

INDIAN CHRONICLE

1 September, 2024 | Sunday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:174

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited prepares for repair works

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) is set to undertake repair and refurbishment works at several key metro stations along Corridor-1. The planned works include comprehensive repairs to footpaths, planter boxes, and drainage systems.

At LB Nagar Metro Station, the project will involve the removal and re-fixing of the existing railings, along with repairs to the footpath and planter boxes. Similar works are planned for Nampally and New Market Metro Stations, where footpaths and planter boxes will undergo refurbishment.

Multiple restaurants in Sainikpuri face action over food safety violations

Hyderabad: The food safety wing conducted inspections at multiple eateries at Sainikpuri in the city on Friday, identifying several violations. At The Joint Al Mandi, the FSSAI license was not displayed, and medical fitness certificates for food handlers were missing. Inspectors found broken kitchen tiles, unlabelled food in refrigerators, and handlers without gloves. Expired food items, including rice flour, masala powder, and synthetic vinegar, were discarded, along with synthetic food colors suspected of use in non-vegetarian dishes. Reliance Restaurant and Bar lacked pest control records and medical fitness certificates. Drains were open and stagnant, dust bins uncovered, and windows lacked insect-proof screens. Synthetic food colors were found and discarded.

Telangana govt takes U-turn on Gruha Jyothi scheme; asks applicants to clear arrears



GNS News Agency, August 31

Hyderabad: People who applied for the Gruha Jyothi scheme, the flagship scheme of the Congress government with an aim to provide free electricity up to 200 units to domestic consumers, are furious over power officials demanding to pay arrears of the last five months. The power utilities authorities claimed that the Gruha Jyothi scheme would come into force only when zero bills are generated and that the people who had applied for the scheme and had not paid bills since March, when the scheme was launched, and therefore the citizens had to pay the arrears. Despite fulfilling all conditions, many eligible individuals are still facing difficulties in waving their electricity bills. During the budget session, the government had presented data indicating that 42.25 lakh people were receiving free electricity. The beneficiaries claim that several eligible people were left out in the first phase of the Gruha Jyothi scheme and the government has asked them to re-apply. However, since then a large number of people are not receiving zero bills. In March, the government had announced that all the eligible beneficiaries of the scheme need not pay the bills till they get zero bills. However, the people were surprised when they were asked to pay the pending bills by the power officials. The beneficiaries argue that as Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy himself had asked the beneficiaries not to pay bills, they stopped paying bills and now suddenly power utilities are demanding them to clear all the pending bills. Even the power utilities have assured that all those who applied through Praja Palana would receive the benefits of the scheme starting June, following the lifting of the Model Code of Conduct, but a large number of people who applied in March did not receive zero bills. Take the case of Jagtial district. It is estimated that over 50,000 people who have applied for Gruha Jyothi scheme would now have to clear their arrears as they have not been paying the bills since February. A woman in the district claimed that though she had applied for the scheme in March along with all the essential documents, she was not included in the scheme and that she was receiving bills every month. Similar reports are coming from other districts, where people have received pending bills. In the districts of Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Medchal, a total of 19.8 lakh applications have been submitted under the Gruha Jyoti scheme as part of the Praja Palana programme. However, around 2.50 lakh eligible applicants are still receiving electricity bills. Officials have attributed this issue to incomplete data entry, which is preventing eligible consumers from receiving the promised zero bills.

AP CM Chandrababu Reviews Rain Preparedness, gives directions to officials

GNS News Agency, August 31

In light of the impending heavy rains expected to impact the state over the next three days, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu conducted a teleconference with key officials, including the Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, district collectors, and other departmental ministers, to assess the situation and reinforce readiness. Due to the severe weather alerts, the Chief Minister has canceled his planned visit to Orvakallu and urged all levels of government administration to remain on high alert. He emphasized that heightened vigilance during this period can significantly alleviate the hardships faced by the populace. The Chief Minister has given crucial directions to the officials such as- Continuous monitoring of pond conditions in coordination with the Irrigation and Revenue Departments.- Addressing urban traffic disruptions caused by water accumulation on roads, with a focus on implementing necessary traffic diversions.- Vigilance concerning the contamination of drinking water and food supplies, particularly in light of recent incidents of food contamination reported in Alluri district, necessitating immediate medical attention for affected individuals.- Thorough investigation into the causes of food contamination cases and decisive action against those responsible.- Enhancement of preparedness in the medical sector to tackle seasonal diseases, particularly in tribal areas.- Strict enforcement to prevent individuals from crossing flooded streams and rivers for their safety.- Encouragement for interdepartmental communication, particularly through WhatsApp groups, to ensure swift assistance to citizens.- Implementation of advanced technologies, including drones, for effective crisis management.- Proactive dissemination of information regarding rainfall forecasts by the Disaster Management Department, ensuring timely alerts reach residents in affected regions. Additionally, CM Naidu emphasised on the monitoring of water levels in irrigation projects and assured that necessary funds for managing these projects would be released promptly.

Speedy development of entire South is govt's priority: PM Modi

GNS News Agency, August 31

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the development of southern states of the country is the priority of his government. Giving a brief summary of Budgetary allocations to Railways during UPA and NDA, PM Modi also informed that the funds allocated for strengthening Railway network in Tamil Nadu this year, was seven times higher than those in 2014. After flagging off the three Vande Bharat services virtually, PM Modi said to achieve the aim of 'Viksit Bharat', speedy development of the southern states is needed as it has an abundance of talent, resources and opportunities.

"Development of all southern states including Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is the priority of our government," he said. Drawing a comparison between fund allocation for the state now and during the Congress regime, PM Modi said, "In this year's Budget we have given Tamil Nadu more than Rs 6,000 crore Railway Budget, seven times more than 2014. Six Vande Bharat are already running in Tamil Nadu, and now with these two more trains, the number will increase to eight. For Karnataka, more than Rs 7,000 crore were sanctioned, nine times more given during 2014." PM Modi said the increased outlay for the states in the Budget has improved the railway transport in these states. On Infrastructure development, he said railway tracks are being improved and electrified, and railway stations are being redeveloped leading to an increase in ease of living and ease of doing business. He flagged off Vande Bharat trains on three routes -- Meerut-Lucknow; Madurai-Bengaluru; and Chennai-Nagercoil virtually.

Talking about the development in Uttar Pradesh, PM Modi said, on the Meerut-Lucknow route, the land of revolution is becoming a witness to development. "On the one hand, Meerut is connected to Delhi through RRTS, on the other hand, via Vande Bharat, distance to the state capital has also been reduced, he said. "In the entire country, 102 Vande Bharat are operational and over 3,000



crore people have travelled in the trains which tells its success story," the Prime Minister said while talking about the state-of-the-art trains being a big hit among commuters. PM Modi said with Vande Bharat's expansion and speed, the country, step-by-step, was forging ahead towards 'Viksit Bharat'. Counting on the facilities of the high-speed train, PM Modi said, "These new Vande Bharat trains will provide connectivity to important cities of the country. It will connect the temple city to the IT city. For weekends and festivals, the Vande Bharat service will provide good facilities. It will also facilitate pilgrims." He said that from Chennai Nagercoil, farmers, IT professionals and students will benefit. On the positive impact, Vande Bharat trains are yielding, PM Modi said places with connectivity via Vande Bharat are drawing more tourists. An increase in the number of tourists means an increase in the income of the shopkeepers, he added. He announced that along with Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat trains are being developed, and the sleeper version of Vande Bharat will be introduced soon. Amrit Bharat station scheme has been helping in redeveloping stations in the country and over 13,000 stations in the country are being renovated, he said. Railways, Roadways and waterways development lead to the empowerment of the country which results in advanced infrastructure and an increase in employment opportunities.

Hidden cameras used in actresses' caravans: Radhika's big revelation on Mollywood



GNS News Agency, August 31

Thiruvananthapuram: South Indian actress Radhika Sarathkumar on Saturday made a startling claim that objectionable videos of women actors were recorded with hidden cameras inside caravans on the shooting sets of Malayalam films and she had personally witnessed male actors watching it on their mobile phones. The senior actress' allegation to a Malayalam channel in the wake of the release of the Justice K Hema Committee report triggered sharp reactions from various quarters in the State, including from RMP leader and MLA KK Rema.

Radhika wondered why the Hema Committee report was delayed and pointed out that not just the Malayalam industry but alleged harassment and ill-treatment of women persists in other industries as well. Sharing her personal experience in this regard, Radhika said at the shooting set of a Malayalam film, she had seen men watching clips of actresses captured using hidden cameras in their caravans. "I have seen this. I have seen videos of women changing clothes in caravans," the senior actress told the channel. However, she was reluctant to divulge other details, including names of the film or the actors seen watching the illicit videos.

She also recalled having reacted strongly to this and warning the person in charge of the caravans of severe action if hidden cameras were found inside vehicles again. "I grew very angry. I insisted that I needed to be safe and so I said I did not want a caravan and went back to my hotel room," the actress added. The actress slammed the silence of male actors across industries over the findings of Hema Committee. "Now the onus is on the women. They (women actors) have to shoulder the responsibility of safeguarding themselves," the 62-year-old actress said. Expressing shock over the statement of Radhika, RMP leader Rema said the cruelties allegedly happening in the film industry were beyond anyone's imagination. "What kind of cruelty is this... cinema world is fast becoming the biggest underworld... that is what we understand from all these allegations," she told the media.

Rema said generally women in the film industry believe that caravan is safer and if they also get such facilities like men, they can be safer in the shooting locations. But, the latest charge has proved it to be wrong, the leader added. Well-known dubbing artiste Bhagyalakshmi, however, questioned Radhika's silence over the issue these years despite being aware of the crime. Speaking to media, noted screenwriter Deedi

Cyberabad police book six govt officials for encouraging illegal encroachments of lakes in Hyd

GNS News Agency, August 31

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad police registered two cases against six government officials for allegedly encouraging illegal encroachments of tanks and lakes at different places. The cases were registered on the basis of a complaint made by HYDRAA Commissioner, A V Ranganath against the officials. In a case with FIR No 41/2024, the police cited four persons P Ramakrishna Rao, Municipal Commissioner, Nizampet Municipal Corporation, Pooling, MRO Bachupally mandal, K Srinivasulu, Assistant Director (AD) Survey and Land Records, Medchal Malkajiri and Sudheer Kumar, Assistant Planning Officer, HMDA as accused.

In the complaint, the Commissioner of HYDRAA alleged that officials allegedly allowed illegal constructions and their negligence and misconduct have resulted in significant environmental harm. The officials had allowed the construction at Errakunta pond at Pragathinagar Nizampet by misguiding superiors and courts.

In the other case with FIR No.42/2024, the police cited M Raj Kumar, Assistant City Planner Circle 21 Chandanagar GHMC and N Sudhamsh, Deputy Commissioner, Circle 21, Chandanagar as accused. The complaint was filed by the Commissioner of HYDRAA, who alleged that the officials were responsible for allowing unauthorized constructions at Erla Cheruvu. The officials had issued building permissions and occupancy certificate although the irrigation department indicated that the constructions violated the buffer zone regulations. The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Cyberabad police are investigating the cases.

Not part of any power group: Mohanlal breaks silence on Hema Committee report



GNS News Agency, August 31 'Wrongdoers should be punished if there is evidence against them,' the Malayalam star says while referring to allegations of sexual misconduct and assaults that surfaced against some of the AMMA members Actor Mohanlal on Saturday said he was not part of any power group in the Malayalam film industry and he has no knowledge of the existence of any such group in the sector. He said Malayalam cinema is a huge industry where thousands of people work and the actors' association AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) could not address issues that cropped up there. He said the executive panel of the Association headed by him resigned recently in the wake of allegations being raised against it after the release of the report by Justice Hema Committee. It was for the first time that Mohanlal, former president of AMMA, was addressing the media following the release of the expert panel report which shed light on the alleged harassment and exploitation of women professionals in the Malayalam film industry. Wrongdoers should be punished if there is evidence against them," the "Kireedam" actor said while referring to the allegations of sexual misconduct and assaults that surfaced against some of the members of the Association. "I am not part of any power group in Malayalam cinema and not aware of the existence of any such group," the actor said. He also said the release of Hema Committee report was a good decision of the government.

On first foreign trip as LoP, Rahul Gandhi to visit US on September 8

GNS News Agency, August 31

In his first visit abroad as the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to visit the United States from September 8 to 10, with the Indian Overseas Congress saying that it has been "bombedarded with requests" to meet the Congress leader since he took over the post in the Lower House of Parliament. Gandhi will meet academics, journalists, representatives of think tanks, technocrats, businessmen and other people from the Indian diaspora and local community during his visit. "Since Mr Rahul Gandhi has become the Leader of Opposition, I as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress with presence in 32 countries have been bombarded with requests from Indian diaspora, diplomats, academicians, businessmen, leaders,

District judiciary crucial component of rule of law, calling it subordinate must be stopped: CJJ

GNS News Agency, August 31

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said district judiciary is the "backbone of the rule of law" and thus a crucial component of the rule of law and calling it subordinate must be stopped. Referring to the increasing number of women joining the district judiciary in the past few years, he highlighted that judges, despite being professionals, are affected by their own "brush with reality" and their mental health may suffer as a consequence.

Speaking at the 'National Conference of the District Judiciary', which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here, Justice Chandrachud said the district judiciary is the first point of contact for a citizen in search of justice. "The district judiciary is a crucial component of the rule of law," he said, adding, "Data on the NJDG (National Judicial Data Grid) reveals a basic truth -- the district judiciary is not just the first but is also the final point of contact for citizens." The CJI said the reasons may be numerous -- many citizens are unable to afford legal representation, they have a lack of awareness about statutory rights, and there are geographical difficulties in physically accessing courts. "The quality of our work and the conditions in which we provide justice to citizens determine whether they have confidence in us and is a test of our own accountability to society," he said.

