance of the crime. Commission Chairperson Sharada Nerella posted on X: "Women Commission has taken cognizance of the reported crime. I have written to Nagarkurnool SP to ensure fair and speedy investigation in the matter."

PM Modi arrives in Ukraine, gets a warm welcome



Kyiv, GNS News Agency, August 23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday arrived in Ukraine on a historic visit to the war-torn country during which he is expected to share perspectives on peaceful resolution of the ongoing

conflict with the Ukrainian leader. He was warmly welcomed by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as the two leaders hugged each other. His visit to Kyiv comes nearly six weeks after his high-profile trip to Moscow which triggered

criticism from the US and some of its Western allies. This is the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Ukraine since the country became independent in 1991. "I look forward to the opportunity to build upon earlier conversations with

President Zelenskyy on strengthening bilateral co-operation and share perspectives on peaceful resolution of the ongoing Ukraine conflict," Modi had said before leaving Delhi. "As a friend and partner, we hope for an early return of peace and stability in the region." The prime minister travelled to Kyiv from Poland in a 'Rail Force One' train that took around 10 hours. The return trip will also be of the same duration. India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has been calling for resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. Before leaving Warsaw, Modi said that his Poland visit has been "special". His visit to Poland was the first trip by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in the past 45 years.

14 killed as Indian passenger bus plunges into river in Nepal

Kathmandu, August 23. Fourteen people were killed as an Indian-registered passenger bus plunged into the Marsyangdi river in central Nepal on Friday, according to media reports. The bus from Gorakhpur was heading towards the capital Kathmandu from the resort town of Pokhara when it drove off the highway in Aaina Pahara in Tanahun district. At least 29 passengers have been rescued from the bus with the number plate UP 53 FT 7623. The bus was heading to Gorakhpur from Pokhara via Kathmandu. At least 14 people were confirmed dead in the accident, the report said.

Information Officer at the District Police Office, Tanahun, Mohan Bahadur Khan, said 29 people had been sent to the hospital so far. The condition of the rescued passengers has not been disclosed yet. A team of 45 Armed Police Force personnel led by Senior Superintendent of Police Madhav Paudel from the Armed Police Force Nepal Disaster Management Training School has already reached the accident site and is carrying out the rescue operation, MyRepublic.com reported. About 35 APF personnel from no 23 Battalion, Bhanu, Tanahun, are also involved in the rescue operation, the report said. According to DSP Dipak Kumar Raya, spokesperson of the District Police Office, Tanahun, the bus fell into Marsyangdi at around 11.30 am on Friday. Last month, two buses carrying 65 passengers were washed away by a landslide into the swollen Trishuli river in Nepal. The



bodies from the two buses were washed away down the Trishuli River as far as 100 kilometres. Extensive search operations, including the deployment of a 12-member team from India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), have not yet located the two missing buses and many passengers swept away by the landslide. The bodies of five Indian nationals have been recovered so far while two are still missing. Nepal's rivers are generally fast-flowing due to the mountainous terrain. Heavy monsoon downpours in the past few days have swollen the waterways and turned them murky brown, making it even more difficult to see the wreckage. Monsoon season brings heavy rains to Nepal from June to September, often triggering landslides in the mountainous Himalayan country.

Dalit Bandhu applicants demand government to release funds

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: Beneficiaries, who were identified for assistance under Dalit Bandhu, staged a protest at Praja Bhavan demanding the State government to release the funds approved under phase II of the scheme. The previous BRS government had offered Rs.10 lakh assistance to Dalits under the scheme. During the elections, the Congress party had promised to increase the assistance to Rs.12 lakh per beneficiary and rechristened the scheme as Ambedkar Abhaya Hastham. Govt replaces original emblem of Sports Authority of Telangana with stock image, ends up in embarrassment

However, the beneficiaries, who were shortlisted under the phase II of the scheme, were demanding the release of funds approved by the previous BRS government. Depending on the beneficiaries plans to set up the units and the status of grounding such units, the district Collectors release the funds. On Friday, several beneficiaries from different districts turned up in large numbers at Praja Bhavan to submit a representation to the government as part of the Praja Vani programme.

Earlier, over 500 beneficiaries under the aegis of Telangana Rashtra Dalit Bandhu Sadhana Ikya Porata Samithi took out a rally to the Praja Bhavan. It has been over four months since the beneficiaries were shortlisted for assistance under the Dalit Bandhu. The previous government had also sanctioned Rs.3 lakhs to each beneficiary and the same were pending with district Collectors for final approval, said Telangana Rashtra Dalit Bandhu Sadhana Ikya Porata Samithi president Kogila Mahesh. "We demand the State government to issue instructions to the district Collectors to release the Rs.3 lakh so that beneficiaries ground their respective units," he said, adding that if the government does not consider their demands, they would further intensify their protests.

YSRCP former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy Granted Bail After Two Months in Jail



GNS News Agency, August 23

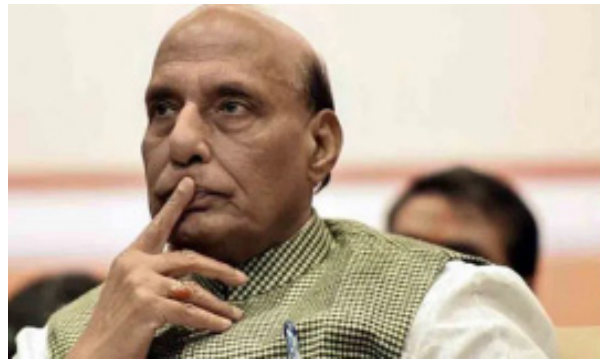
In a significant development, former Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YCP) former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy has been granted bail by the Andhra Pradesh High Court following his arrest in connection with the destruction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and an attack on police at Palwai Gate during the recent Andhra Pradesh General Elections. After spending two months in Nellore Central Jail, Pinnelli was granted conditional bail on August 23. Pinnelli had previously submitted multiple bail petitions, all of which were denied by the High Court. However, on Friday afternoon, the court decided to grant bail, allowing him to secure his release under specific conditions.

The court ordered Pinnelli to provide two sureties of Rs 50,000 each, surrender his passport, and appear before the Magistrate and the Station House Officer (SHO) every week.

India, US ink 2 key deals as Rajnath Singh visits Washington

GNS News Agency, August 23

Washington: India and the US have signed two key agreements as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh began his official visit to Washington to further boost the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the two countries. The agreements signed on Thursday pertain to the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers. "Two important documents have been signed in Washington DC as Raksha Mantri Shri @rajnathsingh's visit to the United States begins. Senior defence officials from both sides concluded the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA), and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers," the Ministry of Defence (MoD) shared in a post on X on Friday, along with some photographs of the



event. Two important documents have been signed in Washington DC as Raksha Mantri Shri @rajnathsingh's visit to the United States begins. Singh arrived here on Thursday on a four-day visit to the US. The US and India entered into a "bilateral, non-binding Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)", the US Department of Defence (DoD) said in a press release on Thursday. Through this SOSA, the US and India agree to provide reciprocal priority support for goods and services that promote national defence. The Arrangement will enable both

and will be a key factor in strengthening the US-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)," said Ramdass. "I look forward to OUSD(A&S) hosting the next DTTI meeting this fall to deepen cooperation between our respective defence industrial bases and pursue bilateral co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment initiatives," he said. In the Arrangement, the US and India commit to support one another's priority delivery requests for procurement of critical national defence resources. The US will provide India assurances under the US Defence Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS), with programme determinations by DoD and rating authorisation by the Department of Commerce (DOC). India will in turn establish a government-industry Code of Conduct with its industrial base, where Indian firms will voluntarily agree to make every reasonable effort to provide the US priority support, the release said.

Kolkata rape and murder accused Sanjoy Roy sent to judicial custody till September 6



GNS News Agency, August 23

Prime accused in the rape and murder of a doctor of R.G. Kar MCH, Sanjoy Roy was sent to judicial custody till September 6 on Friday (August 23, 2024). The CBI has received consent from a court in Kolkata to conduct a polygraph test of the accused Sanjoy Roy. The application to conduct a polygraph test was made before the court on Thursday (August 22, 2024). West Bengal Health Secretary N.S. Nigam on Friday appealed to resident doctors protesting over the incident to resume services. Mr. Nigam said that health services are seriously affected because of ceased work of resident doctors. The Calcutta High Court on Friday directed the CBI to probe financial irregularities at R.G. Kar MCH involving former principal Sandip Kumar Ghosh. The incident has invoked fear among students and doctors with post-graduate trainees questioning the safety and security on the hospital premises and alleging the lack of a separate room for women doctors who work at night. Junior doctors, members of

the hospital's Resident Doctors Association and supporters of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Bharatiya Janata Party have protested against the death of the student. The protesting doctors and students welcomed the court's order on deploying Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, where the alleged rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor happened on August 9, after the midnight violence on August 15. But a section of students said they hoped the Supreme Court would arrange better security as the mob violence has left doctors and students traumatised who have fled considering personal safety.

Bombay HC restrains any political party or person from calling for Maharashtra Bandh on August 24

Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya of the Bombay High Court on Friday (August 23, 2024) said that the court will restrain any political party or individual from proceeding with the August 24 Maharashtra bandh regarding the protest against the Badlapur sexual assault case. The Opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) called for a 'Maharashtra Bandh' on August 24 to protest against 'perversion,' urging citizens from all backgrounds to join the strike.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy met Party top officials at AICC Delhi



New Delhi: GNS News Agency, August 23. Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy landed in New Delhi on Thursday night (August 22, 2024), and on Friday he met with the party's top leadership to discuss party issues such as the appointment of the new PCC chairman and cabinet expansion. He was accompanied by Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu and Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy. He just left the AICC office after meeting party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and General Secretary KC Venugopal. Following this, Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy along with Deputy CM will meet Jyotiraditya M. Scindia in his office, Sanchar Bhawan New Delhi.

Centre approves release of Rs 40 crore to flood-hit Tripura



GNS News Agency, August 23

New Delhi: The Centre has approved the release of Rs 40 crore for flood-hit Tripura, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday. Shah said 11 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), three columns of the Army and four helicopters of the Indian Air Force have been deployed by the Centre for assisting the state government in flood relief and rescue operations. "Given the flood situation in Tripura, the central govt, under the leadership of Modi Ji, has approved the release of 40 crore in advance, as the central share from SDRF (State Disaster Response Fund), to provide relief to the affected people," he wrote on X. The Home Minister said no matter what, "our sisters and brothers in Tripura will find the Modi govt standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them to battle these difficult times". Shah on Thursday called up Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha to take stock of the flood situation in the State and assured him of all assistance from the Centre. At least 22 people have died and two others went missing in Tripura following incessant rainfall, floods and landslides in the past few days, officials said. As many as 65,400 people have taken shelter at 450 relief camps in the State as their houses were damaged due to the downpour. Around 17 lakh people have been affected by rains and floods in Tripura so far, officials said.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

32 years later

THE 1992 Ajmer rape case, in which around 100 schoolgirls were sexually assaulted and blackmailed, points to the deplorable state of justice in India. The sentencing to life of four accused on Tuesday, 32 years after the heinous crime, underscores the systemic failures that allow such atrocities to persist. Despite the existence of stringent laws meant to protect women and deter sexual crimes, the grim reality is that justice remains elusive for many victims. This case was part of a horrifying racket that preyed on young school- and college-going girls in Ajmer. They were blackmailed and sexually exploited by men wielding significant influence, political and financial. Among the most notorious of these predators were Farooq Chishti and Nafis Chishty, Youth Congress leaders who brazenly used their power to silence the girls. Their ability to manipulate the system led to attempts to erase evidence of their crimes, complicating the pursuit of justice. Traumatized, some victims even died by suicide. Much like the recent Kolkata incident where a doctor was brutally raped and murdered, echoing the infamous Nirbhaya case, the Ajmer case is another symbol of the pervasive culture of violence against women. The delay in delivering justice in these cases not only exacerbates the trauma for the victims but also erodes public trust in the legal system as perpetrators manage to evade culpability for years, if not decades. The real change will come when these laws are enforced promptly, when the culprits are held accountable without delay and when the victims' voices are heard and respected. The pursuit of justice must not be an afterthought, but a priority, to ensure that such tragedies are curbed, even as our society is today rattled by protests over the doctor's rape-murder and the sexual abuse of two kindergarten girls in Badlapur, Maharashtra.

B'luru IT hub Electronic City to be renamed after former Karnataka CM Devaraj Urs



GNS News Agency, August 23

Electronic City, a prominent hub of information technology companies in southeast Bengaluru, will soon be renamed Devaraj Urs Electronic City, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on August 20, coinciding with the birth anniversary of the former chief minister and backward classes leader. Siddaramaiah also said that a recommendation would be made to the Central Government to posthumously award the Bharat Ratna to Devaraj Urs. "Last time I had said that Electronics City will be renamed as Devaraj Urs Electronics City and it is under process. We will carry out the change of name," Siddaramaiah said.

Devaraj Urs, who was not from a backward community, is regarded as one of the foremost leaders who worked for backward classes in Karnataka. He played a significant role in the uplift of backward classes during the 1970s by implementing caste-based reservation following a commission's report on the status of these communities. He also initiated land reforms that transferred

substantial land holdings from landlords to farmers. Devaraj Urs heralded a move away from Congress politics that was centred on the dominant communities in the state, such as the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats. He helped to establish a mass base for the Congress among backward classes, minorities and Dalits. Siddaramaiah has aspired to be a leader of the backward classes in the mould of Urs.

Electronic City, established in 1978, is a major technology hub of Bengaluru housing major Indian IT companies like Infosys and Wipro as well as multinational companies. The industrial region witnessed a boom in the 1990s after liberalisation of the economy, which resulted in the creation of multiple IT software export companies. Spread over 5 sq km, the region housing over 500 companies has its own administrative unit called the Electronic City Township Industries Association. An elevated expressway built exclusively on the request of IT companies in the mid 2000s and opened in 2010 connects Electronic City to Bengaluru over a distance of approximately 10 km. The decision to rename Electronic City as Devaraj Urs Electronic City is part of the Congress government's initiatives to honour local leaders of high standing and promote local culture. The Government is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the renaming of the state as Karnataka. Although the unification of the state took place on 1 November 1956, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973 by Devaraj Urs. The culmination of the year-long celebration will be on November 1, 2024. A statue of the Kannada Goddess Bhuvaneshwari will be unveiled in front of the Vidhana Soudha on November 1 to mark the 50th anniversary, Siddaramaiah said. He asked Kannada and Culture Minister Shivraj Tangadagi to ensure the statue is installed at the Vidhana Soudha by then.

Teesta Setalvad gets SC nod for trip to Malaysia for conference



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Supreme Court Tuesday permitted activist Teesta Setalvad to travel to Malaysia from August 31 to September 10 for a conference and asked her to file an undertaking that she will return to India as scheduled. The Supreme Court had last July granted her regular bail in a case of alleged fabrication of documents to frame innocent people in the 2002 post-Godhra riot cases. During hearing Tuesday, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Setalvad, told a bench of Justice B R Gavai and Justice K V Viswanathan that she has filed an application seeking permission to travel abroad as SC had last July said that her passport shall continue to be in the custody of the sessions court.

