

INDIAN CHRONICLE

28 August, 2024 | Wednesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:170

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Brace yourself for heavy rains as IMD issues yellow and orange alerts in Telangana

Hyderabad: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Hyderabad has issued yellow and orange alerts across Telangana, warning of heavy rainfall and thunderstorms over the next five days. The alerts, in effect until September 1, anticipate significant rainfall and gusty winds in several districts across the state.

A yellow alert has been issued for the next three days indicating heavy rains. And orange alert indicating very heavy rains is issued at many places in the state on August 31 and September 1.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech launches next-gen oral cholera vaccine, to help bridge global gap

Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) has announced the launch of Hillchol (BBV131), a novel single-strain Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV), developed under license from Hilleman Laboratories, to combat cholera, a significant advancement in global health. Currently, only one manufacturer supplies OCVs worldwide, resulting in a yearly deficit of 40 million doses. To mitigate this global shortage of oral cholera vaccine, Bharat Biotech has established large-scale manufacturing facilities in Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar with a capacity to produce up to 200 million doses of Hillchol, a press release said.

PM Modi speaks to Vladimir Putin, says 'shared insights from Ukraine visit'

GNS News Agency, August 27

"Spoke with President Putin today. Discussed measures to further strengthen Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. Exchanged perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and my insights from the recent visit to Ukraine. Reiterated India's firm commitment to support an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict," the prime minister posted on X. The prime minister's telephone conversation comes days after he met Zelenskyy amid the raging war in Ukraine. During his meeting with the Ukrainian president, Modi had said that India is not "neutral" as it is always on the side of peace.

"We (India) are not neutral. From the very beginning, we have taken sides. And we have chosen the side of peace. We have come from the land of Buddha where there is no place for war," the prime minister said. "I want to assure you and the entire global community that India is committed to respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity (of states) and it is of utmost importance to us," he added. Last month, Modi had visited Moscow and met Putin, reiterating India's stand on the Ukraine-conflict. He had nudged the Russian president to return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy, asserting that "no solution can be found on the battlefield". The Russia-Ukraine war is in its second year and shows no sign of ending anytime soon. On Monday, Russia carried out

drone and missile attacks across Ukraine, killing two people and triggering fires on the outskirts of capital Kyiv, AP reported. Two people died in a strike on a residential building in Kryvyi Rih struck, a mining



and industrial city in Ukraine's south, said Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the city's military administration. In the Kyiv region, which had struggled with blackouts after Monday's onslaught,

five air alerts were called during the night. The regional administration said air defenses destroyed all the drones and missiles that Russia fired, but that falling debris set off forest fires.

The ruling Congress, however, claimed that Kavitha got bail as per a tacit understanding between BRS and the BJP.

The BRS, meanwhile, hailed the apex court granting bail to Kavitha and its working president K T Rama Rao hit back at Kumar over his comments. Kumar, who is Union MoS (Home), said on X: "Congratulations to the Congress party and its advocates for securing bail for BRS MLC in the infamous liquor scam. Your untiring efforts finally yielded fruits."

GNS News Agency, August 27

New Delhi: Describing Congress and BRS as "partners in crime", BJP leader and Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday alleged that Congress and its advocates secured bail for BRS MLC K Kavitha in the cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam as per an understanding between the two parties. The ruling Congress, however, claimed that Kavitha got bail as per a tacit understanding between BRS and the BJP.

The BRS, meanwhile, hailed the apex court granting bail to Kavitha and its working president K T Rama Rao hit back at Kumar over his comments. Kumar, who is Union MoS (Home), said on X: "Congratulations to the Congress party and its advocates for securing bail for BRS MLC in the infamous liquor scam. Your untiring efforts finally yielded fruits."

BJP BRS Slugfest over Kavitha's release



"This bail is a win for both BRS and Congress — BRS leader is out on bail & the Congress man gets to Rajya Sabha," he said, in a reference to Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi contesting the Rajya Sabha bypoll from Telangana.

"Remarkable political acumen by KCR in supporting the candidate, who initially argued for the bail, to be nominated to Rajya Sabha unopposed by the ruling Congress. Congratulations to the partners in crime who wine & dine," Kumar said. Taking exception to Kumar's comments, BRS leader Rama Rao said the Supreme Court should initiate contempt proceedings against him for allegedly casting aspersions on the apex court. "You're a union minister in charge of Home Affairs & casting aspersions on Supreme Court!! Highly unbecoming of your position," Rao said on X. "I respectfully urge the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India & the respected Supreme Court to take cognisance of these comments and initiate contempt proceedings," he said.

KT Rama Rao urges CJI to initiate contempt proceedings against MoS Bandi Sanjay



GNS News Agency, August 27

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President, KT Rama Rao on Tuesday urged the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Supreme Court to initiate contempt proceedings against Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, for his comments on the bail for BRS MLC, K Kavitha in the Delhi excise policy case. Reacting strongly to the remarks made by Bandi Sanjay

Kumar over bail for Kavitha, KT Rama Rao said he was casting aspersions on the Supreme Court.

"You're a Union minister in charge of Home Affairs & casting aspersions on the Supreme Court!! Highly unbecoming of your position," KT Rama Rao posted on X. "I respectfully urge the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India & the respected Supreme Court to take cognisance of these comments and initiate contempt proceedings," he added. Bandi Sanjay

Kumar reacted to bail for Kavitha by congratulating Congress party and its advocates. "Congratulations to the Congress party and its advocates for securing bail for BRS MLC in the infamous liquor scam. Your untiring efforts finally yielded fruits. This bail is a win for both BRS and Congress — BRS leader is out on bail & the Congress man gets to Rajya Sabha," he posted on X, apparently referring to Abhishek Manu Singhvi, the Congress candidate for Rajya Sabha from Telangana. "Remarkable political acumen by KCR in supporting the candidate, who initially argued for the bail, to be nominated to Rajya Sabha unopposed by the ruling Congress. Congratulations to the partners in crime who wine & dine," added the BJP leader. KT Rama Rao, who is Kavitha's brother, earlier thanked the Supreme Court after it granted her bail. "Thank You Supreme

Court. Relieve. Justice prevailed," he wrote on X. KT Rama Rao and his cousin and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao were present in the Supreme Court when the bail orders were pronounced. Several BRS leaders, who were present in the national Capital, congratulated KT Rama Rao. Meanwhile, BRS leader Dr Sravan Dasoju hailed the Supreme Court order as a triumph of truth and justice. He said the decision came after months of what the BRS claims to be politically-motivated allegations against Kavitha. He emphasised that the court's observations during the hearing were crucial in highlighting the unfair treatment meted out to Kavitha. "The Honorable Supreme Court has questioned the rationale behind keeping Srimathi Kavitha in custody even after the investigation was complete and the charge sheet was filed," Dr. Dasoju stated.

Three youngsters from Maharashtra drown in stream in Adilabad



GNS News Agency, August 27

Adilabad: Three youngsters from Maharashtra were drowned in a stream while fishing at Pochera village in Adilabad Rural mandal on Tuesday. Police said one of the youngsters accidentally fell down in the stream when he was fishing in it. The other two drowned when they tried to save him. Expert divers initially brought out the body of one youngster from the stream. They managed to retrieve the other two bodies later. The identity of the youngsters is yet to be established. The youngsters were from Maharashtra and were visiting their relatives at Bandalnagpur in Thamsi mandal.

Siraj, Malik, Jadeja to miss Duleep Trophy first round, BCCI names replacements

GNS News Agency, August 27

Mumbai: India pacers Mohammed Siraj and Umran Malik along with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, have been ruled out of the first round of the 2024-25 Duleep Trophy. Both Siraj and Malik are suffering from an illness and are not expected to be fit in time for their Duleep Trophy fixtures, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Tuesday. Pacer Navdeep Saini will replace Siraj in the Team B squad, while Gaurav Yadav will replace Malik in the Team C squad. Jadeja has also been released from the Team B squad but his replacement was not named. Nitish Kumar Reddy's participation will be subject to fitness, a BCCI release stated, as he is re-

covering from a sports hernia surgery. The tournament is set to begin on September 5 in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh and M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru.

Originally a zonal competition with teams representing six zones — North, South, East, West, Central, and North-East — the Duleep Trophy will feature only four teams this time. As the second round coincides with the home Test series against Bangladesh starting on September 19, players selected for the Test series will be replaced in the Duleep Trophy. Shubman Gill will lead India A, Abhimanyu Easwaran to captain India B while Rituraj Gaikwad and Shreyas Iyer will don the captain's hat for India C and India D,

respectively. The revised squads of the four teams for the first round of the tournament are: India A: Shubman Gill (C), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (WK), KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prashidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat. India B: Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK). India C: Rituraj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar,

Mohanlal steps down as AMMA president, executive committee dissolved amid growing sexual harassment allegations in Malayalam cinema industry

GNS News Agency, August 27

The executive committee of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) was on Tuesday (August 27, 2024) dissolved amid growing allegations of sexual assault and misbehaviour raised by women against its members. All the 17 members of the committee, including president and senior actor Mohanlal, have submitted their resignation after an emergency online meeting of the actors' body decided that the committee should be disbanded as allegations of sexual abuse and misbehaviour have been raised against its members, including the office-bearers. The new executive committee was elected in June 2024 and it had a tenure up to 2027.

Actor Joy Mathew told The Hindu that the committee decided unanimously to resign following serious allegations of sexual harassment levelled against members, including those in the executive committee. But the existing committee will continue as an ad hoc arrangement to ensure that AMMA's welfare measures for its members are not disrupted. Actor Siddique, who was general secretary of the association, had resigned on Sunday following allegations of sexual assault levelled by actress Revathy Sampath. The committee decided to step down owning moral responsibility for the developments that emerged after the release of the K. Hema Committee report that probed the problems faced by women in the Malayalam film industry. There were rumblings of discon-



tent within the association as a few actors, including Prithviraj had demanded that those who were facing allegations of sexual assault must step down from their posts. A new executive committee is expected to be formed within two months after convening a general body election. The daily affairs of the association will be managed by an ad-hoc committee. Besides Mohanlal, those who submitted the resignations included actors Jagadish and R. Jayan (vice-presidents). Actors Unni Mukundan and Baburaj were the treasurer and joint secretary respectively and the executive committee members included actors Kalabhavan Shajon, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Joy Mathew, Suresh Krishna, Tini Tom, Ananya, Vinu Mohan, Tovino Thomas, Sarayu Mohan and Anseeba.

Kolkata turns fortress ahead of 'Nabanno Abhijan', cops on their toes

GNS News Agency, August 27

Kolkata: The Kolkata Police have made massive security arrangements for the 'Nabanno Abhijan' (March to Secretariat), anticipating violence during the protest in the city on Tuesday. The students of West Bengal have given the march call in protest against the rape and murder of a junior doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, keeping the security establishment of the state on its toes.

The protest call was given on social media by the State's student community, inviting everyone to join in without carrying the banner of any political party. Meanwhile, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose issued a short video message on Monday night saying that there should not be any attempt to disrupt and stop any peaceful movement. The organisers have also issued an appeal to all the participants to stick to just two slogans — 'Dofa ek, dabi ek, Mamata Banerjee podotyag' (There is only demand — Mamata Banerjee's resignation) and 'Justice for RG Kar'. They have also appealed to the participants not to enter the premises of State Secretariat Nabanna, located in the Mandirtala area of Howrah district adjacent to Kolkata. Nabanno is the State Secretariat from where the Government of West Bengal operates. It houses the offices of the Chief Minister and other top Ministers and officials. The Nabanno Abhijan is similar to the call given by the women of the State for a midnight march to 'capture the streets' on the eve of Independence Day seeking justice for the RG Kar rape and murder victim. Those willing to join the protest rally have been asked to assemble at College Square in central Kolkata

from where the protesters will head towards Nabanna. The State unit of the BJP has already expressed solidarity towards the protest march. According to State BJP President and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar, his party would extend solidarity not only to Tuesday's protest march but also to any protests seeking justice for the rape and murder victim. However, representatives of the students' wings of the Left parties have decided to maintain a distance from the protest since they feel that those behind organising the event are clandestine supporters of the BJP and RSS. Meanwhile, both the West Bengal Police and Kolkata Police have decided to keep the state Secretariat as well as the different entry points to Howrah district leading to Nabanna under blanket security cover. A total of 2,000 policemen under the supervision of 97 senior officers will be ensuring safety and security in and around the state Secretariat, sources said, while Kolkata Police will depute as many as 4,000 cops with special focus on the points connecting Kolkata and Howrah. Apart from that police detectives in plain dress have also been deployed in and around the State secretariat. Police personnel from other commiserates and district units will also be deployed on Tuesday to prevent any untoward incident. Sources in the Kolkata Police said that barricades will be put up at seven points in the city on Tuesday, while water cannons will be kept on standby. There will also be drone surveillance of the rally. Last Friday, a division bench of the Calcutta High Court had rejected a plea moved by the West Bengal government seeking a ban on the Nabanno Abhijan. Even the Supreme Court had observed last week that while the law would take its course, peaceful protests cannot be stopped forcefully.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Hema panel report

THE Hema Committee Report has turned into a case of unmet promises and lost opportunities. What began as a hopeful initiative to bring justice and reform to the troubled Malayalam film industry has, unfortunately, devolved into a situation marked by inaction and evasion. The Kerala Government had established the Justice Hema-led committee led to investigate the abuse faced by women in Mollywood. Its report, which revealed pervasive sexual harassment and gender bias in the industry, was submitted to the government in 2019. However, it was only released earlier this week, with several pages redacted. This has sparked an outrage as the redactions raise questions about what is being withheld and why.

Despite the report's damning findings and call for course-correction, it has languished in bureaucratic limbo, with key stakeholders showing a concerning lack of urgency. The absence of a follow-through undermines the trust of the women who opened up about their experiences and perpetuates a culture of impunity. Every day that passes without implementing the committee's recommendations is another day that women in the industry remain at risk. Taking note of the gravity of the situation, both the Kerala High Court and the state human rights panel have intervened, urging swift action on the report's findings. The high court has admitted a PIL seeking the registration of criminal cases for sexual exploitation in the industry. The human rights panel's advocacy for gender justice highlights the systemic failures plaguing the industry. The report should have been a catalyst for change. Instead, it stands as a reminder of the systemic barriers that continue to thwart the fight against sexual harassment and exploitation in the workplace. The time to act on its recommendations is now, before further harm is done.

Tracking cyber crime spike in Delhi-NCR

GNS News Agency, August 27

From dating, and investing in the stock market, to sending a courier — if you have a smartphone or internet connection, you could be a click or WhatsApp call away from losing your life savings in cyber fraud. As per gov estimates, over 600 complaints of cyber crime have been reported across the country daily since 2021 and crores siphoned off. The Indian Express examines the extent of the cyber malaise in Delhi-NCR. I am still getting added to these investment groups: Manufacturing unit owner in Delhi. Lalit Kumar Sharma, 50, had never invested in the stock market before. So, when he saw a link on Facebook, promising tips for investing in stocks, in September last year, he clicked on it and was immediately added to two WhatsApp groups. "I just wanted to see what happens in these groups. So, I joined them. Links were sent to the group to download apps... and I did," said Sharma, an electrical components manufacturer in Delhi. One of the apps was of a prominent stock broker firm.

"There were more than 100 people in the group. For three to four months, I just read the messages — there were 150-200 of them every day — discussing stock prices. Why it would go up, why it would go down... I thought if so many people are discussing these things seriously, it must be genuine. That's when I thought of investing," said Sharma. Initially, he said he played it safe. "In December, I bought shares for Rs 7,000. I could see on the app that I was holding these shares. Then I sold them for Rs 15,000 and got the money three days later. In January this year, I put in Rs 20,000. I again made a profit and took the money out. Their tips were proving right... So I started trusting them more," he said. Then, Sharma said, he was asked to buy IPOs. "The IPOs started showing up on both apps. Some were priced at Rs 70 to Rs 75. In a day or two, their prices went up to Rs 125. I also checked the rates on other apps and Google. They were accurate... They (app admin) asked me to top up my app to start buying IPOs. So I put Rs 8 lakh in both apps. I kept investing according to their tips, and the apps showed I was making a lot of profit," he said.

delhi cyber crime spike, Delhi NCR cyber frauds, stock market scam, OTP fraud, crypto scam, matrimonial scam, delhi online frauds, delhi online frauds, WhatsApp call scam, Indian express news. This time, when he tried to cash out his investments, he said he was actively discouraged by the members. "They gave excuses... said they had a tie-up with the companies whose IPOs were brought so I had to hold on to them for 4-5 days to increase their prices..." he said. Sharma said when he started pushing the group administrators to withdraw his money, he was told 15% of his total deposits — investment plus the profits he made — would be charged as fees. "I asked them to cut it from my investments. But they asked me to first pay the amount to withdraw the money." In a bind, he started dialing numbers on both groups — none were reachable. "... So I typed on the groups that this is a scam. My message was immediately deleted, and I was reported for spam by multiple numbers. My WhatsApp account got blocked," said Sharma. He also went to the stock broker's office in Jhandewalan: "They told me it was not their app or WhatsApp group."