"The district judiciary is therefore called upon to shoulder tremendous responsibility and is aptly described as the 'backbone of the judiciary,'" Justice Chandrachud said, adding, "The spine is the core of the nervous system. To sustain the spine of the legal system, we must stop calling the district judiciary the 'subordinate' judiciary." He said 75 years after independence, the time has come to bury one more relic of the British era -- the colonial mindset of subordination. Referring to the "multifarious responsibilities" of judges, the CJI said it was difficult for a judge not to be affected by the actual face of suffering that each of us encounters every day -- a family which has faced a gruesome crime, an undertrial who is languishing for years or the children in a parental matrimonial dispute.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's nuclear push

THE commissioning of INS Arighaat, India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, marks an important step towards boosting the country's naval prowess and nuclear deterrence capabilities. India is keen to bolster its N-triad, comprising weapons on land, in the air and at sea. This is understandable as China has modernised its nuclear programme in recent years, starting the production of its next-generation ballistic missile submarine and holding nuclear-armed sea patrols on a regular basis. In terms of operational nuclear warheads, China (500) is way ahead of India (172). However, India has close ties with both the US and Russia, which have over 1,700 such warheads each.

Beijing's muscle-flexing in the Indian Ocean Region has been keeping Delhi on its toes. According to the Swedish think-tank SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), India is strengthening the undersea leg of its nuclear triad as well as developing long-range missiles. The presence of INS Arighaat is expected to send out a strong message to China that India is not to be trifled with in the seas.

It is commendable that the submarine has indigenous systems and equipment which were conceptualised, designed, manufactured and integrated by Indian scientists, industry and naval personnel. This underscores the significance of *aatmanirbharta* (self-reliance) in the defence sector for a country which remains the biggest arms importer in the world. At the same time, the stakeholders should guard against the temptation of resting on their laurels and becoming complacent. China's nuclear one-upmanship knows no bounds; so does the secrecy of its operations. No wonder the US, concerned about Beijing's rapid N-weapon build-up, has made a renewed push for holding talks on nuclear arms with the fellow superpower.

How name on biodata saw Mumbai cops solve man's murder inside Malad flat



GNS News Agency, August 31

On October 15, 2013, a 47-year-old advertising professional in Mumbai stepped out of his family home in Mira-Bhayandar on the city's outskirts, saying he was going to his flat in Malad to work on some pending project. It was the last time Chetan Bhardwaj's family saw him alive. A day later, Bhardwaj was found dead, lying in a pool of blood, inside his posh Malad apartment. When the police were called in, they immediately realised that it was likely that the murderer was known to Bhardwaj. There were no signs of forced entry and the police had found food packets and beer bottles lying around.

Over the next week, the Bangur Nagar police, who had registered a case of murder and robbery, interrogated Bhardwaj's family members, close friends and social media acquaintances. They also scrutinised CCTV footage from the building but to no avail. It was then that the police chanced upon a document that would lead them to crack the case – a biodata. The biodata was of a man named Navaz Ahamad Mohamed Nakhli Siddhique. Ten days later, Siddhique was arrested for Bhardwaj's murder. According to the police, Bhardwaj, a divorcee, stayed on the 26th floor of Rustomjee Elanza building in Malad with his parents. The family had another flat in Mira-Bhayandar and were staying there when Bhardwaj left, saying he was going to his Malad home.

The next day, Bhardwaj's brother got a call from an auto driver and his friends, saying they had found a wallet on the roadside in Andheri with a visiting card that had this number on it. "The family members tried to contact Bhardwaj but when he did not respond, they went to his apartment on October 16, opened the door with a set of duplicate keys, and found him dead," a police officer said.

Failing to get any leads despite questioning people known to Bhardwaj, the police decided to focus on the man named in the biodata, a person that Bhardwaj's family and friends were unaware of. When the police contacted the phone number on the biodata, the phone was switched off. Siddhique was not present at the address listed in the biodata either. "We got suspicious and when we started gathering more information on him, we learnt Siddhique had worked in his building," said an officer. Another investigator added, "Also when we checked the call data records, we found that Siddhique had spoken to Bhardwaj on the night of the murder. They had also exchanged text messages and Siddhique's location was around Rustomjee Elanza on the night of October 15."

With Siddhique allegedly using multiple SIM cards and switching his phones to hide his location, the police started identifying people close to him. Later, on October 25, Siddhique was traced near his house in Malad and subsequently arrested. According to the police, Bhardwaj and Siddhique knew each other. "Siddhique was into making sliding windows and as he had worked in the building where Bhardwaj stayed, the latter offered him help with a new job and took his biodata," a police officer said. "The two subsequently grew closer and the accused in his interrogation claimed that they shared an intimate relationship," the officer added.

On the night of October 15, Bhardwaj allegedly called Siddhique to his flat. The police said that the two ordered some food and liquor. According to the police, Siddhique allegedly confessed that they had an altercation after he rejected Bhardwaj's advances and he killed him by stabbing him multiple times with a cutter.

Punjab's Rajpura all set to boom with integrated manufacturing cluster



GNS News Agency, August 31

Punjab ChandigarhA government official said that this is a part of development of futuristic industrial cities in India which can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world. The Punjab government on Wednesday got the Centre's nod for setting up an Integrated Manufacturing Cluster (IMC) on 1,102 acres in Rajpura, in Patiala district.

The IMC project, which is a part of Amritsar-Kolkata industrial corridor, is expected to attract investments worth Rs 6,400 crore from national and international investors, positioning Rajpura as key destination for industrial and commercial activities. The Central Government will spend Rs 1,367 crore on the project that will come up on the land between the corridor and the national highway. Sources said that the Punjab government has already acquired 1,102 acres of land for the project in Rajpura. The

state government submitted a detailed project report to the Centre in 2020. A government official said that this is a part of development of futuristic industrial cities in India which can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world. It will also create employment opportunities and economic growth leading to overall socio-economic development, the officer added. "In order to accelerate growth in the manufacturing sector and for ensuring systematic and planned urbanisation, the Centre in partnership with state governments concerned has adopted the strategy of developing integrated industrial corridors on the backbone of multi-modal connectivity. The Centre is carrying out project development activities in respect of 11 industrial corridors comprising 32 nodes/projects to be developed in four phases till 2024-25 as part of the National Master Plan on multi-modal connectivity," he said. Amenities such as primary school, convention centre/institutional site, dispensary, centre for excellence, commercial spaces, nursing home, public utility, police post, shop-cum-offices, hotel, guard's booth, water reservoir, water treatment plant, ground storage reservoir, elevated storage reservoir, solid waste management, common effluent treatment plant, sewage treatment plant, fire station, fuel station, parking and bus terminal have also been planned. The official said that this is a joint venture between the Centre and the state in 50:50 partnership and a special purpose vehicle (SPV) would be set up. "After that, the work will start at a fast pace. We were just waiting for the approval," he mentioned.

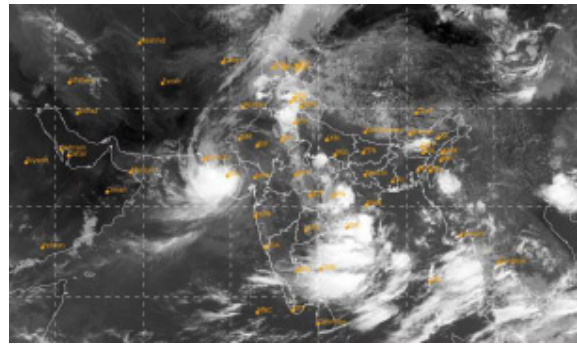
Cyclone to develop in Arabian Sea on Friday, first in August since 1964

GNS News Agency, August 31

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday said that a cyclone is likely to develop over the north Arabian Sea, off Gujarat coast, on Friday. However, the cyclone is most unlikely to affect Indian coasts, as the prevailing deep depression over Saurashtra-Kutch would have moved away to north Arabian Sea by Friday. As on Thursday (5.30am satellite observations), the IMD said that the deep depression had moved westwards and was located at about 60 km north-northwest of Bhuj, 80 km northeast of Naliya and 270 km east-southeast of Karachi, Pakistan. If realised, this will be only the second cyclone to develop in the Arabian Sea in August since 1964. Upon intensifying into a cyclone, it will acquire the name Asna, given by Pakistan.

Cyclones are uncommon during the monsoon season. Depressions (synoptic systems with winds speeds 31 – 50 km / hr) formed during the monsoon season can have a vertical extension of about 6 – 9 km and horizontally, span over several thousands of kilometers. Its core is cold and these monsoon depressions tilt southwards while moving westwards. Due to this high vertical wind shear and the strong obstruction posed by the southwest monsoon winds, depressions formed during June – September season do not intensify into cyclones. In its weather update issued on Thursday morning, the Met department said, "The deep depression was likely to move west-southwestwards, emerge into northeast Arabian Sea, off Kutch and adjoining Saurashtra and Pakistan coasts. It will intensify into a cyclonic storm on Friday. Thereafter, it would continue to move nearly west-southwestwards over northeast Arabian Sea away from the Indian coast during the subsequent two days."

Data on depressions and cyclones maintained by



the IMD revealed that depressions or their intensification originating in the Arabian Sea was recorded during 1961, 1964 and 2022. But none of these developed into a cyclone. Whereas, depressions intensifying into cyclones while on landmass were reported during 1926, 1944 and 1976. "According to IMD records, a depression crossing the subcontinent and intensifying to a cyclone over the Arabian Sea was recorded in 1976 which was in a similar fashion to that of the present scenario. Climate change could potentially be supplying the additional moisture that was dumped as rains in a few hours time. We need to investigate this," said Roxy Mathew Koll, scientist from Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM). The IMD has warned of extremely heavy rainfall (over 200mm in 24-hours) over Saurashtra Kutch on Thursday and thereafter heavy rainfall continuing till Saturday over this region. During the past 24 hours, Abdasa (Kutch district) – 285mm, Bhavnad (Devbhoomi Dwarka) – 275mm, Kalyanpur (Devbhoomi Dwarka) – 240mm and remained among the wettest areas in the state.

LDF backs Mukesh, says Congress MLAs who faced rape charges did not resign

GNS News Agency, August 31

The ruling LDF in Kerala on Thursday threw its weight behind CPI(M) MLA M Mukesh, booked in a rape case, saying that the two Congress legislators who are accused in sexual assault cases should resign first before the Malayalam actor's resignation is sought. At the same time, LDF convener E P Jayarajan also said that neither the CPI(M) nor the Left government will protect any wrongdoers in any of the cases registered on the allegations against various actors and directors. Jayarajan was responding to reporters' queries on whether Mukesh will resign or not. He said that earlier, much bigger sexual assault cases were lodged against two other MLAs who had not resigned.

"Had they resigned, then the third MLA (Mukesh) too would have to resign. The law is applicable equally to all legislators. By asking for Mukesh' resignation, you are protecting the other two," he said. On being told that some CPI leaders, including Annie Raja, have sought Mukesh's resignation, Jayarajan said that "anyone can demand anything." He further said the Left government in the state has taken effective and strong measures, in the wake of the Justice Hema Committee report, to ensure women safety and protection of the film industry. He said that the government was on sound moral footing as a case under non-bailable provisions was lodged against Mukesh.

"The government will not protect or show any leniency towards any wrongdoer. Strict action will be taken against them, whosoever they are. The government always takes the correct stand. You just wait and watch," Jayarajan said. On Wednesday, some LDF ministers had said the government will await the probe's outcome before acting with regard to Mukesh. State ministers K N Balagopal and A K Saseendran had indicated that further action hinges on the findings of the probe by the special police team. An FIR under IPC 376 (rape) was registered against the actor at Maradu police station in Kochi city on Wednesday night, a police officer said. The case was registered under the IPC as the offence allegedly occurred before the new Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita came into force, he said. This is the third FIR against a high profile Malayalam film personality following allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report.

On Wednesday, Thiruvananthapuram museum police had booked actor Siddhique for allegedly raping an actress in a hotel eight years ago. The first case, under IPC Section 354 (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her modesty), was against director Ranjith on a complaint by a female actor from West Bengal regarding an incident which occurred in 2009. Fol-



lowing the allegation by the actor, Ranjith had resigned from his post as chairman of the state-run Kerala Chalachitra Academy. Siddhique had also resigned as general secretary of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) following the allegations against him. The Justice Hema Committee was constituted by the Kerala government after the 2017 actress assault case and its report revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry. Amidst allegations of sexual harassment and exploitation cropping up against several actors and directors, the state government on August 25 announced the establishment of a seven-member special investigation team to probe them.

Bengaluru woman wakes up to see her friend killed with throat slit, victim's husband arrested

GNS News Agency, August 31

He is suspected to have the slit throat of his wife, according to the police. He is suspected to have the slit throat of his wife, according to the police.

When Aishwarya woke up around 6 am on Wednesday, she found her clothes unsettlingly wet. She turned around and saw the mattress drenched in blood with the lifeless body of her friend Navyashree, with her throat slit, lying next.

The horrifying scenes unfolded at Vishweshwaraiah Layout near Kengeri, West Bengaluru. The police arrested the 28-year-old woman's husband Kiran, 31, a cab driver, for the alleged murder based on the complaint of Aishwarya.

2 minor schoolgirls raped in Uttar Pradesh; one sets herself on fire

GNS News Agency, August 31

minor raped According to the police, the girl was lured to a sugarcane field near her house in a village in Bareilly by two minor boys, where one of them allegedly raped her while the other held her hand.