"I (Setalvad) am seeking your lordships permission to go to Malaysia for an anti-racism conference from August 31 to September 10," he told the bench. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Gujarat government, said she should be asked to file an undertaking before the court. The bench noted Mehta's submission that it was necessary that certain conditions should be imposed on her so that her return is ensured to face the trial. While permitting Setalvad to travel to Malaysia, the bench said her passport be returned to her. "The petitioner (Setalvad) shall file an undertaking before this court that she will return to India as scheduled and face the trial," the bench said, adding that she shall also furnish a solvent surety of ₹10 lakh to the satisfaction of the sessions court. On her return from Malaysia, Setalvad shall re-surrender her passport with the trial judge, the court said. On July 19 last year, the top court had quashed the July 1 order of the Gujarat High Court, which had denied bail to Setalvad in the case.

Two ACPs, inspector suspended over RG Kar Hospital vandalism

GNS News Agency, August 23

Kolkata rape murder case, RG Kar Hospital vandalism, inspector suspended, ACP suspension, RG Kar Hospital negligence, RG Kar departmental inquiry, Kolkata ASI, Indian express news Police detain an ABVP activist during protest, Two Assistant Commissioners of Police and an inspector were suspended in connection with the vandalism at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 14 night for alleged negligence as they were on duty at hospital, said officials.

A departmental inquiry has also been initiated against ACPs Shakir Uddin Sardar, Ramesh Shah Chowdhury, and inspector Rakesh Minz. Meanwhile, an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of the Kolkata Police, who is believed to be a close associate of the accused arrested in the alleged rape and murder incident at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, appeared before the CBI Tuesday for questioning in connection with the case. Anoop Dutt, the ASI, was questioned about his relationship with accused Sanjay Roy and any knowledge he may have of the night of the incident. Roy was also interrogated about any interactions he had with the victim among other things. The agency also plans to question Roy's relatives in the next few days, it is learnt. Dr Sandeep Ghosh, former principal of RG Kar Medical College, appeared before the CBI for fifth day in a row Tuesday, facing questions about inconsistencies in his statements. CBI also questioned him on why an adjacent portion of seminar room was demolished and repair work started during investigation. Allegations of dereliction of duty and attempts to cover up have been levelled against Ghosh.

Policeman accidentally strikes SDM during Patna lathicharge



GNS News Agency, August 23

Bihar SDM lathicharge hit a video of the purported incident shows a policeman accidentally hitting SDM Shrikant Kundlik Khandekar, who was monitoring the situation, with his lathi, but immediately realising his mistake. A policeman in Patna accidentally struck the local sub-divisional magistrate Wednesday while lathicharging a demonstration held in the city to protest the Supreme Court's August 1 ruling allowing sub-classification of the Scheduled Castes for reservation.

The incident occurred at 12:30 pm, when 200 protesters from various Dalit organisations had gathered at the City's Dak Bungalow square. A video of the purported incident shows a policeman accidentally hitting SDM Shrikant Kundlik Khandekar, who was monitoring the situation, with his lathi, but immediately realising his mistake. Although the errant policeman was reprimanded, no action was taken against him, police sources said. The protest in Patna was part of a nationwide shutdown that Dalit and Adivasi organisations called to protest the Supreme Court ruling.

Supriya Sule meets protesting MPSC aspirants in Pune, says she will take up their demands with Maharashtra CM

GNS News Agency, August 23

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) MP Supriya Sule visited Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) aspirants protesting in Pune on Wednesday and offered support to their demand for the inclusion of 258 posts from the agriculture department in the MPSC examinations. The aspirants are also demanding that MPSC postpone the exams as its scheduled date, August 25, conflicts with the Institute of Banking Personnel Section (IBPS) exam, affecting candidates appearing for both exams. The students argued that positions in the agriculture department had been advertised long ago, and any delay in conducting the exams raises uncertainty about when they would be held. They sought the exams to fill positions in the agriculture department to be held along with the MPSC exams. However, the MPSC has maintained that, due to timing issues, the agricultural services posts could not be included in the upcoming exam.

Addressing the aspirants, Sule said she agreed with their demands. "The government should realise that paying multiple examination fees is not feasible. After meet-



ing with you, I will meet the chief minister to impress upon him the importance of your demands." NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar was also scheduled to visit the protest site in Pune later in the day. Speaking to The Indian Express, some students expressed their concern about the uncertainty surrounding the scheduling of exams for the agricultural department. With Assembly elections scheduled to take place in the next few months, they are worried about possible delays in the examinations.

Retired HC judge reveals why Rajiv Gandhi as PM called him to his residence at 2 am

GNS News Agency, August 23

Paying tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 80th birth anniversary, Justice B G Kolse-Patil, retired judge of Bombay High Court, has revealed that Rajiv Gandhi when he was the Prime Minister had called him at his residence in connection with his judgment in excise refund case. "Rajiv Gandhi was a sensitive Prime Minister who worked for the good of the nation during his five-year tenure. He was sensitive to the issues of people and was ready to go the extra mile to resolve their issues," Kolse-Patil said at an event organised by Rajiv Gandhi Smarak Samiti at Katraj in the city on Tuesday.

Recalling a quick action of the then Prime Minister "which saved crores of rupees" for the nation, Kolse-Patil said, "In the mid-80s, as Bombay High Court judge, I had given a judgment which was hailed as a historic one. The case related to some private companies claiming a refund of excess excise duty charged by the government. However, I rejected that demand. My contention was that when the companies were already collecting excise amounts from consumers, why should the amount be refunded to them? It should actually go to the consumers. Top lawyers like Fali Nariman and Nani Palkiwala were arguing the case for their clients. The money involved was huge." After he delivered the judgment which caused a buzz in the country, Kolse-Patil said, he met Union Minister Kalpana Rai and briefed him about the judgment, and told him to take it up with the Prime Minister. "Rajiv Gandhi called me at his residence at 2 am. He told me that it was an excellent judgment which would set new precedent," Kolse-Patil said. The retired judge added, "Rajiv Gandhi accepted that there was a mistake in the Excise Act and got the Excise Act amended. Later I suggested that instead of returning the refund amount to con-



sumers, the amount should be deposited in Consumer Welfare Fund." On the occasion, Kolse-Patil garlanded the statue of Rajiv Gandhi at Katraj. The event was organised by Rajiv Gandhi Smarak Samiti. In his address, Samiti president Gopalada Tiwari said, "Rajiv Gandhi had a modern outlook. He brought in computer revolution in the country. The television era started during his tenure. During Covid time, lakhs of people worked from home, thanks to Rajiv Gandhi who laid the foundation of a modern India." Congress leader Kamalata Vyavahare said, "Mobile and internet revolution in India owe their existence to Rajiv Gandhi who started the technological revolution in the country. It was Rajiv Gandhi who as the Prime Minister ensured reservation for women in the local self-government bodies."

Man's decayed body found inside Delhi's Dwarka apartment, wife arrested

GNS News Agency, August 23

A decomposed body of a 33-year-old man was found at his residence in Dwarka's Dabri area of Delhi on Tuesday, the police said. The police have arrested the wife of the man, identified as Sachin, for allegedly stabbing him to death following an argument with him on Sunday morning. Neighbours on the first floor of Chanakya Place-II informed the Dabri police station around 3 pm on Tuesday after they received a foul odour from Sachin's apartment that was locked. Upon reaching the spot, the police broke into the house and found Sachin's decomposed body in one of the rooms, a police officer said. The police have registered a case of murder against Sachin's wife Kavita, 20. "In a fit of rage, Kavita stabbed Sachin with a knife in his chest. As he lay in an unconscious state, she locked the house and fled the scene," said Nishant Gupta,



Additional DCP (Dwarka). "Sachin had moved into the apartment last October with his wife.

Schools shut down in Tripura as heavy rainfall affects several districts; over 180 relief camps opened to ensure safety of those affected



GNS News Agency, August 23

A day after seven people died, two went missing and over five thousand became homeless due to incessant rainfall for over 48 hours, Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on Wednesday declared a total shutdown of all schools for two days — August 21 and 22. Meanwhile, colleges across the state remained shut on Wednesday. Even Tripura University decided to suspend all regular classes on Wednesday due to the heavy rainfall, the university's registrar in-charge Prof Chinmoy Roy informed. "All students, teachers, and staff are requested to stay safe and follow the instructions," Saha wrote on his social media account. Flood relief camps, swelling water levels at rivers and Centre's assurance Till now, the Tripura government has opened 183 relief camps to provide shelter to 5,607 affected families. Of the total, 24 camps have been set up in West Tripura district, 68 in Gomati, 30 in South Tripura and 39 in Khowai districts. The rest are spread across the remaining four districts.

Nearly 200 rescue teams, comprising personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Tripura State Rifles, Border Security Force (BSF), civil volunteers and others have been pressed into action. The measure came after large swathes of lands got inundated with rivers Howrah, Dhalai, Muhuri, and Khowai flowing above the danger level. As per latest reports, the water level of the Gomati river, which passes through different parts of the Gomati and Sepahijala districts, have crossed the 'extreme danger level' as rainfall continues. The authorities have urged people to move to shelter homes and rescue teams have been instructed to focus on evacuating people from low-lying areas at the earliest.

In a social media post, Saha said, "Urgent Notice: The water level of the Gomati River has crossed the extreme danger level. The administration is working tirelessly to evacuate affected individuals to safe zones. I urge all those who may be affected by the flooding to please cooperate with the authorities and move to the shelter houses immediately. Your safety is our top priority." Saha has already briefed Union Home Minister Amit Shah about the current situation and has requested him to dispatch additional NDRF teams to support the response efforts. "Hon'ble Home Minister assured me of all possible support during this crisis. I am grateful to him for providing all possible support to us at this hour," Saha said. Saha himself was seen travelling in a rescue boat from his residence to his office on Wednesday morning, as a large area around Ganaraj Chowmuhani, close to his residence, was submerged under water. On Wednesday, waterlogging was seen in parts of Agartala city although emergency evacuation pumps drained out water from different areas, including Indira Gandhi Memorial (IGM) Hospital Chowmuhani, Math Chowmuhani, Shakuntala Road etc. CM's call for safety of affected people, effort for maximum compensation

The chief minister also visited some of the flood-affected areas of Tripura and said such heavy rainfall was never recorded in the state. He added that while the natural calamity has put up hurdles, the government is doing everything possible to make sure people are evacuated to safety, all necessary support is provided to them, and they get maximum compensation. Soon after his return from New Delhi Tuesday evening, the Chief Minister had chaired a review meeting with officials to assess the flood situation throughout the state.

WFI chief called for contempt; no OBC quota in Chandigarh engg colleges and charges framed against Lawrence Bishnoi



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has summoned Sanjay Kumar Singh, President of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), after finding him prima facie guilty of "wilful disobedience" of a court order. The court was hearing a petition filed by the Haryana Amateur Wrestling Association, which sought recognition as the sole affiliated unit of the WFI in Haryana and requested that other associations not be allowed to represent the state or conduct selections and trials. On April 24, 2024, the HC had directed the WFI to allow the team recommended by the Haryana Amateur Wrestling Association to participate in the Federation Cup (Seniors), scheduled from April 24 to April 26 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Despite this order, the players nominated by the petitioner association were not permitted to participate, leading to further legal action.

The petitioner also alleged that the WFI ignored subsequent court orders allowing individual players from the association to appear in selection trials for the Under-17 Asian Wrestling Championship. The High Court expressed concern over the WFI's continued disregard for its interim orders and summoned Sanjay Kumar Singh to

appear in court on August 28, 2024, to explain why he should not be held in contempt and why an ad hoc committee should not be appointed to oversee the WFI's affairs. OBC candidate's plea for reservation in Chandigarh engineering colleges dismissed. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has dismissed the petition of an OBC candidate seeking admission to the Bachelor of Engineering programme based on his OBC rank in JEE Mains. The court ruled that the University Institute of Engineering and Technology (UIET), Panjab University, and Chandigarh College of Engineering and Technology (CCET), Sector 26, Chandigarh, do not fall under the definition of a 'Central Educational Institution' as per Section 2(d) of the CEI Act, 2006. Therefore, the reservation provisions under Section 3 of the Act do not apply to these institutions. The division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Vikas Suri held that reservation policies are a matter of government policy and do not confer a legal right for the petitioner to seek a writ of mandamus demanding such reservation. The petitioner had previously sought directions to apply the CEI Act's reservation provisions for OBCs for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic sessions but was admitted to the general category without dispute. The court reaffirmed that policy decisions on reservation are not subject to judicial intervention unless there is a violation of an existing legal right. A Mohali court has framed charges against gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and four of his accomplices in an arms smuggling case from 2022. The Judicial Magistrate (1st Class) set September 3 as the next hearing date. Bishnoi, along with Aseem Baba, Sonu, Bikramjeet Singh, and Deepak alias Deepu, is accused under relevant sections of the Arms Act and Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code. The case was initiated following the arrest of Deepu by ASI Gurpartap Singh's team in May 2022, which led to the identification of the other accused.

Cresa's plastic-free pads go a distance towards ensuring a green future



GNS News Agency, August 23

After completing her graduation in Mechanical Engineering from MIT in Pune, Sarika Pathak Kulkarni was determined to complete her post-graduation studies. It did not matter that she was married. With her husband and the rest of the family in India, Pathak Kulkarni travelled to Philadelphia University in the US in 2015 to study. In January this year, Pathak Kulkarni would draw upon her stubborn spirit once again when she gave birth to her second child—just as her startup, Cresa, launched its product on Amazon and calls started coming in for orders. "I remember that I slept the day I delivered my baby but, from the very next morning, my work started. Entrepreneurs don't have leave," she says.

What drove her passion was that Pathak Kulkarni had seen the future in which Cresa's product, sanitary pads that are more environment friendly than most of those available in the market, would be improving the lives of women as well as helping the planet. The journey of Cresa, which means Creative Sanitation, started during Pathak Kulkarni's two years in the US. She was sent to train with a major international pharma company, where she redesigned their panty liners. This drew everybody's attention to her aesthetic thinking about products that are hidden by women in the deep pockets of their bags. The experience made Pathak Kulkarni rethink women's menstrual products. Back in India, she spent some time work-

ing and being a mother and wife before she realised the immensity of the problem surrounding sanitary napkins. According to the organisations, such as the Stockholm Environment Institute, "The prevalent use of non-recyclable and non-biodegradable disposable menstrual products, like sanitary pads and tampons, harm the environment. Their life-cycle pollutes waterbodies and landfills, leading to microplastics and other environmental and health hazards."

Pathak Kulkarni wasn't looking to become an entrepreneur. Instead, she was happy being a working woman who drew a salary at a good company and maintained a home. She was aware that individuals and companies were working on the problem of disposal of sanitary napkins. "I wanted to work on the problem itself, which is that pads are used for a few hours and, then, discarded," she says. Her first child was very small at the time but Pathak Kulkarni went ahead and patented her idea. She was made the leap to being a startup founder. Her father, Mohan Kulkarni, is a director and mentor of Cresa

"I approached BHAU Institute at the College of Engineering, Pune. They really supported me and explained that my idea had implications for women's health, the environment and social structures, the last because it is garbage collectors who segregate used pads from the rest of the waste by hand. BHAU Institute gave me financial opportunities in the form of grants worth Rs 15 lakh from CSR and the government. They helped me conceptualise the idea into a prototype," says Pathak Kulkarni. The pads have been available in the market for two years and are made of biodegradable material. "The products do not contain petrochemical byproducts or chemicals and are rash-free," she says. Women can simply pour hot water from a geyser or a kettle on the used pads and it dissolves into slurry that can be flushed down a toilet. It does not cause plumbing blockages. As the pad is free of plastic, it goes a distance towards ensuring a green future.