Sharma was soon in for another shock — his bank told him the account in which he received his initial profits had been frozen. A man had filed a complaint in Bengaluru against the same apps, and the account to which his money was transferred was frozen. The account turned out to be none other than Sharma's. "Someone in Bengaluru filed a complaint against me. He was also investing in the same app. They (scammers) put his investment in my account and mine in other investors. That's when I filed a complaint. Police told me 17 accounts are frozen. An account in which I put Rs 2 lakh was one of them," he said. Sharma's FIR was registered on February 1 at Outer District's cyber police station. Months have passed, but the accounts remain frozen. "Police said they are helpless themselves. They said the money taken from investors was converted into cryptocurrency by the app administrators," he said. Losing so much money affected his finances for a couple of months. "I faced some problems initially. It's not a small amount. I invested more than I could afford. But I made a mistake, so there will be consequences. I learnt the hard way. To get my account back, I will have to go to Bengaluru as well. The complaint against me is filed there. I will lose more money going again and again," he said. Sharma now plans to go to court to get his account unblocked and get the money that the police were able to freeze. But he is not getting his hopes up.

CPI(M) student, women wings take out protest rally, against summon issued to leaders



GNS News Agency, August 27

The student, youth and women wings of the CPI (M) on Saturday, took out a rally in Kolkata, to protest against the summons issued by the Kolkata Police to some of their leaders, for their alleged connection in the vandalism at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on the night of August 14. Amid heavy rains in the city, the state committees of SFI (Students' Federation of India), DYFI (Democratic Youth Federation of India), AIDWA (All India Democratic Women's Association), and members of Ganotantrik Mahila Samiti, took out a rally from College Street and proceeded towards Kolkata Police headquarters, at Lalbazar. According to them, DYFI state secretary Minakshi Mukherjee and six left leaders and activists have been summoned by Lalbazar along with a

notice in connection with the vandalism at the state-run RG Kar Hospital on the night of August 14. They are being "implicated in a false case", the organisations have claimed. Those summoned participated in the protest march along with their lawyers. "The people of the state are not taking it well, the attempt to hide the criminals. For the last 13 years, the Leftists have been harassed by the police. But our fight for justice will continue. Leftists are not afraid," said Minakshi. Police, however, put up barricades to stop the march mid-way. Meanwhile, the protesters during their more than two hour rally, shouted slogans demanding justice for the 31-year-old doctor who was found raped and murdered at R G Kar Hospital, earlier this month, along with prompt punishment for those accused. They also demanded the resignation of the health minister and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The Kolkata police had on last Saturday summoned several Left leaders, including DYFI's Bengal secretary Minakshi Mukherjee, and six other state level youth and student leaders of the CPI(M), in connection with the case of vandalism at RG Kar medical college and hospital on August 14 night. CM Mamata Banerjee, who blamed the BJP and the CPI(M) for the attack, had said, "It was not done by the students (doctors). I don't blame them. Some outsider political people want to create unrest in Bengal. Bam and Ram (BJP and Left) united to do this. They went to take advantage of the protest. They don't want peace. Those who carried the national flag in the movement were BJP. Apart from this, DYFI flags were also seen."

Financial irregularities at R G Kar hospital: CBI takes over investigation

GNS News Agency, August 27

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday registered a case of alleged financial irregularities at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College where a trainee doctor was found dead on August 9, officials said. The agency took over the investigation from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the West Bengal government on the directions of Calcutta High Court.

The High Court which had already handed over the probe into the rape and murder of the medico also transferred the probe of financial irregularities to the CBI "in the interest of ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased inquiry". "...this Court directs that the investigation be transferred to the CBI, given that the case involved serious allegations and multiple agencies handling different aspects of the case could lead to inefficiencies or inconsistency for comprehensive justice, unnecessary delays in the judicial process and potential misinterpretation of information thereby undermining effective and credible enforcement. Therefore, the investigation should not be fragmented between different agencies. Handing over the investigation to the CBI ensures consistency," Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj said. The high court had directed the CBI to submit a progress report on the investigation within three weeks. The court had earlier told the state police to hand over the case diary and necessary paperwork by Saturday at 10 am. The central probe agency collected all the documents from the police and re-registered the FIR. According to the procedure, the CBI takes over the investigation from state police and re-registers its FIR as its own, keeping the details unchanged. The central agency gives its findings in the final report and submits it before a special court. The High Court had given the directives for a CBI probe on the plea of former Deputy Superintendent of the hospital Akhtar Ali who had alleged financial irregularities in the hospital during the tenure of its former principal Sandip Ghosh and sought a probe by the central agencies. Ali had already filed a complaint with the state police in July 2023. On Saturday, CBI also seized a two-wheeler owned by the arrested



accused, Sanjay Roy. The CBI also commenced the process of conducting polygraph examinations of the key suspects in the case. A team of polygraph experts from Delhi's Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) has arrived in Kolkata. Among those undergoing the lie detection tests are former principal (of RG Kar) Sandip Ghosh and four on-duty doctors from the night of the incident. The CBI hopes to corroborate their previous statements with the polygraph tests. On Saturday, polygraph test was conducted on Ghosh while the agency will conduct a test on Roy Sunday. Sandip Ghosh reached the CGO complex on Saturday morning for the ninth consecutive day. Earlier, the central agency had applied to the Sealdah court seeking permission for his polygraph test. The permission was granted on Friday and Roy also consented to the test. He was sent to jail on Friday. A delegation of resident doctors had met the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials on Friday regarding the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in West Bengal's Kolkata. The delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the responses provided by the investigative agency. "Our delegation of five people who went to meet the CBI at CGO Complex yesterday, did not get any satisfactory answer even from there. Our only demand is justice. We told the CBI that the motive behind our ongoing protest is justice, which is in your hands," one of the representatives of the delegation said.

Kolkata Junior Doctor rape-murder | Talks between doctors & health officials fail: 'Will continue stir'



GNS News Agency, August 27

The West Bengal health department's efforts to restore normalcy in the state-run medical college and hospitals failed after the junior and senior doctors in the state refused to return to work saying they would continue with their protest movement, weeks after a woman doctor who was found raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata. On Saturday, separate talks were held between the health department officials as well as the representatives of the junior and senior doctors. The meeting aimed at convincing the protesting doctors to resume work across hospitals and colleges in West Bengal. In the wake of the case the doctors have also been demanding secure working environment for themselves. According to sources, the administration failed to give concrete assurance on their demands and thus the doctors decided to continue with their movement. Leader of Joint Forum of Doctors Manas Gumta said, "Only discussions were held, but no concrete assurance was given by health officials. So, our protest movement will continue." "We demand proper justice and security for doctors. But, yet to receive that. Until and unless we get, at least, these two demands we will continue our movement," a member of the West Bengal Junior doctors forum said. A delegation of resident doctors had met the CBI officials on Friday regarding the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar. The delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the responses provided by the agency. Meanwhile, the top officials in the state administration held a meeting over the security arrangement of a protest rally — "Nabanna Abhijaan" — called by the Chhatra Samaj on August 27 to the state secretariat.

Kolkata police Commissionerate and police supers of all districts, especially South Bengal districts, have been

Ex-ministers as 'neighbours', accused lodged at high security 'Poila Baish' cell block in Presidency jail



GNS News Agency, August 27

WITH HIS new 'neighbours' including former education and industries minister Patha Chatterjee and former foodminister Jyotipriya Mullick, the accused in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the RG Kar hospital in Kolkata, Sanjay Roy, has been lodged at the high security 'Poila Baish' cell block of the Presidency central jail.

Jail authorities said that since this is a high profile case, there is apprehension that Roy may be harmed by other undertrials and convicts if kept in the general area or in wards inside the jail premises. According to jail authorities, after his prayer, an interview was arranged on Saturday with his lawyer (he was provided with a lawyer by court from the district legal services authority, after he failed to get his own lawyer). Later in the evening, he was served dinner which included chapatis, dal and vegetables. On Friday, Roy was remanded to 14 days in judicial custody by a court in Sealdah. The civic volunteer was arrested on August 10. Later, the CBI, which took over the probe following a Calcutta High Court order, interrogated Roy. He was taken to Presidency central jail from court around 4 pm on Friday. Following the procedure, jail authorities searched and had him evaluated by a doctor. "Roy has been placed in 'Poila Baish (1 to 22)' cell block. This cell block has Partha Chatterjee, Jyotipriya Mullick, Aftab Ansari (American centre attack case) and Suvod Singh (Bihar gangster brought to Bengal) among others, who too are kept in individual cells. The cell block inside the jail is highly guarded and normal inmates are not allowed inside," said a jail official.

Roy has been placed in cell number 21. Partha Chatterjee is in cell number 2, Jyotipriya Mullick in cell number 7. Chatterjee is in jail following the CBI investigation into the school recruitment scam while Jyotipriya Mullick is behind bars for his alleged involvement in a ration scam. "He (Roy) seemed quite casual and there was no indication from his face or behaviour that he is accused in such a case. The first thing he said was, "Sir, I am hungry. After placing him in his cell, he was given the usual meal here: chapati and vegetables," said a senior Presidency jail official. According to jail officials, Roy did not demand anything after he was taken to his cell.

Agri Ministry tells insurer to clear claims after farmers complain

GNS News Agency, August 27 Agriculture Ministry, farmer complaints, shivraj chouhan, Maharashtra, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Pending insurance claims, soybean crop, insurance companies, Indian express news. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Chouhan interacted with farmers in Nanded on August 21.

Days after farmers of Parbhani district in Maharashtra complained to Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan about pending insurance claims of their soybean crop, the Centre on Saturday directed the insurance company concerned to clear the payment within 1 week.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Chouhan interacted with farmers in Nanded on August 21. "During the interaction, the farmers informed the Union Minister about the problem of pending insurance claims of their soybean crop. In this regard, Chouhan gave instructions to the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Officials to immediately resolve the problem," the ministry said in a statement. The statement said, "Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare held a meeting of the National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in this regard on August 22, 2024. In the meeting, the TAC rejected the objection lodged by the insurance company on crop cutting experiments and directed the insurance company to pay the pending claims. Due to this decision, pending claims of Rs 200 to 225 crore are to be paid to about 2,00,000 farmers of Parbhani district." "Today, on August 24, 2024, the Central Technical Advisory Committee has issued an order to the insurance company to pay the due claim within 1 week..." it said.

'Priority to promote Tamil culture': CM Stalin opens Lord Murugan Conference

GNS News Agency, August 27

Tamil culture, MK Stalin, International Muthamizh Murugan Conference, Lord Murugan, Indian express news, current affairs. Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin with superstar Rajinikanth during the release of the book Kalaignar Enum Thai, authored by Minister EV Velu, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin inaugurated the International Muthamizh Murugan Conference from his office via video on Saturday, talking about the cultural and spiritual significance of Lord Murugan to Tamil Nadu.

Inaugurating the conference, Stalin said the sacred town of Palani, known for the Palani Murugan Temple, holds a special place in the hearts of millions of devotees, not just in Tamil Nadu but across the world. Stalin's speech also addressed the government's efforts to advance the infrastructure at the Palani Temple, ensuring a comfortable pilgrimage experience for all devotees. "Our government, through the HR&CE Department, has always placed great importance on the preservation and promotion of Tamil culture and spirituality," Stalin said, mentioning the various development projects initiated at the temple.

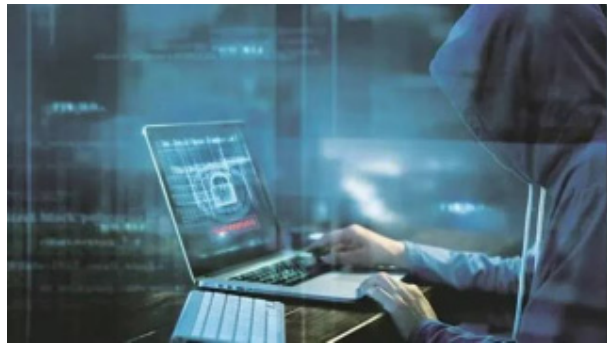
Stalin's speech at the event was carefully crafted to appeal to both the spiritual and cultural pride of Tamils



while subtly reinforcing the DMK's secular credentials. "The Tamil language, with its rich heritage, has always been at the forefront of cultural and spiritual progress. It is through the grace of Lord Murugan that the three components of Tamil culture—literature, music, and drama—have flourished and attained greatness.

The teachings and stories of Lord Murugan continue to inspire us, guiding us through the challenges of life with wisdom and strength," he said. The two-day conference, being held in Palani, a temple town known for one of the six major Murugan temples in the state, features research seminars, virtual reality shows, a three-dimensional music theater, and a photo exhibition.

Huge rise in cyber crime cases within a year, say police officers



GNS News Agency, August 27

Dealing with cyber crime cases is no easy task for the police, especially since the scammer is nameless and faceless, operating from behind a screen or a phone. The stolen money too vanishes quickly — jumping from account to account before it ends up being converted into cryptocurrency. Several police officers The Indian Express spoke to across Delhi and the NCR acknowledged that there has been a spike in cases and said quick filing of complaints is key to recovering the stolen money. Data with Delhi Police shows that in the first seven months of this year, till July 30, cyber fraud of Rs 600 crore was reported. The IFSO (Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations), a special police unit that deals with cyber fraud cases exceeding Rs 50 lakh, registered 240 cases till August. Out of them, 150 are stock market frauds. In 2023, the total number of cases the IFSO registered was 137, a police officer said.

“Rise in cases in just a year has been huge. Most of the increase has been driven by financial fraud and stock market scams. Two things scammers prey upon are greed and fear of victims — greed to make more money and fear of losing it all. This makes victims put more and more money, hoping to get something back,” said ACP (IFSO) Manoj Kumar. “Once you click on a link that promises any kind of financial gain, you are touching a 440-volt live wire. Any detail you put online — photos, bank account details — it’s going to be there forever,” he added.

The ACP also spoke about the difficulty in tracking the money: “Many fake investment apps now demand investments from victims in crypto wallets. Or, they sometimes convert it into cryptocurrency before taking it out. This has made tracking even more difficult as digital currency is still not properly regulated.” In neighbouring Gurgaon, 697 FIRs were lodged from January till July 31 this year. In 2010, the city saw just 100 FIRs — of these, 29 were job scams and net banking frauds. Police also arrested 953 people this year as compared to last year when 645 were held. Residents have lost Rs 220 crore till May this year, a massive jump from 2023 when the duped amount totalled Rs 210 crore in the whole year. Police said they managed to recover Rs 43 crore this year. Sidhant Jain, DCP South, Gurgaon, said finance-

related cybercrime in the city has been evolving. The new addition to the list is the one carried out under the pretext of stock market investment. He also said the faster a crime is reported, the easier it is to trace the money. “When people raise an alarm with the bank and file a complaint on 1930, the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, banks are intimidated and before the money could be transferred from one account to another or taken out through an ATM, they immediately put the accounts on hold. The probability of getting money back in such scams is higher if you are proactive.” Vivek Ranjan Rai, ACP (Cyber Crime Police station), Noida, has a note of advice — don’t share any personal details and attend audio and video calls from unknown numbers.

“Anyone posing as any official in any call, asking for any kind of money or data cannot be real,” he added. Umesh Chandra Naithani, SHO of the cyber police station in Noida’s Sector 36, said only two things are needed to execute such frauds — a SIM card and an account number. “You can easily get both in our country... In normal crimes, we find the location of the accused and catch them, but in cyber fraud cases, we need to find the money trail,” he said. Sub-Inspector Sanat Yadav, who is also in-charge of S P City Office-Cyber Crime Cell, Gautam Buddha Nagar, said: “50 to 100 cases are registered per day on the NCRB portal. 10 cases are registered here every day and more than 200 cyber cases are registered across the district in a day.” This cyber crime cell registers cases where the cheated amount is less than 5 lakh; cases involving amounts higher than this are registered at the Sector 36 Cyber Crime Police Station. Yadav also said the nature of the crime keeps changing: “If there is an IPL season around, then people are duped in the name of cheaper tickets; if there is an election, the fraud starts in the name of a political party.”