In two incidents of sexual assaults on minors in Uttar Pradesh in 24 hours, a 13-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her two classmates in the Bareilly district on Monday, and a nine-year-old girl was sexually abused reportedly by her neighbour in the Agra district the next day. After the local panchayat issued a diktat not to reveal the crime to the police, the 13-year-old girl from Bareilly set herself on fire the next day. The Class 9 girl, who suffered 60 per cent burns, succumbed to her injuries while on the way to hospital, the police said.

According to the police, the girl was lured to a sugarcane field near her house in a village in Bareilly by two minor boys, where one of them allegedly raped her while the other held her hand. A police officer said the victim raised cries for help following which her elder sister rushed to the spot but the accused had fled the scene. The elder sister told her father about the crime, added the officer. According to the officer, the village held a panchayat on Monday evening where villagers forced the father not to report the rape to the police. The next day, the victim poured kerosene on her and set herself ablaze when she was alone at her house, said the officer.

The police arrested one of the accused on Tuesday night based on the complaint of the girl's father, who accused two minors who also study in the same school as his daughter of the crime. "Raids are being conducted to nab the other accused. Prima facie it appears that she died due to burn injuries but the real cause of death will be revealed after the report of the post-mortem examination," said Mukesh Chand Mishra, Superintendent of Police (North), Bareilly. In the other incident of rape in the state, a 19-year-old accused in Agra took his eight-year-old neighbour to the roof of his house and allegedly raped her on Tuesday. The man threatened to kill the child and her mother if she disclosed the attack on her. He was arrested on Wednesday. "The accused took the girl to her house after the alleged crime and told her mother that she fell from the stairs of his house. The mother believed him and later took the child to hospital. After a medical examination, the lady doctor got suspicious and asked the child what had happened. She told the doctor about the incident and named the accused. The mother lodged a complaint with the police following which we arrested the accused," said the officer in charge of the area police station.

Canada ends policy allowing visitors to apply for work permits



GNS News Agency, August 31

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has ended a temporary public policy that allowed visitors to apply for work permits from within the country, effective immediately.

The policy, introduced in August 2020 in response to COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions, permitted visitors in Canada to apply for work permits without leaving the country. It also allowed foreign nationals, who had held a work permit in the previous 12 months but later changed their status to "visitor," to work legally while awaiting a decision on a new work permit application. A statement on the Canadian government website said originally set to expire on February 28, 2025, IRCC decided to terminate the policy early to help manage the number of temporary residents in Canada and maintain the integrity of the immigration system. The agency noted that the policy had been exploited by some individuals to mislead foreign nationals into unauthorised work. Applications submitted before August 28, 2024, under this policy will still be processed by IRCC.

Beautician blackmailed, extorted by man she met on online gaming platform



GNS News Agency, August 31

A 34-year-old beautician filed a police complaint on Tuesday after a man she befriended on an online gaming platform blackmailed her by threatening to circulate her nude photos and extorted money from her. The Amboli police are currently investigating the case. According to the police, the victim met the accused on a gaming app last month. After they became friends and began chatting regularly, the accused gained her trust and manipulated her into sending nude photos. Frightened, the woman transferred Rs 55,200 via UPI to the accused through various mobile numbers as instructed. However, when his demands for money persisted, she decided to file a complaint at Amboli police station, a police officer said.

JJ Hospital's aging quarters to be replaced by luxury flats in Rs 728 crore overhaul



GNS News Agency, August 31

The state-run JJ Hospital is proposing to construct a state-of-the-art residential complex at an investment of Rs 728 crore on the hospital campus. This ambitious project will see the replacement of the hospital's aging infrastructure with eight luxury towers, offering modern, upscale living for its doctors, nurses, and other staff.

For years, healthcare workers at Mumbai's largest government hospital have voiced their concerns over the dilapidated conditions of the on-campus quarters. Responding to these long-standing demands, the state government has approved a luxury redevelopment plan that will demolish the old structures to make way for con-

temporary high-rises. These new buildings will not only provide shelter but also offer a significant lifestyle upgrade, complete with podium parking, serene gardens, and even a swimming pool. The housing plan includes a centerpiece of this project, a 22-storey tower dedicated to Class 1 and 2 staff, replacing the 70-year-old Dhanvantari buildings. This new tower will include 40 spacious three-bedroom flats, each spanning 1,152 square feet, and 110 two-bedroom flats of 872 square feet, all designed with an emphasis on comfort and luxury.

The plan also includes three 34-storey towers for Class 3 employees, housing 612 one-bedroom flats, and four towers for the often-overlooked Class 4 staff, offering 816 modern one-bedroom flats. "This transformation will not only provide better living conditions but also elevate the morale and productivity of the hospital's dedicated workforce," said Dr Pallavi Saple, Dean of JJ Hospital. She highlighted the dire state of the current quarters, where employees, particularly the elderly, are forced to use external restrooms due to the dilapidated condition of the buildings. Recognising these challenges, the government has greenlit this luxury redevelopment plan, aiming to create a living environment that reflects the hospital's commitment to excellence in healthcare. The blueprint for the project has been prepared by the Public Works Department (PWD).

108 male passengers deboarded from Delhi Metro ladies' coaches on first day of drive to ensure women's safety

GNS News Agency, August 31

On the first day of the campaign, 108 male passengers were directed to leave the ladies' coaches, while 32 were fined for violating the Delhi Metro (Operation and Maintenance) Act. On the first day of the campaign, 108 male passengers were directed to leave the ladies' coaches, while 32 were fined for violating the Delhi Metro (Operation and Maintenance) Act. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Tuesday initiated a special drive across all its lines to prevent the unlawful entry of male passengers into ladies' coaches, officials said on Wednesday.

On the first day of the campaign, 108 male passengers were directed to leave the ladies' coaches, while 32 were fined for violating the Delhi Metro (Operation and Maintenance) Act. The DMRC deployed 10 flying squads on each Metro line as part of the drive to enhance the safety and comfort of women during their daily commute. These squads, comprising personnel from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Delhi Metro Rail Police (DMRP), and DMRC staff, will conduct random surprise checks throughout the day. "The primary focus is to ensure that men do not enter the ladies' coaches and ad-



dress any misbehaviour. Offenders who break the rules or refuse to pay the fine of Rs 250 will be deboarded and handed over to the DMRP," said Anuj Dayal, DMRC principal executive director of corporate communication. The DMRC also urged women commuters to report any unauthorised entry or misbehaviour by male passengers via the 24x7 Helpline Number 155370. It reiterated that the first coach in the running direction of all Metro trains is reserved exclusively for women, and male passengers are advised to respect this reservation at all times.

Karnataka High Court dismisses SIT petition against HD Revanna's bail order in rape victim's abduction case



GNS News Agency, August 31

H D Revanna's counsel, Senior Advocate C V Nagesh, had stated that there was no element of fear of death in the case, which was an ingredient of the aforementioned IPC section. The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday dismissed the state police's Special Investigation Team (SIT)'s petition against the bail granted to JD(S) legislator H D Revanna, accused of being involved

in the kidnapping of one of the alleged rape victims of his son Prajwal Revanna.

The order was pronounced after it was reserved earlier by a bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna. H D Revanna was granted bail on May 13 by a Special Court, and it was challenged by the SIT on May 31. Special SIT counsel Professor Ravivarma Kumar had argued that the bail order contained an erroneous interpretation of Section 364a of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). He had also stated that if kidnapping of a witness was allowed then it would have a chilling effect on registration of cases.

Revanna's counsel, Senior Advocate C V Nagesh, had stated that there was no element of fear of death in the case, which was an ingredient of the aforementioned IPC section. He had also argued that it was not an abduction in the absence of an element of deceit. The Karnataka High Court also granted bail to Satish Babanna, who is said to be a relative of Revanna and a co-accused in this case. Five other co-accused persons were also granted bail. The full order is yet to be released in both of these cases.

Red flags over state tender for helipads at Sindhudurg where Shivaji statue was unveiled

GNS News Agency, August 31

The Maharashtra government's Public Works Department got three temporary helipads constructed for Rs 2.03 crore at Malvan in Sindhudurg to facilitate the landing of Prime Minister Narendra Modi chopper on December 4 last year. Documents available with The Indian Express show that the contract for construction of all three helipads was awarded to Sindhudurg-registered firm Accurate Infraproject for a total of Rs 2.03 crore. A source in the PWD, however, raised questions about work orders being issued even before a tender is floated, and tenders being floated just 2-3 days before the PM is scheduled to land on December 4.

For instance, the work order for the first helipad was issued even before a tender document was floated. While a Rs 79.28 lakh work order for building it near a polytechnic college in Malvan was issued on September 3, 2023, the tender was floated almost three months later on November 30, 2023, the documents reveal. In the case of the second temporary helipad at Boarding Ground, the tender was floated on December 1, 2023, and a work order of Rs 78.51 lakh issued on December 3, 2023.

And in the case of the third temporary helipad at Ozer, the tender was floated on November 30, 2023. A work order of Rs 45.53 was issued, the date for which is not available in the documents. A senior PWD official, who did not wish to be identified, said, "Multiple landing pads had to be built at three locations at the last minute as there was VVIP movement and the helipads were to be used by other ministers and SPG as well. We had to do concretisation on three pads on the instructions of SPG and had to also construct connecting roads."

PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan did not return calls and did not respond to queries sent over text messages. PWD Secretary Manisha Mhaskar said Konkan PWD Chief Engineer Sharad Rajbhaj would answer the que-



ries. When contacted, Rajbhaj said, "I am not aware. I will have to go through the documents. Please contact the superintending engineer of PWD's Kankavil division, who signed the work orders." On his part, Superintendent Engineer Ajay Sarvagod said, "I cannot comment on the matter until I go through the documents. However, there has been no irregularity." The Prime Minister arrived in Malvan to unveil the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue and to attend other Navy Day celebrations on December 4. The Navy spent Rs 1.55 crore for organising the event.

The 35-foot statue of Shivaji was constructed by Thane-based M/s Artistry and sculptor Jaydeep Apte. It was erected at the Rajkot Fort in Malvan, at a cost of Rs 2.44 crore, and paid for by the Public Works Department. Amid heavy rains and strong winds, the statue had collapsed on Monday. The Opposition had slammed the government for not taking adequate care and paying little attention to the quality of work. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said they would ensure that a new statue is built on the same spot. "The statue was built and designed by the Navy. When I spoke to the district collector, I was told that the winds were blowing at a rate of 45 km per hour that damaged the statue," he had said Monday.

Digital media policy: Up to Rs 8 lakh for online push of UP schemes, action if content negative



GNS News Agency, August 31

The Uttar Pradesh Digital Media Policy 2024, unveiled Wednesday by the state government in an official order, allows it to pay up to Rs 8 lakh per month to an empanelled influencer to publicise its schemes. The policy, which defines influencers and content creators under four categories based on subscribers and followers, makes it clear that payment will be made "solely on the basis of the views". It also empowers the Information Director to initiate action and stop payment if "any such content, video tweet, post, reel is anti-national, anti-social, indecent or hurts the sentiments of various sections of the society". The officer can also take action if "the content is based on wrong facts or presents government schemes in a wrong manner or with wrong intention". With the Opposition calling it an attempt to control content on social media, Shishir Singh, Director, Information, clarified: "How can there be any provision of providing punishment in any such policy? Under the policy, the Director, Information, has been authorised to take legal action under the relevant provisions of law against any anti-national, anti-social, derogatory posts. It may range from lodging FIR

under the relevant law, getting that post deleted, revoking empanelment or discontinuing the advertisement." The order issued Wednesday cited the need for the government to disseminate information via digital media platforms about various developmental, public welfare, beneficial schemes, achievements in the state and the benefits to the people.

Under the policy, pages, channels, account holders, operators, digital media influencers, content writers or their related agencies and firms will be empanelled in the department and advertisements will be issued as per requirement and utility. To be empanelled with the Information Department, minimum functioning of two years is mandatory. Influencers will have to give an affidavit that there is no criminal case registered against them or their firm. Different platforms of digital media i.e. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X etc will be listed by the Information Department in four different categories on the basis of subscribers, followers. For example, in the case of Facebook and YouTube, categories A, B, C and D will be based on those with minimum subscriber numbers of 10 lakh, 5 lakh, 2 lakh and 1 lakh, respectively. Whereas, in the case of X and Instagram, it will be categorised according to minimum subscribers or followers of 5 lakh, 3 lakh, 2 lakh and 1 lakh, respectively. Payments will be defined for each social media segment and category - for "video, reels and podcast" on Facebook and Instagram, a maximum of Rs 5, 4, 3 and 2 lakh per month respectively under four categories. In the case of a written post on Facebook, X or Instagram, it will be Rs 10,000, Rs 8,000, Rs 6,000 and Rs 5,000 per post and maximum up to Rs 50,000 per month, Rs 40,000, Rs 30,000 and Rs 20,000 per month. The maximum amount will be given under the YouTube category where it will be Rs 1 lakh for displaying each video advertisement given by the government and Rs 2 lakh for those developing their own content on the topic given by the government. This amount can be maximum up to Rs 8 lakh, Rs 7 lakh, Rs 6 lakh and Rs 4 lakh per month under the A category, B, C and D categories.

If fire starts in Bengal, will spread to Assam, Bihar, Odisha: Mamata Banerjee

GNS News Agency, August 31

Addressing a foundation day event of the TMC's Chhatra Parishad (student wing) in Kolkata, Mamata said: "Some people are thinking this is Bangladesh. I love Bangladesh, their culture and food are the same as ours. But Bangladesh is a separate country and India is a separate country. Modi babu, you want that fire to spread in Bengal. Then you should understand that if a fire starts in Bengal, Assam will not be spared, Bihar will not be spared, it will not stop at Manipur, or Odisha. It will also reach Delhi." In a post on X, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma wrote in Hindi and Bengali: "Didi, how dare you threaten Assam? Don't incite fire in the country with your politics of failure. Divisive language does not suit you."