Next month, Cresa will begin a pilot project of Hot Bins at a corporate office. These bins resemble ordinary trash bins but have provisions for hot water and a flush. But, how will the startup overcome a common problem of products that are more sustainable than commercially available products having higher price tags? "This is an issue we have been thinking about. Products that use plastic and have bulk production are priced less in the market. We are small scale currently, so raw material and production costs are higher. As we grow, we will bring good prices in the market," says Pathak Kulkarni.

Bar Council of Delhi calls on lawyers to wear black ribbons as mark of protest



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Bar Council of Delhi (BCD) on Wednesday issued an appeal to all advocates to observe a "peaceful protest" on Thursday by wearing black ribbons on their arms as a mark of protest against the

alleged rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor in Kolkata. Condemning the crime at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, the BCD also sought capital punishment for the accused. The BCD's circular appealed to the Centre to issue "appropriate direc-

tions to the investigating agency to conclude the investigation expeditiously and ensure capital punishment to the perpetrators of this brutal and heinous crime".

The circular also asked the Centre to put in place "stringent measures

to prevent recurrence of such horrendous crimes, so as to rebuke the predators and to repose faith in the minds of the public, and particularly keeping in view the security of women". The 31-year-old victim was allegedly raped and murdered inside a seminar hall of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9, sparking outrage across the country as doctors went on strike. Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer, was arrested by the West Bengal police. The Calcutta High Court transferred the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), expressing displeasure with the probe by the West Bengal Police. In the nationwide protests, doctors have been demanding justice for the victim and a law ensuring safety for all doctors in colleges and hospitals.

As MVA opposes his appointment as special public prosecutor, Ujwal Nikam denies conflict of interest



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra has opposed the state government's decision to appoint Ujwal Nikam as the special public prosecutor in the Badlapur school case where two four-year-old girls were allegedly sexually abused by a cleaning staff member, saying that he was a BJP member and the school management reportedly had links with the party. Nikam, however, said his party and his profession were separate. "The chief minister has announced my appointment in the Badlapur case. The government said

that it wants to fast-track the case to secure justice for the victims." Nikam had contested the Lok Sabha elections as a BJP candidate from the Mumbai North Central constituency and lost. "The school belongs to a particular party and Nikam also belongs to that party. How can he ensure justice in this case?" asked Leader of Opposition and Congress MLA Vijay Wadettiwar. Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sanjay Raut also opposed Nikam's appointment as SPP. "Nikam fought elections on a BJP ticket. He is not an independent lawyer now. He cannot be expected to argue against an institute run by BJP people," Raut said. Asked about the opposition to his appointment, Nikam reminded both parties about the 1993 Sanjay Dutt arms possession case. "I was the public prosecutor in the Sanjay Dutt arms case. At that time, there was a Congress government at the Centre and the state. The government had appointed me. The Congress seems to have forgotten about (my) impeccable record...." he said. "The Shiv Sainiks are also well aware of what all happened in the Sanjay Dutt case. In the 1993 blasts case I was handling, Sena chief Bal Thackeray used to call me for discussions... He used to appreciate my handling of the case. He was fond of my professional skills and praised me several times," Nikam said, adding that he does not want to go into the details of the case.

Women protesting against SC/ST sub-classification halt train in Gujarat's Surendranagar

GNS News Agency, August 23

Women protest SC/ST sub-classification, Gujarat Bharat bandh SC/ST. In Surat, members of the SC/ST community held a rally and submitted a memorandum to District Collector Sourabh Pardhi in support of the nationwide protest called by the Reservation Bachao Sangharsh Samiti. Protesters occupied railway tracks and forced a goods train to halt in Gujarat's Wadhwan town during a Bharat Bandh against the recent Supreme Court judgment allowing sub-classification of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservation purposes.

"A group of women occupied railway tracks around 10.30 am at a level crossing in the Ganpati Fatsar area. Due to the protest, a goods train travelling from Surendranagar to Botad had to be halted near a station in Wadhwan," Vishwarajsinh Jadeja, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Surendranagar division, told The Indian Express. A team from the Surendranagar police rushed there to manage the situation, he added. The Western Railway confirmed the incident. "We have seen photos of people occupying the track and therefore a goods train had to be halted," said Mashooque Ahmad, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Bhavnagar. Shambhu Singh, Public Relations Inspector for the Bhavnagar division, said the Government Railway Police and the Railway Protection Force eventually cleared the tracks. "We persuaded protesters to clear the railway track and they agreed to withdraw from the tracks to allow the resumption of traffic," Jadeja said.



In Surat, members of the SC/ST community held a rally and submitted a memorandum to District Collector Sourabh Pardhi in support of the nationwide protest called by the Reservation Bachao Sangharsh Samiti. Under the banner of the Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Samajik Dayitya Samithi, a large crowd gathered at Mandarwaja on Ring Road, where protesters garlanded a statue of Dr Ambedkar and chanted slogans against the Supreme Court's sub-classification ruling. Police were deployed along the rally route. "The Supreme Court ruling is part of a conspiracy to weaken the SC/ST community and is unconstitutional," one of the protest leaders said. The apex court recently ruled that SCs and STs can be sub-classified to ensure that benefits of reservation reach the most disadvantaged within these communities.

Who was Aruna Shanbaug, the Karnataka nurse whom CJI Chandrachud cited in Kolkata rape and murder case hearing

GNS News Agency, August 23

While taking a suo motu petition into the brutal rape and murder of a young trainee doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, the Supreme Court on Tuesday mentioned Arun Shanbaug, a nurse who was sexually assaulted in 1973. In his remarks, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud emphasised the need for safe working space for health professionals and mentioned Aruna Shanbaug, a junior nurse from Karnataka who was raped and choked by a janitor at Mumbai's King Edward Memorial Hospital on November 27, 1973. "Due to ingrained patriarchal biases, the relatives of patients are more likely to attack the women doctors and they are more susceptible to sexual violence too, and the Aruna Shanbaug case is a case in point. Gender violence shows a lack of safety for women in the system," said CJI Chandrachud. An aspirational woman, Aruna Shanbaug, who was from the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, was finishing her work when Sohanlal Bhartha Walmiki attacked her, choked her with a dog chain, and raped her in the hospital's basement. The next morning, a cleaner noticed her lying on the floor. While she suffered serious injuries to her spine in the brutal attack, the strangulation with the dog chain cut off the oxygen supply to her brain, rendering her in a vegetative state for life. She was 24 years old. Walmiki was convicted of attempted murder and theft, but was not tried for rape under a narrow definition of what constitutes rape. After serving seven years of imprisonment, Walmiki vanished. Shanbaug remained in a vegetative state for the next 42 years, and died due to pneumonia at the age of 66 in May 2015. For all those years, she was confined to a bed at the very same hospital where she worked and was taken care of by the nurses.

In 2009, 36 years after Shanbaug was attacked, Pinki Virani, a journalist and human rights activist filed a plea in the Supreme Court on behalf of the nurse seeking passive euthanasia for her. Virani, who wrote Aruna's Story: The True Account of a Rape and Its Aftermath, sought to end the suffering that Shanbaug had to endure for decades and with no chance of recovery. However, the staff of K E M Hospital staff opposed the euthanasia plea, and said they were happy to take care of Aruna Shanbaug. The Supreme Court allowed the petition the next year. In 2011, the Supreme Court directed the setting up of a medical committee to examine Aruna Shanbaug's condition, and the panel's report said she was in a permanently vegetative state. Though the Supreme Court turned down Pinki Virani's plea, it allowed 'passive euthanasia' of withdrawing life support to patients who are in a permanently vegetative state. While refusing to grant permission for the mercy killing of Aruna Shanbaug, the court also laid down a set of tough guidelines under which passive euthanasia could be legalised through a high court-monitored mechanism. As defined by the SC in the Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug vs Union Of India & Ors, passive euthanasia entails withholding of medical treatment for continuance of life, eg withholding of antibiotics where without giving it a patient is likely to die. The nurses at the K E M Hospital, who had taken care of Aruna Shanbaug for decades "like their child", cel-



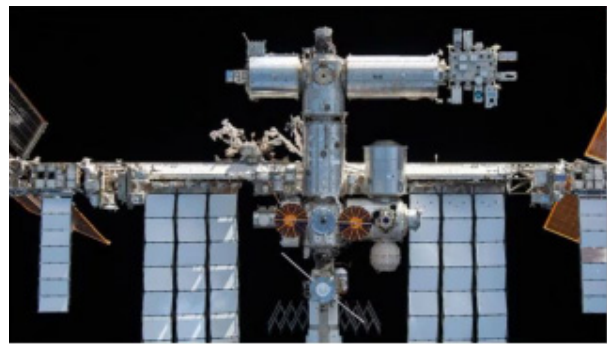
ebred by cutting a cake. On May 18, 2015, Aruna Shanbaug passed away at the hospital. After her death, Virani told The Indian Express, "Aruna was the reason passive euthanasia was legalised but she never got the benefit of it. In her death, she brought in a landmark judgment." Almost three years after her death, the Supreme Court in a landmark judgment on March 9, 2018, allowed passive euthanasia in the country. A five-judge Constitution bench, headed by the then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, while recognising "living wills" made by terminally ill patients who are likely to go into a permanent vegetative state, laid down guidelines for passive euthanasia. The bench, also comprised justices A K Sikri, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud, and Ashok Bhushan, also laid down rules about who could execute the will and how a nod for passive euthanasia would be granted by the medical board. On that day, Justice Chandrachud said, "Life and death are inseparable. Every moment our bodies undergo change... life is not disconnected from death. Dying is a part of the process of living."

Face masks back again amid surge in upper respiratory tract infections

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: Face masks back again amid surge in upper respiratory tract infections. Hyderabad: The ongoing season of upper respiratory tract infections like influenza, viral fevers and pneumonia has forced doctors and staff to not only start wearing masks in hospitals but also advise the patients and their attendants do the same. While the present onset of viral fevers is not as dire as the time when Covid-19 was at its peak and masks were mandatory, these days, as a precautionary measure, a considerable number of individuals have started wearing masks to avoid air-borne transmission. On its part, the Directorate of Public Health (DPH), Telangana has urged people to guard themselves against air-borne infections like viral fevers, Conjunctivitis and influenza by strictly following cough etiquette.

Indian astronaut likely to fly to International Space Station by next year: Jitendra Singh



GNS News Agency, August 23

An Indian astronaut is likely to fly to the International Space Station by April next year as part of the NASA-ISRO collaborative initiative, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said. Two Indian astronaut-designates Group Captains Shubhanshu Shukla and Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair are undergoing training in the US for the Axiom Space Ax-4 mission. ISRO has assigned Shukla for the Ax-4 mission while Nair would be the backup candidate. "An Indian astronaut will travel to the ISS by April next year," Singh told a press conference here ahead of the first-ever National Space Day celebrations to mark the landing of Vikram lander on the Moon on August 23 last year. The theme for the National Space Day is 'Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga'. On the occasion, ISRO will release on August 23 the scientific data collected by the Chandrayaan-

3 mission that could be used by researchers. More than one thousand events have been organised across the country over the last two months.

President Droupadi Murmu will participate in the National Space Day celebrations at the Bharat Mandapam here and give away prizes to the winners of the Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon and ISRO Robotics Challenge. Briefing reporters on the upcoming space missions, ISRO Scientific Secretary Shantanu Bhatawdekar said the ISRO-NASA joint mission NISAR was expected to be launched after February next year. The 12-metre reflector of the earth observation satellite, billed as the most expensive ever built, had developed an anomaly and was sent back to the US for corrective measures. The reflector is expected to be back in India by October and integrated with the satellite. "Since November to January is the period of solar eclipses, NISAR cannot be launched before February," Bhatawdekar said. The Chandrayaan-4 mission is expected to be launched in 2027 subject to approval from the government, he said, adding the aim of the mission was to bring back samples of lunar rock and soil to Earth. The ISRO-Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) mission to explore the polar region of the moon has been designated as Chandrayaan-5, Bhatawdekar said. The Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) project is an international cooperative project, with JAXA in charge of the lunar rover and ISRO responsible for the lander that will carry the rover. Observation instruments from NASA and the European Space Agency will also be mounted on the rover.

UPSC opposes ex-IAS probationer Puja Khedkar's pre-arrest bail plea, says it will 'embolden' others



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has opposed the anticipatory bail plea of former IAS trainee officer Puja Khedkar in the Delhi High Court, stating that granting her the relief "would not only impede the investigation process" but also "embolden individuals with criminal intent to exploit and abuse the law". Meanwhile, Justice Subramonium Prasad on Wednesday extended Khedkar's interim protection from arrest after her counsel, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, requested additional time to respond to the UPSC's affidavit. The court will hear the matter again on August 29.

The UPSC's affidavit stated that "the gravity of fraud

committed is unprecedented," affecting not only a constitutional body but also the public at large and people who could not be appointed despite being eligible and qualified. The affidavit said that Khedkar's false statements regarding her number of attempts and her suppression of other information could not have been possible "without the assistance and helping hand of several other individuals, all of which requires to be unearthed by custodial interrogation".

The affidavit detailed Khedkar's alleged fraudulent actions, including attempts made beyond the permissible limits, name changes, and applying under various reserved categories (OBC and people with disabilities). The UPSC thus submitted that granting anticipatory bail to Khedkar could influence the ongoing investigation. The affidavit further stated, "The fact that the accused is in a position to collude with others even before her selection as a Civil Service officer speaks volumes about her influence. It is not far-fetched to suggest that even the medical reports claiming disability benefits may have been tampered with or obtained through unfair means. There is a prima facie indication of a complex scheme devised by Khedkar to further her intentions in collusion with others. The calculated manner in which the offences have been committed over time indicates that the investigation cannot rely solely on documents."

Pigeon released by Chhattisgarh police officer fails to fly at I-Day function, he seeks action from district collector

GNS News Agency, August 23

During the function, BJP MLA and former minister Punnul Mohle who was the chief guest, Mungeli Collector Rahul Deo, and Superintendent of Police Girija Shankar Jaiswal were handed pigeons to release, signifying peace and freedom. Chhattisgarh During the function, BJP MLA and former minister Punnul Mohle who was the chief guest, Mungeli Collector Rahul Deo, and Superintendent of Police Girija Shankar Jaiswal were handed pigeons to release, signifying peace and freedom. The superintendent of police of Chhattisgarh's Mungeli on Tuesday wrote to the district collector seeking disciplinary action against the person responsible for the situation where a pigeon failed to fly while he released it during the Independence Day celebration. The video featuring the awkward moment as Girija Shankar Jaiswal tries to release the pigeon on August 15 has left netizens in splits with many linking it to a funny scene from the third season of Panchayat, a popular web series. A similar awkward moment was featured in Panchayat when the pigeon drops dead after being released by a local MLA. During the I-Day event, Jaiswal, along with chief guest Punnul Mohle, a BJP MLA and former minister, and Rahul Deo, Collector, Mungeli, was supposed to release white pigeons as a symbol of peace and freedom. While the birds released by the MLA and the collector flew up, the one released by Jaiswal failed to fly.