On how cyber fraud trends have changed in the last year, a Delhi Police officer on condition of anonymity said fraudsters have now moved outside India. “Till last year, many cases related to fake customer care calls were based in India. Now, they come from Dubai, Cambodia and other Southeast Asian countries. Either through OTP or forwarding a message, your account details registered with your number are accessed. Also, the money is moved across multiple mule accounts. We manage to block some of it after getting a complaint, but multiple accounts have to be simultaneously blocked for that,” said the officer with Outer North cyber police station. Mule accounts are bank accounts that are created either using fake IDs and SIM cards or are bought from individuals to be used for moving money. How are these opened? A cyber police officer explained: “Banks give targets to their branches. To comply, many officials at these branches allow accounts to be opened without proper background checks. Money coming in and out of these accounts is also not tracked diligently. Almost all cyber crimes are done using mule accounts.”

Allahabad HC acquits man serving life term for ‘raping’ minor in 2001



GNS News Agency, August 27

Allahabad HC acquits man, life term in minor rape, Minor rape case, life imprisonment, up minor rape news, up news, up crime news, Uttar Pradesh, Indian express news “In view of the discussions and deliberations held, this criminal appeal succeeds and is allowed,” the court said in its order. THE ALLAHABAD High Court has acquitted a man who had been sentenced to life imprisonment by a trial court in 2002 for allegedly raping a six-year-old girl. The court pointed out that the prosecution failed to prove the charges against him, thereby granting the accused the benefit of the doubt. The court also noted that the medical records did not indicate any injuries to the victim.

According to the prosecution, the case dates back to March 31, 2001, when the complainant had gone to work and his wife had gone to a forest area to collect fodder, leaving their daughter, the victim, alone at home. In the evening, while playing, the victim stepped out of the house to look for her mother. The accused allegedly took her to a field and raped her. As the girl raised an

alarm, two local residents reached the spot and reportedly witnessed the accused sexually assaulting the child. As they approached, the accused fled towards the forest area. The girl was injured and was lying unconscious. Upon being informed, the victim’s parents reached the spot and brought her home. The girl’s father subsequently filed a rape complaint against the accused at the local police station. The police investigated the case and filed a chargesheet against the accused. On October 24, 2002, a local court in Bulandshahr sentenced the accused to life imprisonment. Following this judgment, the man, through his lawyer, filed an appeal, arguing that the victim had not suffered any internal or external injuries and that the medical examination and supplementary medical report did not support the prosecution’s version of events. Opposing the appeal, the government counsel contended that the trial court had thoroughly considered the evidence on record before reaching its findings and sentencing the accused to life imprisonment. “In view of the discussions and deliberations held, this criminal appeal succeeds and is allowed,” the court said in its order.

The court observed, “We find that the statements of witnesses of fact as well as the victim do not corroborate with the medical evidence. The medical examination of the victim was conducted within six and a half hours. The specific case of the prosecution is that sexual assault was committed upon the victim. In our assessment at the tender age of six years if the victim is subjected to rape some sort of injury is bound to occur and be reflected in the medical papers or the testimony of doctor. The fact that none was found, along with the fact that there are contradictions in the manner in which the offence was observed by the witnesses, we are of the considered opinion that the prosecution has failed to prove the charges of rape levelled against him and accused is entitled to benefit of doubt.”

Obscene videos pop up on ad panel at Connaught Place, FIR lodged

GNS News Agency, August 27

Obscene videos at CP, Connaught Place, Delhi Police, PCR call, delhi pornographic videos, advertisement panel, New Delhi Municipal Council, Indian express news Police sources said they suspect the board had been hacked to gain access to it and the opportunity was used to display obscene videos on it.

At 10.30 pm on Friday, the Delhi Police received a startling PCR call — “pornographic videos” were being displayed on an advertisement panel, managed by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), at the upscale Connaught Place. The NDMC said the incident appears to have been a result of a “significant breach” in its digital systems, maintaining that all security measures are in place across all locations and that this is an isolated incident. The Council has now launched an investigation to determine how the breach occurred. “This incident is one of its kind. We are trying to find out how the firewall was breached. Since only one location has been compromised, and there were no issues at the other 49 locations, it can be construed that somebody has hacked one location using some advanced technique, which we are trying to identify,” the NDMC said. The NDMC operates two types of panels in its jurisdiction: one for advertisements and another for an interactive touch screen. “Both



panels are of international standards and are controlled by a server that is secured with a firewall and anti-virus software,” the Council said. The panels that were hacked are the ones that provide free WiFi hotspots for public use in the NDMC area. DCP (New Delhi) Devesh Mahila, confirmed the incident. He said police had received a PCR call at 10.30 pm. “We have filed an FIR under sections of obscenity and the IT Act. We are investigating the matter,” he said. Police sources said they suspect the board had been hacked to gain access to it and the opportunity was used to display obscene videos on it.

Month after students’ deaths at Rau’s, uncertainty, civic woes persist: ‘Feel betrayed’



GNS News Agency, August 27

Rau students death, UPSC aspirants death, delhi waterlogging, Rau’s IAS Study Circle, Old Rajinder Nagar, civil services aspirants death, delhi basement flooded, delhi coaching basement, Indian express news Three students drowned in the flooded basement at Rau’s on July 27. The waterlogged street outside Rau’s IAS Study Circle in Delhi’s Old Rajinder Nagar is no longer a mere inconvenience for civil services aspirants in this area. A month after the death of three students — Shreya Yadav, Nevin Dalwin, and Tanya Soni — in the flooded basement of the coaching centre, it is a grim reminder of the civic apathy that had cut short three lives, says 23-year-old civil services aspirant Ram Singh Badhori. Blocked by barricades, the building of the coaching centre stands tall. But with no physical classes at the centre, many students who have been compelled to switch to the online mode of study for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) entrance exam preparation after the July 27 basement flooding tragedy say they have been left in lurch amid no clarity on the resumption of offline classes. Sanglee Sidisow, 22, hails from Arunachal Pradesh’s Itanagar. He moved to Delhi three months back and enrolled at Rau’s for offline classes. “After the incident happened, we have been cooperating with Rau’s for over three weeks now. We understand that this incident could’ve happened at any institute in the area... but we feel a bit betrayed and are facing mental pressure as they are not giving us clarity on when the physical classes will start,” he says. “My family has paid over Rs 1 lakh for physical coaching classes. If I had to do it online, I would have opted for that for much cheaper... I could have stayed home. This city is expensive. I am having to pay around Rs 14,000 every month to stay in a PG here at Karol Bagh... there are other expenses too,” Sidisow adds. “For people who live in Uttar Pradesh or Haryana, going back (home) is easier and cheaper. What about people like us who come from far away places like the South or North East? We are stuck here amid uncertainty,” he further shares.

Another 23-year-old aspirant who enrolled at Rau’s over a month ago has been paying a rent of Rs 22,000 a month. “There is no clarity from the institute’s side as to when the physical classes will resume. They are asking us to wait for the court’s judgment. Why should I spend and live in a city where there is no safety for my life?” he

asks. Badhori, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, points to other coaching centres in the area. “It rained last night and there is so much water in front of every institute. It seems the deaths of the three students have been forgotten. It all seems like a money-minting factory... like no one cares,” he says. Another civil service aspirant from Uttar Pradesh’s Gorakhpur, who packed bags after the incident to go home like many but came back to Delhi later, says, “We have raised the waterlogging and drainage issues multiple times with the MCD. But nothing has changed even after a month and three deaths.”

Many other coaching centres around Rau’s have been caught in the aftermath of the incident. Just next to the institute, Sri Ram IAS has been seeing fewer walk-in registrations. “As our institute is right next to where the deaths have happened, there is probably fear among parents, which is why we have been seeing fewer walk-in registrations at this branch,” says Administrative Head Aditya Kumar. “Of about 1,000 students, about 20-30% of students have gone back home and are attending online classes,” he adds. Across the street, at Chahal Academy, an official, pleading anonymity, shares, “After the incident, we had to close our institute for a week. However, as normalcy returned, students were back in classes. But the number of aspirants taking classes online has gone up slightly.” At smaller institutes like Raj Malhotra’s IAS Study Circle, a professor says, “We are constantly in touch with our students. After talking to them, we feel like they have lost hope. We see that most parents now prefer to choose hubs like Gwalior, or Bhopal.” A Delhi court is set to take a decision on August 28 after a plea was filed by Rau’s CEO Abhishek Gupta, seeking resumption of classes at the coaching centre.

‘Drone Didis’: 200 women set to get licence after training

GNS News Agency, August 27 Namo Drone Didi’ scheme, Drone Didis, drone pilot licence, new scheme, VK Saxena, Delhi LG, Raj Niwas, drone demonstration events, Indian express news L-G Saxena flagged off the scheme on Saturday.

Around 200 women in Delhi are set to get a drone pilot licence after undergoing training under a new scheme rolled out by Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, Raj Niwas said on Saturday. The L-G on Saturday presided over the drone demonstration events in the Capital held as part of the national ‘Namo Drone Didi’ scheme, said officials.

Terming it as “one of the best means of women empowerment through employment”, Saxena participated in the events at Singhola in North and Badu Sarai in South-West Districts. Under the scheme, a total of Rs 25,000 will be spent on each trainee and funds will be raised through Corporate Social Responsibility.

Row over remarks on Mayawati: Akhilesh calls for defamation case against BJP MLA

GNS News Agency, August 27

SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has said that a defamation case should be filed against BJP MLA Rajesh Chaudhary for his remarks against BSP chief Mayawati. In a video from a news channel shared by Yadav on X on Friday, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Chaudhary from Mathura district’s Mant area is heard saying, “There is no doubt that Mayawati has been the chief minister of UP four times and it was us (BJP) who made her the chief minister for the first time. We made that mistake.” “Mayawati is the most corrupt chief minister of Uttar Pradesh,” Chaudhary goes on to allege in the video.

Condemning these remarks, Yadav, in a post in Hindi on X on Friday, said, “Political differences have their place but no one has the right to tarnish her (Mayawati’s) dignity as a woman. BJP members are saying that making her chief minister was a mistake, which is also an insult to public opinion in a democratic country.” “Furthermore, making baseless allegations that she was the most corrupt chief minister is highly objectionable. A defamation case should be filed against the BJP legislator for this public statement,” he added. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president said the party is grateful to Yadav for responding to Chaudhary’s allegations. “The SP chief has responded to the false allegations made by a BJP MLA from Mathura district, acknowledging the truth about the BSP chief’s honesty. The party is grateful for this,” she said in a post in Hindi on X on Saturday. Meanwhile, Chaudhary hit back at Yadav, alleging that the SP chief has “turned the Samajwadi Party into a serial rapist party.”

“Boys will be boys, they make mistakes... You have turned the Samajwadi Party into a serial rapist party. In Ayodhya and Kannauj, minor girls from backward and Dalit communities are raped, and you gamble away the honour of Hindu Dalit daughters for minority votes. Akhilesh Yadav, a follower of Aurangzeb, you have already broken all records of corruption,” the BJP MLA said in a post in Hindi on X. “Do you remember the 2nd June 1995 Guest House incident? Samajwadi goons tried to disgrace Mayawati. What insult was left that your goons did not hurt at Mayawati? It was the BJP that saved Mayawati’s life and dignity; otherwise, the Samajwadi



goons would have killed a Dalit woman leader. You talk about values while publicly insulting your own father on stage for power. You are deeply casteist and corrupt,” Chaudhary alleged in the post. The SP chief had said that the “disrespectful remarks” made by the BJP legislator towards Mayawati reflect the “deep-seated bitterness that BJP members harbour towards women, especially those from marginalised and oppressed communities”. Yadav said that by sheltering such MLAs, the BJP is deeply hurting the dignity of women. “If the BJP does not take immediate disciplinary action against such people, it will be assumed that this is not just the personal opinion of one legislator but the view of the entire party,” the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said in the post. “The party (BSP) feels that this BJP legislator is no longer getting any attention within his own party. That is why he is making outrageous statements about the BSP chief to grab headlines, which is extremely unfortunate,” the BSP chief said in a series of posts in Hindion X. “The BJP should take strict action against him and if he is mentally ill, they should ensure he gets treatment. Otherwise, it wouldn’t be wrong to say that this appears to be part of a conspiracy by the BJP,” she said in another post on X. Mayawati said that if the BJP does not act against Chaudhary then the people of Uttar Pradesh will respond in the upcoming 10 by-elections in the state. “If the BJP does not take strict action against its legislator, then the party will face the consequences in the next assembly elections when its candidates will lose their deposits. The people will also respond in the upcoming 10 by-elections,” she said in the post.

Woman harassed by husband, in-laws over dowry shot dead in Greater Noida: Police

GNS News Agency, August 27

“At around 11 am, we received information about the incident and we rushed to the spot. The matter was reported to us by the woman’s father, Chaudhary Harveer Singh, a resident of Sarai Kale Khan,” said Ashok Kumar, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Greater Noida. He added that “the family of the woman (Nidhi) has alleged that she was being harassed for dowry”. Nidhi was shot dead at the Greater Noida home where she lived with her in-laws, officials said.

“After a police team reached the spot, we saw Nidhi lying in a pool of blood. She was immediately rushed to the hospital where she was declared brought dead on arrival,” Kumar said. Nidhi got married to Deepak Badhana in 2020. Her husband and two other accused are absconding with the couple’s two children, aged two years and one-and-a-months, officials said. “The woman has a single bullet wound around her neck. The father of the



woman claimed that his son-in-law and his parents used to harass Nidhi for dowry. She had left their home several times but would always return to her in-laws,” said a senior police officer investigating the case at Dankaur Police Station.

SMC deducts security officer's salary for failing to stop AAP councilor from carrying offensive banner



GNS News Agency, August 27

Surat Municipal Corporation, SMC deducts security officer's salary, SMC news, AAP councilor, SMC general board meeting, offensive slogans, Indian express news In the SMC general board meeting of July 30, AAP councilors had taken on the ruling BJP on the civic body's alleged failure to prevent creek water from entering the city and flooding it during monsoon.

The Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has deducted five-day salary of its security officer for allegedly being negligent in duty and allowing one AAP councilor to show offensive banner in a general board meeting. In the SMC general board meeting of July 30, AAP councilors had taken on the ruling BJP on the civic body's alleged failure to prevent creek water from entering the city and flooding it during monsoon. During the commotion, one AAP councilor had taken out a banner with offensive slogans and showed the same to the mayor and commissioner. The marshal deployed there had snatched the banner from him. Following this, chief security officer (retired) Major Jagrut Naik issued a showcause notice to Shailesh Parekh – who was in charge of security during the July 30 meeting – on August 1. On Thursday, Naik passed an order directing that Parekh's salary for five days be deducted under the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act. Naik said, "In his reply, Shailesh Parekh confessed that he had found some printed material in the pocket of the AAP corporator (while he was arriving for the meeting) and tried to stop him. But the corporator insisted on taking the material inside and he was allowed. It was Parekh's duty to inform senior officials about the corporator... we would have prevented such an incident."

Mozambique national cremated in presence of family in Vadodara

GNS News Agency, August 27

Mozambique national cremated, Vadodara police, Vadodara passenger, Vadodara passenger death, Vadodara car accident, car falls into pool, Vadodara driver, Indian express news Victim's eldest brother Lourenco Fernando during a prayer meeting on Saturday. Five days after the body of 25-year-old Mozambique national, Lawrence Fernando, was recovered from a pond in Vadodara district's Khatamba, his final rites were performed in presence of his siblings on Saturday. Fernando's siblings had flown into the country with the financial assistance from his alma mater, Parul University, and High Commission of India in Mozambique.

Fernando's eldest brother Lourenco (43) and another sibling Emidio (41) had requested the university officials for a cremation ceremony instead of a burial, expressing their desire to return to their home country with his ashes. Although the university had arranged for the burial as per the Mozambican traditions, other arrangements were made to comply with the family's request. Director of the Office of International Affairs, Parul University, Vandit Anjaria told The Indian Express, "The mortal remains of the deceased student were consigned to flames at a cremation ground in the city around 2.45pm as per the request of the family in presence of his brothers, officials of the High Commission of Mozambique in India as well as his colleagues and staff of Parul University... The family said they would not prefer a burial in India as they wish to carry back his ashes to Mozambique



to complete the rituals as per their traditions, along with their ageing parents and other siblings..." Later, Fernando's brothers also visited the university campus in Waghodia, where a prayer meeting was organised. Other international students and friends of the deceased attended the meet.

Addressing the students with the help of an interpreter, Lourenco said, "You have a career ahead of you and you are all here to study. Remember that you have a family back home and they have hopes from you so remain focussed on your goal." Fernando's siblings will stay back in Vadodara until next week to complete the formalities. On August 18 Fernando was allegedly killed when a rented vehicle he was travelling in, from Shankarpura village to Ajwa road, fell into a pond in Khatamba village around 4.30 am.