Manipur CM N Biren Singh posted: "How dare Didi threaten the Northeast? I condemn such irresponsible remarks in the strongest terms. She must publicly apologise to the Northeast and the rest of the nation. Mamata ji must immediately stop inciting violence and hatred with divisive politics. It is highly unbecoming of a political leader to issue threats of violence on a public platform." Odisha's Mohan Charan Majhi asked Mamata: "Who gave you the right to say such insulting words against Odisha? People of Odisha will never accept your negative and insensitive comments about our state. Instead of ensuring justice, your revengeful comments are harmful to the nation."

BJP's West Bengal president Sukanta Majumder, in a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, highlighted Mamata's comments and said, "This isn't the voice of someone holding a constitutional position; it's the voice of an anti-national." Speaking at Wednesday's event, Mamata also vowed to bring in a law through the Assembly to ensure capital punishment for rape cases, while TMC's second-in-command, Abhishek Banerjee, promised to move a private member's Bill in Parliament for a time-bound legislation to curb crimes against women.

Both also targeted the BJP for the Nabanna Abhiyan (protests at the secretariat) and the Bangla Bandh, and for "conspiring to spread anarchy in Bengal". The CM also urged protesting doctors to resume work, stating that an FIR would "ruin their careers". Abhishek, meanwhile, asked why the former principal of R G Kar, Sandip Ghosh, had not been arrested so far. After July 21, when the party took out a Martyrs' Day rally, this was the first time that Mamata and Abhishek shared the stage. According to sources, Abhishek had expressed differences over the handling of the R G Kar case by the administration and the police.

He is learnt to have been against Ghosh's transfer



to Calcutta National Medical College and Hospital (CNMCH) within hours of his resignation from R G Kar. He was also critical of the Kolkata police's failure to stop miscreants from ransacking the hospital's emergency building during a protest on the night of August 14. "I will ask the Speaker to call a special session of the Assembly next week and we will bring a Bill which will have capital punishment for rape. The only punishment for rape is hanging. After passing the Bill, if the Governor does not give assent, our workers will sit in protest in front of Raj Bhavan," Mamata said. "If time-bound legislation is not passed by the Centre in the next three-four months on crimes against women, we will take our movement to Delhi, and common citizens will hit the streets... If the Centre does not pass an anti-rape law and time-bound legislation, I will move this via a private member's Bill," Abhishek said. He also requested the TMC to "reserve 55 per cent positions for women in the upcoming elections in the student union bodies", and asserted that "out of our 29 MPs, 12 are women". While Abhishek said "the CBI needs to answer why Sandip Ghosh has not been arrested after 14 days", Mamata did not comment on the former principal. Referring to the protests by doctors, she said: "We did not take action when junior doctors were on strike across the country. That's because I think their movement is justified. They want justice for their friend. But in Delhi, they filed an FIR against the doctors... The Supreme Court, on that day, empowered the state to take action. I don't want to do it. Because they should study well. If I file an FIR against someone, his or her life will be ruined, they will not get a passport, visa. We don't want to do that." Backing Mamata, Abhishek said those demanding her resignation should first ask the chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra to step down for crimes against women there. On the BJP, Mamata said, "Sometimes you have to endure, you have to be patient. But you don't know what I can do when the limit of tolerance is exceeded."

CJI steps in amid rare SC Bench dispute, will hear Delhi tree felling case

GNS News Agency, August 31

Bench vs Bench over felling of trees in Delhi, so CJI will hear matter today. The case relates to the felling of trees for widening the approach road to the Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS) in Southwest Delhi's Ridge area. A three-judge Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud will take up the tree-felling case against the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Thursday. The bench includes Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. On July 24, a bench led by Justice B R Gavai had taken exception to another bench led by Justice A S Oka hearing the matter, pointing out that it had already issued a contempt notice to the DDA on the issue. "Though the other bench has not adhered to judicial propriety, we are doing so... When, for the same cause of action for felling of trees, this court had issued notice, could the other bench have proceeded for that," Justice Gavai had asked, and referred the matter to the CJI, asking him to decide which bench should continue to hear the case so as to avoid conflicting orders.

The case relates to the felling of trees for widening the approach road to the Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS) in Southwest Delhi's Ridge area. On April 24, a two-judge bench of

Justices Gavai and Sandeep Mehta had issued notice to DDA Vice-Chairman Subhashish Panda on the issue. In May, another bench of Justices Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan also issued notice to Panda on a plea alleging contempt in the matter. In subsequent hearings, Justice Oka said there was a "cover-up" on what transpired during Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena's visit to the site in February and sought to know if it was the L-G who had directed the felling of the trees.

On July 24, Senior Advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for Panda, told the bench led by Justice Gavai that the road, which would also facilitate access to the CBI's residential quarters and SAARC University, was only 7.5 metres wide and needed to be widened to 24 metres. He said the inauguration of the CAPFIMS Hospital, on which Rs 2,200 crore was spent, was scheduled for April, but was deferred due to the road-widening issue. He also referred to the April 24 contempt notice issued by the Justice Oka bench. Taking note, Justice Gavai wondered how the other bench could have heard the contempt plea when it had already issued notice in the matter on April 24. "The appropriate course for any bench would have been to refer the matter to the Chief Justice and get the order as to which bench should hear it because, ultimately, it is the Chief Justice who is the master of the roster," he remarked.

Israeli forces kill 10 Hamas militants, arrest 5 in massive West Bank operation



GNS News Agency, August 31

Israeli forces launched a significant operation in the West Bank, killing at least 10 Hamas militants and sealing off the city of Jenin. The operation is among the largest in months. Israeli forces launched a large operation in the occupied West Bank overnight and into Wednesday, killing at least 10 Hamas militants, carrying out arrests and sealing off the volatile city of Jenin. The ongoing operation was among the largest in the West Bank in months, and a reminder that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict extends far beyond the war in Gaza that began with Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Israel says it is rooting out West Bank militants to prevent attacks, while Palestinians fear it intends to broaden the war and expel them from territories they want for a future state.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said "large forces" had entered Jenin, long a militant stronghold, as well as Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp dating back to the 1948 Mideast war, all in the northern West Bank. He said Israeli forces killed three militants in an airstrike in Tulkarem and four in an airstrike in Al-Faraa. He said another five suspected militants were arrested, and that the raids were the first stage of an even larger operation. Four Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire in Jenin, according to Palestinian officials. Hamas announced that 10 of its fighters had been killed in the West Bank on Wednesday, including three of the four men killed in Jenin. It was not immediately clear if the fourth was also a fighter. The military said all of the dead were militants. The governor of Jenin, Kamal Abu al-Rub, said on Palestinian radio that Israeli forces had surrounded the city, blocking exit and entry points and access to hospitals, and ripping up infrastructure in the camp.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said Israeli forces had blocked the roads leading to a hospital with dirt barriers and surrounded other medical facilities in Jenin. Shoshani said the military was trying to prevent militants from taking shelter in hospitals. An Associated Press reporter saw army vehicles blocking all the entrances to Al-Faraa camp. Military jeeps and bulldozers entered the camp and soldiers were seen patrolling its alleyways by foot. Water leaked onto the damaged streets from houses where fighting had ruptured tanks and pipes. Shots rang out every few minutes. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz drew comparisons with Gaza and called for similar measures in the West Bank. "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps might be required. This is a war in every respect, and we must win it," he wrote on the platform X. Shoshani said there was no plan to evacuate civilians.

Hamas called on Palestinians in the West Bank to rise up, calling the raids part of a larger plan to expand the war in Gaza and blaming the escalation on U.S. support for Israel. The militant group called on security forces loyal to the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel, to "join the sacred battle of our people."

Investigation 'sluggish', probe officer 'careless': Uttarakhand HC grants bail to 50 accused in Haldwani violence

GNS News Agency, August 31

Haldwani violence, Dehradun, Uttarakhand High Court, accused in Haldwani violence, Indian express news, current affairs. The High Court also mentioned that they "did not notice promptitude in the investigation; rather the investigation was sluggish, and for such a sluggish investigation, the appellants cannot be made to suffer." Ruling the "sluggish" pace of investigation, the Uttarakhand High Court Wednesday granted "default bail" to 50 people accused in connection with the Haldwani violence in February, citing that the chargesheet was not filed within the 90-day time limit. A division bench comprising Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari and Justice Pankaj Purohit also overturned the lower court's previous decision to grant the police additional time to file the chargesheet. The violence took place on February 8, and according to the CrPc, the chargesheet should have been filed within 90 days.

Violence had erupted in Nainital after the administration conducted a drive during which a mosque and a madrasa were demolished in Banbhoolpur. District authorities said both structures stood on Naozool land - government land not officially mentioned in revenue records. As stones were pelted, cars torched and the local police station surrounded by a mob, Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami had issued shoot on sight orders. At least five people were killed and many others, including police personnel, were injured. The police arrested over 90 people, including five women. In July, the Uttarakhand High Court had granted bail to the accused on Wednesday. The bail was not on merit, but because it was within the right of the accused.

In its order, the High Court mentioned that having gone through the case records, it was noticed that the appellants have been in judicial custody since February 13, and the 90-day period has expired. The High Court also mentioned that they "did not notice promptitude in the investigation; rather the investigation was sluggish, and for such a sluggish investigation, the appellants cannot be made to suffer."

"The manner in which investigation proceeded clearly reveals the carelessness on the part of the investigating officer as to how slow the investigation proceeded with, that too in such a situation where the appellants were languishing in judicial custody. In three months' time, statements of only eight official witnesses and four public witnesses were recorded. The height of the sluggish investigation is that in the first month, only two public witnesses and one official witness were examined," said the court. "The manner in which the investigation proceeded also speaks volumes when we see that the arms recovered on February 13 were sent to the FSL only on

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the raids as a "serious escalation" and called on the U.S. to intervene. Abbas announced he was cutting short a visit to Saudi Arabia and returning to the West Bank, where his government is based. At least 652 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war in Gaza began over 10 months ago, according to the Palestinian ministry. Most have died during raids, which often trigger gunbattles with militants. Israel says the operations are required to dismantle Hamas and other militant groups. Attacks on Israelis have risen since the start of the war. The Israeli operation comes as Hamas is using the West Bank as a base for organizing more attacks, using weapons smuggled from Iran and taking advantage of the weakness of the Palestinian Authority, according to Michael Milshtein, an expert on Palestinian issues at Tel Aviv University. He predicted similar operations in the future because Israeli authorities don't seem to have a strategy for defeating Hamas in either Gaza or the West Bank. The Palestinian Health Ministry said the bodies of seven people were brought to the hospital in Tubas, another West Bank city, and another two were brought to the hospital in Jenin. The ministry identified two killed in Jenin as Qassam Jabarin, 25, and Asem Balout, 39. Hamas claimed Jabarin as a fighter and said another two fighters, Mohammed Abu Zumeiro and Ahmed al-Sous, were killed in Jenin. Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three for a future state. Israel has built scores of settlements across the West Bank, which is home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers. The settlers have Israeli citizenship, while the 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under Israeli military rule, with the Palestinian Authority exercising limited control over population centers. The war in Gaza erupted when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel and rampaged through army bases and farming communities, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. The militants are still holding 108 hostages, around a third of whom are believed to be dead, after most of the rest were released during a November cease-fire.

Israel responded with an offensive that has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were militants. Around 90% of Gaza's population has been displaced, often multiple times, and Israeli bombardment and ground operations have caused vast destruction. Israeli strikes in Gaza overnight and into Wednesday killed at least 24 people, including five women and five children, according to Palestinian health officials. AP reporters at two hospitals confirmed the toll. One strike hit tents housing displaced people near the central town of Deir al-Balah, killing eight including two brothers, 6 and 17 years old. "He's alive!" their mother shouted as the teenager's body was carried to the morgue. She later sobbed and cradled both of them. Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas because the militants fight in dense residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes in Gaza, which often kill women and children. The U.S., Qatar and Egypt have spent months trying to mediate a cease-fire that would see the remaining hostages released. But the talks have repeatedly bogged down as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed "total victory" over Hamas and the militant group has demanded a lasting cease-fire and a full withdrawal from the territory. There was no sign of a breakthrough after days of talks in Egypt, and the negotiations move to Qatar this week. One of the hostages was released Tuesday after Israeli forces found him in a tunnel. After a short stay in a hospital he returned Wednesday to his Bedouin village where he got a hero's welcome.



April 1 after inordinate and unexplained delay of 45 days and further the articles seized on April 16 were sent only on May 18 after the period of 90 days was over. Moreover, the reason which has been cited by the investigating officer does not impress us that for the investigation yet to be completed, the custody of appellant was at all required," the court said. Speaking to The Indian Express, High Court lawyer Ahrar Baig, who represented a family in a petition against the demolition that led to the violence, said, "There was a delay in filing the chargesheet as the police took more than 90 days. The state government said that they needed extra time because elections hindered the process. A lower court twice extended the time of the investigation. This was challenged in the High Court, which granted bail to the accused on Wednesday. The bail was not on merit, but because it was within the right of the accused."

Cyberabad police nab two for cheating people in pretext of real estate investment

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad police on Wednesday arrested two persons who had allegedly cheated people to the tune of several crore rupees on pretext of investment in real estate.

The arrested J Chandrashekar and Jullapalli Sunitha, started a company Amacon Developers at Madhapur and collected huge amounts of money from people towards investment. The duo promised higher returns within a short period of time and later duped the victims. To make the investors believe, they told that they possess 33 guntas of land at Chevella village and also entered into a MoU with the investors.