In his letter, the SP wrote that the incident took place on Independence Day and was prominently aired on



social media and other media channels. "The situation was created as a result of presenting a sick pigeon for flying in the main district-level programme. The situation would have been extremely unpleasant had it occurred at the hands of the chief guest of the function and honourable MLA," he said in the letter. In response to the SP's letter, Deo told The Indian Express that he has ordered an inquiry to find out if there has been any kind of negligence that led to the incident. "The pigeon is alive. If it is an act of God then it is not actionable, but we are finding out if anyone from the veterinary section is responsible." Four days after the incident, a social media user Sachin Gupta shared the video on X, which received 69,000 views and over a thousand likes. "Panchayat-3 was repeated in Chhattisgarh. SP sahab released pigeons on Independence Day. His pigeon fell down instead of flying," wrote Gupta.

Kerala police issues notice to Google, Meta over apps, ads linked to fake lotteries



GNS News Agency, August 23

A notice was issued to Meta to remove advertisements of such fake lotteries from social media platforms Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram managed by it. A notice was issued to Meta to remove advertisements of such fake lotteries from social media platforms Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram managed by it. Kerala police have issued a notice to Google to remove apps from its Play Store that are selling fake lotteries online in the name of the lottery run by the state.

A similar notice was issued to Meta to remove advertisements of such fake lotteries from social media platforms Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram managed by it, the State Police Media Centre (SPMC) said in a release on Wednesday. Police took the action after cyber patrolling revealed that 60 fake lottery apps, 25 fake

Facebook profiles and 20 websites are connected to the scam, the SPMC release said. It said that stringent legal action will be taken against those who are behind the fraud. Giving details of the scam, the police said that fake advertisements in the name of 'Kerala Megamillion Lottery' and 'Kerala Summer Season Dhamaka' have been circulating on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram for some time stating that lotteries run by the state government can be bought online.

People also get messages on their phones stating that the Kerala government has started an online lottery, and on spending Rs 40 rupees there is a chance to win up to Rs 12 crore, it said. When a person sends Rs 40 on the number mentioned in the message, they get a fake lottery ticket image on WhatsApp. Later, when the draw time is over, the fraudsters send artificially fabricated results that show that the ticket held has won a prize of Rs 5 lakh, the release said. Subsequently, someone claiming to be a government representative calls on the phone and asks the 'ticket holder' to transfer a certain amount to a bank account towards 'GST' and 'stamp duty' to receive the prize money, it said. After the demanded amount is transferred, they ask for more money claiming that the RBI is holding on to the prize. "Victims are provided with artificially produced documents and videos to make every step seem believable," the SPMC release said. The police have urged the public to be careful not to fall prey to such online lottery scams and to immediately call on the number 1930 if they suspect that a financial fraud is taking place.

Won't quit politics, open to floating new party: Former Jharkhand CM Champai Soren

GNS News Agency, August 23

With the Assembly elections round the corner, former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren said that he will not be quitting politics and that he was open to floating a new party. "It is a new chapter of my life. I won't quit politics as I have received lots of love and support from my followers. The chapter has closed, I may form a new outfit," the senior Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader was quoted as saying by news agency PTI shortly after he reached his ancestral village Jhilingora in Seraikela-Kharsawan district. This comes days after he had announced that he was mulling three options — to retire, start a new party, or join another party. In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, Champai claimed that on July 3, days after Hemant Soren walked out of prison after being granted bail by the Jharkhand High Court, all his scheduled programmes were cancelled without any explanation. "When I asked about the reasons for cancellation, I was told that there is a meeting of party legislators on July 3 and I cannot attend any government programmes till then," he wrote. "When the party's central executive meeting has not been held for years, and one-sided orders are passed, then whom should I go to and tell my problems? I am counted among the senior members in this party, the rest are juniors, and the supreme



who is senior to me is no longer active in politics due to health, then what option did I have? If he had been active, perhaps the situation would have been different," he had said. JMM sources had said that differences had emerged within the party after it denied Champai's request to make his son its candidate from the Ghatshila seat in the upcoming Assembly polls. "He (Champai) is just building a premise to quit and thus many baseless stories are being spread. It is clear he went to Kolkata and reportedly met BJP leaders. Everything will be clear if and when he joins the BJP," a JMM leader had said.

Senior advocate designation: Proposal to rework process raised with CJI

GNS News Agency, August 23

A DAY BEFORE the Supreme Court designated 39 lawyers as senior advocates last week, a proposal for reframing the "application" process was made to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, has learnt. Sources said senior advocate Kapil Sibal, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta together brought up the issue with the CJI at a meeting on August 13, a day before a full court of the Supreme Court met to make the final decision. The interviews of shortlisted lawyers had already been held by then. "There is a feeling that the designation has to be conferred and not simply be an application where anyone who meets a minimum criteria gets the prestigious tag," said a senior lawyer familiar with the development. It is learnt that during the meeting with the CJI, Mehta also briefly brought up the case of human rights advocate Vrinda Grover, who had applied for designation as senior advocate but did not make it to the interview list. "The issue was raised not to bat for one name or oppose another but rather for a review of the method itself," Mehta told The Indian Express. When contacted, Sibal declined to comment. There has been disquiet in the Bar, with senior advocates expressing disappointment over Grover being left out.

Grover, 60, an alumnus of St Stephen's and New York University, has over 35 years of practice. From the sexual violence in 2013 Muzaffarpur riots to the sexual harassment complaint against former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, she has taken up cases involving women's rights. In 2023, the Human Rights Council, an intergovernmental body within the United Nations, appointed Grover to the three-member panel probing human rights violations by Russia in Ukraine. "Vrinda's competence is recognised by all her peers, including professional opponents who may be ideologically opposite to her. She is fearless, with academic credentials and has a pan-India presence, appearing not just in the SC but in high courts across the country. It is difficult to fathom what could have led to her exclusion even from the preliminary stage of an interview," senior advocate Raju Ramchandran said. It was only in 2017 that the SC, in a three-Judge Bench verdict, overhauled the process of designation. The SC moved away from voting by secret ballot by Judges to a formal, application-based decision on pre-decided grounds by a selection committee.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising had challenged the earlier system on the grounds that it was flawed, arbitrary and unfair. The SC evolved a process where every application was graded and awarded points based on factors like seniority, number of reported judgments and publications, which would then be followed by an interview with the selection panel. Last year, when the 2017 rules were challenged in court, the government also sought reconsideration of the process. A Bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul (now retired), then noted: "An endeavour was made by the Union of India to reopen the



It is learnt that during the meeting with the CJI, Mehta also briefly brought up the case of human rights advocate Vrinda Grover, who had applied for designation as senior advocate but did not make it to the interview list.

2017 judgment itself. That, however, is not our remit in the present applications. We are not at the stage of a review or a reference of the matter to a larger Bench."

The Bench, however, tweaked the points system, reducing the weightage for publications and adding these points for judgments delivered. The name of an advocate in judgments indicates "legal formulations advanced by the advocate in the course of the proceedings of the case, pro bono work and domain expertise." The SCBA had argued that "very few actively practicing advocates are able to devote time to writing books or articles and, in any case, publications were not a reflection of advocacy skills." In 2017, the SC rules had allocated 10 points for advocates with 10-20 years of experience and 20 points for 20-30 years of experience. In 2022, the SC tweaked this rule too, after complaints that "an applicant with 11 years of practice and an applicant with 19 years of practice would get the same points in this criterion." The SC said a point can be allotted for each year at the Bar to ensure equity. In the latest round of designations on August 14, the SC designated 39 advocates including Additional Advocate General of Assam and BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli; BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj; Additional Advocate General of Punjab Shadan Farasat; former Uttar Pradesh standing counsel M R Shamsud; Advocates on Record Dr Anindita Pujari, Aparna Bhat, K Parameshwar and Ashok Panigrahi as senior advocates.

Odisha spurious liquor case: 1 dies, 2 critical at MKCG hospital



GNS News Agency, August 23. One of the 15 people receiving treatment at MKCG Medical College Hospital for consuming spurious country liquor died on Tuesday night, police said. He was one of 20 people who fell ill after allegedly consuming adulterated liquor in Maoundpur village, located within the jurisdiction of K Nuagaon police station in Ganjam district, on Monday. Behera had been in the ICU since Monday night and had underlying health conditions, including diabetes and high blood pressure. He passed away at 12.30 am during his treatment, the Superintendent of the Medi-

cal College and Hospital, Suchitra Dash, said.

The other 14 people are undergoing treatment at the medical college and hospital. The condition of two of them was critical and they were undergoing treatment in the ICU, Dash said.

Meanwhile, the family members of the deceased and villagers staged a road blockade at Chikiti demanding compensation of Rs 20 lakh. Over 20 people of Jenapur, Maoundapur, Karabalua, fell sick after consuming the country-made liquor from an illegal vendor on Monday and were first admitted at the community health centre, Chikiti before being shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital on the same night. The police and excise personnel conducted joint raids in the area to crack down on the illegal units of the country that made liquor.

"We have arrested at least six persons and destroyed huge quantities of 'pochha' (raw liquor) near the Digapahandi area during the joint raids conducted by the police and excise personnel," the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Berhampur, Sarthak Sarangi, said. Among the arrested persons, one of the key accused in the hooch incident, Surendra Mallick, was accused of supplying the country-made liquor, he said.

Israel kills top Palestinian militant as Gaza truce talks stumble



Israel killed a senior militant from Fatah's armed wing Wednesday (August 21, 2024) in a strike on Lebanon, leading to accusations from the Palestinian movement that Israel is trying to "ignite a regional war". Fatah, the Palestinian movement based in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, said Khalil Maqdash was killed in a strike near the southern Lebanese city of Sidon.

The Israeli military said it targeted the brother of Mounir Maqdash, who heads the Lebanese branch of Fatah's armed wing. It accused them both of "directing attacks and smuggling weapons" to the West Bank and collaborating with Iran's Revolutionary Guards. In response, the slain militant's Fatah movement, which is headed by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and rivals the Gaza Strip's Islamist rulers Hamas, accused Israel of bidding to trigger a wider regional war.

Mr. Maqdash's killing marks the first such attack on a senior Fatah member in more than 10 months of cross-border clashes between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement following the Gaza war. The "assassination of a Fatah official is further proof that Israel wants to ignite a full-scale war in the region," Tawfiq Tirawi, a member of Fatah's central committee, told AFP in Ramallah. It came only hours after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken left empty-handed after a tour of the Middle East aimed at reaching a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Mr. Blinken appealed to Hamas to urgently accept a U.S.-backed truce proposal, while also entering into a public spat with Israel over its future presence in the besieged Palestinian territory. "Time is of the essence," Mr. Blinken said before flying out of Doha after stops in Qatar, Egypt and Israel on his ninth regional tour seeking to halt the Gaza war.

"This needs to get done, and it needs to get done in the days ahead, and we will do everything possible to get it across the finish line," he said of the truce proposal. The United States has presented ideas to bridge gaps and, through Qatar and Egypt, pressed Hamas to return to talks this week in Cairo.

But a day after Mr. Blinken said U.S. ally Israel was on board, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted by Israeli media as disagreeing on a key sticking point. Mr. Netanyahu insisted Israel maintain control of the Philadelphi Corridor, the border between Gaza and Egypt that Israeli forces seized from Hamas, whom Israel says relies on secret tunnels to bring in weapons. Mr. Blinken said Israel had already agreed on the "schedule and location" of troop withdrawals from Gaza. Since the conflict began, it was made "very clear that the United States does not accept any long-term occupation of Gaza by Israel", Mr. Blinken said when asked about Mr.

Netanyahu's remarks.

A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, called Mr. Netanyahu's "maximalist statements" unhelpful for reaching a truce. Mr. Blinken acknowledged differences and called for "maximum flexibility" from both Israel and Hamas. Egypt, the first Arab nation to make peace with Israel, has been infuriated by the border takeover. Hamas said it was "keen to reach a ceasefire" but protested "new conditions" from Israel in the latest U.S. proposal. On the ground, Gaza was again rocked by air strikes, AFP reporters, first responders and witnesses said. The Israeli military said it struck about 30 targets throughout Gaza and that troops "eliminated dozens" of militants.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said death appeared to be the "only certainty" for Gaza's 2.4 million people, with no way to escape Israel's bombardment. "Absolutely nowhere is safe," said UNRWA spokeswoman Louise Wateridge. "People... feel like they're being chased around in circles." "Death seems to be the only certainty," she told AFP.

As tensions escalated, Lebanon's Health Ministry said earlier Israeli strikes in the country's east killed one person and wounded 20, hours after four were killed in the south. Cross-border skirmishes have taken place almost daily between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah, but fears of a greater crisis soared when Hamas's political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed on a visit to Tehran on July 31. Iran has vowed retaliation, blaming Israel for the assassination, but has held off so far, with the United States sending additional forces and warning a wider war could destroy prospects for a Gaza ceasefire. Elsewhere in the region, a merchant vessel was struck by three projectiles off Yemen after exchanging fire with two boats, British maritime security agency UKMTO said. There was no immediate claim for the attack, but it comes as Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement keeps up a campaign against international shipping that it says is in support of Gaza.

Israel and Hamas have blamed each other for delays in agreeing a deal to end fighting, free Israeli hostages and allow vital humanitarian aid into Gaza. Mr. Netanyahu has faced public protests in Israel urging him to accept a truce, which would bring back hostages whose plight has plagued Israelis. The Israeli military said Tuesday (August 20, 2024) it had retrieved the bodies of six hostages from tunnels in Gaza, some of whom were killed in its operations. The October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,199 people in Israel, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Out of 251 people taken hostage that day, 105 are still being held hostage inside the Gaza Strip, including 34 the military says are dead. Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed 40,223 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's Health Ministry, which does not give details of civilian and militant deaths. In a stark reminder of what's at stake for Mr. Netanyahu, a young Israeli woman symbolising the 251 hostages called for their swift return. "Avinatan, my boyfriend, is still there, and we need to bring them back before it's going to be too late. We don't want to lose more people than we already lost," Noa Argamani said while visiting Japan.

Search resumes for six missing after Mike Lynch's yacht sank, but hopes dim



GNS News Agency, August 23

Divers resumed a search on Wednesday (August 21) for survivors after British tech entrepreneur Mike Lynch's yacht sank off the coast of Sicily two days ago, though hopes dwindled of finding the six missing people alive. The British-flagged Bayesian, a 56-metre-long (184-ft) superyacht, was carrying 22 people and was anchored off the port of Porticello, near Palermo, when it capsized during a fierce storm on Monday.

Fifteen people survived, one crew member's body was recovered and six passengers remain unaccounted for, including Lynch, his 18-year-old daughter and Jonathan Bloomer, a non-executive chair of Morgan Stanley International. Underwater inspection of the wreck resumed early on Wednesday after being paused late on Tuesday, the fire department said on social media. It earlier described the operations as "long and complex". The

yacht was lying sideways at a depth of around 50 metres, giving divers 8-10 minutes to inspect it before having to resurface. Efforts have been hampered by "very confined" spaces inside the wreck, fire department spokesman Luca Cari said.