In Vadodara, rumour of stone pelting leads to commotion at Ganesh procession

GNS News Agency, August 27

Vadodara stone pelting rumours, Ganesh Chaturthi festivities, Ganesh procession stone pelting allegations, Gujarat ganesh procession, Gujarat police, Indian express news The procession passing from Gorwa in Vadodara on Friday night. The Vadodara City Police on Saturday said that it "averted" a law and order situation during a procession of the arrival of Lord Ganesh — ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festivities that begin September 7 — when an alleged "commotion" ensued late Friday due to a rumour of stone pelting by miscreants.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 1) J C Kothiyia said the incident occurred when a local youth group from Gorwa had taken out a procession to bring home the idol of Lord Ganesh, accompanied by DJ music. When some local residents asked the organisers to tone down the music at one location, it allegedly led to a "misunderstanding" with those participating in the procession thinking that "someone had pelted stones" at the procession. Addressing mediapersons, Kothiyia said that as the procession was passing near Madhunagar, the organisers realised that the truck with the DJ system could get stuck in electricity cables and thus, it was asked to pass to speed away and not wait for the procession.

"The distance between the trucks carrying the DJ system and the idol increased and some local residents said the music should be turned off for sometime until the procession catches up. Some of the organisers, who were leading the procession, made a noise about it and the rest of the participants misunderstood this and thought miscreants were pelting stones at the procession. There was a commotion," he added. Kothiyia further said that the people at the back of the procession began moving about



haphazardly, assuming that stone pelting was taking place and a few stones were pelted by members of the procession in "retaliation".

"There was chaos and people at the back thought that something has happened... commotion ensued as the rumour spread that someone has pelted stones... a few stones were thrown on both sides but since the procession was carried out amid police cover, two inspectors were present there and the situation was immediately brought under control... The idol of Lord Ganesh was not damaged," he added. Kothiyia said while no case has been registered as no complaint has been filed, the police have apprehended two persons under the Gujarat Prohibition Act. "There is no case of rioting as it was a misunderstanding... However, two persons, who seem to have incited the participants of the procession based on the rumour of stone pelting, were booked as they were visibly intoxicated when they were brought to the police station," he added.

In Goa for competition, 3 shooters forced to use airgun to get out of fight over parking

GNS News Agency, August 27

Goa shooting competition, shooting competition, Panaji, Goa, Goa police, goa arrests, Indian express news, current affairs "In the situation, the victims panicked and fired in the air from their sports pistol because they felt threatened. No weapon was used and hence no one was injured. On the basis of the complaint, we have registered a case and arrested one accused," SP Kaushal said.

The Goa Police Saturday arrested a man for allegedly threatening three Delhi-based shooters after an alleged altercation over parking in North Goa's Mapusa. Police said the shooters, who were in Goa to participate in a shooting championship, "used their sports gun to make a fire sound" in panic after allegedly being chased by the accused. According to the police, the incident took place on Friday night around 11.45 pm when Vishal Shokeen (22), who runs a shooting academy in Delhi, and his two students – a minor and a first-year student of Delhi University – were returning to their hotel after visiting Baga beach following the shooting event. Police said the trio were in a rented car and stopped near Karaswada for dinner, where they had a verbal altercation with two men. Police said the two accused – Shailesh Gadgar and

Saurabh – allegedly damaged their car with a brick and threatened them. After the initial argument, the accused allegedly chased the victims for a few kilometres, police said. In the police complaint, Shokeen said the accused hurled abuses at them and insulted him by calling him handicapped and also wrongfully restrained them. One of the victims suffers from a physical disability, said police. SP North Goa Akshat Kaushal said the three shooters, who claim to be preparing for Nationals, had come to Goa to participate in a shooting competition.

"In the situation, the victims panicked and fired in the air from their sports pistol because they felt threatened. No weapon was used and hence no one was injured. On the basis of the complaint, we have registered a case and arrested one accused," SP Kaushal said. Police said the arrested accused Shailesh is a history sheeter and has seven prior cases, including two cases of attempt to murder, registered against him. Shokeen told the media: "After dinner, as we were leaving, the accused parked their scooter behind the car and blocked the way. I rolled down the windows and requested them to give us the way, but the accused seemed drunk and suddenly hit the car bonnet and threatened to hit us with a brick

Lookout circular issued against Belgium-based accused over speech-hearing impaired man's murder



GNS News Agency, August 27

A lookout circular has been issued against a 50-year-old Belgium-based man, Jagpal Preet Kamal Singh, after the police named him as one of the conspirators and a prime accused in the murder of a 30-year-old man suffering from hearing and speech impairment on August 4. A senior police officer said two of the three arrested persons – Shivjeet Singh and Jay Chawda – killed Arshad Ali Sadiq Ali Shaikh inside an apartment in Pydhonie on August 4 and the duo had made a video call to Jagpal to show him the incident live following which his role also came to light. Shaikh's wife Ruksana was also arrested in the case.

An officer said, "All the people involved in the case are suffering from a disability and we have learnt that it is a very small-knit community in which Jagpal had a huge following. But as Shaikh had suddenly become popular, Jagpal was jealous of his rising followers due to which it is suspected that he hatched a plan to bump him off." According to police officials, the two accused had called Shaikh to Chawda's Pydhonie home under the pretext of consuming alcohol. Later when Shaikh was on a high, the two accused allegedly stripped him naked and brutally assaulted him. The two accused strangled him to death and subsequently used sharp objects to ensure that he was dead following which they wrapped his body in a suitcase.

Later in the night, Chawda was caught by the RPF

personnel at Dadar railway station while he was trying to dispose of the body. Calling it a pre-planned murder, an officer said, "We have evidence to show that on the same day, in the afternoon, Chawda went to his Virar home and got a suitcase from there. After the murder, he packed the body in the same suitcase, took a cab to CST station from where he got into the train and alighted at Dadar railway station. Chawda was caught after an RPF official spotted blood seeping out of the suitcase as he was getting into Turti Express." Chawda initially tried to mislead the investigators by claiming that Singh had killed him and forced him to dispose of the body. However, during sustained interrogation, the police realised that Chawda was in an extra marital relationship with Shaikh's wife Ruksana and also that a couple of months before the incident, the deceased had stripped him naked and assaulted him in public for allegedly molesting a woman due to which Chawda wanted to avenge it. "A day later, we got some footage which revealed that Chawda had made a video call to Jagpal to show the killing following which it came to light that he had instigated the whole crime," an investigator added.

"In order to show off and gain more popularity, Jagpal, who had screen-recorded the live murder incident, had sent it across to other people in the community and also posted it on social media through which it reached us. But when others did not appreciate it and started calling and threatening him, Jagpal released another video claiming that he had only asked Chawda and Singh to assault him and not to kill Shaikh," another officer added. When asked the reason for Singh getting involved in the crime, the police said that the accused becomes violent once he consumes alcohol. "We have his mother's statement on record and she has said that he does not bother about anything and beats anyone under the influence of alcohol," an officer said. Chawda, Singh and Ruksana are currently in judicial custody. The police are confident of bringing Jagpal to Mumbai and arrest him. The investigators informed the court recently that they will apply for the police custody of the three arrested persons again to confront them with the Belgium-based man.

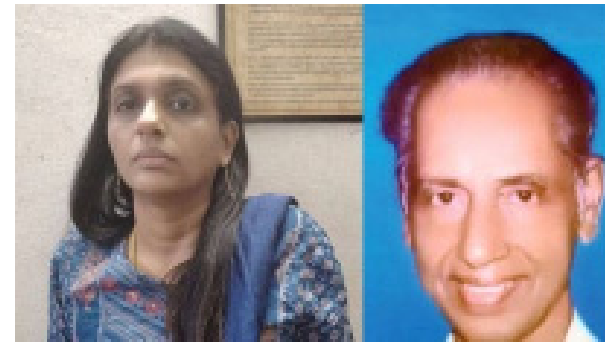
How a stray remark and an estranged daughter's curiosity blew the lid off a murder disguised as a hit-and-run

GNS News Agency, August 27

It should have been an open-and-shut case: an 82-year-old cyclist is hit by a car in Kerala in May, the driver goes into hiding, the cyclist dies a day after the accident, the driver surrenders before the police a few days later and is then released on bail. And that's what it was — an open-and-shut case — till a stray remark by one of C Pappachan's acquaintances on discrepancies in his local deposit account left the victim's estranged daughter curious since her father was extremely well off but did not spend money on anything, not even on a vehicle to commute across Kollam city. Her curiosity not only blew the lid off the plot to disguise Pappachan's murder as a hit-and-run case, but also led to the arrest of a banking professional three months later in August. Saritha, 45, allegedly hired a gang to kill Pappachan, a retired assistant general manager with BSNL, to hide all traces of her embezzlement from his Rs 76-lakh deposit at her financial institution. Short article insert Estranged from his family, Pappachan lived all alone in Kollam. His wife, a retired school teacher, lived almost 100 km away in Kottayam, while his son is in the Middle East and daughter in Uttar Pradesh. Pappachan was riding his bicycle on a deserted stretch in Kollam on May 23, when he was hit by a car. He died in the hospital the next day. A hit-and-run case was registered and the police managed to track down the car by examining footage from several CCTV cameras along the route. Days later, car driver Animon, 44, surrendered before the police but was released on bail.

After the mourning period ended, Pappachan's daughter visited the branch of Muthoot Mini Nidhi Limited in Kollam where her father had an account to enquire about the alleged discrepancies in his finances. However, she did not receive a satisfactory response from branch manager Saritha. "A branch employee hinted at misappropriation of Pappachan's funds. Realising that a huge chunk of her father's deposit was missing, the daughter filed a complaint over her concerns on his May 23 accident. We decided to reopen the case," Kollam Assistant Police Commissioner (ACP) S Shereef, who led the probe in the case, told The Indian Express. The police started by looking into the call detail records (CDR) of accused driver Animon, who was a history-sheeter. "Animon was in constant touch with one number since the second week of May. That number belonged to Saritha, the manager of the branch where Pappachan had a deposit. That got us wondering what business could a banking official possibly have with a history-sheeter," says the officer.

Even as the police were investigating the link between Saritha and Animon, Pappachan's family filed a complaint with the financial firm over "unexplained" transactions in his deposit account. A probe by the company revealed that Saritha had misappropriated Rs 25 lakh from Pappachan's deposit account. Though she returned the amount immediately, she and branch executive K P Anoop, 37, were fired by the company on June 25. Meanwhile the police discovered the link between Saritha and Animon. Saritha worked with another financial firm in Kollam five years ago and that firm had engaged Animon to help repossess vehicles from owners who had defaulted on loans. Saritha, who knew Animon since then, got in touch with him in May 2024. According to the police, Pappachan was wealthy but "chose to live like a miser". "Besides the deposit of Rs 76 lakh, he had also invested in the share market. Spending money did not bring him the happiness that building up his savings did. He lived like a miser. Instead of a vehicle, he chose to move around the city on a bicycle. At the time of his death, Pappachan was using a rope as a belt," says a police officer. Despite his sizable deposit at Saritha's branch, which grew to Rs 76 lakh by early 2024, Pappachan suddenly realised that he was not earning any interest. Following his enquiry, a branch employee informed Pappachan that Saritha had taken four loans against his account. Despite her denials, Pappachan kept calling Saritha on the office landline and demanding answers regarding the discrepancy of nearly Rs 48 lakh in his deposit account. Realising that Pappachan was in no mood to relent, Saritha decided to get rid of him. "She and the others at the firm were aware that Pappachan was estranged from his family. She assumed that his family was in the dark regarding his wealth and simply wanted



to pocket his deposit. She never expected his daughter to turn up with questions on discrepancies in his deposit account," says ACP Shereef. According to the police, Saritha contacted Animon, a contract killer, in May, claiming that "Pappachan's son" wanted to kill his father over a property dispute. The next day, Saritha introduced her branch executive Anoop as "Pappachan's son" to Animon. A deal was struck for Rs 2 lakh and Animon was given an advance payment of Rs 20,000. The meeting was followed by a few failed attempts by Animon's gang to hit Pappachan's cycle with an autorickshaw. Back at the branch, Saritha was under immense pressure from Pappachan, who was growing increasingly agitated over his missing funds. Police say she got so furious with Animon over his failed murder attempts that she reportedly told him "she had smart people at her disposal if he was incapable of executing the murder". To carry out the hit successfully, Animon borrowed a car from an acquaintance. At noon on May 23, branch executive Anoop called Pappachan on the phone and asked him to meet Saritha at a new location so they could discuss his financial issues over a cup of tea. As soon as Pappachan left on his bicycle, Anoop started tailing him on his motorcycle. Anoop also shared Pappachan's location with Animon, who was waiting in the car. As soon as Pappachan reached a lonely stretch, Animon hit his bicycle from behind and ran him over before fleeing the spot.

One of Animon's gang members was deputised as a lookout at the accident site. According to the plan, he rushed towards Pappachan as soon as he saw other locals run towards him. The gang member allegedly delayed first aid to Pappachan by insisting that only an ambulance should shift him to a hospital. He died in the hospital the next day, on May 24. For Saritha, Pappachan's death was just the beginning of more troubles. Laying low in Kochi, around 130 km from Kollam, after the murder, Animon and his gang started blackmailing Saritha. Instead of Rs 2 lakh for killing the octogenarian, the gang managed to extract nearly Rs 18 lakh from Saritha. Threatening to reveal the accident plot to the police, the man who had lent his car to Animon forced Saritha to pay him Rs 3 lakh in exchange for his silence. After the investigation confirmed that Pappachan was killed under the guise of a hit-and-run, the police on August 8 arrested Saritha, her former colleague Anoop, Animon and two of his associates. All five accused belong to Kollam.

Wait for pharmacy admissions to get longer in Telangana

Hyderabad: The wait for admissions into pharmacy courses offered by the colleges in the State is set to get longer. With approvals for State pharmacy colleges still pending with the Pharmacy Council of India, TG EAPCET 2024 admission counselling for BPharmacy and PharmD courses is likely to extend till the last week of October, pushing the start of classes to the first week of November.

Every year, 50 per cent seats each in the BPharmacy and PharmD courses are allotted for candidates who qualify the TG EAPCET (earlier TS EAMCET) with MPC and BiPC streams in Intermediate. For MPC students, along with engineering, the Pharmacy admission counselling is conducted. While engineering admission counselling has already been conducted, the pharmacy counselling notification for both MPC and BiPC stream candidates is yet to be notified. "We are learning that the PCI may release a list of approved colleges in September. Following this, the BPharmacy admission counselling schedule will be announced.

'HYDRA' ma in Hyderabad puts Ministers in a spot



GNS News Agency, August 27

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection (HYDRA) agency, constituted by the Congress government with multiple objectives, including demolitions of illegal structures, has started giving the party's own Ministers and leaders the jitters. Despite widespread criticism that the agency is being used to target political rivals of the Congress, party sources say a few Ministers and Congress leaders, who own palatial buildings in the limits of the twin reservoirs of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar, are spending uneasy nights with HYDRA continuing its demolition drive. In fact, they are said to have summoned HYDRA Commissioner AV Ranganath and asked him to desist from taking up any further demolitions in the buffer zone of the twin reservoirs. However, with Ranganath reporting directly to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on any action to be taken up, the Congress Ministers and leaders are apprehensive whether Ranganath will listen to them.

For them, and others who own buildings in the Full Tank Level (FTL) or buffer zone, the most worrying factor is a memo issued in 2007, incidentally by the Congress government led by the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy. The memo clearly lists out regulatory measures and demarcations applicable for both Osman Sagar and Himayat

Sagar, and says no development will be allowed upto 500 metres from the bund or FTL in the downstream and the same should be declared as a prohibited zone. This apart, beyond 500 m and upto 1000 m (one km) downstream, only low rise residential development (ground plus two floors) was to be permitted. Beyond 1000m downstream, all developments such as residential, commercial, IT units, hotels, public and semi public developments could be allowed except for 68 specific industries. Meanwhile, the nightmares for the Congress leaders got worse on Saturday when HYDRA demolished film actor Akkineni Nagarjuna's N Convention Centre at Thammidikunta in Madhapur. The actor responded saying the demolition was unlawful and claimed there was no encroachment and moved the court the same day, managing to get an interim stay from the High Court, which asked HYDRA to maintain status quo on N Convention. Amidst these demolitions, there are also debates among the people over the reasons for HYDRA's sudden burst into action. Many are considering these demolitions a political tactic to divert public attention from other burning issues like the crop loan waiver fiasco, increasing seasonal diseases and lack of facilities at hospitals and the breakdown of administration in gram panchayats among others. HYDRA's demolitions have also triggered verbal duels between political parties. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said HYDRA was set up to save lakes from encroachments. "People are appreciating the demolition of unauthorized structures. Notices are being served before taking up any demolitions," he said while speaking to media persons in New Delhi. However, countering the Congress government, union Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy said the government was enacting a new drama using HYDRA. He pointed out that most of the unauthorised structures had come up when the Congress was in power earlier and nothing was done then. "How was permission given for the structures then and how were taxes collected?" he asked.