How Indian students, facing deportation, are fighting to stay back in Canada



GNS News Agency, August 31

Thousands of Indian students, facing the risk of being deported by the end of this year, are holding protests across Canada. From where did the protests start and which provinces are engulfed by the agitation? What are the demands of these students?

Across Canada, over 70,000 international student graduates now face the risk being deported due to recent changes in federal immigration policies. Protests are sweeping through Canadian cities as international students and skilled workers rally for their rights, demanding changes in immigration policy that could determine whether they stay in the country they've come to call their home or are forced to leave. From the bustling streets of Ontario to the picturesque landscapes of Prince Edward Island (PEI), these demonstrations highlight the growing frustration and anxiety among those who came to Canada with the promise of a better future, only to find themselves caught in a web of bureaucratic red tape and increasingly uncertain immigration pathways.

The situation has become particularly dire due to new provincial policies that have introduced a 25% reduction in permanent residency nominations, leaving many students unexpectedly vulnerable. This was the case in PEI, from where several Indian students had to return. The protests by Indian students have spread to four Canadian provinces -- Ontario, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island (PEI) and British Columbia (BC). The agitation started first in PEI in May. It is no secret that Canada saw hordes of students joining its private universities because of the country's easy citizenship process. Lakhs of Indian students, dreaming of relocating to North America or Europe, used the study visa route. The Canadian government knew it all this while, but allowed that massive migration because the students were also helping its gig economy. India's Ministry of External Affairs reports that approximately 2.8 million Indians, including 1.8 million people of Indian-origin, now reside in Canada. The rising number of international students has placed significant pressure on Canada's housing, healthcare, and other services. HOW CANADA IS TRYING TO KEEP OFF IMMIGRANTS When Canadians began protesting over the pressure on housing and hospitals because of the surge in immigrants, the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau began a sudden crackdown. It imposed a two-year cap to manage this growth.

This cap is expected to result in around 360,000 approved study permits in 2024, representing a 35% reduction from the previous year, according to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that starting June 21, foreign nationals can no longer apply for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) at the border. This decision targets "flagpoling", a practice where temporary residents exit and re-enter Canada

Israeli forces kill 10 Hamas militants, arrest 5 in massive West Bank operation

GNS News Agency, August 31

Israeli forces launched a significant operation in the West Bank, killing at least 10 Hamas militants and sealing off the city of Jenin. The operation is among the largest in months. Israeli forces launched a large operation in the occupied West Bank overnight and into Wednesday, killing at least 10 Hamas militants, carrying out arrests and sealing off the volatile city of Jenin.

The ongoing operation was among the largest in the West Bank in months, and a reminder that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict extends far beyond the war in Gaza that began with Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Israel says it is rooting out West Bank militants to prevent attacks, while Palestinians fear it intends to broaden the war and expel them from territories they want for a future state. Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said "large forces" had entered Jenin, long a militant stronghold, as well as Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp dating back to the 1948 Mideast war, all in the northern West Bank. He said Israeli forces killed three militants in an airstrike in Tulkarem and four in an airstrike in Al-Faraa. He said another five suspected militants were arrested, and that the raids were the first stage of an even larger operation. Four Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire in Jenin, according to Palestinian officials. Hamas announced that 10 of its fighters had been killed in the West Bank on Wednesday, including three of the four men killed in Jenin. It was not immediately clear if the fourth was also a fighter. The military said all of the dead were militants. The governor of Jenin, Kamal Abu al-Rub, said on Palestinian radio that Israeli forces had surrounded the city, blocking exit and entry points and access to hospitals, and ripping up infrastructure in the camp. The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said Israeli forces had blocked the roads leading to a hospital with dirt barriers and surrounded other medical facilities in Jenin. Shoshani said the military was trying to prevent militants from taking shelter in hospitals. An Associated Press reporter saw army vehicles blocking all the entrances to Al-Faraa camp. Military jeeps and bulldozers entered the camp and soldiers were seen patrolling its alleyways by foot. Water leaked onto the damaged streets from houses where fighting had ruptured tanks and pipes. Shots rang out every few minutes. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz drew comparisons with Gaza and called for similar measures in the West Bank. "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps might be required. This is a war in every respect, and we must win it," he wrote on the platform X.

Shoshani said there was no plan to evacuate civilians. Hamas called on Palestinians in the West Bank to rise up, calling the raids part of a larger plan to expand the war in Gaza and blaming the escalation on U.S. support for Israel. The militant group called on security forces

to expedite work or study permit applications. The PGWP is crucial for international students seeking employment and permanent residency. Protests are taking place across the country, with students setting up camps and holding rallies in provinces like Prince Edward Island (PEI), Ontario, Winnipeg, and British Columbia. Just two days back, on August 26, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also announced a reduction in the number of temporary foreign workers employed in low-wage jobs. The Canadian government will halt the processing of Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) for the low-wage stream in areas with an unemployment rate of 6% or higher, with exceptions for jobs in agriculture, food processing, construction, and healthcare. WHY INDIAN STUDENTS IN CANADA ARE FEELING CHEATED "I spent six years taking risks to come to Canada. I studied, worked, paid taxes, and earned enough Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points, but the government has taken advantage of us," said Mehakdeep Singh, a former international student facing deportation, told City News Toronto. Singh, who invested his family's life savings in tuition, is now confronting a daunting deadline with no guarantee of permanent residency. The international students are calling on the government to extend post-graduate work permits, establish clear and consistent pathways to permanent residency, and address the systemic issues contributing to their exploitation. THE FIGHT FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCY One of the central issues driving these protests is the call for an increase in Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) slots.

The PNP allows provinces and territories to nominate individuals for permanent residency based on their skills, work experience, and potential to contribute to the local economy. However, the number of slots available is limited, and the competition is fierce. Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada's smallest province, announced a 25% reduction in immigration permits, leading to widespread protests from hundreds of Indian students who are now facing deportation. The student protest started on May 9 and is still active after 110 days. They say the sudden changes by the Canadian province to the immigration policy have left them with an uncertain future. CANADIAN PROVINCES SEEING PROTESTS BY INDIAN STUDENTS In cities like Vancouver and Winnipeg, protests have erupted, with demonstrators urging the government to increase the number of PNP slots to give more international students and temporary workers a chance to secure permanent residency. At the rally, international students chanted slogans like "Good enough to work, good enough to stay" and "Don't blame us, fix your system", according to CBC News. They called for more fairness in how people are selected for the Provincial Nominee Program, which is currently based on a ranking system rather than random selection. Baljinder Singh, a permanent resident, expressed his support at the rally, stating that he believes international students and workers are not being treated fairly. "Once skilled workers began fulfilling the requirements to complete their pathway, the government suddenly changed the process," he said. "That's not fair."

WHAT'S NEXT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS? As protests continue to unfold across the country, the Canadian government faces mounting pressure to address the concerns of international students and temporary foreign workers. The calls for increased PNP slots, faster processing times, and more draws are growing louder, as are the demands for better protection against exploitation and more transparent immigration policies.



loyal to the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel, to "join the sacred battle of our people." Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the raids as a "serious escalation" and called on the U.S. to intervene. Abbas announced he was cutting short a visit to Saudi Arabia and returning to the West Bank, where his government is based. At least 652 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war in Gaza began over 10 months ago, according to the Palestinian ministry. Most have died during raids, which often trigger gunbattles with militants. Israel says the operations are required to dismantle Hamas and other militant groups. Attacks on Israelis have risen since the start of the war. The Israeli operation comes as Hamas is using the West Bank as a base for organizing more attacks, using weapons smuggled from Iran and taking advantage of the weakness of the Palestinian Authority, according to Michael Milshtein, an expert on Palestinian issues at Tel Aviv University. He predicted similar operations in the future because Israeli authorities don't seem to have a strategy for defeating Hamas in either Gaza or the West Bank. The Palestinian Health Ministry said the bodies of seven people were brought to the hospital in Tubas, another West Bank city, and another two were brought to the hospital in Jenin. The ministry identified two killed in Jenin as Qassam Jabarin, 25, and Asem Balout, 39. Hamas claimed Jabarin as a fighter and said another two fighters, Mohammed Abu Zumeiro and Ahmed al-Sous, were killed in Jenin. Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three for a future state. Israel has built scores of settlements across the West Bank, which is home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers. The settlers have Israeli citizenship, while the 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under Israeli military rule, with the Palestinian Authority exercising limited control over population centers. The war in Gaza erupted when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel and rampaged through army bases and farming communities, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. The militants are still holding 108 hostages, around a third of whom are believed to be dead, after most of the rest were released during a November cease-fire.

Typhoon Shanshan kills 3 in Japan, snaps power, hits train and flight ops



GNS News Agency, August 31

After landfall in Kyushu, Typhoon Shanshan brought heavy rain and very strong winds, snarling air traffic, knocking out power to over 250,000 households, and leaving three people dead. A metal object blown away by strong winds of Typhoon Shanshan is caught on a power line in Miyazaki, western Japan. At least three people were killed in southwestern Japan on Thursday as Typhoon Shanshan made landfall in Kagoshima prefecture, bringing heavy rain and very strong winds as well as snarling air traffic and knocking out power to over a quarter million households. Major automakers including Toyota and Nissan suspended operations in some or all of their domestic factories due to the storm.

The typhoon, with gusts of up to 55 metres per sec-

ond (198 km per hour), made landfall near Satsumasendai city located in the country's southwestern island of Kyushu on Thursday morning, the weather agency said. Authorities warned the storm could be one of the strongest ever to hit the region, and local governments have issued evacuation orders for millions of residents in several prefectures. Three people were dead, one was missing, two were severely injured, and five suffered minor injuries because of the typhoon, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said. "As this typhoon is moving slowly, total amount of rain could be rather big," Hayashi told a regular news conference. Footage from public broadcaster NHK showed walls torn and window glass of buildings broken in Miyazaki city in southern Kyushu, with objects scattered on the street or hanging from utility poles.

More than 250,000 households in seven prefectures are experiencing power outage as of 9:00 a.m. on Thursday (0000 GMT), according to Kyushu Electric Power Co. After hovering over Kyushu for the next few days, the storm is expected to approach the central and eastern regions, including the capital Tokyo, around the weekend, the weather agency said. Airlines, including ANA Holdings and Japan Airlines, have already announced cancellations of more than 600 domestic flights. Train services have been suspended in many areas of Kyushu. Typhoon Shanshan is the latest harsh weather system to hit Japan, following Typhoon Ampil, which also led to blackouts and evacuations, earlier this month.

Typhoon Shanshan makes landfall in Japan, warnings for floods and landslides

GNS News Agency, August 31

Typhoon Shanshan, Japan's most powerful typhoon this year, made landfall on Kyushu island. The storm has injured dozens, caused significant property damage, and led to widespread power outages.

Typhoon Shanshan slammed into Japan on Thursday (Aug 29), injuring dozens as howling winds smashed windows and blew tiles off houses while torrential rains sparked floods and landslide warnings. Japan's most powerful typhoon this year, packing gusts up to 252 km/h, made landfall on the main southern island of Kyushu, home to 12.5 million people, around 8am (7am, Singapore time). Ahead of the arrival, authorities issued their highest alert level in places, advising hundreds of thousands of people to evacuate and warning of "life-threatening" flooding, landslides and storm surges. The coastal city of Miyazaki has so far recorded 26 injuries - including some from a tornado - with 124 incidents of damage to buildings, a disaster official told AFP. Most of the injuries were caused by strong winds smashing windows, with none life-threatening. Broadcaster NHK reported that nine people were hurt in nearby Kagoshima.

Unverified social media footage showed a small river in the city of Beppu turned into a raging torrent of dark water and a fallen tree hanging precipitously above a rainswept road near Oita. Student Aoi Nishimoto, 18, said he had called his family in Miyazaki.

"Our home is fine, but there was a tornado in Miyazaki and power went out in some places. It's worrying," he told AFP in Kyushu's main city Fukuoka. "This year, I am away from my parents' home for the first time. So it's a bit scary being all alone," student Rio Ohtsuru, 19, told AFP. "Maybe I will look for a flashlight in case of a power outage," she said. Kyushu's utility operator said that 254,610 houses were already without power elsewhere on the island. The system was moving slowly, which often means more rain, with the weather office forecasting it to gradually rumble towards Japan's main island Honshu and the cities of Osaka and Nagoya, although this could change. The Japan Meteorological Office warned that "the risk of a disaster due to heavy rain can rapidly escalate in western Japan as Friday approaches."

For Kagoshima, the JMA issued "special warnings



of violent storms, high waves and high tides." "Please exercise maximum vigilance against violent storms, high waves and high tides in Kagoshima, as well as landslides, flooding in low-lying areas and overflowing rivers in southern Kyushu," it said. For southern Kyushu, the JMA predicted an enormous 1,100mm of precipitation in the 48 hours to Friday morning. Heavy rain brought by Shanshan has been lashing large parts of Japan since Tuesday. Three members of a family died after a landslide buried a house in Gamagori, a city in central Aichi prefecture, late Tuesday, local media reported. The deceased included a couple in their 70s as well as a son in his 30s, while two adult daughters in their 40s survived with injuries, Kyodo News reported.

Auto giant Toyota has suspended production at all 14 of its factories in Japan. Nissan and Honda also decided to halt operations at their Kyushu plants, reports said. Japan Airlines has cancelled 275 domestic flights for Thursday, affecting 14,893 passengers, and an additional 13 for Friday that would have carried 1,307 people. ANA scrapped 212 domestic flights slated for Thursday, affecting 18,700 passengers, and 42 Friday flights, affecting 4,200 more. Shanshan comes in the wake of Typhoon Ampil, which disrupted hundreds of flights and trains this month. Despite dumping heavy rain, it caused only minor injuries and damage. Ampil came days after Tropical Storm Maria brought record rains to northern areas. Typhoons in the region have been forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change, according to a study released last month.