Mr. Lynch, 59, is one of the UK's best-known tech entrepreneurs. He built the country's largest software firm, Autonomy, and was referred to as Britain's Bill Gates. He sold the firm to HP for \$11 billion in 2011, after which the deal spectacularly unravelled with the U.S. tech giant accusing him of fraud, resulting in a lengthy trial. Mr. Lynch was acquitted on all charges by a jury in San Francisco in June. The other missing passengers are Bloomer's wife Judy, Clifford Chance lawyer Chris Morvillo and his wife, Neda Morvillo. Mr. Morvillo represented Mr. Lynch in the San Francisco trial, while Mr. Bloomer was a character witness on his behalf. Experts have been at a loss to explain how a large luxury vessel, presumed to have top-class fittings and safety features, could have sunk within minutes, as recounted by witnesses. Another yacht anchored next to it was unharmed by the tempest. Matthew Schanck, chair of the Maritime Search and Rescue Council, a U.K.-based non-profit organisation that trains sea rescuers, said the Bayesian was the victim of a "high impact" and rare weather event. "If it was a water spout, which it appears to be, it's what I would class as like a black swan event," he told Reuters. He said he was confident the authorities would "get to the bottom" of what caused the shipwreck, thanks to the accounts of survivors, witnesses and examination of the ship, which appears to have remained intact on the seabed.

28 killed, 23 injured in bus accident carrying Pakistani pilgrims in Iran

GNS News Agency, August 23

A bus carrying Pakistani pilgrims overturned in Iran, killing 28 passengers and injuring another 23 people, the Iranian Students News Agency reported on Wednesday (August 21, 2024). The crash happened Tuesday (August 20) night in the central Iranian province of Yazd, said Mohammad Ali Malekzadeh, a local emergency official, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. Another 23 people suffered injuries in the crash, 14 of them serious, he added. There had been 51 people on board at the time of the crash.

The pilgrims had been on their way to Iraq to commemorate Arbaeen, which marks the 40th day following the death of a Shiite saint in the 7th century. Pilgrims gather in Karbala, Iraq, in what's regarded as the largest annual public gathering in the world. Authorities offered no immediate cause for the crash. However, Iran has one of the world's worst traffic safety records with some 17,000 deaths annually. The grave toll is blamed on wide disregard for traffic laws, unsafe vehicles and inadequate emergency services in its vast rural areas. In a separate



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incident, a bus crash early Wednesday (August 21, 2024) in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province killed six people and injured 18, authorities said.

Sheikh Hasina faces 33 cases, including murder, after ouster from Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, August 23

A case was filed on Wednesday (August 21, 2024) against Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 86 others on charge of attacking a procession in Sylhet city which left several people shot and injured during the recent mass protests on August 4, taking the number of cases against her after her ouster to 33. Juber Ahmed, acting president of Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal's Sylhet city unit, filed the case with the court of Sylhet Metropolitan Magistrate Suman Bhuiya. Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana is also an accused in the case.

According to the case statement, the accused attacked a peaceful rally, brought out by Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its associate organisations in Sylhet City's Bandarbar area on August 4, which left several shot and injured, The Daily Star newspaper said. Awami League's general secretary and former road transport minister Obaidul Quader, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, former foreign minister Hasan Mahmud, former law minister Anisur Rahman, and former advisor to the prime minister Salman F Rahman were among people named in the case.

With this case, Hasina is now facing 33 cases against her, including 27 for murder, four for crimes against humanity and genocide, and one for abduction, the paper said. Hasina fled to India on August 5 after resigning from her post amidst unprecedented anti-government student-led protests. The Hasina-led government

was replaced by an interim government, and 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was named its Chief Adviser.

Bangladesh's interim government has said it will try those involved in the killings during the recent mass movement of the students against the Hasina-led government in the International Crimes Tribunal. Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government, taking the death toll to more than 600 since the massive protest by students against a controversial quota system in government jobs first started in mid-July. On Tuesday, she along with five other was implicated in a case lodged over the murder of private company employee Firoj Talukder in indiscriminate shooting from a helicopter by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) during recent anti-discrimination students' movement. Earlier Hasina, her son Sajeeb, daughter Saima and sister Rehana and 17 others were sued in a case filed over the killing of a fruit seller in the capital's Jatrabari on August 5.

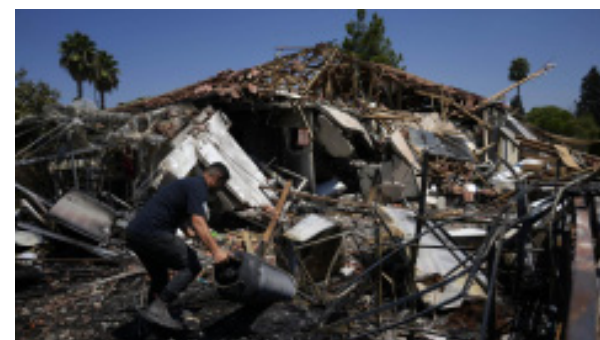
The victim's father, Sultan Miah, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shakil Ahmed. Another case was filed against Hasina and 49 others over the death of Md Omar Faruque, a student of Kabi Nazrul Government College, at Laxmibazar of Sutrapur on July 19. Hasina and 24 others were sued for the death of 18-year-old garment worker Sohail Rana in the city's Adabor area on August 5. In Savar, Hasina and 75 Awami League men were sued over the murder of a barber shop worker on August 5. In Narayanganj, a case was filed against Hasina, seven former ministers and law-makers and 179 others for killing a bus helper in the Kanchpur area of Sonargaon upazila. In Rangpur, Hasina, her sister and 49 were sued over the killing of a vegetable trader during the quota reform movement on July 19. In Joypurhat, a murder case has been filed against Hasina along with 216 others in connection with the death of an auto driver in front of a police station on August 5. In Bogura, Hasina and Obaidul Quader have been sued for the murder of a rickshaw puller on August 4.

Hezbollah fires more than 50 rockets hitting Israeli-annexed Golan Heights

GNS News Agency, August 23

Lebanon's Hezbollah has launched more than 50 rockets, hitting a number of private homes in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights. The attack on Wednesday (August 21, 2024) came a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with fellow mediators Egypt and Qatar as he pressed ahead with the latest diplomatic mission to secure a cease-fire in the war in Gaza, even as Hamas and Israel signalled that challenges remain.

Hamas in a new statement called the latest proposal presented to it a "reversal" of what it agreed to previously and accused the U.S. of acquiescing to what it called "new conditions" from Israel. There was no immediate U.S. response. First responders in Golan Heights said they treated a 30-year-old man who was moderately wounded with shrapnel injuries in Wednesday's (August 21, 2024) attack. One house was engulfed in flames, and firefighters said they prevented a bigger tragedy by stopping a gas leak. Hezbollah said the attack was in response to an Israeli strike deep into Lebanon on Tuesday (August 20, 2024) night that killed one and injured 19. On Tuesday (August 20, 2024), Hezbollah launched more than 200 projectiles toward Israel, after Israel targeted a Hezbollah weapons depot some 80km from the border, a significant increase in the daily skirmishes. Israel and Hezbollah



have traded near-daily strikes for more than 10 months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hezbollah's ally, Hamas, in Gaza. The exchanges have killed more than 500 people in Lebanon — mostly militants but also including around 100 civilians and non-combatants — and 23 soldiers and 26 civilians in Israel. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed it, saying it needs the strategic plateau for its security. The United States is the only country to recognize Israel's annexation, while the rest of the international community considers the Golan to be occupied Syrian territory.

Putin's slow response to the Kursk attack could test the patience of some of his backers in Russia

GNS News Agency, August 23

A year ago this week, President Vladimir Putin strode onto a stage in the Kursk region to commemorate the 80th anniversary of one of the Soviet army's proudest moments in World War II. Addressing a rapt audience that included soldiers fresh from fighting in Ukraine, Mr. Putin called the decisive victory in the Battle of Kursk "one of the great feats of our people."

Now, as Russia prepares to celebrate the 81st anniversary of that 1943 battle, Kursk is again in the news — but for a very different reason. On Aug. 6, Ukrainian forces made a lightning push into the region, seizing villages, taking hundreds of prisoners and forcing the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians. Russia was caught unprepared by the offensive and reportedly is drafting conscripts to repel some of Ukraine's most battle-hardened units. Mr. Putin has a history of responding slowly to various crises in his tenure, and he has so far played down the attack. But 2 1/2 years after launching a war in Ukraine to remove what he called a threat to Russia, it is his own country that seems more turbulent. He appeared uneasy at an Aug. 12 televised meeting of his security staff about Kursk, cutting off the acting regional governor who had started listing the settlements seized by Ukraine. The President and his officials referred to "the events in the Kursk region" as a "situation," or "provocation." State media fell into line, showing evacuees queuing for aid or donating blood, as if the events in Kursk were a humanitarian disaster and not the largest attack on Russia since World War II. In his 24 years in power, Mr. Putin has portrayed himself as the only person who can guarantee Russia's security and stability, but that image has suffered since the war began. Russian cities have come under drone attacks and shelling from Kyiv's forces. Mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin launched a brief uprising last year to try to oust his military leaders. Gunmen stormed a Moscow concert hall and killed 145 people in March. The Kremlin has given tacit approval to a wide-ranging purge of Defense Ministry officials, with many facing corruption charges. Lower-level officers also are being arrested on fraud charges, including Lt. Col. Konstantin Frolov, a decorated airborne brigade commander. "I would rather be in Kursk ... than here," he said while being marched in handcuffs into a Moscow police station. In another reminder that fortunes in Russia can change quickly, authorities started criminal cases against other officials and are seeking to confiscate land from some of the country's wealthiest people in a posh area outside Moscow near a Putin residence. While state TV drives the still-strong support for Putin despite setbacks

like the Kursk incursion, it's harder to gauge the opinions of his key constituency — Russia's elites. Putin is dependent on their acquiescence, said Ekaterina Schulmann, a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center in Berlin. "The calculation that's going on in their heads 24/7 is whether the status quo is to their advantage or not," she said.

Since the war began, life for those elites — Mr. Putin's inner circle, top bureaucrats, security and military officials, and business leaders — has gotten worse, not better. While many have been enriched by the war, they have fewer places to spend their money because of Western sanctions. The question they are asking themselves about Mr. Putin, Ms. Schulmann said, "is whether the old man is still an asset or already a liability." Russia's elites could be described as being in a state of "unhappy compliance," said Nigel Gould-Davies, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. They are discontented with the status quo, he said, but fearful about who would win if there were to be a leadership struggle. They could be hoping, the analysts said, that Mr. Putin's reaction to the events in Kursk fits a pattern in which he is initially slow to respond to a crisis before eventually managing to prevail. It's something seen since his earliest days in power — starting with the sinking 24 years ago of a nuclear submarine that was named for the Battle of Kursk. On Aug. 19, 2000, less than a year after Mr. Putin became President, the Kursk sank in the Barents Sea after one of its torpedoes exploded, killing all 118 sailors aboard. Mr. Putin stayed on vacation early in the crisis — setting off widespread criticism — and waited five days before accepting Western offers of help that might have saved some sailors who initially survived the explosion. Mr. Putin also appeared sluggish in responding to the June 2023 uprising by Wagner chief Prigozhin in what became the most serious challenge to his authority yet. After the mutiny fizzled, Prigozhin initially was allowed to remain free, but Ms. Schulmann said Mr. Putin eventually "got the last laugh" when the mercenary leader was killed a month later in a still-mysterious crash on his private plane. As the Ukrainian offensive enters its third week, Putin sought to keep to his schedule and even embarked on a two-day trip to Azerbaijan, without mentioning the crisis. On Tuesday he briefly referred to it, promising "to fight those who commit crimes in the Kursk region." With domestic dissent stifled and with the media firmly under his control, Mr. Putin can afford to make the "absolutely cynical" decision to ignore what is happening in the Kursk region, Ms. Schulmann said. Still, Mr. Putin's hold on power "is unlikely to be weakened as a result of this humiliation."

Markets around the world are rattled by fears of slowing US growth



A sell-off in markets around the world quickened pace Monday as investors grew uneasy about signs of a slowing US economy, with stocks tumbling across Asia. The declines were especially pronounced in Japan, where the Topix index, which includes companies that represent a broad swath of the country's economy, fell more than 10%. The decline at one point triggered a "circuit breaker" mechanism that halts trading to let markets digest large fluctuations. The Nikkei 225 index, considered the benchmark in Japan, fell as much as 9%. South Korea's benchmark Kospi index fell more than 5%. Equity markets in Taiwan, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong were all lower. The declines were expected to continue Monday in Europe and the United States. In the market for stock futures, the S&P 500 was down 1.5% and the Nasdaq was more than 2% lower. Stock futures for key indexes in Europe, including Germany's, pointed to declines of about 1%. Bitcoin, a main cryptocurrency, fell more than 10% in another apparent sign of investor

anxiety.

The drops followed a US jobs report Friday that indicated that employers had slowed hiring significantly in July, with unemployment rising to its highest level in nearly three years. This deepened fears that the economy was cooling and that the Federal Reserve may have waited too long on cutting interest rates. Nomura, the Japanese investment bank, said in a research note Monday that the "slowing US data causes a growth scare for markets," and that it has "reignited fears of a faster-than-expected US slowdown." Based on the weakness in the jobs report, Goldman Sachs said in a note that it now expects the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates at its next three meetings — a more aggressive timetable for cuts than the investment bank had previously expected. In Japan, the soft US data only added to the uneasiness of investors. The Topix is down more than 18% from last Wednesday, when the Bank of Japan raised interest rates for only the second time in nearly two decades. A circuit breaker was also triggered for trading in long-term Japanese government bonds and the Nikkei 225. Japanese stocks have been on a tear for more than a year, fueled by a weak Japanese yen. The yen's depreciation had helped to inflate the earnings of Japanese exporters, but the currency has strengthened considerably over the past week. Adding to the pressure, foreign investors have started selling off positions in Japanese stocks over the last few weeks. In the most recent data from the Tokyo Stock Exchange, foreign investors sold nearly \$4 billion more in Japanese equities than they purchased during the week ending July 26. In the week prior, they were net sellers of \$1.5 billion of equities.

IndiGo launches business class, to start with Delhi-Mumbai route from mid-November

IndiGo industry watchers see the competition from the Tata group's full service carriers (FSCs) Air India and Vistara for business travellers and those willing to pay a premium for extra comfort as a key reason behind this move and some other decisions taken by IndiGo in recent months. India's largest airline IndiGo will launch its "tailor-made" business class product — IndiGoStretch — from mid-November on the Delhi-Mumbai route, and ticket sales for the same will start from Tuesday.

The carrier, which has been tagged as a budget airline for long, will be launching business class for 12 routes. This move, which was ostensibly in the works for some time now, marks a strategic shift in IndiGo's product offering. In its 18 years of existence, IndiGo has championed the one-size-fits-all single-class cabin configuration. IndiGo's business class cabin will have 12 seats from Recaro in a two-by-two configuration. The business class meals will be curated by Oberoi Hotels, IndiGo's Chief Executive Officer Pieter Elbers announced at an event to mark the airline's 18th anniversary. "Considering India's soaring economy and the evolving aspirations of Indian society, it's time for IndiGo to redefine premium travel in India, increasing the availability of this service for the nation. It will create a desired option for many who are aiming to travel business, perhaps for the first time in their lives," IndiGo had said in May when it announced its intention to launch a business class product on India's busiest and business routes.