US's ex-Covid advisor Anthony Fauci infected with West Nile virus:



GNS News Agency, August 27

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the former top US infectious disease expert, was hospitalised after being infected with West Nile virus and is now recovering at home. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the former top US infectious disease expert, spent time in the hospital after being infected with West Nile virus and is now recovering at home, a spokesperson confirmed on Saturday. Fauci is expected to make a full recovery, the spokesperson said on condition of anonymity due to security concerns.

West Nile virus is commonly spread through the bite

of an infected mosquito. While most people don't experience symptoms, about 1 in 5 can develop a fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhoea, or rash, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. About 1 out of 150 infected people develop a serious, sometimes fatal, illness. CBS News' chief medical correspondent, Dr. Jonathan LaPook, wrote in a social media post that he spoke Saturday with Fauci, who said he was likely infected from a mosquito bite that he got in his backyard. "Dr. Fauci was hospitalised about ten days ago after developing fever, chills, and severe fatigue," the post on X said. It said Fauci spent a week in the hospital. As chief White House medical adviser, Fauci was the public face of the US government during the Covid-19 pandemic, a role that made him both a trusted voice to millions and also the target of partisan anger. He left the government in 2022 but was back before Congress in June to testify as part of Republicans' yearslong investigation into the origins of Covid-19 and the US response to the disease. Fauci last summer joined the faculty at Georgetown University as a distinguished university professor. There are no vaccines to prevent West Nile, or medicines to treat it. As of August 20, the CDC had recorded 216 cases in 33 states this year. It's best prevented by avoiding mosquito bites.

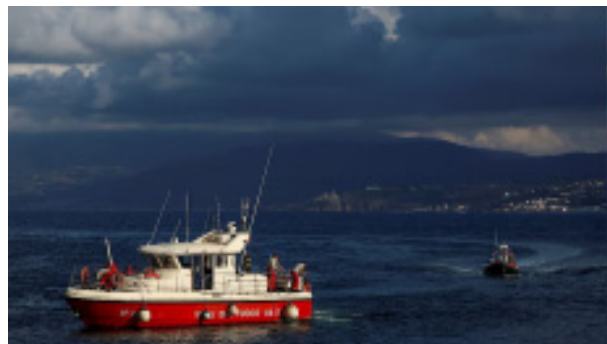
Italian authorities open manslaughter probe in superyacht capsizing case

GNS News Agency, August 27

UK tech tycoon Mike Lynch, his 18-year-old daughter Hannah, four friends and the yacht's cook died when the British-flagged Bayesian sank in a storm before dawn on August 19. Sicily starts manslaughter probe as last movements of yacht victims revealed. Rescue boats take part in a search operation, after a luxury yacht, which was carrying British entrepreneur Mike Lynch, sank near the Sicilian city of Palermo, Italy. Sicilian prosecutors said Saturday they were investigating possible manslaughter after a superyacht sank, killing seven people, as it emerged that trapped passengers scrambled for air pockets after it went down. UK tech tycoon Mike Lynch, his 18-year-old daughter Hannah, four friends and the yacht's cook died when the British-flagged Bayesian sank in a storm before dawn on Monday. "The Public Prosecutor's Office of Termini Imerese has registered a file with the state against unknown persons, hypothesising the crimes of negligent shipwreck and multiple negligent manslaughter," state prosecutor Ambrogio Cartosio told reporters on the Italian island. But he said he was only announcing the probe due to the huge international interest in the case, stressing: "We are only in the initial phase of the investigation. At this stage, precisely because the investigation could develop in any way, we are absolutely not ruling anything out." Lynch, 59, had invited friends and family onto the boat to celebrate his recent acquittal in a massive US fraud case.

But the 56-metre (185-foot) yacht was struck by something akin to a mini-tornado before dawn on Monday as it was anchored off Porticello, near Palermo. Fifteen people were rescued and the body of the yacht's chef was found shortly afterwards. Six passengers were reported missing. A major search operation including specialist divers subsequently identified the bodies of four of Lynch's friends on Wednesday. Lynch's body was found on Thursday and that of his daughter, who had been preparing to go to Oxford University, on Friday.

The bodies were found in two cabins on the side of the ship closest to the surface, and officials said they believed the trapped passengers had moved there in a bid to find pockets of air. The ship sank by its stern -- the back -- and came to rest on its right side on the sea bed, some 50 metres down, Girolamo Bentivoglio Fiandra of the fire service said. He told reporters the passengers inside "took refuge to seek safety in the cabins on the left side where somehow the last air bubbles formed." "We found the first five bodies in the first cabin on the left side, and the last body in the third cabin on the left side," he said. Bayesian's emergency flare had gone up at 4.38 am (0238 GMT) on Monday morning, and the coastguard immediately deployed -- but when they got there, it had already sunk. Contrary to previous reports, Raffaele



Macauda, from the Sicilian coastguard, said there had been no storm warning that night. "It was a sudden and unexpected event," added Raffaele Cammarano, another state prosecutor. The officials said the crew were free to leave Sicily during the investigation. Information on whether the yacht's doors were open -- which might explain why it sank so fast -- would not be possible to confirm until the wreck was recovered, the officials said.

Lynch, once dubbed the British "Bill Gates", founded software firm Autonomy in the 1990s. Its \$11 billion sale to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 saw him face fraud charges in the United States. A jury in San Francisco acquitted the 59-year-old and a co-defendant of all charges in June. After Hannah's body was brought ashore on Friday, her family issued a statement describing their "unspeakable grief". "The Lynch family is devastated, in shock and is being comforted and supported by family and friends," it said. US lawyer Chris Morvillo, a partner at top law firm Clifford Chance who worked on the US trial, also died along with his wife Neda. The bodies of Jonathan Bloomer, the chair of Morgan Stanley International, and his wife Judy, were also found. The chef was named in various media reports as Canadian-Antiguan Recaldo Thomas.

Amid Hezbollah airstrikes, Israel declares 48-hour nationwide emergency

Tel Aviv: Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant declared a 48-hour nationwide state of emergency on Sunday morning after the Israeli military launched pre-emptive strikes against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The emergency measure, effective from 6:00 am (Israeli time) aims to empower the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to implement crucial directives, including restrictions on public gatherings and the closure of vulnerable sites.

Volcano erupts in Indonesia, hikers flee in panic



GNS News Agency, August 27

The descent, captured by a government drone earlier this month, shows a group of panicked hikers racing down over the rocky terrain of Mount Dukono as the towering plume of ash rolls toward them with hair-raising

speed. In the heart-stopping footage, the hikers are seen fleeing in sheer panic as a massive plume of ash towers into the sky. As the Mount Dukono volcano in Indonesia erupted without any warning, a group of hikers found themselves racing against time, scrambling down the treacherous slopes. In the heart-stopping footage, the hikers are seen fleeing in sheer panic as a massive plume of ash towers into the sky. Their descent, captured by a government drone earlier this month, shows a group of panicked hikers racing down over the rocky terrain of Mount Dukono as the towering plume of ash rolls toward them with hair-raising speed. Battling fear and terror, they rapidly rushed down the side of the rocky terrain, dropping quickly in a mad race for their lives. Fortunately, everyone survived the terrifying adventure. The Telegraph reported. Despite explicit warnings from Indonesia's national disaster agency, the group defied a ban on entering a perilous area on Halmahera, a remote island known for its rugged terrain and sparse population, the New York Post reported. The agency strongly advised against climbing Mount Dukono, a volcano that has been in a state of near-constant eruption since the 1930s due to heightened volcanic activity. However, these warnings were ignored, as reported by the outlet. Head of the Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation, Priatin Hadi Wijaya, said, "The public is advised not to climb or visit Mount Dukono as volcanic activity is still high at the moment."

Venezuelan opposition candidate summoned in criminal probe after disputed polls

GNS News Agency, August 27

Opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia has been summoned for questioning Monday as part of a criminal investigation following the country's disputed presidential election claimed by strongman Nicolás Maduro. Venezuela investigates disputed election results. Venezuelan prosecutors have summoned opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia for questioning Monday as part of a criminal investigation following the country's disputed presidential election claimed by strongman Nicolás Maduro. "Citizen Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia" is summoned "on August 26 at 10 am for an interview," prosecutors said Saturday, as part of an investigation into the opposition's publishing of electoral records which it claims show Maduro was clearly defeated. Attorney General Tarek William Saab, a Maduro ally, had foreshadowed the summoning Friday, saying Gonzalez Urrutia would have to explain his "disobedience. Saab said the opposition's website, where it has posted a detailed breakdown of election results, had "usurped" the powers of the Maduro-aligned CNE electoral council. Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado was defiant, calling in a post on X for Venezuelans to take to the streets again on Wednesday. "One month after our glorious victory, in which Edmundo Gonzalez was elected President, Venezuelans again take to the streets," she said, calling for supporters to come "with family, with your children, with your grandchildren and with your voting record in hand." The CNE declared Maduro the winner of the July 28 election with 52 percent of votes cast, but has refused to publish detailed results, claiming hackers had corrupted the data. An observer mission from the US-based Carter Centre said there was no evidence of a cyberattack.

The polling station-level results published by the opposition show that Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old retired diplomat, defeated Maduro with 67 percent of the vote. Maduro has called for the arrest of Gonzalez Urrutia, who has not been seen in public since he led a march on July 30 with Machado. Machado, banned from running in the election, is also in hiding. She has demanded that Maduro enters into transition negotiations, which he has rejected outright. On Saturday, she said in a televised Fox News interview that Maduro had unleashed a brutal "campaign of terror." She pledged to "keep on fighting, peacefully protesting, increasing pressure domestically and



internationally, until Maduro understands that his best option is to accept the terms of a negotiation that would bring us to a transition to democracy." Venezuela's top court, widely regarded as loyal to Maduro, on Thursday certified his reelection to a third, six-year term, and reprimanded Gonzalez Urrutia for not appearing as ordered.

The opposition candidate refused to attend the hearings, saying doing so would risk his freedom. Protests following the disputed vote left 27 people dead, including two military members, and nearly 200 injured. More than 2,400 people have also been arrested in the wake of the election, including some high-profile opposition members. The United States, European Union, several Latin American countries and multilateral bodies have refused to recognize Maduro's victory claim without seeing the detailed results. Mexico, Brazil and Colombia have been promoting negotiations to find a way out of the Venezuelan crisis. The leaders of Brazil and Colombia on Saturday issued a joint statement reiterating a call for the CNE to release detailed vote results, while saying they "take note" of the Supreme Court ruling. "Both presidents remain convinced that the credibility of the electoral process can only be restored through the transparent publication of disaggregated and verifiable data," the statement said. The EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell on Saturday reiterated that the CNE is the Venezuelan "body legally and constitutionally responsible" for publishing results. "Only complete and independently verifiable results will be accepted and recognized to ensure that the will of the Venezuelan people is respected," he said in a statement. "The Venezuelan people have to decide their own destiny. Their will must prevail."

California sees 'unusual' cold weather, heavy snow shuts part of highway

GNS News Agency, August 27

A cold weather system from the Gulf of Alaska interrupted summer along the West Coast, bringing snow to mountains in California and the Pacific Northwest and prompting the closure of parts of Highway 89 through Lassen Volcanic National Park. A group of cross country athletes, who had traveled from Davis, California, huddle after their practice was canceled due to wet and snowy conditions in Donner Summit, California.

An unusually cold weather system from the Gulf of Alaska interrupted summer along the West Coast on Saturday, bringing snow to mountains in California and the Pacific Northwest and prompting the closure of part of a highway that runs through a national park.

Parts of Highway 89 through Lassen Volcanic National Park in California were shut down after an estimated 3 inches (7.6 centimetres) of snow fell overnight, according to the National Weather Service. Photos posted by the agency and local authorities showed a high-elevation blanket of white on Mount Rainier in Washington along with a dusting of



snow at Minaret Vista, a lookout point southeast of Yosemite National Park in California's Sierra Nevada. Madera County Deputy Sheriff Larry Rich said it was "definitely unexpected" to see snow at Minaret Vista in August. "It's not every day you get to spend your birthday surrounded by a winter wonderland in the middle of summer," he said in a statement. "It made for a day I won't soon forget, and a unique reminder of why I love serving in this area. It's just one of those moments that makes working up here so special." In northern Nevada, rain fell in the runup to the annual Burning Man festival, prompting organisers to close the en-

trance gate for most of Saturday before reopening. Torrential rains upended last year's festival, turning the celebration and its temporary city into a muddy quagmire. It also snowed overnight on Mammoth Mountain, a ski destination in California, with the National Weather Service warning hikers and campers to prepare for slick roads. Record rainfall moved through Redding, Red Bluff and Stockton in Northern California on Saturday, and the weather service said, and rain showers were expected to continue into the evening.

A dusting of snow fell overnight on the crest of the Sierra Nevada around

Tioga Pass, the weather service said. August snow has not occurred there since 2003, forecasters said. Tioga Pass rises to more than 9,900 feet (3,017 metres) and serves as the eastern entryway to Yosemite. But it is usually closed much of each year by winter snow that can take one or two months to clear. While the start of ski season is at least several months away, the hint of winter was welcomed by resorts. "It's a cool and blustery August day here at Palisades Tahoe, as a storm that could bring our first snowfall of the season moves in this afternoon!" the resort said in a social media post Friday.

Electrical machinery, parts boost India's imports from Vietnam by 17% in January-July



GNS News Agency, August 27

Driven primarily by electrical machinery and parts, India's imports from Vietnam are on an upward trajectory, with a 17 percent increase to \$5.8 billion between January and July this year, compared to the same period last year, according to an analysis of Ministry of Commerce and Industry data. Latest available data also showed that imports of electrical machinery and parts from Vietnam jumped 43 percent between January and May 2024, compared to the same period last year. The Economic Survey 2023-24 noted that the rise in trade through countries such as Mexico and Vietnam is a "result of Chinese firms re-routing their supply through these countries." Making a case for attracting Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI), the survey stated that East Asian economies are boosting their exports by focusing on FDI from China. This comes in the wake of the Indian Steel Association (ISA) calling for an investigation into imports of hot-rolled flat products originating from Vietnam, stating that these imports are negatively impacting domestic steel prices. On August 16, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched an anti-dumping investigation into imports of "hot-rolled flat products of alloy or non-alloy steel, not clad, not plated or coated, of a thickness up to 25 mm and width up to 2100 mm" originating from Vietnam. Imports from Vietnam, Electrical machinery, Electrical machine parts imports, Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news stories

According to a Crisis report, India turned a net importer of steel in FY24, with an overall steel trade deficit of 1.1 million tonnes, marking a shift from its status as a net exporter since fiscal 2017. The top exporters were China, South Korea, and Japan, but Vietnam has now become a new entrant to the list. In a sign that imports from Vietnam could continue to grow, trade data showed that imports in July almost doubled to \$1 billion compared to \$520 million in July 2021. "China setting up units in Vietnam" Indian Customs have flagged cases where a few ASEAN firms made minor changes to products mainly made in China and then exported them as "made in ASEAN" to India, benefiting from zero-duty access under FTAs. Set-top boxes are one such product. Vietnamese firms use FTAs to enter markets in India, the US, and the EU. In many cases, Chinese companies have set up manufacturing to bypass tariffs imposed by the US and the EU on Chinese goods. In response, the US recently imposed high tariffs on solar panels made by Chinese firms in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. The same fate may await the goods produced by Chinese firms in India," said Ajay Srivastava, former Indian Trade

Service officer and head of the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

Srivastava said that India must closely monitor such imports under the India-ASEAN FTA to ensure compliance, and effective monitoring requires clear tracking of production processes and trade linkages. "The presence of Chinese firms in ASEAN has also led to increased imports into ASEAN from China. For example, when Chinese electric vehicle (EV) companies started production in Thailand, local auto parts orders dropped by 40 percent, forcing many manufacturers to cut back. India, with similar EV policies, could face similar challenges when Chinese firms begin operations," Srivastava said. The possible re-routing of goods from Free Trade Agreement (FTA) nations comes amid efforts to check imports from China through Quality Control Orders (QCOs) on a range of products such as steel wires, aluminum and aluminum alloy products, household and similar electrical appliances, and ceiling fan regulators. Despite several efforts to curb imports and investments from China, the neighboring country continues to surge. Imports from China have already crossed \$60 billion during the first seven months of 2024, which is 10 percent higher than the \$55 billion recorded during the same period last year. Imports from China in FY24 exceeded \$100 billion.