Sheikh Hasina faces four new cases, total spike to 75



GNS News Agency, August 31

Four more cases have been filed against Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her former cabinet ministers and aides, taking the total number of cases filed against her to 75, a media report said on Wednesday. Three of the cases were filed with Dhaka courts on Tuesday, while another murder case was filed in Bogura two days ago, the Daily Star newspaper reported. With these, 76-year-old Hasina is now facing 75 cases related to the protests, including 63 on murder charges, seven on allegations of crimes against humanity and genocide, three on charges of abduction, and two for other charges, the paper said.

Hasina and 30 others were sued over the death of a grocery shop owner during the quota reform movement in the capital's Banasree on July 19. The victim's father filed the murder case with the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Tofazzal Hossain who asked Khilgaon Police Station to register it as a first information report (FIR), the paper said. The court asked the officer in-charge of the same police station to register an FIR against Hasina and 26 others in a case related to the death of a 14-year-old on the same day. The third case was filed against Hasina and 50 others on charges related to the attempted murder of a lawyer of the Dhaka Bar Association during the students' quota reform protest on July 18, the paper said. A murder case was filed in Bogura against Hasina, three local journalists and 130 others. The 35-year-old victim was shot dead on August 4, a day before Hasina's ouster. Hasina resigned and fled to India on

August 5 after unprecedented anti-government student-led protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs. The Hasina-led government was replaced by an interim government, and 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was named its Chief Adviser.

Mexico-US flight diverted after severe turbulence, 1 passenger hospitalised



GNS News Agency, August 31

A United Airlines flight from Cancun to Chicago was diverted to Memphis due to severe turbulence. One person was taken to hospital in non-critical condition while six others declined treatment. One person was taken to a hospital Wednesday after a United Airlines flight was diverted to Memphis because of severe turbulence, officials said. The person was in non-critical condition when taken to a hospital after the flight headed from Cancun, Mexico, to Chicago landed at Memphis International Airport, United and the Memphis Fire Department said in separate statements. The turbulence happened while the airplane's seat belt sign was on, United said. The Memphis Fire Department said six other people declined treatment and transport to the hospital,

Kamala Harris campaign recruits Egyptian American lawyer to boost Arab votes



GNS News Agency, August 31;

Kamala Harris' presidential campaign has recruited Brenda Abdelall, an Egyptian American lawyer, to enhance outreach to Arab American voters. This move comes amid a tight race with Republican candidate Donald Trump, with key battleground states like Michigan in focus.

Kamala Harris' campaign for U.S. president has hired an Egyptian American lawyer and former Department of Homeland Security official to help lead outreach to Arab American voters who hold sway in some states that could help decide the Nov. 5 election, the campaign said on Wednesday. Brenda Abdelall would be tasked with shoring up support from a community frustrated with U.S. support for Israel's war in Gaza. Vice President Harris, a Democrat, has already hired Afghan American lawyer Nasrina Bargzie for outreach to Muslim Americans. Harris is in a tight race with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Votes from Muslim and Arab Americans could help decide the outcome in battleground states like Michigan, which has seen street protests over the Israel-Gaza war. U.S. President Joe Biden won a large share of the Arab and Muslim vote in 2020,

but his support for Israel despite the huge death toll in Gaza has frustrated many community members. They launched an "uncommitted" campaign against him in the Democratic nominating contests. Michigan, where Harris is due to visit next week, is home to one of the largest Muslim and Arab American populations in the United States. More than 100,000 voters cast their ballot "uncommitted" instead of Biden, who stepped aside as candidate on July 21, in the state's primary.

Some activists say they hold Harris responsible for the Biden administration's Israel policy and the crisis in Gaza. Following last week's Democratic convention, pro-Palestinian activists said Harris had failed to demonstrate any break from the status quo. While pro-Palestinian voices are not expected to vote for Trump and have indicated no support for the Republican, some activists have launched a campaign called "Abandon Harris" and have urged their supporters to back third-party candidates.

Abdelall, Harris' pick for Arab American outreach, most recently served as senior counselor to the Department of Homeland Security's secretary. She joined the agency in January, 2021, shortly after Trump left office, to be chief of staff for the department's civil rights office. Abdelall, who grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, previously ran a food blog and website, focused on Middle Eastern cuisine. She has taught Middle Eastern cooking classes at a culinary school in northern Virginia. The latest bloodshed in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict was triggered on Oct. 7 when Palestinian Islamist group Hamas attacked Israel, killing 1,200 and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on the Hamas-governed enclave has since killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, while also displacing nearly the entire population of 2.3 million, causing a hunger crisis and leading to genocide allegations at the World Court that Israel denies.

Hong Kong court to deliver verdict against 2 editors in sedition case

GNS News Agency, August 31

A Hong Kong court is set to deliver verdicts against two editors of the now-defunct Stand News for conspiring to publish seditious articles. This marks the first sedition trial against journalists since the 1997 handover. Former chief-editor of Stand News Chung Pui-kuen and former acting chief-editor Patrick Lam. (Photo: Reuters)

A Hong Kong court on Thursday is expected to hand down verdicts against two editors of a now-defunct online media outlet for conspiring to publish seditious articles in a case that has drawn international scrutiny. This is the first sedition trial against any journalist or editor since Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China in 1997. It is a case that critics, including the U.S. government, say reflects deteriorating media freedoms under a years-long national security crackdown in the China-ruled city. Stand News, once Hong Kong's leading online media outlet with a mix of critical reportage and commentary, was raided by police in December 2021 and had its assets frozen, leading to its closure a few days later. Its top editors, Chung Pui-kuen, 54, Patrick Lam, 36, and the outlet's parent company Best Pencil (Hong Kong) Ltd, were all charged with conspiracy to publish seditious publications in connection with 17 news articles and commentaries between July 2020 and December 2021. All those charged pleaded not guilty. If convicted, they face a maximum two years jail term.

During the 57-day trial, government prosecutor Laura Ng alleged Stand News had acted as a political platform to promote "illegal" ideologies and incited readers' hatred against the Chinese and Hong Kong governments. Ng described the articles as seditious, including interviews with jailed or exiled pro-democracy politicians and a news article about jailed human rights lawyer Chow Hang-



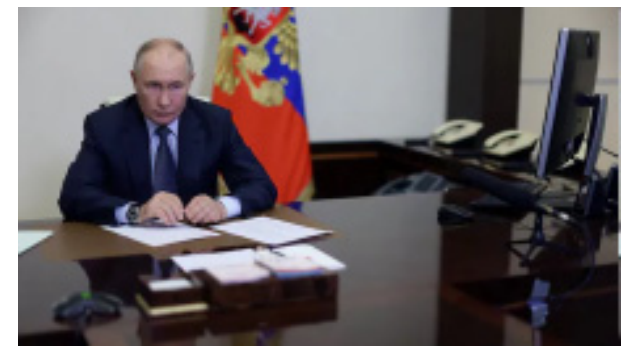
tung. Foreign governments including the U.S., and media freedom advocacy groups said the case showed how authorities had suppressed freedoms and intensified self-censorship since the national security law was passed in 2020. Chung, who chose to testify in court, was in the witness box for 36 days of the trial, defending media freedoms and saying Stand News had only "recorded the facts and reported the truth", while giving voice to a spectrum of voices including democrats. "The media should not self-censor but report," he said. Chung stressed that they upheld the principle of publishing every article they received to "showcase the greatest extent of freedom of speech", as long as they didn't immediately cause violence, affect public health and cause defamation. Stand News was forced to shut down and take down all its online content after a police raid. The verdict was originally scheduled to be delivered last October, but it was adjourned three times to wait for the High Court to hand down its ruling on an appeal by a pro-democracy activist Tam Tak-chi against his conviction and sentence on charges which included sedition offences.

Russia faces 'difficult fight' to retake Ukraine-held area: CIA official

GNS News Agency, August 31

CIA Deputy Director David Cohen revealed that Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing a counter-offensive to reclaim the Kursk region from Ukrainian forces. Despite this, Cohen anticipates a challenging battle for Russian troops. Russian President Vladimir Putin will mount a counteroffensive to try to retake territory in the Kursk region captured by Ukrainian troops, but Russian forces will encounter "a difficult fight," Deputy CIA Director David Cohen said on Wednesday. Cohen told a national security industry conference that the significance of the Ukrainian incursion, which has overrun some 300 square miles (777 square km) of the Russian province, remained to be seen. Ukrainian forces crashed through Russia's western border into the Kursk region on Aug. 6 in a surprise offensive that is continuing. While Kyiv has said it has no intention of annexing the area it has captured, Ukrainian troops are building defensive lines and it appears that they intend to retain "some of that territory for some period of time," Cohen told the Intelligence and National Security Summit. "We can be certain that Putin will mount a counteroffensive to try to reclaim that territory," Cohen said. "I think our expectation is that that will be a difficult fight for the Russians." Putin, he said, "is not only going to have to face the fact that there is a front line now within Russian territory that he's going to have to deal with, he has to deal with reverberations back in his own society that they have lost a piece of Russian territory." "Ukraine's success in Kursk "has the potential to change the dynamic" of the conflict "a little bit going forward," he continued without elaborating. Ukraine has claimed the capture of 100 settlements in its incursion into Russia's Kursk region, while Russian forces continue to inch forward in the eastern Donetsk region.

Cohen said that Russia has been making those gains "at extraordinary cost" in troops and equipment and "may or may not" capture the key Ukrainian logistics hub city of Pokrovsk. "But at the end of the day, none of it is a game changer in a strategic sense" for the Russians, he continued. On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the war with Russia would eventually end in dialogue, but that Kyiv had to be in a strong position and that he would present a plan to U.S. President Joe Biden and his two potential successors. Putin has said any deal needs to start with Ukraine's acceptance of "realities on the ground," that would leave Russia with possession of substantial chunks of four Ukrainian regions



as well as Crimea. Ukraine says it controls more than 1,200 square km (463 square miles) of the Kursk region.

US reports over 50 illnesses, 8 deaths in Listeria outbreak

GNS News Agency, August 31

Los Angeles: The US has reported more than 50 illnesses and eight deaths in Listeria outbreak, according to the latest data released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Listeria is a hardy germ that can remain on surfaces, like meat slicers, and foods, even at refrigerated temperatures, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. It can also take up to 10 weeks for some people to have symptoms of listeriosis, according to CDC. Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback data show that meats sliced at delis, including Boar's Head brand liverwurst, are contaminated with Listeria and are making people sick, according to CDC. Listeria spreads easily among deli equipment, surfaces, hands, and food. A total of 57 people have been hospitalised due to Listeria infections in the country, and eight deaths have now been reported, according to CDC. This is the largest listeriosis outbreak since the 2011 outbreak linked to cantaloupe. The CDC requested the public not to eat recalled deli products. People who are at higher risk of getting sick with Listeria, such as those who are pregnant, are aged 65 or older.

Bitter truths in Maharashtra's sugar fields



The High Court of Bombay has recently taken suo motu cognisance of the exploitation of the intra-State workforce that migrates seasonally from the drought-affected and water-scarce regions of Marathwada to the sugar-belt region of western Maharashtra. Maharashtra is one of the top sugar producers in India. According to the Maharashtra Sugar Commissioner, in 2022-23, the net area under sugar cane was 1.487 million hectares, and there were 203 crushing factories in the State that were expected to produce 138 lakh metric tons of sugar.

Though intra-State migrant workers form the backbone of the sugar cane industry and economic growth, they have remained critically marginalised and oppressed for several decades. Considering the precarity of this migrant workforce, the High Court asked the Maharashtra government to form a committee of officers from various departments (with one nodal officer) to address their issues. Against this background, it would be critical to examine how 'seriously' the State develops policies and consistently implements strategic measures and existing labour laws for the effective inclusion of this precarious migrant group.

To deal with the prolonged unemployment after the sowing of rabi crops, millions of small and marginal peasant households from Beed, Jalna, Osmanabad, Latur, Nanded and Parbhani districts of the Marathwada region migrate to the sugar-belt districts such as Sangli, Kolhapur, Pune, Satara, Solapur and Ahmednagar to work in sugar cane harvesting and factories. Prolonged drought conditions, repeated crop failure, debt, and acute unemployment create an end-most situation for Marathwada's rural labour, and, ultimately, they have to migrate seasonally. Therefore, there needs to be a long-term and comprehensive policy to address their vulnerability at both the source and destination. The State government has to intervene in the prevalent exploitative structure of recruiting migrant workers in the sugar cane industry filed through the 'Mukadam' (labour contractor). The Mukadam has a contract with sugar factories to supply 'Koytas' (labour couples) and takes an advance to pay workers. The Mukadam system assures sugar factories a supply of a large volume of temporary, cheap, reliable, and efficient workforce (Bremner, 1978). Because of eco-political reasons, the Mukadam system remains the focal point; migrant workers are very dependent on the Mukadam. Consequently, it creates adequate space to control migrant workers, violates labour laws, and is unfavourable to establish any relationship between the factory and workers.

Gaps in the data, plight of women, children, inadequate data is the stumbling block in framing meaningful policies for seasonal migrants, especially when women migrants and children are largely invisible and un-enumerated. Hence, a periodic and time-bound enumerating exercise is critical to create a databank of

seasonal migrants that is credible. A technology-aided Migration Tracking System (MTS) application was launched in 2022 by the Women and Child Development Department of the Maharashtra government, which was said to be the first-of-its-kind project in the country. The MTS initially focused on seasonal migrants in the tribal districts to enumerate and track children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers at source and destination areas to ensure nutrition, immunisation and early childhood care, and continuity of the Integrated Child Development Services.