Industry watchers see the competition from the Tata group's full service carriers (FSCs) Air India and Vistara for business travellers and those willing to pay a premium for extra comfort as a key reason behind this move and some other decisions taken by IndiGo in recent months. Yields from business and premium classes are usually notably higher than the more price-sensitive economy class. On the flipside, having a premium class products also lead to higher costs for airlines. According



to Elbers, despite the business class product adding some complexity and costs for the airline, IndiGo will continue to maintain its position of cost leadership in the market.

The airline's decision to introduce a business class cabin on select domestic routes is being seen as a precursor to the it offering a business class product on its international routes as well, particularly on those that see high business travel as well as medium and long-haul international routes that the airline plans to operate over the coming years by inducting aircraft like the A321XLR—the extra long-range variant of the narrow body A321 aircraft—and the wide body A350, which can operate long-haul flights. The airline recently also announced its plans to enter the long-haul market with an order of 30 Airbus A350-900 wide body aircraft. So far, IndiGo has operated a fleet of over 350 narrow body aircraft, except for two Boeing 777 planes that are on damp lease and are exclusively used to operate flights to and from Istanbul. After dominating the domestic skies with a market share of over 60 per cent, IndiGo has more recently been focussing on expanding its international network and operations, heating up the competition with not just Air India and Vistara, but also foreign carriers.

Natural catastrophes: Insurance cover proposal hangs fire for over a decade

While the country has suffered heavily in terms of human fatalities and economic losses due to natural catastrophes every now and then, proposals by the insurance industry to bring the population and properties in the country under a catastrophe insurance plan has been hanging fire for the last 13 years. A host of proposals, including the latest from the Standing Committee on Finance of the Lok Sabha in February this year, for an insurance catastrophe pool (INCIP) which would have mitigated the sufferings of the people are stuck with the governments and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) with no decision taken about the complex issue of implementing the scheme across the country. That too at a time when several landslides, cloud bursts and floods have hit several states like Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Uttarakhand over the years. Though over 350 people died and nearly 200 others are still missing in the major landslide that occurred in Wayanad, Kerala, on July 30, people are unlikely to get benefits as they are largely uninsured. Properties worth hundreds of crores were destroyed in the landslide. Insurance sources said normally less than 10 per cent of the people and property are covered in any region in India, leaving a huge gap without protection. They will have to depend on the government and other agencies for compensation and rebuilding of houses. The global average for insurance protection is 54 per cent. In February 2024, the Standing Committee on Finance of the 17th Lok Sabha recommended that the government should explore options as to how homes and properties, especially those of economically vulnerable groups, can be insured in areas susceptible to catastrophic damages with the aid of Central/ State Government. "This may require a specialised insurance business to be set up by one of the public sector general insurance companies with subsidised premiums for disaster-prone areas. Such insurance businesses have been established in many other areas, such as Florida which is subject to regular hurricane damage," the committee said. In 2010, after Cyclone Nilam hit Tamil Nadu, the insurance industry and the Finance Ministry jointly planned to set up an exclusive catastrophe pool to cover the losses that occur in natural disasters. The proposal for the INCIP would have cost up to Rs 5,000 crore, if applied across India, and brought down the present undefined bill to rebuild lives after the catastrophes, providing a big comfort to citizens, the government and the insurance sector. However, a natural catastrophe insurance plan is yet to take shape,

said an insurance sector official. The Standing Committee also proposed that IRDAI should set up a working group with all concerned stakeholders to examine all these issues in detail and then provide appropriate policy recommendations to address this important set of issues. Insurance companies, especially public sector GIC Re, had proposed catastrophe bonds — or Cat bonds which are common in developed countries — to raise funds for meeting claims. Even this has failed to fructify. "NatCat (natural catastrophe) risks are largely uninsured and the governments (State/ Centre) often provide some monetary compensation/ relief when a catastrophe strikes. The recent tragedy in Wayanad is an example. There will be cries for having a NatCat Insurance Scheme but it will be soon be forgotten till the next NatCat strikes," said KK Srinivasan, former Member, IRDAI. A major challenge will be to formulate a voluntary common catastrophe rate for the entire market. If the rates are too low, premium will not be sufficient to cover the risk and the pool will not be viable, officials said. India has been ranked third after the US and China in recording the highest number of natural disasters since 1900. By disaster type, India is marred mostly by floods. "What we need is a public-private solution, say a Disaster Pool, for natural disaster risk involving the insurance sector could offer many benefits over government crisis loans and grants," says a report prepared by State Bank of India last year. "If we consider 2020 floods in India, the total economic loss was of \$7.5 billion (Rs 52,500 crore) but insurance cover of only 11 per cent," the SBI report said. Apart from human losses, there is huge economic loss due to these disasters. Since 1900, India has suffered an economic loss of \$150 billion (where the loss is reported) with largest loss from floods (\$92.1 billion) followed by storms (\$44.7 billion), the report said. In India the intensity and frequency of natural calamities, especially cyclone, have increased manifold. "Further, the cyclones in west coast (Maharashtra, Gujarat) in increasing, which has not been witnessed in the past. However, around 8 per cent of the total losses are covered. So, there is around 93 per cent protection gap during the period 1991 to 2022. So, early intervention is needed to close the protection gap, which are in all lines of insurance," the SBI report said. The Standing Committee said that the natural disasters can cause a lot of damage to infrastructure in India, a country that faces many natural hazards because of its demographic and geographic features. Also, many houses are

Your pedicure can give your foot a fungal infection



Getting a manicure or pedicure is arguably one of the most relaxing ways to pamper yourself, and there's no denying that. But it turned near fatal for a woman who went to get a pedicure at a nail salon in Florida and eventually ended up losing a leg to an infection after the session. The incident took place in 2020. The salon had to chip off a hefty sum of \$1.75 million (Rs 146,559,700) after losing the court battle in 2021, but nothing compensates for a lost leg, and you will agree.

No, it's not just your boyfriend; even your favourite salon can show some serious red flags that you have been ignoring. While we can't help you with the first, we can definitely tell you how to recognise the latter. If pedicure instruments and tubs are not clean: Dr Kiran Sethi, MD, author and founder of Isya Aesthetics, says, "A nail salon red flag would be instruments lying around with no signs of sterilisation. Unclean or unsterilised hands and the absence of gloves are also major concerns. Hygiene is crucial."

Imagine a salon being visited by numerous people on a daily basis who could be having an array of skin problems. In that case, when these pedicure tubs and instruments are not sterilised after every use, it could wreak havoc on your skin. Ideally, the tubs should be cleaned after every use but not many adhere to these norms. Most salons are very callous about the well-being of a client, especially what happens to them after the session. "Infections are a significant concern, especially when visiting an unclean salon. Not only can you contract a fungal infection of the toenail, but there have also been rare cases of blood-borne diseases being transmitted. For instance, when instruments used for cuticle cutting and fixing are not properly sterilised between clients, there is a risk of transmitting diseases such as hepatitis C. Maintaining high hygiene standards in nail salons is crucial to prevent such serious health risks," Dr Kiran adds. If sanitation is the last thing a salon cares about, you know when your last visit should be. If you experience a bad reaction after a session: Whether it's an allergic reaction to a product or an infection — it might be time to reconsider your visits to your "most-trusted" salon. Clearly, they are not adhering to the necessary standards of care and hygiene. A pain of any kind or even a small cut after the session should be counted as a red flag. The session is supposed to help you relax, not give you more pain (like life is not doing it enough).

The foot tubs used during pedicures can be a hotbed for microbial contamination. If the tubs are not cleaned thoroughly and regularly, they can harbour harmful organisms. This is particularly concerning for individuals with weakened immune systems, diabetes, or circulatory issues, who are more susceptible to infections. If a person has diabetes, they are susceptible to a lot of problems. Getting a pedicure just adds on to it. How? Well, as long as diabetics do not have an existing foot ulcer, minor cut or infection, getting a pedicure is fine. But again, cleanliness is a priority. "People with diabetes should be wary of getting a pedicure, particularly if it's not hygienic, because

they have a much higher risk of fungal infections, since their immune system is lower," says Dr Kiran. If you have diabetes, inform the pedicurist. Request that the water isn't too hot and that they avoid clipping your cuticles or filing your heels and calluses. It is better to avoid shaving your legs right before your pedicure, as small nicks can allow bacteria to enter. You can shave afterwards instead.

But pedicure is important. The point is not to scare you off to the extent that you stop getting a pedicure. It is just to make you vigilant about what needs to be taken care of when you go for one because guess what, pedicure is not a luxury. Keeping your feet clean is important as our feet reflect our overall health. "There are so many problems like fungal issues, warts, corns and calluses, that can be avoided by paying proper attention to the feet," says Dr Seema Oberoi Lall, consultant, dermatology, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram. It also helps with improved blood circulation. The massage component of a pedicure stimulates blood flow to your feet and lower legs. Improved circulation can reduce pain and swelling and contribute to overall foot health. It doesn't just help you de-stress but it helps you get rid of the dead skin which could be accumulating and can lead to bunions or corns. What you can do

Want a pedicure but still sceptical about hygiene? We've got you covered. Just follow our cue: Research salons: Choose a reputable salon known for its hygiene standards. Online reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations can be invaluable. Observe cleanliness: Pay attention to the cleanliness of the salon and its equipment. Sterilised tools and clean foot baths are non-negotiable. Bring your own tools: Sounds too much? Think about losing a foot if that helps. When you bring your own tools, it reduces the risk of cross-contamination. Communicate: Don't hesitate to discuss your concerns with your pedicurist. Make sure they are aware of any allergies or medical conditions you have. Opt for natural products: Wherever possible, choose salons that use non-toxic and natural products.

Homemade pedicure hack: Soak your feet: Fill a basin with warm water and add a few drops of your favourite essential oil or a bit of Epsom salt. Soak your feet for 10-15 minutes to soften the skin and relax your muscles. Exfoliate: After soaking, use a foot scrub or a pumice stone to gently exfoliate the dead skin cells from your feet, focusing on the heels and any rough areas. This helps to smooth your skin and prepare it for the next steps. Trim and file nails: Dry your feet thoroughly and trim your toenails straight across to prevent ingrown nails. Use a nail file to shape the edges and smooth any rough spots. Moisturise: Apply a generous amount of moisturiser or foot cream to your feet, massaging it in well. Pay extra attention to your heels and any dry areas. For an added treat, put on a pair of socks to help the moisturiser penetrate deeper into your skin. Paint your nails: This is an optional step, but who doesn't want a splash of colour? So, pick a nail paint of your choice and your feet should look straight out of a salon.

That serrated blade you use for dermaplaning is ruining your skin

Dermaplaning is a cosmetic procedure that involves using a blade to gently exfoliate the top layer of skin, removing dead skin cells and peach fuzz. If you're someone who struggles with facial hair, you must have taken matters into your own hands (using a blade) and removed that unwanted hair.

The problem of facial hair is ten times worse if you have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Nowadays, women are shaving their faces not just to remove facial hair but also to achieve clear skin. This practice, known as dermaplaning, is currently generating a lot of buzz as it is easily accessible and can be done at home.

What is dermaplaning?

Dermaplaning means exactly how it sounds - 'planing' the dermal layer of your face and shaving or dermaplaning your face - if done the right way - does not harm your skin. Dr Shifa Yadav, a consultant of dermatology at Artemis Hospitals, New Delhi, tells India Today that in the beauty industry, dermaplaning is a cosmetic procedure that involves using a sterile surgical scalpel blade to gently exfoliate the top layer of skin, removing dead skin cells and peach fuzz (the fine, short, lightly coloured hair that grows on the skin of the face). If a dermatologist is performing dermaplaning, they will use a scalpel (a more professional blade), while people who are doing dermaplaning at home generally use blades that are readily available in the market. Today, you will find tons of blades and razors for your face that are sold on the market, with prices ranging anywhere from Rs 80 to Rs 500. Dr Yadav says, dermaplaning aims to reveal smoother, brighter skin. It can also improve the effectiveness of skincare products and makeup applications.

BTW, in case you're wondering, shaving your face and dermaplaning are two different things. Dermaplaning involves using a sterile surgical scalpel to exfoliate the skin by removing dead skin cells and fine vellus hair (peach fuzz), providing a deeper exfoliation. Shaving typically uses a razor to remove hair without targeting dead skin cells, primarily for hair removal rather than skin exfoliation.

Aesthetician advises not to use serrated blades in viral video. A now-viral video, which has more than 3.4 million views, aesthetician Chantel took to Instagram, saying that as an aesthetician, she doesn't want people who are dermaplaning to use serrated blades.

Why? According to her, these serrated blades cause more harm to the face than normal blades or scalpels.

Do experts agree?

We spoke to various experts and all of them seem to agree that serrated blades can ruin your skin - especially if you have extremely sensitive skin.

For instance, Dr Neha Khuraana, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of House of Aesthetics, Delhi, says, "Definitely, a serrated blade has jagged teeth and can cause more cuts to the skin as compared to a smooth blade." She says that their "teeth" can penetrate deeper into the skin, leading to more injuries and irregular wounds. "Such wounds are more complex to clean and suture and are at high risk of developing infections. There is an increased risk of developing nerve damage and more pain with such a blade. If by any chance, deeper components such as muscles, tendons or ligaments are damaged, the functionality of that particular area may get affected," adds Dr Khuraana.

How to do dermaplaning the right way?

Meghna Mour, the co-founder and medical head at Skuccii Superclinic, says that one can do dermaplaning in four major steps.

1. Prep: Cleanse and dry your face.

2. Blade: Use a scalpel or smooth blade (we will get into the details in a bit).

3. Technique: Hold the skin taut and use short, feathering strokes with a dermaplaning blade at a 45-degree angle. Move the blade in an upward motion against the hair growth direction. Avoid going over the same area multiple times to prevent irritation.

4. Aftercare: Don't forget to take care of your skin once you're done with dermaplaning. Rinse, moisturise, and apply sunscreen.

Jennifer Lopez-Ben Affleck divorce: With no pre-nup, here's what she is seeking from the breakup



GNS News Agency, August 23

After two years of marriage global pop sensation and actor Jennifer Lopez and her husband, actor Ben Affleck, are officially calling it quits. The news of their separation is notably coinciding with the anniversary of their Riceboro, Georgia-set wedding ceremony in 2022 after they first eloped in Las Vegas a month prior.

A CNN report suggests that Lopez has already filed for dissolution of their marriage in Los Angeles on Tuesday (July 20), according to an entry on the Los Angeles Superior Court docket. However, the couple is yet to make

a formal announcement about their separation. NBC News is now reporting that Lopez has waived her claim to spousal support, and wants the same for Affleck. As they don't have a prenuptial agreement, earnings of both Affleck and Lopez since their marriage is considered community property between the duo. Affleck has starred in Air and Hypnotic and wrapped The Accountant 2, and produced The Instigators. Lopez made Shotgun Wedding, Atlas, This Is Me Now and The Mother in this time period. In the documents, Lopez mentions April 26 as their date of separation, a few days before she made a solo appearance at the 2024 Met Gala. Lopez and Affleck were reportedly living separately for several months before taking the legal route to get a divorce. The singer-actor has canceled her summer tour and is planning to spend time with her family. The couple has apparently also put their Beverly Hills home for sale. Jennifer and Ben first met on the sets of comedy film Gigli and fell in love in 2002. The Unstoppable actor popped the question with a custom 6.1-carat pink diamond ring from Harry Winston. He also appeared as Lopez's love interest in the music video for her 2002 single "Jenny from the Block." The couple postponed their wedding in 2003 and officially split in 2004. However, the two reconciled in 2021 and tied the knot in July 2022.