Decoupling from China challenging The Economic Survey noted that decoupling from China is challenging for the world, as Beijing dominates the supply of several critical minerals used in the manufacturing industry, and its control over various product categories creates a risk of "economic coercion." "Research by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) shows that despite its policies, the US remains reliant on Chinese inputs. In fact, the rise in trade through Mexico and Vietnam is a result of Chinese firms re-routing their supply through these countries (or by locating themselves in these countries)," the survey said. The survey also pointed out that as Global Value Chains (GVCs) are designed to minimize costs, countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan have focused on lowering their trade costs over time. This is one reason why these countries are benefiting from the 'China Plus One' phenomenon. "Over 90 percent of manufacturers in North America surveyed by the Boston Consulting Group in 2023 moved some or all of their production to other countries like Mexico, Thailand, and Vietnam, suggesting a shift away from China," the survey noted. Vietnam's goods exports surged by 14 percent to \$190 billion during the first half of the year, and its trade surplus rose to \$11.63 billion, according to Vietnam's General Statistics Office (GSO). This follows the Economic Survey's indication that Vietnam might be benefiting from Chinese FDI amid a reconfiguration in global trade patterns. "Vietnam's trade with China and the US has recently increased. US imports from Vietnam more than doubled from \$46 billion in 2017 to \$114 billion in 2023. During the same period, Vietnam's imports from China rose from \$58 billion to \$111 billion," the survey stated. Moreover, Vietnam is seeking closer trade ties with China, as Vietnam's newly appointed President, To Lam, is on a visit to China seeking economic cooperation and rail links. According to reports, the two countries are discussing plans for constructing high-speed railway lines connecting China to Vietnam by 2030.

Adani, Birla keen to tap Mongolian copper, but face logistics challenge

GNS News Agency, August 27

copper, Adani Enterprises, Aditya Birla, Aditya Birla Group, Hindalco Industries, Mongolia, Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news stories Mongolia exported copper ore worth \$2.7 billion in 2022 and was the world's 10th largest exporter of the commodity. Much of its exports go exclusively to China. Two large companies Adani Enterprises Ltd and Aditya Birla group-owned Hindalco Industries Ltd are keen to source raw material from copper-rich Mongolia, but are concerned about the logistics of transporting copper concentrate from the landlocked Central Asian country to India.

Copper concentrates is a key input for refined copper, and India relies on imports for nearly 90 per cent of its supply due to limited domestic mining of this critical mineral. India imports its requirements almost entirely from Indonesia, Chile and Australia. Mongolia exported copper ore worth \$2.7 billion in 2022 and was the world's 10th largest exporter of the commodity. Much of its exports go exclusively to China.

In a meeting in New Delhi with officials from the Union Ministry of Mines and India's mission in Mongolia early July, representatives from Adani-owned Kutch Copper Ltd and Hindalco-owned Birla Copper Ltd sought more information on transportation facilities to evacuate copper concentrate out of Mongolia. The company executives noted that the current arrangement, where Mongolian suppliers are responsible for transportation costs and logistics, posed "a hindrance in till-date trading" between the two countries. The Indian Express has learnt. Officials in the Indian mission in Mongolia are learnt to have suggested that the companies should visit the Central Asian country to understand the trade dynamics and intricacies of logistics. They also recommended that the companies can then make a start by placing trial orders to get some practical experience of the opportunities and technical challenges that may arise during transporting copper ore and concentrates from Mongolia to India.

The officials listed the ports of Tianjin in China and Vladivostok in Russia as potential routes for Indian smelters to source copper concentrate shipments from Mongolia. Officials said the companies may visit Mongolia in October to explore opportunities of importing copper. At present, there are only two possible options for evacuating shipments out of Mongolia—transporting them by rail to Tianjin or exploring the possibility of a combined road and rail route to Vladivostok, according to a person familiar with the development. Notably, the distance from major copper mines in Mongolia to Tianjin is only around 1,000 km, while the distance to Vladivostok exceeds 4,000 km. Mongolia's copper mining industry is dominated by two major producers — Oyu Tolgoi, majority-owned by global mining giant Rio Tinto, and Erdenet Mining Corporation, a state-owned company. According to ICRA, demand for copper in India is expected to grow by 11 per cent in 2024-25. Given copper's widespread industrial use, its demand is often seen as a barometer of economic activity. Refined copper is essential for the production of electrical equipment such as wiring and motors, consumer electronics, and construction. It is also



heavily used in electric vehicle batteries and wind turbines. India's bilateral trade with Mongolia is heavily tilted towards exports. Last fiscal, India imported goods worth Rs 8.5 crore, mostly wool yarn and fabric, inorganic chemicals, and leather, and exported goods worth Rs 275 crore. As far as copper concentrates is concerned, India's imports in the first quarter of 2024-25 totalled Rs 6,788 crore, and were Rs 25,951 crore in 2023-24, almost entirely from Indonesia, Chile and Australia.

Govt invites proposals for setting up e-commerce export hubs

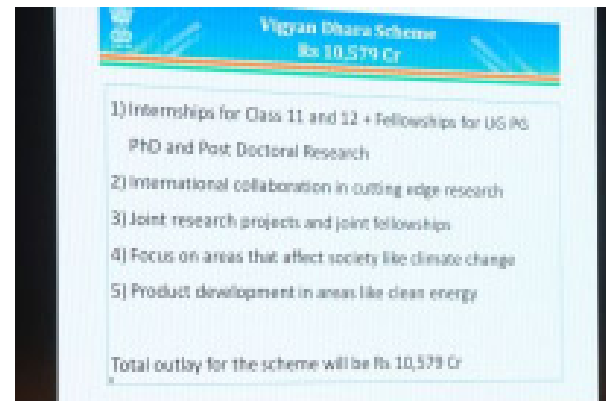
GNS News Agency, August 27

e-commerce export hubs, e-commerce, e-commerce companies, e-commerce sector, e-commerce market, Nirmala Sitharaman, Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news stories The main objectives are to ensure predictability and the shortest possible turnaround time for e-commerce exports, to facilitate easy re-imports for e-commerce returns or rejects, and to bring various cross-border e-commerce stakeholders under one roof.

After Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech announced the establishment of e-commerce export hubs, modelled on similar initiatives in several Southeast Asian countries, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has invited proposals to finalise the operational modalities of these hubs. Based on these proposals, further details, including software requirements for e-commerce export hubs (ECEH) to facilitate seamless and expeditious export clearances, will be finalised, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) stated in a trade notice. "In this regard, detailed proposal(s) for setting up ECEH may be submitted to this Directorate for examination, support, and guidance," the DGFT said.

Initially, there are plans to set up 10-15 hubs across the country. These hubs would be designated areas, serving as centres with favourable business infrastructure and facilities for cross-border e-commerce activities. The main objectives are to ensure predictability and the shortest possible turnaround time for e-commerce exports, to facilitate easy re-imports for e-commerce returns or rejects, and to bring various cross-border e-commerce stakeholders under one roof.

To boost research, Cabinet clears Vigyan Dhara, biotech initiatives



The Centre Saturday approved two key science initiatives to strengthen the research base and accelerate search for science and technology solutions to some of the country's pressing needs in sectors like clean energy. The Union Cabinet decided to merge several existing science promotion programmes being run by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under a new initiative called Vigyan Dhara that, it hopes, would result in better fund utilisation, and improve efficiency. It also approved a biotechnology initiative that will push for research and development, industrialisation and manufacturing in the biotechnology sector.

Official sources said the overall objective of initiatives was to focus scientific energies on some specific areas that were key to India's sustainable growth and development in the coming decades. Vigyan Dhara, for example, merges several existing DST schemes including the INSPIRE programme that works to attract young talent to science research.

"Vigyan Dhara has three broad components — human and institutional capacity building, research and development, innovation and technology development, and also deployment. Existing schemes would fall under one

of these components. There are two big benefits of Vigyan Dhara. DST gets the flexibility to reorient schemes within the broad framework of achieving the three objectives. This can include reallocation of funds as well... The second thing is the ANRF (Anusandhan National Research Foundation, a newly created institution) is creating its own programmes. It is important to avoid duplication of work and energy. The flexibility of the DST to refashion its existing programmes helps in this as well," DST Secretary Abhay Karandikar said.

On biotechnology side, the new initiative aims to support innovation-driven research and development across six thematic areas. The first will focus on bio-chemicals, bio-enzymes, and bio-polymers, which will mainly have industrial, consumer, and scientific applications. The second pillar will focus on smart proteins and functional foods. Union I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw — while briefing reporters on Cabinet decisions — said one of the critical challenges that India faces is feeding its 140 crore people. The second pillar will focus on developing functional foods that can complement land-based food production, thereby reducing pressure on land resources. The third will focus on bio-therapeutics. Targeted therapy is emerging as the cutting-edge treatment for several genetic conditions and cancers.

The fourth will focus on agriculture, supporting development of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides. Vaishnaw said this will help make agriculture resilient and also reduce levels of chemicals in foods. The fifth will focus on developing bio-fuels and bio-chemicals, especially those that are developed from captured carbon emissions. This will help in creating a circular economy, said Vaishnaw. And, last area was marine and space application to focus on developing products from marine ecosystems. "Just like the industrial revolution and IT revolution, there will be a bio-revolution in the coming days. All fields related to biotechnology and bio-sciences will create a big economy," he said.

Inflation will gradually glide towards 4% target, but this would take several quarters: MPC member Jayanth R Varma

JAYANTH R VARMA, one of the three external members of the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), believes that inflation will gradually move towards the 4 per cent target, but it would take several quarters. In an interaction with GEORGE MATHEW and HITESH VYAS, Varma, Professor in the Finance and Accounting at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, said that growth in 2024-25 and 2025-26 would be in the ballpark range of around 7 per cent, which is below the potential growth rate of the economy. He said that a reduction in the current excessive real interest rate would help in reviving private capital investment. "Restrictive monetary policy controls inflation by suppressing demand, and until companies see robust demand growth, they may be reluctant to invest despite reasonably high capacity utilisation," he said. Edited excerpts: Retail inflation has fallen to 3.5 per cent in July. Do you expect inflation to be benign in the coming months? Is the 4 per cent level sacrosanct? I expect inflation to trend down in coming quarters, with transient spikes in between, primarily due to food inflation. As far as the MPC is concerned, the 4 per cent target is a statutory mandate and therefore sacrosanct. I am confident that inflation will gradually glide towards the 4 per cent target, but this process would take several quarters.

What's your opinion on the proposal in the Economic Survey for exclusion of food inflation from CPI inflation?

I do not wish to comment on this as an MPC member. The MPC has a statutory mandate set by the government, and our task is to conform to that target. It is up to the government to change the target if it considers it desirable to do so. It would not be appropriate for the MPC to suggest changing the goal post when high food inflation is making it difficult to reach the target. There is a view that since Indian inflation is not well measured, and could be over or under-estimated, too much precision with regard to a target is unproductive. What is your view on this?

The tolerance band of 2 per cent on either side of the target takes care of these measurement errors as well as the well-known difficulties in forecasting future inflation and the uncertain lags in the effect of monetary

Can hair perfumes damage your hair? Here's all you need to know about them

Fragrance and haircare are both integral parts of our beauty regimen, and while all of us love the scent of freshly washed hair, spraying our hair with regular perfumes is certainly not the answer.

With brands coming out with their own wide range of offerings that promise to make your tresses smell a million bucks, hair perfumes come in handy when you need to meet people right after a sweaty gym session, or have a party to attend and heads to turn. But while regular perfumes come under the spotlight for their harsh ingredients and side effects that cause skin irritation, the question on whether hair perfumes are safe or not may leave you wondering. Indianexpress.com spoke to a haircare expert to find out whether you can make these a part of your regular routine without worrying about the health of your locks.

"Infused with delicate aromas, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals, hair perfumes work wonders as nourishing agents, which makes them a must-have for lasting fragrance and freshness in the scorching summer heat," said Dr Simal Soim, Founder and Chief Dermatologist, AAYNA Clinics and Chief Medical Officer, Clinically.

Are they damaging to the hair? "There has been a lot of debate regarding the use of harmful products, especially when it comes to haircare. Hair perfumes are actually great for your hair as they are formulated with nourishing ingredients. Since hair perfumes are usually water-based with a minute amount of alcohol, you can be assured that they won't dry out your hair like the alcohol-scented body fragrances," she explained. Being perfectly safe for all hair types, they are ideal for freshening oily hair, as well as providing nourishment to dry and damaged hair, she said.

Safer alternatives to explore Although hair perfumes



are perfectly safe, if you are still doubtful, Dr Soim suggested opting for much safer alternatives like hair mists, essential oils, and serums. "You can always start by experimenting with essential oils, as they are made with natural ingredients, and can help you achieve a very subtle and organic scent. Also, homemade hair mists are ideal if you're looking for an excellent alternative for adding a fresh scent to your hair without relying on chemical-infused products," she said. Last but not least, hair serums are also a perfect combination of fragrance and nourishment, leaving your ends healthy and fresh, she added.

Key things to keep in mind while picking out hair perfumes: Choosing hair perfumes is certainly a subjective experience. However, it is significant to pick out a product that complements your hair type," advised Dr Soim. She also suggested choosing hair perfumes that come with hair-friendly formulations and alcohol-free scents that are packed with naturally hydrating ingredients.

Ranjith steps down as Kerala Film Academy Chairman, Siddique quits AMMA after sexual misconduct allegations



Senior Malayalam actor Siddique and ace filmmaker Ranjith have quit their respective cinema related positions after sexual misconduct allegations against them. Siddique resigned as the general secretary of Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) on Sunday, a day after an actress had alleged that she was raped by him at a young age. The senior actor had earlier on August 23 in a press conference by AMMA claimed that he was "not aware of casting couch" in the film industry. The young actor had first spoken up about the alleged harassment—which took place in 2016—five years ago but reiterated her allegations after the release of the Hema Committee report, which provided a damning indictment of the discrimination and exploitation faced by women in the Malayalam film industry.

According to reports, Siddique said he sent a resignation email to the AMMA president, actor Mohanlal and confirmed that he was quitting because of the allegations against him as it would "not be right to continue in the post in this situation". The senior actor said that he would respond to the allegations after getting legal advice. Malayalam filmmaker Ranjith has also stepped down as the chairman of the Kerala Chalachitra Academy following allegations of misconduct against him by Bengali actor Sreelekha Mitra. Manorama reported that Ranjith "communicated his decision to Cultural Affairs Minister Saji Cheriyan, stating that he is unwilling to continue in the position in light of the allegations against him".

The report added that the filmmaker claimed he was

innocent and the "real victim" in the case, terming the allegations against him as an "organised attack against the LDF government". Narrating the incident to the media on Friday, Sreelekha had alleged that the incident took place in 2009 when Ranjith's film Paleri Manikyam: Oru Pathirakolapathakathinte Katha was under production.

Referring to a meeting with Ranjith at an apartment, Sreelekha had said, "He was on a phone call. There were a lot of people. He was on the phone with the cinematographer with whom I had worked. Asking me whether I want to talk to him (the cinematographer), he (Ranjith) called me to another room... the bedroom was dark. When I talked to the cinematographer over the phone, he (Ranjith) was playing with my bangles and touching my skin."

"We women have the sixth sense. I felt uncomfortable, but I was trying to give him the benefit of doubt. I thought I was overthinking and thought he wanted to see my bangles. I was not feeling ok with him. After realising that I was not reacting or taking back my hand, he tried to play with my neck and hair. Then, I excused myself and got out of the room. This was not shocking. I know how the film industry works by and large. There are good and bad people," she added. On February 17, 2017, a leading Malayalam actress was abducted and sexually assaulted in her car by a group of men. A prominent actor was later implicated in the case which sparked outrage across Kerala and brought under the scanner the discriminatory treatment faced by women in the Malayalam film industry. The Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), comprising women actors, producers, directors, and technicians, was formed in response to this incident. On May 18, 2017, the WCC submitted a petition to the Kerala Chief Minister demanding an inquiry into the incident, and larger gender issues plaguing the state's film industry. In July, the state government formed a three-member committee headed by Justice K Hema, a retired Kerala High Court judge, to look into issues of sexual harassment and pervasive gender inequality in the Malayalam film industry. After speaking to multiple women in the industry, the Committee submitted a 295-page report to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in December 2019. However, the report was only made public earlier this month.