However, the MTS fails to create a comprehensive picture of seasonally migrating families, their current employment status, wage structure and entitlement coverage. With expanded scope, the revised MTS can be used in the State's sugar belt and other seasonal migration corridors to enumerate migrants, understand the dynamics and clearly delineate the specific needs and interventions. Another high priority area is addressing the plight of migrant women workers, and ensuring their health, safety and employment in the sugar cane labour market. In the sugar cane harvesting task, women workers are engaged in strenuous work such as headload cane bundles and carry heavy weight (40 kg-45 kg) on trucks or trolleys, which usually occur late in the evening, resulting in several accidents during the loading process (Oxfam India 2020). Their work adversely impacts their body, causing musculoskeletal disorders and several gynaecological issues. UNESCO noted that early and forced marriages among migrants cause problems for adolescent girls, resulting in early pregnancies (15-17 years), deliveries in the absence of a trained birth attendant, frequent childbirth, no exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and many other problems. Many studies have reported recurring violence and sexual harassment cases linked to the Mukadam and male workers. Despite multiple vulnerabilities among seasonally migrating women, the State government has not adopted any adequate long-term intervention strategy.

Though the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises equitable and inclusive education for all, the Right to Education of children who accompany their parents to sugar cane fields is violated blatantly. There are no sufficient alternative schooling models, which in turn affect their education. They are probably forced into child labour. In their joint study, the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and UNICEF (2022) observed that despite these children being physically absent from school, school records do not acknowledge this in many cases.

Need for government interventions There needs to be intervention to ensure that seasonal migrants have access to justice and are guaranteed safe and healthy working and living conditions. The State government must take the lead and collaborate with different Ministries and Departments to formulate targeted and time-bounded interventions. With a strong political will, it is possible to create a favourable legal environment to protect the rights of migrants by strengthening the labour administration. On the one side, it is said to be an Amrit Kaal with the vision of an empowered and inclusive economy to fulfil all its humanitarian obligations, while on the other, State functionaries constantly neglect a tribulation of the huge groups of seasonal migrants, leaving them helpless and in jeopardy. One must stop this deceit and take specific action. S. Irudaya Rajan is Chair at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala. Kuldeep Singh Rajput is Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala

As many as 393 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.64 lakh cr

As many as 393 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.64 lakh crore in June 2023, an official report said. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which monitors infrastructure projects worth ₹150 crore and above, out of 1,643 projects, 393 reported cost overruns and as many as 815 projects were delayed.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1,643 projects was ₹23,86,687.07 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be ₹28,51,556.84 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of ₹4,64,869.77 crore (19.48 per cent of original cost)," the ministry's latest report for June 2023 said. According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till June 2023 was ₹14,99,771.71 crore, 52.59% of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, it stated that the number of delayed projects decreased to 594, if delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion. Further, it stated that for 336 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported. Out of the 815 delayed projects, 193 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 192 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 293 projects for 25-60 months and 137 projects have been delayed for more than 60 months. The average time overrun in these 815 delayed projects was 37.49



month. Reasons for time overruns as reported by various project implementing agencies include delay in land acquisition, delay in obtaining forest and environment clearances, and lack of infrastructure support and linkages. Delay in tie-up for project financing, finalisation of detailed engineering, change in scope, tendering, ordering and equipment supply, and law and order problems were among the other reasons. The report also cited state-wise lockdowns due to COVID-19 (imposed in 2020 and 2021) as a reason for the delay in implementation of these projects. It has also been observed that project executing agencies are not reporting revised cost estimates and commissioning schedules for many projects, which suggests that time/cost overrun figures are under-reported, it added.

In Sahara saga, small investors find a new hope

Soon after a new Ministry to look after the cooperative sector was formed in 2021, the corridors of its old offices at Krishi Bhavan in Delhi's Central Secretariat were filled with thousands of letters and postcards. Many handwritten, they had to be stuffed into gunny bags. All had the same request: a refund from the Sahara group, the business conglomerate mired in financial embezzlement, and currently being investigated by multiple agencies including the Enforcement Directorate (ED) since 2008. The group raised ₹80,000 crore from 2.76 crore small time investors across 26 States.

On July 18, the Central government set up the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) portal — mcrefund.crccs.gov.in — for small investors in Sahara companies to get a maximum refund of ₹10,000 per investor, irrespective of the total amount invested. Until 7.30 a.m. on July 29, up to 15.28 lakh investors had registered.

"The idea is to return at least ₹10,000 to everyone from a ₹5,000 crore corpus [from the corpus of the Sahara-SEBI Refund Account that the Supreme Court allowed the ministry to access on March 29 this year]. There

are 2.76 crore investors and at this rate we need ₹27,000 crore. Some have invested ₹7,000 and others, lakhs of rupees," said the official from the Ministry of Cooperation. For the rest of the amount, the ministry will approach the Supreme Court again. "The total number of verified applicants are 4.21 lakh and 12.26 lakh claims worth ₹3,182.67 crore have already been generated. These will be refunded in a maximum of 45 days," the official added. To weed out any irregularities, "The data dump has been digitised. The portal has five layers of checks. An investor can register only through their Aadhaar-linked mobile phone. The bank account linked to Aadhaar will appear on the screen. A token number will be generated and sent to Sahara. Once they verify, the CRCS will also run a check. There is an auditor and four retired bureaucrats to oversee the portal," the official said. Investors will have to scan and upload documents, and give an undertaking that the claims are true. If the information is found to be false, legal action will be initiated. Claims will be processed only through the portal and no physical documents will be entertained. "The Common Service Centres in villages and rural areas have been asked to help rural investors who do not have access to computers and scanners," the official said.

Vidya Malavade does acro yoga; know more about the practice



Celebrities tend to take their fitness game a notch higher each day. And that is true in the case of the Chak De! India actor too. The yoga enthusiast is a fitness buff and like a true enthusiast was seen doing acro yoga even as she burst into a few laughs with her girl gang. "No idea why I must have this nervous moronic giggly response every time I try something NEW... Like an autonomous nervous response... and with the giggles, the balance goes for a complete toss as you can tell," shared Vidya, 50. However, advising caution, she also shared with her followers on Instagram that one should be "super careful" when it comes to your neck. "Caution - please be super careful of your neck if you ever want to give this a try... have someone spot you initially when you practice #acro yoga / inversions!" remarked Malavade. Scroll down to catch the video.

Taking a leaf out of her fitness diary, we reached out to yoga experts to know more about the practice of acro yoga. The Greek origin word acro stands for "height," "tip end," or "extremities of the body". This in combination with the word yoga gives us acro yoga. It is a simple form

of yoga done with a partner that combines the gymnastic-like characteristics of acrobatics with the relaxing flexibility of yoga. "Most advanced practitioners of acro yoga also combine elements of massage in their movements," said Pragya Bhatt, yoga expert, and scholar and published author on acro yoga. According to her, although acro yoga seems like a new 'invention', nothing in the field of yoga is really new. "While acro yoga moves weren't practiced widely historically, there is evidence of many teachers teaching yoga asanas where children would do movements which have today been renamed to 'acro yoga'. So the origins of acro yoga can be found in traditional yoga shalas," said Bhatt.

What to keep in mind?

Because it is a partner practice, the most important thing is to ensure that you practice with someone you trust and are comfortable with. "It goes without saying that the teacher should be qualified. Most students experience falls and injuries when they first start out. This can be because of a lack of experience and physical ability. So students should think about slow and steady progress. Asanas on the mat is easy because the mat is stable - but here you're in the air and supported only by arms or legs and that's a whole new sensation to get used to," said Bhatt.

How about acro yoga inversions?

For any asana to be effective, it needs to be held for at least 2-3 minutes. "In acro yoga, this is difficult to achieve as both partners are essentially relying on their body weight and strength. So while it's fun to do these inversions and they do help you in breaking mental barriers and overcoming fear - if you're looking for yoga therapy then acro yoga inversions won't really help," said Bhatt.

Chhavi Mittal shares side effects of tamoxifen medication; know more about it

Chhavi Mittal, who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, triumphed over the deadly disease and now shares her recovery journey - along with her day-to-day health and fitness experiences - on social media. Recently, she candidly discussed the side effects of taking tamoxifen, a medicine prescribed to her daily for a decade. "The breast cancer led to the treatment, a major part of which is tamoxifen which I have to take every day for 10 years (9 more to go)," she started out saying.

Chhavi revealed that tamoxifen leads to hormonal changes which, in turn, is leading to bone mineral density loss. "The BMD loss is causing uncalculated-for fractures (like the one I had in my foot) and also positioning me as an osteopenia patient, putting me at a high risk for spinal fractures," she added. The treatment for this, according to the doctor, is an injection administered intravenously, which she took two days back in a hospital. "That injection has a plethora of side effects. Yesterday, my entire chest, back, shoulders, and neck went into a spasm. I couldn't even breathe without wincing in pain. I thought I was dying and this is how it feels when the body degenerates," she wrote.

Then, Chhavi took medicines to settle those side effects. "Currently, I feel tightness in my chest and my joints feel like they will break. This is what is called a butterfly effect. But, what choice do I have? Once a cancer survivor, always a cancer survivor. There's no undoing it," she said. "My heart goes out to ALL survivors out there who have gone through similar things and more and continue to fight living their lives on a daily basis. All I can say is, today may not be a good day, but tomorrow will be better. Of that I'm sure," she concluded.

Dr Tirathram Kaushik, consultant oncologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mira Road said that tamoxifen is a medication commonly used in the treatment of hormone receptor-positive breast cancer. "It belongs to a class of drugs known as selective estrogen receptor modulators



(SERMs). Tamoxifen blocks the estrogen receptors in breast cancer cells, thereby inhibiting their growth and reducing the risk of cancer recurrence. "He agreed that like all medications, tamoxifen may have side effects. "Some common side effects of consuming it daily include hot flashes, fatigue, mood swings, vaginal dryness or discharge, and irregular menstrual periods. Rare but serious side effects can include blood clots, uterine cancer, and cataracts," Dr Kaushik said. To manage the side effects of tamoxifen, the experts asked patients to openly communicate with their oncologist or healthcare team. "Lifestyle modifications such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and getting enough rest can help manage fatigue and mood changes. For hot flashes, avoiding triggers like caffeine, spicy foods, and wearing breathable clothing may be beneficial. Vaginal dryness can be addressed with lubricants or vaginal moisturisers," he said. Dr Kaushik added that regular follow-up visits with the oncologist are crucial to monitor for any potentially serious side effects and ensure the overall well-being of the patients. "It's important to adhere to the prescribed treatment plan and discuss any concerns or discomfort experienced during the course of therapy," he said.

For a healthy heart, avoid these 5 foods during summer

Certain foods can exacerbate these challenges and increase the risk of heart problems. Don't worry, you can still enjoy the season by being a little careful. Let's understand how certain foods can negatively impact your heart, and the ones you must avoid. How unhealthy foods sabotage your heart: Several dietary culprits put your heart at risk, said Kanika Malhotra, Consultant Dietician & Diabetes Educator: Unhealthy Fats: Saturated and trans fats raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol, leading to plaque buildup in arteries. This condition, atherosclerosis, increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. Red meat, processed meats, fried foods, and sugary baked goods are high in these harmful fats. Salt (Sodium): Excessive salt intake leads to high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease. Processed foods often have high sodium content, even if they don't taste salty.

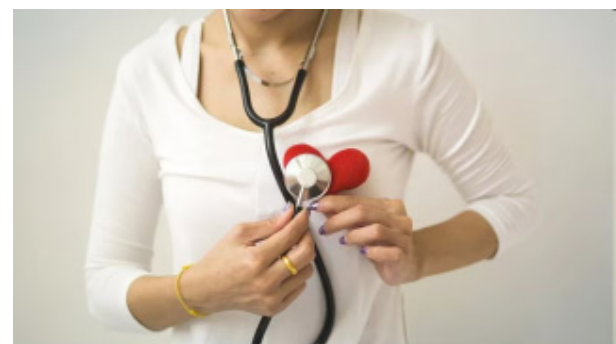
Added Sugars: A diet high in added sugars promotes weight gain and inflammation, both of which increase your risk of heart disease. Understanding sugar's impact on your body and health: Sugary drinks, pastries, candies, and cereals are all packed with added sugars. (file)

Remember, moderation is key. Occasional treats are unlikely to cause harm. However, a regular diet of these unhealthy foods can significantly increase your risk of developing heart problems down the line.

5 summertime treats to limit for a healthy heart: Malhotra advised steering clear of these foods in the summer:

Samosas & Pakoras: These deep-fried delights may be tasty, but the frying process adds harmful fats to your diet. Opt for healthier snacks like grilled vegetables or air-popped popcorn. Sweetened Lassi & Thandai: While these cooling drinks are refreshing, they can be loaded with sugar. Choose buttermilk lassi with mint or a homemade thandai with minimal added sugar for a heart-healthy alternative.

Red Meat Curries with Ghee: Rich curries with fatty red meat and generous amounts of ghee are tempting, but red meat is high in saturated fat, and ghee adds even more. Opt for healthier protein sources like chicken breast or lentils in your curries, and cook with a lighter oil. Salty Pickles & Pappads: These tangy accompaniments can be a taste bud explosion, but they are often high in sodium. Limit these or find low-sodium alternatives to avoid putting extra strain on your heart.



Remember, moderation is key. Occasional treats are unlikely to cause harm. However, a regular diet of these unhealthy foods can significantly increase your risk of developing heart problems down the line.

Deep-fried Sweets: Jalebis and Imartis are classic summer treats, but the combination of deep-frying and sugary syrup is a recipe for heart trouble. Enjoy these sweets in moderation, or choose fresh fruit with a drizzle of honey for a heart-healthy dessert option. By making mindful choices and opting for healthier alternatives, you can enjoy a delicious and heart-friendly summer diet. DISCLAIMER: This article is based on information from the public domain and/or the experts we spoke to. Always consult your health practitioner before starting any routine.