Nani reacts to Arshad Warsi calling Prabhas a 'joker' in Kalki 2898 AD: 'This must be the most publicity he has got in his life'

Arshad Warsi's comments on Prabhas' performance in Kalki 2898 AD have not gone down well with his fans and many other stars in the Telugu film industry. After Sudheer Babu and director Ajay Bhupathi, now actor Nani has also joined in to criticise Arshad's comments. During a press conference of his latest film Saripodhaa Sanivaaram, when the actor was asked about Arshad's comments, the actor implied that Arshad was getting the "most publicity" of his life because of his comments and called it an "unimportant matter."

Nani said, "The person that you're referring to, this must be the most publicity he has got in his life. You are unnecessarily glorifying an unimportant matter." Arshad, in a chat on Unfiltered by Samdish, had said that Prabhas was "like a joker" in Kalki 2898 AD. Arshad said, "I am really sad. Prabhas was like a joker. I want to see a Mad Max. I want to see Mel Gibson over there. Tumne usko kya bana dia yaar. Kyu karte ho aisa? Mujhe nahin samajh mein aata (What have you made of it? Why do they do such things? I never understand)." The comment was not welcomed by Prabhas' fans and other actors and directors in Telugu cinema. RX100 director Ajay Bhupathi said, "Prabhas is the man who has given everything & will do anything to take Indian cinema to the world audience, a pride of our nation. We can see the jealousy



on the film, and him in your eyes just because you've faded out & no one gives an eye to you. There's a limit & a way to express our opinion... Seems like you're the one that you've said about him." Sudheer Babu also spoke about Arshad's comments and said, "It's okay to criticise constructively but it's never okay to bad-mouth. Never expected the absence of professionalism from Arshad Warsi. Prabhas' stature is too big for comments coming from small minds." Kalki 2898 AD released in theatres in June and became the most successful film of the year. The Nag Ashwin film also starred Amitabh Bachchan, Deepika Padukone and Kamal Hassan.

Rani Mukerji, Kajol's cousin Samrat Mukherjee clarifies he is not the Bengali actor who hit a motorcyclist in Kolkata: 'I'm not the same'



Bengali actor Samrat Mukherjee was arrested by police on Tuesday after his car hit a motorcycle in the Behala area of Kolkata, according to PTI. Soon after the news surfaced, it was speculated that the actor is none other than Rani Mukerji and Kajol's cousin Samrat. However, that's not true. The filmmaker recently clarified and claimed he is based out of Mumbai and not Kolkata. In a conversation with Times Entertainment, Samrat clarified that the actor Samrat Mukherjee who met with an accident wasn't him. He further claimed that the actor in question Samrat Mukherjee is based in Kolkata, whereas he

himself is a filmmaker and the owner of Filmalaya Studios in Mumbai. Rani's cousin said he has been receiving multiple calls regarding the incident. "I am tired telling them how I am not the same Samrat."

He further claimed that the actor is no way related to his family. "I am safe and based here in Mumbai. The actor Samrat Mukherjee doesn't belong to our family." The Bengali actor in question is Samrat Mukherjee, who goes by the same name as Rani and Kajol's filmmaker cousin brother. He is a television star and currently features in the Sun Bangla series, Akash Sumon. The motorcyclist who was hit by the actor is a 29-year-old resident of Vidyasagar Colony in Behala. He was initially taken to M R Bangur Hospital and then transferred to SSKM Hospital.

Talking to PTI, the motorcyclist said, "It was 12:30 am when I was returning home. I saw a car coming from the wrong side at high speed. The car hit me, and I lost consciousness." According to the locals, after the collision, Samrat Mukherjee's car crashed into a nearby house, damaging its boundary wall. The actor has been arrested and was taken for a medical test, according to PTI.

Sunil Kumar, Sarkata of Stree 2, is a police constable known as 'The Great Khali of Jammu'

Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao starrer Stree 2 has become a blockbuster at the box office. While this version of the Stree franchise dealt with a folktale around a beheaded ghost, the actor who played this particular part has also been getting a lot of interest on social media. A Jammu-based police constable Sunil Kumar plays Sarkata in the film. A report in Bollywood Hungama has revealed some interesting details about Sunil who is also known as 'The Great Khali of Jammu'.

Interestingly, Sunil is even taller by 5 inches than wrestler Great Khali. His height is 7'6 and he is also into wrestling, with The Great Angaar as his ring name. As per some media reports, Sunil is a police constable and he got the job through the sports quota. Sunil had even tried to make it as a wrestler and participated in the WWE Tryouts in 2019. Though director Amar Kaushik revealed that Sarkata's face was generated through CGI, it was placed on Sunil Kumar's body. The Stree 2 director also told Bollywood Hungama, how Sunil was cast for the role, he shared, "The casting team found him. We wanted a man with such a height and he fit the bill. We used his body shots while the face of Sarkata was generated through CGI."

Sunil plays the villain in the film. His character Sarkata is an evil spirit who abducts girls with a modern outlook. To fight him, Stree returns in the film. Stree 2 also stars Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurana, and Abhishek Banerjee, in important roles. Akshay Kumar, Varun



Interestingly, Sunil is even taller by 5 inches than wrestler Great Khali. His height is 7'6 and he is also into wrestling, with The Great Angaar as his ring name. As per some media reports, Sunil is a police constable and he got the job through the sports quota. Sunil had even tried to make it as a wrestler and participated in the WWE Tryouts in 2019

Dhawan, and Tamannaah Bhatia have cameos in the film. Stree 2 released on Independence Day has earned Rs 350 crores worldwide.

Bigg Boss fame Sanam Shetty claims sexual abuse exists in Tamil cinema: 'No one can say no, I am speaking from my experience'



After the Justice Hema Committee submitted a report in Kerala listing several challenges faced by women in the Malayalam film industry, Tamil actress Sanam Shetty claimed assault against women is also taking place in the Tamil industry. The actress claimed to have personally experienced such incident. She claimed that not just women, but men are also sexually abused. On Tuesday, Sanam Shetty reacted to the Hema Committee report outside Chennai Police Commissioner Office, where she sought permission to organise a rally to condemn crimes against women following the Kolkata rape and murder case.

Addressing the media stationed at the venue, the actress said in Tamil, "I don't know the details of the Hema Committee report. But I welcome this move. I would like to thank the judge and the Kerala government for coming

up with such a report and listing out all the issues faced by the women in the Malayalam film industry. Such incidents are also taking place in the world of Tamil cinema. No one can say no. I am speaking from my own experience." The actress further claimed she gets angry when people cross-question the victim about the incident and ask her why did they not open up when the incident took place. "I am raising my voice against the cruel scenario that 'adjustment is the only way to get a chance'. I say it from my personal experience, don't be desperate for work. If you believe in yourself, you will get work without adjustments. So, wait for it."

While she said not everyone in the industry 'is bad', she added that both men and women 'face sexual and power abuse'. The actress encouraged other women to speak up on the issue. She said, "It takes a lot of guts. But, please come forward and expose such people." She highlighted the lack of unity among women in the industry, "We don't have to wait for men to fight for us. We are capable enough. We need to stand up for ourselves." On Monday, the Kerala government released the report by Justice Hema Commission, constituted in 2017 after a leading Malayalam actress was abducted and sexually assaulted in a moving car while travelling from Thrissur to Kochi. One of the 13 accused is popular actor Dileep. The report spoke in detail about the kind of problems faced by women in cinema, including the paucity of basic facilities on sets, economic discriminations, ostracism for standing their ground, and the casting couch.

Farhan Akhtar felt 'angry, betrayed' when dad Javed Akhtar married Shabana Azmi; scriptwriter accepts he feels 'guilty' towards first wife Honey Irani



Screenwriter Javed Akhtar had revealed he feels "guilty" towards his former wife actor screenwriter Honey Irani and said he takes "60-70 percent" of the responsibility for the failure of the marriage. Javed and Honey married in 1972, and had two children, Farhan Akhtar and Zoya Akhtar. The couple got divorced in 1985. In the latest Prime Video docu-series Angry Young Men, Javed Akhtar opened up about his personal life, particularly his first marriage which fell apart the same time he split with his screenwriting partner, Salim Khan.

"Honey is one person in the world, towards whom I feel guilty. And she is the only person. Sixty-seventy percent responsibility lies on my shoulders, for the failure of that marriage. If I had as much understanding as I have today, perhaps things would not have gone wrong. It is very difficult to accept, but that's how it is," a pensive Javed is seen confessing on the show's final episode. Farhan said post the separation, he went through a gamut of emotions, which included feeling "betrayed" by his father. "There was a phase when I was angry with him, I felt betrayed by him. There were all those very normal emotions that I did go through as a child growing up." Zoya added that after the divorce, the duo lived with Honey, so they ended up spending more time with her. "But it took time to go back to normal with my dad. Shabana played a big part in creating that normalcy." Javed Akhtar married actor Shabana Azmi in 1984 and the couple has been together since. Angry Young Men also featured Honey Irani and Shabana Azmi, both reflecting on the marriage that fell apart and the new equation that blossomed. Shabana said a "triangular relationship" will by

default be extremely personal and "very painful and especially when there are children involved." The veteran actor said the equation becomes "more hurtful" because people are quick to pass judgments. Addressing the comments she received, Shabana Azmi added, "People say, 'She is a home-breaker, she is a home-destroyer.' Obviously, I wanted to explain my point of view but then I figured, if I did that, I would end up hurting far too many people. So, wisdom lay in keeping quiet and not explaining myself and getting the brickbats, which obviously I would get." The veteran then credited Honey for not "filling the children" with "tales" against her. Shabana said Honey "just didn't do that" and added, "She gave them the security that you do not have to consider me as an evil stepmother. She and I have a very warm, nice relationship. And I am very grateful, because we all were very graceful. All three of us very graceful but she above all. She had the most to give and she gave that."

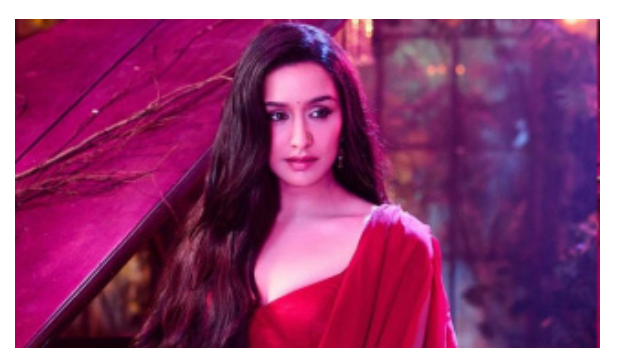
The chapter on the episode then ended with Honey Irani in the frame, addressing the marriage. "I guess what had to happen happened. But we are still very good friends. I think we are the best friends now. I know he is there for me whenever I need him, and he knows that I am there in whatever he does. No matter how many accidents he has," Honey Irani said and laughed. "The kids are there, and they are perfect with them, even Shabana has been very nice," she said, picking a glass next to her for a sip of water, as the chapter comes to an end. Angry Young Men chronicles the life and times of iconic screenwriting duo Salim-Javed and is directed by Namrata Rao.

Amar Kaushik justifies Shraddha Kapoor's limited screen time, accepts 'people complained'

Stree 2 is on a roll as it has turned out to be one of the most successful films this year. However, a section of viewers have complained about the limited screen time of the film's female protagonist Shraddha Kapoor. The film also stars Rajkumar Rao, Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurana and Abhishek Banerjee. Akshay Kumar features in a special cameo as well. The film's director Amar Kaushik has justified Shraddha's limited screen time and said that her character would not have so much impact if she had more scenes.

Talking to Bollywood Hungama, Kaushik said, "Some people complained that Shraddha Kapoor's screen time is less. Lekin agar Shraddha zyada dikhti, toh jis tarah ki entry ki usne, uska impact nahin hota (If Shraddha was seen more, then the way she had her entry, the impact of her character would be less)."

Kaushik also addressed actor Aparshakti's limited screen time. He said, "Lots of people told me but that's how the character was. If you see, even Abhishek Banerjee comes 40 minutes into the film. With Aparshakti, it was vice versa. Until he got hypnotised or possessed by Sarkata, he was fully there in the madness. After that, he became someone else. It was the demand of the script."



"We write what is required. We don't think, 'Yeh actor bura maan jaayega, yeh role bada hai, yeh role chota hai (an actor would feel bad, this role is big, this role is small)'. For us, the Bible is the script and things have to be organic. My producer also has given me freedom in this regard," Kaushik concluded. Stree 2 is the highly anticipated sequel of Stree (2018). The film was released in cinemas on August 15 and has already raked in Rs 285 crore at the box office in just six days. It is expected to cross the Rs 300 crore mark under a week.

Nick Kyrgios, Shapovalov lash out after Jannik Sinner escapes ban despite failing two dope tests



GNS News Agency, August 23

Jannik Sinner plays a shot during their quarter-final match at the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Montreal. (The Canadian Press via AP) Jannik Sinner plays a shot during their quarter-final match at the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Montreal. The world's top-ranked tennis player Jannik Sinner has escaped a ban despite failing two dope tests for an anabolic steroid in March this year. The move has not gone down well with players like Nick Kyrgios and Denis Shapovalov slamming the reprieve for Sinner.

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), in its ruling, handed a clean chit to Sinner because it determined that the substance, a metabolite of Clostebol, entered Sinner's system unintentionally through a contaminated over-the-counter spray used by his physiotherapist. While the ITIA have announced that the 23-year-old Sinner will not face a suspension from tennis, he will forfeit prize money and ranking points earned at the Indian Wells hard-court tournament where the first positive test occurred. After the hard-court tournament in March, Sinner again tested positive eight days later in an out-of-competition sample.

The Italian is expected to lose the \$325,000 in prize money and 400 rankings points he earned at the tournament in Indian Wells, California, where his first positive drug test happened. Tennis players react to Jannik Sinner escaping ban "Ridiculous – whether it was accidental or planned. You get tested twice with a banned (steroid) substance... you should be gone for 2 years. Your performance was enhanced. Massage cream.... Yeah nice," thundered Nick Kyrgios on X.

"Can't imagine what every other player that got banned for contaminated substances is feeling right now," Denis Shapovalov posted on X before adding: "Different rules for different players." Clostebol is a banned anabolic steroid that can be used for ophthalmological and dermatological use. The Associated Press notes that it's the same drug for which San Diego Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr. was suspended by MLB in 2022. "I will now put this challenging and deeply unfortunate period behind me," Sinner said in a statement posted on social media. "I will continue to do everything I can to ensure I continue to comply with the ITIA's anti-doping (program) and I have a team around me that are meticulous in their own compliance."

What was Jannik Sinner's defence? Sinner said his test results happened because his fitness trainer purchased an over-the-counter spray in Italy that contained Clostebol and gave it to Sinner's physiotherapist to treat a cut on the physiotherapist's finger. The physiotherapist then treated Sinner while not wearing gloves, which caused the substance to enter Sinner's system unintentionally. The ITIA said it accepted the player's explanation and determined the violation was not intentional. An independent panel held a hearing on August 15 and "determined a finding of No Fault or Negligence applied in the case, resulting in no period of ineligibility," according to the ITIA.