10 years of Munnariyippu: Mammooty's minimalist film explores journey of a man imprisoned in the outside world after living a freer life in prison

One of the definitions given by the Cambridge Dictionary for the word "freedom" is "the state of not being in prison". However, its primary meaning is "the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited." Considering these two definitions in tandem raises an intriguing question: what if someone's freedom is more restricted in the outside world and they feel more free in prison? Does this make the concept of freedom subjective? Also, how long can a person remain silent before retaliating as their freedom is increasingly restricted? In such a scenario, will the retaliation be peaceful or violent? Cinematographer-turned-director Venu's psychological political drama Munnariyippu (Warning), starring Mammooty, explores these questions and dissects the psyche and life of a middle-aged man, CK Raghavan, stuck in such a quagmire.

"Living in constant fear is very dull. It will destroy our freedom. Whether a man or a woman, no one should allow that to happen. Freedom depends on our definition of it. My perception of freedom might be different from yours. We may have to weed out certain obstacles that stand in our way. Isn't that what freedom is? When it occurs at home, it's domestic violence; when it happens in society, it's revolution. Be it in Cuba or at home, blood will spill during revolutions," a drunk Raghavan tells a bunch of strangers in a bar.

When he was finally granted freedom after spending five decades in prison, Brooks Hatlen (James Whitmore) in director Frank Darabont's The Shawshank Redemption (1994) couldn't hold it together for long. "In here, he's an important, educated man. Outside, he's nothing," says Ellis Boyd "Red" Redding (Morgan Freeman), explaining how prison has institutionalised Brooks. For Brooks, prison was more than just a place of confinement — it was the only space where he felt a true sense of belonging. We first see Raghavan as he stands quietly in the office of jail superintendent Rama Moorthy (Nedumudi Venu) who is explaining to freelance journalist Anjali Arakkal (Aparna Gopinath), hired to ghostwrite his service story, a rehabilitation scheme he developed for prisoners released after long sentences. Convicted of double homicide — his wife and a Marwadi girl living at his employer's home — Raghavan, however, becomes visibly disturbed when someone refers to him as a murderer. "I haven't killed anyone," he tells Anjali when Moorthy steps out for a moment. Just before this moment, we are shown a scene featuring a party hosted by senior journalist KK (Prathap Pothan) for aspiring scribes. There, he declares German novelist Franz Kafka as one of his favourite writers, with Josef K as his favourite Kafka character. Josef K is the protagonist of Kafka's novel The Trial, which begins with the line, "Someone must have been telling tales about Josef K, for one morning, without having done anything wrong, he was arrested." It's no coincidence that Venu and screenwriter Unni R placed these two scenes in tandem, especially since Munnariyippu, which released 10 years ago, is rich with metaphors, analogies, similes and imagery.

In his cell, Raghavan has pinned two photos on the wall — of the two people he's accused of killing. "No one has ever come to visit him, nor has he ever applied for parole," a cop tells Anjali, further piquing her curiosity. "These walls are funny. First, you hate them; then you get used to them; enough time passes, you get so you depend on them," Redding says about Brooks. After her first conversation with Raghavan, Anjali begins to feel the same about him too. Despite having served 20 years in jail — six years beyond his actual sentence — Raghavan speaks with a surprising calmness and that too in allegories and nearly everything he says has multiple layers of meaning. Although Raghavan has no evidence to prove his innocence, he is unwavering in his belief that he is not guilty. The intellectual depth in the things he wrote down in his diary captures Anjali's interest even more, leading her to publish his story in a prominent news magazine. When the article gains popularity, she is offered the chance to turn it into a book. However, the unexpected fame that follows disrupts Raghavan's life in prison, leading to his release and effectively ending his extended stay there. This part of Munnariyippu also critiques how quite a few journalists focus solely on producing "interesting" stories that will bring them fame, without considering the impact it can have on the person(s) featured/discussed in their work.

Munnariyippu, mammooty, munnariyippu movie, munnariyippu review, mammooty best movies, mammooty films, venu, venu director, venu isc, venu cinematographer, venu cameraman, venu director movies, munnariyippu (2014), malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2014, malayalam films, mollywood Newspaper clipping reporting that CK Raghavan has been sentenced to life imprisonment for double homicide. (Image: Silly Monks Mollywood/YT) Even before his release, Anjali starts acting as if she owns him, forbidding him from meeting a journalist from Delhi. At the same time, she gives him (false) hope by promising to be there for him after his release, just to manipulate him into writing for her.

While Anjali resides in a plush apartment, she arranges for Raghavan to stay in a cramped single room in an old building, located far from the main areas of the city. Reaching the place requires navigating through a couple of narrow alleys and climbing a precarious staircase. To Raghavan, the room seems to be "well-equipped," as it includes a bed, a table, a chair, a table lamp and a wastebasket. When he mentions this to Anjali, she shamelessly says, "How could you be given a room without these facilities?" Yet, a quick look around makes it clear that the room is only a bit better than his prison cell, reflecting how she seeks to exploit him, believing that an ex-convict deserves no more than the bare minimum. Munnariyippu, mammooty, munnariyippu movie, munnariyippu review, mammooty best movies, mammooty films, venu, venu director, venu isc, venu cinematographer, venu cameraman, venu director movies, munnariyippu (2014), malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2014, malayalam films, mollywood Mammooty and Aparna Gopinath in Munnariyippu. Although she is a writer herself, Anjali tells Raghavan they can easily meet the deadline since he "has no other job and just needs to sit and write," as if it were a mechanical task. However, when Raghavan realises he has to write his own life story, his demeanour and body language shift, showing signs of tension and unease. Anjali, however, either doesn't notice this change or simply doesn't care. Whenever she leaves, Anjali instructs Raghavan to close the door, confining him to the room, where he's expected to do something against his will. In jail, he feels merely confined, with no expectation to engage in anything he doesn't



want to. In contrast, here he feels isolated, with no one to even talk to. Even KP Anil Kumar (Minon), the young boy from the hotel who brings his food, is always busy. Here, Venu, who also handled Munnariyippu's cinematography, frequently frames Raghavan through the bars of his window, symbolising the jail he's in. Munnariyippu, mammooty, munnariyippu movie, munnariyippu review, mammooty best movies, mammooty films, venu, venu director, venu isc, venu cinematographer, venu cameraman, venu director movies, munnariyippu (2014), malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2014, malayalam films, mollywood Raghavan in his cramped single room in an old building. (Image: Silly Monks Mollywood/YT) Anjali's treatment of Raghavan becomes even more evident during her meeting with the senior management of the publishing house. When the boss advises her to ensure no one has access to Raghavan, Anjali confidently replies, "I am pretty certain no one can. He's safe in my custody."

However, her plans start to backfire as Raghavan repeatedly fails to begin writing, coming up with a new excuse each time. Though she tries to persuade him, he continues to fail. When Anjali realises he isn't writing, her attitude toward him changes. She tries to even emotionally manipulate him, expressing disappointment that he isn't trying. At the same time, she also begins to treat him with indifference, as he is unable to produce the service/product she forced upon him. Even the way she enters his room changes; she now opens the door with a bang. One day, when Anjali visits Raghavan's room and finds him missing, she becomes agitated and irritated, thinking it unacceptable for him to focus on anything other than writing for her. This reaction highlights her elitist, feudalistic and authoritarian attitude. Venu also doesn't forget to offer more on Raghavan's character beyond his interactions with Anjali. During their outing, it's revealed that Raghavan has no money and only Anil does, ironically. Raghavan is also shown becoming visibly tense upon encountering an elderly, seemingly Marwari, couple who might be connected to the girl he is accused of murdering.

Munnariyippu, mammooty, munnariyippu movie, munnariyippu review, mammooty best movies, mammooty films, venu, venu director, venu isc, venu cinematographer, venu cameraman, venu director movies, munnariyippu (2014), malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2014, malayalam films, mollywood Anjali's plans start to backfire as Raghavan repeatedly fails to begin writing, coming up with a new excuse each time.

The movie also critiques the field of journalism and in one scene, KK is seen lecturing Anjali about professional ethics immediately after having made a misogynistic comment on female journalists, which clearly highlights a typical old-school, elitist media giant mentality. Munnariyippu adds a political and economic dimension too to its narrative when Chacko (Prithviraj Sukumaran) comes to meet Anjali as a prospective groom. Interestingly, Chacko works in, of all the places in the world, the US, known for its capitalist economy and supremacist tendencies of a huge population. Anjali quickly agrees to marry him and it's later mentioned in passing that she will move to the US after marriage. Intriguing, isn't it? Munnariyippu, mammooty, munnariyippu movie, munnariyippu review, mammooty best movies, mammooty films, venu, venu director, venu isc, venu cinematographer, venu cameraman, venu director movies, munnariyippu (2014), malayalam movies, malayalam movies 2014, malayalam films, mollywood Aparna Gopinath as freelance journalist Anjali Arakkal in Munnariyippu. njali's treatment of Raghavan becomes increasingly disrespectful and she even suggests that she is doing him a favour by providing him with the room and covering his expenses. After the Delhi journalist tracks Raghavan down and meets him, Anjali moves him to an even more dilapidated house, farther away, with no other houses nearby. At this point, Raghavan's demeanour starts to change. As Anjali leaves him at the new location, he smirks oddly. Later, he is shown taking a walk outside, picking up an iron rod, examining it and then throwing it away. On the final day of their contract, realising she cannot meet the deadline or make Raghavan write, Anjali comes to meet him and there, mocks him and the diary entries that initially attracted her. But he doesn't respond and continues to just look at her, smiling, and that too an eerie smile with a shade of determination. He hands her a set of papers with his writings and as she reads, he begins packing his stuff. As she reads his account, Anjali grows increasingly frightened, understanding the true nature of the person she has been dealing with and why he says, "I haven't killed anyone," and that it's not because he hasn't committed a crime, but because he doesn't see himself as guilty. "You asked me where I want to go now. I've decided. I am returning to jail," Raghavan says with a sinister smile before striking Anjali on the head with the iron rod. Unsettlingly, he wears the same red-checked shirt he wore on the day of his release here too. The next scene shows him sleeping peacefully in his cell, now with three photos on the wall: his wife, the girl and Anjali. Fascinatingly, in Munnariyippu, there is no crime or punishment — only freedom and the consequences of depriving someone of it. Significantly before Munnariyippu delves into the core of its plot, Venu masterfully encapsulates the film's theme with a striking shot featuring a quote by renowned poet and novelist Sylvia Plath: "I desire the things which will destroy me in the end," reflecting how Anjali's desire to get Raghavan to pour his life into words and thereby gain fame, ultimately leads to her tragic demise. Mammooty's outstanding performance, which subtly but effectively reveals the complex layers and nuances of Raghavan,

Amid Arshad Warsi's 'joker' comment on Prabhas, his old interview calling dubbed South Indian films 'mindless' resurfaces

Actor Arshad Warsi's comments stating that Prabhas looked like a "joker" in filmmaker Nag Ashwin's Kalki 2898 AD, has snowballed into a controversy that refuses to die down. Amid the comments which has angered fans of Prabhas and other artistes from the Telugu film industry, Arshad's old interview regarding his views on dubbed South Indian films has now resurfaced online.

A user posted an old interview clip of Arshad on Reddit, where the actor was asked about his take on the rise of dubbed South Indian films at the box office. It is not clear which film or movies was being referred to. In the clip, Arshad Warsi is seen calling them "time pass" as he reveals how his entire staff is glued to such movies which are mindless entertainers. He also alludes to Superstar Rajinikanth's on-screen swag, with his action and the style of smoking his cigarette. "All the staff at my house watch dubbed South Indian films. It is highly entertaining. Rajinikanth is such a big star, there must be a reason for it. In that (cinema), you don't have to think too much, wrack your brains. Cars are blasting, people are flying, cigarettes smoke in style.. it is all time pass. Eat popcorn, watch the film, and go home," he said in the video. Arshad Warsi's comments angered fans on social media, with many noting how his views on South Indian films were highly misinformed and prejudiced. "Yeah ??, in Jersey, Mahanti, Jai Bhim, Maharaja, Super Deluxe, cars were flying," read a sarcastic comment.

While many slammed Arshad in the comment sections of the video, others also noted how before the pan-India movement (which started with SS Rajamouli's



Baahubali), North Indian audiences had a deeply prejudiced view about movies from the South, similar to what the actor echoed. While Arshad Warsi has been hum since the controversy erupted, filmmaker Nag Ashwin said the actor should have "chosen his words better," adding that his remarks were no reason to start a fan war across the Hindi and the Telugu film industries. "Let's not go backwards. No more North-South or Bolly vs Tolly. Eyes on the bigger picture. United Indian Film Industry. Arshad saab should have chosen his words better, but it's ok. Sending buji toys for his kids. I'll work hard so he tweets FDFS that Prabhas was the best ever in Kalki 2," he tweeted. Kalki 2898 AD is the biggest grosser of the year so far, earning more than Rs 1,000 crore at the global box office. The mythological sci-fi epic also starred Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan.

Creators reveal The Rings of Power Season 2 features dark, twisted psychology, with strained friendships, fractured kingdoms

The premiere of the first two episodes of The Lord of the Rings - The Rings of Power Season 2 was recently held in Singapore, receiving positive reactions from the fans. (L-R) Charlie Vickers, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, Trystan Gravelle, Charlotte Brandstrom, JD Payne, Charles Edwards, Megan Richards, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Markella Kavenagh and Tyroe Muhafidin.

Nearly two years after the pilot episode of the American fantasy streaming series The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power aired, streaming giant Amazon Prime Video is set to return with its second season. Developed by JD Payne and Patrick McKay, the premiere of the first two episodes of the upcoming season was recently held at the Shaw Theatres Lido in Singapore, receiving positive reactions from fans who came to catch an early glimpse of the Middle-earth saga.

Before the screening, co-creator Payne provided a succinct overview of the season, joking, "It's very simple... It's about one guy (Sauron) manipulating another guy (Celebribor) into making rings for all the remaining people." He added, "It's really a spectacular season. It's both broader, deeper and bigger. And we go into more worlds. The psychology gets really dark and twisted. There's a sort of a psychological thriller this time and there are bigger creatures, action and scale that we've never seen before." Co-creator McKay, who couldn't attend the premiere, revealed details about Sauron's return through a media statement, sharing, "We're going to watch as he uses deception, manipulation, lies, coercion, and cunning to set the chess pieces in motion. This season is about reaching a deeper understanding of his modus operandi — and seeing it in action. Each of these societies and heroes that we set up in Season 1 reveals

serious cracks in the foundations that Sauron can exploit." "What the audience will start to realise as the season goes on is this is not a story about several different worlds but a story about one world — and Sauron is the spine that connects all of it. There is good and evil in Tolkien. But what side you are fighting for is something that everyone has to struggle with. Evil is not something in some far-off place. One of the central themes is the evil that dwells inside us all," he added.

The Lord of the Rings, the lord of the rings the rings of power, The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power, lord of the rings, the rings of power, lord of the rings series, lord of the rings season 2, the lord of the rings the rings of power season 2, Sauron, Galadriel, charlie Vickers, Morfydd Clark, amazon prime, prime video, amazon prime video The cast and crew of The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power at the world premiere of the show's Season 2 in Singapore.

The Singapore premiere turned into a star-studded affair, with director Charlotte Brandstrom and cast members Charlie Vickers, Markella Kavenagh, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Charles Edwards, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, Trystan Gravelle, Megan Richards and Tyroe Muhafidin attending, much to the delight of the fans present at the theatre. Brandstrom, who directed the visually stunning sixth (Udun) and seventh (The Eye) episodes of Season 1, mentioned that while the second season gets darker, the stakes also get higher for the characters. Young actor Charlie Vickers, who played Halbrand in the first season of The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power and later revealed his true identity as Dark Lord Morgoth's former right-hand Sauron, said that the character has a different look this time, hinting at a more twisted arc. "

India's men and women teams to tour England next year for Tests, white-ball series



GNS News Agency, August 27

New Delhi: The India men's and women's cricket teams will be touring England next year for red-ball and white-ball matches respectively, said the England and Wales Cricket Board while releasing their 2025 international home season schedule. After the England men's team plays a one-off Test against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge on May 22, which is also the African nation tours the United Kingdom for the first time since 2003, they will then play three ODIs and as many T20s against the West Indies. At the same time, the Lords will host the 2025 World Test Championship final for the first time. "It is a privilege for us to host international cricket at the Lord's involving England's men's and women's sides and we're hugely honoured and excited to be adding the ICC World Test Championship Final to our international fixture list next year. It is the perfect setting for the final of an international tournament, and this will be a wonderful spectacle. The confirmation of these matches really whets the appetite for another unforgettable summer of cricket at the Ground and we look forward to opening our gates to everyone to enjoy all that Lord's has to offer," said Guy Lavender, Chief Executive & Secretary of MCC.

After this, the Ben Stokes-led Test side will face India in a marquee five-match Test series from June 20 to August 4, to be played at Headingley, Edgbaston, Lord's, Manchester and The Oval. India and England are currently at number two and three in the ICC World Test Rankings, with the former last winning a Test series in the United Kingdom in 2007. The last series ended in a 2-2 draw after England won the rescheduled fifth Test at Birmingham by seven wickets in 2022 after the match

had been delayed by a year due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the Indian camp at Manchester in 2021.

At the same time, after also playing three ODIs and as many T20s against the West Indies, the Heather Knight-led England women's team will host India for five T20s and three ODIs from June 28 to July 22. The five T20s between England and India will be played at Trent Bridge, Bristol's Seat Unique Stadium, The Oval, Old Trafford and Edgbaston respectively. The three ODIs between the two teams will be played at Southampton's Utilita Bowl, Lord's and the Seat Unique Riverside, Chester-le-Street. The white-ball series promises to be exciting as, in 2022, England triumphed in T20s, while India won the ODI series.

Staging England Men's and England Women's series alongside each other has been popular with fans and supported the continued growth of the women's game, with both the Ashes last year and the Pakistan series earlier this year proving successful, said ECB Chief Executive Richard Gould. "I'm excited we'll be doing the same again for the West Indies and India series next year. Cricket fans are in for a real treat, and I hope they'll be out in force to support both Men's and Women's sides. India touring is always a big draw and a highlight of any cricket summer, he said. The last Men's Test series here was a nailbiter and I'm sure next year's clash will be just as exciting, while our women's series are always fiercely competitive. I'm delighted we'll also be welcoming both West Indies teams back again for white ball series, following this year's Men's Test series, he added. "England's home international summer will conclude in early September, with the men's taking on South Africa in three ODIs and as many T20s, before the team travels to Ireland for three ODIs from September 17-21. ECB also confirmed that India's women's team will return in 2026 for a one-off Test match at Lord's. "The first-ever Women's Test to be staged at the Home of Cricket. England women's team has played white-ball matches at the Lord's for the past three years, with an ODI against India next year, but it will be the first time the iconic ground will host a Women's Test match. I'm also delighted we can confirm that India Women will return in 2026 to take on England Women in the first-ever women's Test match at Lord's. It will be a truly special occasion, and one of real significance," added Gould.

Virat Kohli on Shikhar Dhawan's retirement: Your passion and trademark smile will be missed

GNS News Agency, August 27

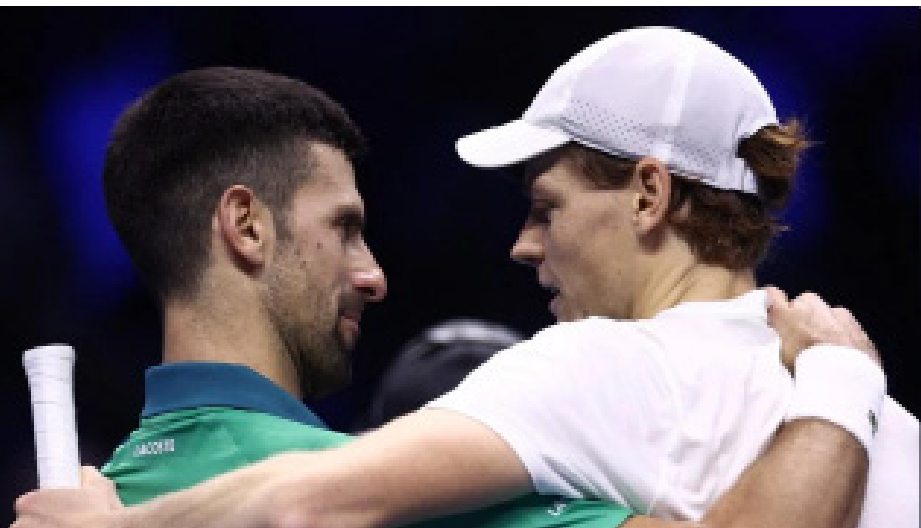
India batter Virat Kohli wrote a touching tribute for his long-time India and Delhi teammate Shikhar Dhawan following the latter's retirement. Taking to social media on Sunday, Kohli said Dhawan's characteristic passion and smile will be missed in the Indian dressing-room. "Shikhar, from your fearless debut to becoming one of India's most dependable openers, you've given us countless memories to cherish. Your passion for the game, your sportsmanship and your trademark smile will be missed, but your legacy lives on. Thank you for the memories, unforgettable performances and always leading with your heart. Wishing you the best in your next innings, off the field Gabbar," Kohli wrote on X.

Shikhar @SDhawan25 from your fearless debut to becoming one of India's most dependable openers, you've given us countless memories to cherish. Your passion for the game, your sportsmanship and your trademark smile will be missed, but your legacy lives on. Thank you for the... While Kohli made his international debut in 2008, Dhawan, his Delhi senior made his first appearance in 2010. Dhawan has since played a majority of his career under Kohli's captaincy. The duo played 221 international matches together, amassing 20,780 runs. Kohli and Dhawan recorded over 3400 ODI runs in their partnerships with a 60-plus average, the best for any pair



who has scored as many runs as them in the format. The duo were instrumental in India's Champions Trophy win in 2013 and Dhawan also finished as India's highest run-scorer in the 2017 Champions Trophy in England under Kohli's leadership. The pair have also maintained a healthy camaraderie off the field where Dhawan has urged that the former India captain was one of the first players he had turned to during a poor stretch of form. Together with India captain Rohit Sharma, the trio formed a potent top-order for India in the limited-overs formats between 2013 and 2019, topping the charts among all international batters in one-dayers in the period.

'Is it about more funds?': Novak Djokovic calls for rule changes after Jannik Sinner doping case



Djokovic said he understood why a few tennis players have questioned the double-standard of the rules after Jannik Sinner was cleared by the International Tennis Integrity Agency last week.

GNS News Agency, August 27

World No. 2 Novak Djokovic has demanded changes in anti-doping rules in tennis following top ranked Jannik Sinner evaded suspension despite testing positive for a banned performance-enhancer recently. Djokovic said he understood why a few tennis players have questioned the double-standard of the rules after the Italian Sinner was

cleared by the International Tennis Integrity Agency. The ITIA determined the banned performance-enhancer entered Sinner's system unintentionally through a massage from his physiotherapist.

The ruling was announced last Tuesday but Djokovic agreed with other players that there was "a lack of consistency." "I understand the frustration of the players is there, because of a lack of consistency," defending US Open champion Djokovic said ahead of the tournament. "As I understood, his case was cleared the moment basically it was announced." "We see a lack of standardized and clear protocols. I can understand the sentiments of a lot of players that are questioning whether they are treated the same," Djokovic added.

Djokovic said the Professional Tennis Players

Association that he co-founded advocates on behalf of players for clear and fair protocols and standardized approaches to cases. "Many players ... have had similar or pretty much the same cases, where they haven't had the same outcome," Djokovic said, "and now the question is whether it is a case of the funds — whether a player can afford to pay a significant amount of money for a law firm that would then more efficiently represent his or her case." Meanwhile, Carlos Alcaraz, the 2022 U.S. Open champion, said Sinner's case was a delicate issue.

"I think there's something behind this that a lot of people doesn't know. I don't even know. In the end it's something very difficult to talk about," Alcaraz said. "In the end, he tested positive, but there must be a reason that allowed him to keep playing that we don't know. So I cannot talk a lot about it. He was declared innocent and so we have Jannik in the tournament, and so there's not much to talk about and I'm no position to add anything else."

'Long time no see, fans': Korea's Lee Jang-Kun returns to PKL, with proud six-pack abs from a stint on Netflix show Physical 100



GNS News Agency, August 27

For the past few years, Lee Jang-Kun has been waking up to many, many messages from his fans in India begging him to come back. Besides the Iranians, Lee was one of the rare foreign players who have made their mark in the Pro Kabaddi League, which enters its 11th season this year. But he has not featured in the PKL since the pandemic. "Lots of messages. Direct Messages. 'Missing you Jang-Kun Lee' or 'please come back' or 'I love you Lee'," recalls Lee. Lee speaks very little English. But he has a message for his fans in India. "Long time no see fans. Sorry. Very late. But I am back. Cheer for me!" he tells The Indian Express from Korea after being picked by the Patna Pirates in the PKL auction last week for a price tag of Rs 17.50 lakh. When the pandemic brought the sport to a standstill, the league only returned in 2021. However, since the sport is a contact sport, Lee opted to sit out the post-pandemic edition. Ask him if he missed playing in the PKL in front of thousands of fans daily and he says: "Very, very missing. I like kabaddi. My life kabaddi. I want to play PKL. But COVID and some little, little problems (prevented me from playing in the PKL for the last few seasons). COVID very big problem. My life was stopped: Kabaddi cancel, training cancel. All cancel during COVID 2019. COVID was very big problem, I was scared. India was in very big problem. I tell I'm not going because COVID is big problem for me."

So what did he do in all these years?

"In Korea, playing kabaddi for Korea Kabaddi Club in Busan. I was a club kabaddi player. No job. Only enjoy the club team," he says before adding: "Also some talent on TV." Lee is talking about his stint with the Netflix reality show Physical 100, which pits 100 competitors against each other. In each episode, competitors are given challenges that test their bodies in elimination battles. To compete in the show, Lee got shredded, with veins popping out from his sinewy body. Lee had to compete against professional athletes from swimming, football, rugby, track and field, arm wrestling, bodybuilding, judo, weightlifting

besides the occasional carpenter, ballerina, nurse and some fitness YouTubers, actors and K-pop stars. Jung Jihyun, an Olympics gold medal-winning wrestler from the Athens Olympics, was also one of the competitors.

Competing in each contest was back-breakingly hard, with challenges like running on a manual treadmill (which is powered only by your feet) and racing through a maze carrying weighted gunny bags.

After missing three seasons, Lee Jang-Kun is back after starring in a reality show back home. After missing three seasons, Lee Jang-Kun is back after starring in a reality show back home. One of the contests sees a shirtless Lee tussling for control of an exercise ball in a one-on-one 'death match' with Choi Won-jae. The battle, being fought in a swamp-like pit filled with muddy water, sees him emerge triumphant. While in the PKL, Lee is known for his raiding prowess and the ability to slip past the strongest defences, in this battle, he slams his opponent into the watery floor a couple of times on his way to winning the contest. His performance is so eye-catching that he got voted as one of the 10 team leaders in the next quest. The training to get in shape for the show was even more gruelling than competing, says Lee. He says that building muscles was important for that show since it is a TV program. "Need showmanship," he says. "So more hard training for it. Crossfit and hard weight training in the gym for four months (before the show started shooting)." The shooting went on for one month. "It was very heavy. But very fun. I am a kabaddi player. All kabaddi players strong. Show others!" he grins as he describes his stint in Physical 100. Ask him how the reality show compared to playing kabaddi and he says: "More running (in Physical 100.) You know crossfit? More crossfit training." While playing in the PKL made him a household name in India, featuring in a show on Netflix got him fans from different countries. Lee Jang-Kun Lee Jang-Kun says he has received countless messages from the Indian fans to return to PKL. (Special Arrangement | Netflix) "Celebrity, yes, yes, yes. Other country people were watching. Thanks to the show, people watch me in Korea, but other country also. Brazil, Indonesia, Philippines," he says excitedly. Lee's campaign at Physical 100 ends in the fourth 'quest', which is shown on episode 8. The last visual of Lee on the show is of him shirtless, flashing his abs while dragging a heavy roller behind him. His upcoming challenge at the Pro Kabaddi will not require him to show off those muscles he's built so meticulously. PKL demands a different kind of showmanship, one that earned Lee his fame in the first few seasons. "I'm excited about playing for Patna in PKL," Lee says over a video call from Korea. But before signing off, he lifts his shirt to tap proudly on the abs and says with a grin: "But I still have my abs."

Haaland hat-trick as Man City, Brighton topple Ipswich and United, Arsenal down Villa

GNS News Agency, August 27

Erling Haaland netted a hat-trick to fire Manchester City to a 4-1 victory over promoted Ipswich Town on Saturday and lift the champions to the top of the Premier League table. They share the summit with Brighton & Hove Albion, who defeated Manchester United 2-1 with a last-gasp goal to give new manager Fabian Huerzeler a victory on his home debut. Manchester City scored three times in less than four minutes after conceding a shock early goal to crush Ipswich and remain perfect in their quest for a fifth consecutive league title.

Haaland kicked off City's trio of goals in 191 seconds with a penalty in the 12th minute. Kevin De Bruyne netted less than two minutes later and Haaland struck again in the 16th to all but seal the victory at Etihad Stadium. "Last season (Haaland) struggled a lot, especially at the beginning," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "He felt tired and niggles most of the time. This time with the rest with no Euros, he has arrived with a good vibe. The numbers are unbelievable." Table toppers Brighton & Hove Albion beat Manchester United 2-1 on Saturday to stay perfect in the Premier League after Joao Pedro scored a late winner in the fifth minute of added time to give new manager Fabian Huerzeler a victory on his home debut.

Brighton striker Danny Welbeck scored the opener against his former club before Amad Diallo drew United level in the second half and the game looked destined for a draw until the dying minutes. United lose to Brighton 2024/25 Soccer Football - Premier League - Brighton & Hove Albion v Manchester United - The American Express Community Stadium, Brighton, Britain - August 24, 2024 Brighton & Hove Albion manager Fabian Huerzeler celebrates after the match. But Brighton's pressure paid off when Simon Adingra found space in the box and chipped the ball over United's defenders to an unmarked Pedro who headed home to give them their second win of the season. United had the first opportunity to take the



lead 10 minutes into the game when Diogo Dalot crossed the ball to the far post where Diallo failed to convert with a volley. Brighton took the lead when Kaoru Mitoma received the ball on the left flank before his cross went through United's defence and into the six-yard box where Welbeck struck out a leg to score his second goal of the season. It was Welbeck's 100th career goal in club football and his sixth against United, the club he spent his formative years at and even won the Premier League title with in 2012-13.

Second-half goals by Leandro Trossard and Thomas Partey earned Arsenal a hard-fought 2-0 win at Aston Villa on Saturday as Mikel Arteta's side continued their perfect start to the Premier League season. Arsenal win vs Aston Villa 2024/25 Soccer Football - Premier League - Aston Villa v Arsenal - Villa Park, Birmingham, Britain - August 24, 2024 Arsenal's Thomas Partey celebrates scoring their second goal. Villa did the double over Arsenal last season, defeats that ultimately cost the Gunners the title, and had plenty of chances to make it three successive wins at Villa Park, striker Ollie Watkins missing two gilt-edged openings. However, Arsenal weathered the storm, taking the lead in the 67th minute through substitute Trossard, before Partey made sure of the three points 10 minutes later.

Djokovic Urges Clear Doping Protocols After Sinner Avoids Ban

New York: As the US Open approaches, Paris Olympics gold medalist Novak Djokovic has called for "clear protocols" and "standardised approaches" following the doping controversy surrounding Jannik Sinner.

Djokovic voiced his concerns after Sinner, who twice tested positive for a banned substance earlier this year, escaped a ban that has left many in the tennis community questioning the fairness of the system. Djokovic, speaking ahead of the US Open, echoed these frustrations. "I understand the frustration of the players because of a lack of consistency," the 24-time Grand Slam champion said. "His case was cleared almost immediately after it was announced, but five or six months had passed since the news of the positive tests reached him and his team."

Sinner tested positive for clostebol, a steroid known for its muscle-building properties, in March. The Italian was provisionally suspended but continued playing after successfully appealing. Last week, a tribunal cleared him of any fault or negligence after the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) determined that the substance had

been inadvertently transmitted by his physiotherapist, Giacomo Naldi. Naldi, who was using an over-the-counter spray on a cut on his own hand, later treated Sinner, unknowingly contaminating the player. Following the ruling, Sinner ended his professional relationship with both Naldi and fitness trainer Umberto Ferrara. However, the swift clearance of Sinner, now the top seed at the US Open, has sparked backlash across the sport. Prominent players, including Nick Kyrgios, Liam Broady, and Denis Shapovalov, took to social media to express their dissatisfaction, suggesting that Sinner may have received special treatment due to his high profile. Djokovic, a seasoned veteran of the sport at 37, emphasised the need for reform in how tennis handles doping cases. "There are a lot of issues in the system. We see a lack of standardised and clear protocols."

I can understand the sentiments of a lot of players questioning whether they are treated the same," he continued. "Hopefully, the governing bodies of our sport can learn from this case and take a better approach in the future."