Record 39 runs in an over in T20Is: Why Samoan

Darius Visser's six sixes in an over needs to be celebrated despite small ground and a matting pitch

GNS News Agency, August 23

Four months ago, Darius Visser, a cricket coach in a Sydney club, decided to dust up his old dream of playing international cricket. He decided to make use of his mother's Samoan heritage and took trials with Samoa's team just before the East Asia Pacific region qualifiers for the T20 World Cup the year after. A batsman who bowls leg-spin—he began his cricket journey with Penrith Cricket Club, and aspired to be a fast bowler like the club's most famous face, Pat Cummins, but for a spate of stress fractures—he breezed through the trials in time for the tournament. In only his third game, he wrote history by not only hitting six sixes in an over, but also set a record for most runs in an over 39, off the unfortunate Nalin Nipiko's nine-ball over, against Vanuatu in Apia on Tuesday.

With a hefty clump over fine-leg—all strikes arrived in the arc between fine-leg and midwicket—he joined an elusive and exclusive group. Only three batsmen have struck six sixes in an over in T20Is ever, only seven others have managed the achievement in other forms of the game, in both domestic and international levels. The list features both illustrious and obscure cricketers; it includes Gary Sobers and Ravi Shastri (both in first class), Herschelle Gibbs and Yuvraj Singh; it also features Ross Whitely and Jaskaran Malhotra.

Suspicious eyes would be cast on Visser's record. The dimensions of the ground, a perfect oval, was predictably modest. The ground itself was small and rustic. The dressing rooms were makeshift tents. The pitch was a green carpet. Behind the black cloth sight-screen flapping in the breeze protruded plantain trees. Even a mishit—though all sixes of his were sweet-spotted and could clear most grounds—could shatter the glasses of the occasional car drawing by, past the scattered coconut trees. The bowler—medium pacer Nipuko, who the commentator apologetically insisted is better than his ignominious over suggests—was not of the highest calibre. Twice he overstepped, twice he gift-wrapped full tosses, once he bowled a wide, and the rest were length or short balls of inviting pace. A cricketer bred in Sydney would merrily latch on, the game watched by his parents. He would just hang back, shuffle across, clear his front leg, and swipe across the line with a fluid bat-swing and a thumping flourish.

Yet, for all the caveats, the achievement should be celebrated for both its rarity and romance. It is the rarest of cricketing monuments. Statistical milestones are being ceaselessly bettered, its horizons constantly redrawn. The fastest century in T20s was broken twice this year alone. As many as 59 bowlers have picked hat-tricks in this format; two have managed it even twice. Sixes are hit so frequently that it has shed its novelty long ago.

It requires a conjunction of several favourable circumstances, and a bestowal of fortune. A highly skilled



batsman in a rampaging mood and in destructive touch, batting often towards the end of his own or the team's innings, on the best day of his life against a bowler enduring the worst day of his life. It happens because it happens, irrespective of a batsman's rope-clearing prowess. The six-hitting metronome of our times, Chris Gayle, has not managed yet. Neither could Rohit Sharma, or Suryakumar Yadav yet. Glory and failure are seldom twinned in a single frame as closely as this in the game. For bowlers its devil's number multiplied by two. They dread this evil union of sixes, just as batsmen dream of this the moment they pick the bat. Not all the unfortunate recipients of the six-inamy are incompetent. Nipiko has 49 wickets in 30 outings, a robust average of 15 and an economy rate of 8.10. The matted pitch was on the slower side, and as the scorecard suggests, it was not a shirtfront. None of Visser's colleagues mustered more than 16 runs, which too is a record, the highest run percentage (132 off 62) by a batsman in a T20 innings.

More famous names have endured Nipiko's agony. Like Stuart Broad, the recipient of Yuvraj's assault, retired as the second most prolific seamer in Test cricket. The incident resolved him to bounce back stronger. "I think it steeled me up to make me the competitor I am, and has driven me forward a huge amount." Malcolm Nash, the left-arm seamer from Wales who Sobers clobbered, enjoyed a distinguished first-class career of 993 wickets. Nash would remember the incongruously short fine-leg boundary. "There was a little short boundary on the leg side. It would have been an under-13 pitch. And I've hit a few sixes here myself, of course!" he told The Cricketer, a year before his death in 2019. Three months before his death, Nash wanted Sobers to sign his autobiography Not Only, But Also. The legendary all-rounder accepted the invitation and shared a couple of drinks too.

The closest feat to hitting six sixes in an over perhaps is a bowler grabbing all ten in an innings, which has occurred only thrice in Test cricket, though on 84 instances in first-class cricket. Peak 6, thus, is a more difficult scale to scale. But it makes unlikely men famous, like a failed club cricketer from Sydney.

was caught on the crease and done in with pace. That dismissal was one thing but the couple of balls Mayank bowled before that tells you about his skillset," says Mhambrey. Mayank Lucknow Super Giants's Mayank Yadav celebrates after taking the wicket of Royal Challengers Bengaluru batter Cameron Green during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 T20 cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Lucknow Super Giants, at M Chinnaswamy Stadium. (FILE) Mayank managed to play only four games and bowled only 12.1 overs in IPL 2024. But during that brief period, he set the tournament alight by generating a speed of 155kph consistently before picking up a recurring abdominal strain. It has been more than three and a half months since he played any competitive cricket. He was not picked for any of the four Duleep Trophy squads and has even pulled out of the inaugural Delhi Premier League (DPL). T understands that the speedster has not yet recovered completely.

Lakshya Sen on losing to Viktor Axelsen at Paris Olympics: 'I was fighting for every point but ... this gonna hurt for sometime'



GNS News Agency, August 23

With Lakshya Sen, it's never about some streaky ray of hope. When he gets going in a big-stakes match at a big stage with his big booming, pacy game building up big leads, he makes the world look beatable. When he crashes down with a thud, a grandfatherly Bruce Banner coach turns into a Paris-rattling Hulk. National coach P Gopichand had reckoned gold was within Sen's reach the way he put Viktor Axelsen under the pump to start the semis. It was because Sen's exceptionally sharp reading of the game had dialled up his anticipation, backing the Indian against Thai Kunlavut Vitidsarn, had Sen made Paris Games finals. Sen's own mentor Prakash Padukone was thoroughly scathing when the shuttler let go of a chance of a bronze medal, a day later, because the two wise men saw wild possibilities of an Indian man achieving the unprecedented, believing him capable. Alternate scenarios play out in their minds, and recurring regrets come with the job of sitting on the chair.

Sen, though, walks the post-Olympics equilibrium, like a tightrope. In Mumbai for a sponsor's event on Tuesday, he says, "Overall, in how I played, there were some things I was happy and proud about at Paris. But this is gonna hurt for some time," he says crisply, before adding, "I'm looking to add and change a lot of things moving forward." It's one of those 4th place finishes, whose conversion into a medal India will ride along with, in the coming years – the country has never turned 4th into a podium before.

In the bronze playoff against Lee Zii Jia, Sen was 21-13, 8-3 up, when the Malaysian prone to implosions, pulled a heist on the Indian. The lead, Sen indicates, had been unexpected, and to his eventual dismay, lulling. "In the second game, that side of the court had some drift. Even after the lead, I knew I couldn't control the shuttle. And then the momentum suddenly changed, and he started playing better. Even when he drew level, I was fighting for every point. But ..." he trails off, on what had been a stunning run to the brink of bronze, for a guy ranked 22nd. It's a familiar pattern with Sen, at All England, and against Anders Antonsen and Jonatan Christie, over the course of his career, though he's nicked wins against both in latest battles. When he's aggressive and operating at peak pace, he looks stunningly in control. But if the pace drops a tad, and that happens in a blink, there's a significant drop in his game, where winning a big rally takes a toll on him.

Against Viktor Axelsen in the semis, 20-17 up, the Dane was on the ropes, hassled and taking forever to serve – a situation where Sen ought to have gone straight to the chair to hurry up the long framed opponent. But as is peculiarly recurrent with Sen, he allowed Axelsen to regroup, with no strong Plan B to drive the knife in, at the all-important endgame. Sen let the senior worm his way right back into the match, waiting for Axelsen to tire out,

Why Indian hockey star Abhishek is disappointed with Paris Olympic showing: 'It's a bronze when gold was in reach'

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Receptions held by the prime minister and president of the country, felicitations in their hometowns and massive celebrations, the welcome back to the Indian hockey team after winning historic bronze in Paris – the first time in 52 years that the team has won back-to-back medals at the Olympics – has been grand. Yet many in the playing group, especially those whose rise has coincided with the re-rise of Indian hockey, are not too keen to sit on their laurels. 25-year-old forward Abhishek is a case in point.

"This is big for us, it's an Olympic medal, but it's still a bronze when gold was in reach," Abhishek told The Indian Express after returning from Paris. "In my view, there are areas in which we all can improve. We need more consistency, were playing well on one day, making too many mistakes on another. We need to start scoring early, not just attacking well when we concede. There are a lot of smaller things."

Abhishek is among the younger crop of players in this team, alongside the likes of Hardik Singh and Raj Kumar Pal, who have risen through the ranks in the past few years as India have notched up successes. His Paris bronze adds to a collection of Commonwealth silver and Asian Games gold during his short career. His critical appraisal of the team's results – often a sign of developing the winning edge – clearly indicates how the standards have been raised among India's next generation of hockey stars under the seemingly positive philosophy of coach Craig Fulton. He is equally harsh on himself. "I don't think I had a good tournament," the Haryana-based forward said. "I gave my best, everything, but I was not at 100% performance. I scored two goals, important goals, but really, I should have scored more." Goals from open play were an issue throughout the team. 10 out of the 15 goals came from set pieces, each from skipper Harmanpreet Singh. The two goals Abhishek speaks of – the first in the solid performance against Belgium, which, despite losing, is seen as the match in which India turned their tournament around; the second being the opener in their blowaway win against Australia – were similar, hit on a marauding half-turn after he received the ball with his back to goal.

This was a result of a concerted effort from Fulton, during India's pre-Games preparation, to improve outcomes in the D with a focus among the forwards to de-

not quite pushing the attack, while the Dane simply bided his time, and switched gears. Sen concedes Axelsen was far too solid towards the end, but also that he botched his chance. "I'm happy that my starting strategy was working well. But in crucial situations I could've played differently. I didn't play well at all in the end, and there were a lot of unforced shots (errors). I needed to be a bit more patient," he says, though some might argue he got a little too patient, ceding space to the European. It was audacious that had brought Sen until here, earning the right to evict the defending champion in the semis. Axelsen is now double Olympic champion, but Sen needed to believe he could have dislodged the crown. He had held strong against Christie, the All England champion, and won more matches the pool stage. "There was a lot of time after the draw came out and I had a good group stage. After two matches, I had a good gameplan against Jonatan Christie," he recalls.

Crucially, he was prepared for a struggle. "I knew not everything will go my way, so I was focussed. My attack was sharp and defense strong so I could draw out errors from him. I just focussed on the next point," he says. It was the perfect example of piling on pressure as underdog – with the burden of Indonesian medal on Christie. Axelsen, many notches tougher, but nevertheless not immune to being brought under pressure, proved too mighty, as the big medal was gone. Christie had been threatening to defy, but that's when Sen played the no-look, behind the back, backhand to nick the 18-19 situation. "We do play that in training. But I'm happy it came off here as a good shot in crucial time. The shuttle had actually gone past me, and I'll say this would be Backhand Shot No 4 on priority. But it was the only shot left as option in that situation," he says simply. The freakishness of the no-look blindsided backhand where Sen swivelled and whacked his wrist behind the back, is in how rarely it amounts to anything good in the end. "There is a higher chance of making mistakes. And usually you don't get any advantage because the shuttle was still in play after Christie returned. I knew the shot went viral, but maybe it played its part in the mental bit ..." Sen hinted, at breaking down the Indonesian. Sen candidly says he's watched it "many times," but not searching for it specifically. "It just comes up a lot of times if I'm scrolling Insta reels," he says.

Between reels and reeling from the disappointment of the near-medal miss, Sen insists it's best to move on. From August 26-30, Sen will head to the Red Bull Athlete Performance Centre in Salzburg, Austria. Sen had undergone a precision challenge, and a 1 vs 4 reflex timer routine before the Olympics, but will head back to Europe for a detailed evaluation in ergometry (treadmill, rowing, cycling), lactate thresholds, oxygen spirometry (his VO2 Max was 69 heading into Games), and specific isokinetic tests for extremities, that will give detailed metrics on his reflex-heavy game. He will also be checked for injury risks by analysing his asymmetric movements, as well as a consult on mental training. Sen relies heavily on fitness to play the game style he does, and he is keen to get started right away. A semblance of mental exhaustion that compounds when playing high pressure rallies, did fell him, despite being in peak shape. So he sees potential for getting even better. "I'm looking forward to collecting data on this, and focusing on the fitness side. Rated very highly by India's top coaches for his game intelligence, he will however need to sort out his endgame freeze. And start building a proper Plan B, as he starts from scratch all over again in the next Olympic cycle.

Some may remember the now well-reported story of how a life-threatening accident – in which he got his hand caught in a barbed-wire fence, splintering a nerve and nearly losing a fatal dose of blood – turned around Abhishek's life. But few would know his immediate reaction. "He woke up after the accident, and the first thing he asked his mother was: 'Please don't stop me from playing hockey now,'" Shamsher Singh, Abhishek's childhood coach-cum-Hindi teacher, recalls. Abhishek got his start at the CZR Sr. Secondary School in Sonapat in his formative years, under the tutelage of an unconventional coach in Singh, who remembers being particularly harsh on him after recognising his talents. "When he was younger, he was disciplined and talented, but he didn't always understand that he must make the most of it," Singh, who Abhishek still affectionately refers to as 'Masterji', says. "I've coached players at his level, sometimes even better, that did not get chances because of their circumstances. The special thing about him is that once he got the chance, there was no looking back." That may explain, according to Singh, why Abhishek is self-critical. He constantly thinks he can improve. "I remember seeing him sulk in the first few matches on TV. I messaged him asking what was wrong and he replied saying he was disappointed he had not yet scored any goals. I tried to explain to him that he is contributing in other ways, playing well with the team, but he was not having it. He accepts nothing less than what he expects from himself," the coach says. Part of what makes him one of the more dangerous forwards in the team is his versatility. This is why Singh, having witnessed his sporting upbringing from start to finish, calls him a "coach's dream". "Today's hockey is about scoring goals with touches and rebounds and setpieces, crowding the circle. That's not how Abhishek used to play," he says. "In his younger days, he was a great dribbler (drawing comparisons with Pakistan great Shahbaz Ahmed) and got past people. He could dodge and had ball control. Unlike other kids, he never panicked in the D. Now, he has adapted his style. He is the perfect mix of the old and new generation."

develop an edge with their back to goal. "I have been practicing this (finishing on the half turn) a lot. Some myself, some with the coach," Abhishek said. "At this level, international defenders give you no space. The D is almost always crowded when you're in attack, so making the space for yourself is the most important thing. That's the focus from the coach." Will to improve