Vijay Varma recalls his 'lowest low', had only Rs 18 in his bank account: 'I could either eat panipuri or idli'



the lowest time of his life.

Talking on Shubhankar Mishra's YouTube channel, Vijay said, "It was a very bad time, it was my lowest low. There were just Rs 18 in my account and I could either eat panipuri or idli." When asked why he was in such a state even though he came from a household with a comfortable income, Vijay shared, "I had stopped taking money from home because my father wasn't talking to me." Vijay shared, "I was told that if my rent and allowance was sorted, I would not work hard, so I should let that fire within me get strong. In 2-3 months, I was left with nothing, that time I played a small role for money and it was a very bad experience. So it was the lowest low of my life." Earlier during the promotions of Mirzapur 3, Vijay had spoken about his relationship with his father with indianexpress.com. Recalling the time he decided to become an actor, Vijay said that when he told his father about his acting aspirations, he was thrown out of the house.

Actor Vijay Varma has carved a niche for himself in the movies but the actor saw a long struggle before he made a name for himself in Hindi films. During a recent interview, Vijay recalled a time when he had just Rs 18 left in his bank account and shared that this was probably

'Shah Rukh Khan was a hit among kids after Baadshah, Karisma Kapoor was our first choice,' recalls producer Ratan Jain

Shah Rukh Khan's Baadshah celebrated its 25th anniversary recently and on this special occasion, the film's producer, Ratan Jain, shared some fond memories and revealed some intriguing details about the casting decisions for the film. Jain revealed that Karisma Kapoor was initially considered for the female lead role, which ultimately went to Twinkle Khanna. He also discussed how Shah Rukh Khan became a favourite among children after the film's television premiere.

In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Ratan Jain said, "Earlier, we had considered Karisma Kapoor. She was almost finalised but then for some reason, she couldn't come on board. Then we looked for a few options. Finally, we locked Twinkle Khanna." Baadshah featured Shah Rukh Khan in the role of a private detective equipped with cool gadgets, like sticky shoes that allowed him to climb buildings. These memorable scenes were depicted without any extensive use of VFX technology, which was not as advanced at the time. Speaking about the challenges, Jain remarked, "There was no VFX like it is right now. But we did have some effects. Honestly, in some scenes, we were not very happy with the effects. But we had to compromise. If there was VFX in those times, toh phir bahut kuch ho sakta tha (we could have done a lot more)."

Reflecting on Shah Rukh Khan's rising stardom during the film's release, Jain added, "The response was amazing. But that time, Shah Rukh naya naya star bana tha. He was not very big and was growing. Nevertheless, he was very popular and audiences used to love him. And he loves the film. Whenever we talk, he speaks more



about Baadshah than other films that we did together. Moreover, it works big time on TV. Kids, especially, love the film a lot."

During the conversation, Ratan also revealed that the makers changed the film's second half to make it look more serious. "To be honest with you, the second half was supposed to be something else. But then we changed the script. If you look at the film, the first half is very comic but in the second half, it gets a bit serious," he said. Despite being one of Shah Rukh Khan's most beloved films, Baadshah underperformed at the box office upon its release. Directed by Abbas-Mustan, the film was promoted as an action movie but turned out to be a comedy thriller. The audience at the time expected an action film and was disappointed when they watched it in theaters. However, Baadshah eventually found its audience after its television release, gaining a cult following over the years.

When actor Mukesh's first wife Saritha alleged he kicked her in the stomach when she was pregnant, revealed she kept quiet about abuse at his father's request



The men in the Malayalam film industry are currently paying the price for their decades-long tyranny wherein they used their unchecked power to exploit and harass those less powerful than them — especially women. Following the release of the Justice Hema Committee report, numerous survivors have come forward to accuse various male figures in the industry of sexual misconduct. Actor and CPI(M) MLA Mukesh is among those facing serious allegations, with accusations of sexual abuse from a woman professional. While calls for Mukesh's resignation are intensifying, with opposition parties also joining the chorus, the statements made years ago by Mukesh's first wife, veteran actor Saritha, have gained widespread attention. She had then disclosed that Mukesh had emotionally and physically abused her during their time together.

Saritha shared her distress with the media nearly a decade ago, around the time Mukesh remarried dancer Methil Devika. She revealed her shock and shame at her

experiences, contrasting them with the portrayals she had seen in films. "I was ashamed to tell what I had experienced... I could not believe what was happening to me. I have acted in movies... I have seen all this in movies... But I never thought that all that would happen in my life," she revealed, Manorama Online reported.

Saritha explained that Mukesh's affairs were a major reason behind their separation, adding that there were many instances of domestic violence during their marriage. "I was hesitant to speak out. When some people from the media came to know about what I was going through and reached out, I denied everything. To show others that all was well, we clicked pictures pretending to be happy on the occasion of Onam and similar instances. Amid all these familial issues, he maintained affairs with many. I just hoped that he would realise his mistake and come back," she said. "After my father's death, I started seeing Mukesh's father as my own. He was given an assurance by me. That is why I made no complaint to the

police. I kept that assurance until his death. After Mukesh attacked me in front of his maids, I stopped going to his house. Once when his father came to Thiruvananthapuram for tax matters, he came to pick me up. At the airport, father told me 'Let's go home'. I said I was not coming and that I had taken a room in Pankaj Hotel. He did not utter a word in front of the driver and then came to my room. He then held my hands and said he knew what I was going through and that he knew his son was wrong. He, however, requested to ensure this doesn't come up in the media. I kept that promise till today. I am breaking this today because my silence was misunderstood. No one knew what had happened," added Saritha. Mukesh's father O Madhavan was a theatre director and actor and one of the founding members of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in Kerala. His mother Vijayakumari was a stage, television and film actor. "When I was pregnant, he kicked me in the stomach and I fell into the yard. I cried... In such situations, he would say, 'Oh,

you are a good actress... go on, cry.' He always found something to hurt me... Once, when I was nine months pregnant, we went out for dinner together. While returning, when I tried to get into the car, he kept tricking me by taking the car forward and backwards. When I ran behind the car, I fell down and sat there crying. But I tried not to let him see those tears since he would laugh," she said, adding "Once, when he returned drunk at midnight, I casually asked why he was late. He pulled me by the hair, dragged me through the floor and beat me," she added.

During a chat with Manorama News in 2023, Mukesh, however, said he harboured no grudge against Saritha and Devika, whom he divorced in 2021, and had never spoken ill of them. "Until now, I have refrained from speaking negatively about them. Typically, when a couple appears before the family court, the husband and wife almost always blame each other, a common scenario in nearly 100% of cases. It is natural. Not once have I made any derogatory remarks about them," he claimed. "I faced a lot of pressure to say something... I genuinely appreciate both women because making such a decision and being content with it is commendable. Instead of desperately holding on and trying to harm me, there was none of that. If you don't allow your wife, close friend, or even children the freedom to make such decisions, what would happen to their lives? Even to my children, I've only advised them never to hurt their mother under any circumstance."

Kalki 2898 AD producer lauds Nag Ashwin's 'calm' response to Arshad Warsi calling Prabhas a 'joker': 'He only wished he used better language'



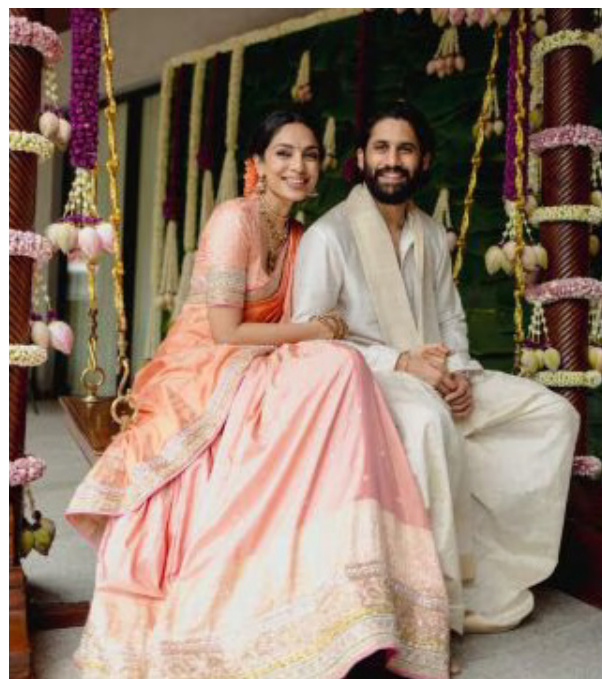
Arshad Warsi recently sparked controversy on social media when he said that Prabhas 'looked like a joker' in Kalki 2898 AD. The remark divided opinions online, with Prabhas' fans criticising Arshad for his distasteful comment, while others defended Arshad's right to express his opinion. The film's director, Nag Ashwin, also responded, advising Arshad to choose his words more carefully. Now, Kalki 2898 AD co-producer Swapna Dutt, who is also Nag Ashwin's sister-in-law, has shared her reaction to the incident.

Swapna praised Nag Ashwin's composed response

to Arshad's statement during an interview with News18. She said, "I loved the way Nagi reacted to it. We stayed calm because the film proved for itself what it is. Prabhas was fantastic in the film as he always is. We've to give it to the magnanimity of Nag Ashwin and Prabhas. They're just so easy on these things." She added, "Nagi tweeted recently saying that he will be sending him a toy and work harder for part two. He only wished that he (Arshad) used better language and that makes Nagi who and what he is."

Previously, Nag Ashwin had shared on X, "Let's not go backwards... no more north-south or bolly vs tolly (Bollywood vs Tollywood)... eyes on the bigger picture... united Indian film industry... Arshad saab (sir) should have chosen his words better... but it's ok... sending Buji toys for his kids... I will work hard so tweets... that Prabhas was the best ever in K2." Other celebrities involved with the film also reacted strongly to Arshad's comment. Kalki 2898 AD co-star Saswata Chatterjee supported Prabhas, stating that "he was the best choice for the role," while Telugu actor Nani dismissed Arshad's remark as a "publicity stunt." Nani later regretted his words and said that the matter was blown out of proportion. Co-producer Dil Raju and director Ajay Bhupathi also criticised the Jolly LLB actor for his statement.

Naga Chaitanya says 'countdown for my marriage' has started, opens up about wedding plans with Sobhita Dhulipala



Actor Naga Chaitanya took the internet by storm on Tuesday after a video of him dressed up in a groom's outfit started circulating online. Fans of the actor were left confused as they thought that the actor, who recently got engaged to Sobhita Dhulipala, was getting married. But, that wasn't the case. The actor was present to launch the wedding collection of a clothing brand and spoke to mediapersons at the event. Chaitanya admitted that this was a "countdown for my marriage" but did not give many details for his wedding date and venue.

At the event, when Naga Chaitanya was asked if this was like a rehearsal for his upcoming wedding with Sobhita, he said, "Perhaps you could think so, that it's a countdown kind of for my marriage." He was also asked if he would want a big fat Indian wedding or a lowkey wedding and the actor shared, "Marriage is about the people who mean a lot to me. It doesn't have to be a big fat wedding but people keeping up with the cultures and traditions in mind, so that's how I want it (marriage) to be." Naga Chaitanya was also asked about the date and

venue for his wedding to Sobhita, and the actor said nothing has been decided as of yet. On August 8, Sobhita Dhulipala and Naga Chaitanya got engaged at the latter's home. Making their relationship official, they wrote, "What could my mother be to yours? What kin is my father to yours anyway? And how did you and I meet ever? But in love our hearts are as red earth and pouring rain: mingled beyond parting. —From Kurunthogai, translated by A K Ramanujan." Chaitanya's father Nagaarjuna Akkineni had also officially announced the engagement on social media officially welcoming Sobhita into their family. In an earlier chat with Times Now, the veteran actor said that Chaitanya and Sobhita decided to have a rushed engagement as this was an auspicious date. "We chose this day because it was very auspicious. Both families consulted the Nakshatras, and when we were told August 8 was a very auspicious day, we decided to go ahead with it," he said. Naga Chaitanya was earlier married to actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu, the two lovebirds had taken the plunge in 2017, and the two parted ways in 2021.

Aamir Khan landed an ad over Shah Rukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai was cast for her 'startling eyes', recalls Prahlad Kakkar

Ad filmmaker Prahlad Kakkar recently took a trip down memory lane and recalled creating the famous Pepsi commercial featuring Aamir Khan and Aishwarya Rai. Prahlad Kakkar opens up about why he chose Aamir Khan over Shah Rukh Khan for the iconic 1995 Pepsi ad featuring Aishwarya Rai.

One of the most prominent figures in the Indian ad film industry, Prahlad Kakkar has served as the mastermind behind numerous memorable commercials. Recently, Kakkar took a trip down memory lane and recalled creating the famous Pepsi commercial featuring Aamir Khan and Aishwarya Rai. He also discussed why he chose Aamir over Shah Rukh Khan, despite the brand's preference for the latter.

"Both of them had just launched their careers," Kakkar said during a chat with Kreative Talkative while mentioning that Shah Rukh Khan had his own reasons for wanting to be in the commercial. "He wanted to own a flat in Bombay. Somebody wanted to sell their flat to him. 'Mujhe Rs 6 lakh chaahiye (I need Rs 6 lakh) to own a flat,' that was his be-all and end-all in terms of his ichha (wish)."

"Aamir had just come out of Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak and he didn't want to do ads because there was a stigma involved that a mainstream actor would do ads only when they are broke or not doing well," he said, adding, "I said 'no, Shah Rukh's time will come'. He had not launched himself as the character, where as with Aamir, I don't have to worry about explaining it to him as he's the character from the film. Then we only had to find the two girls."

Watch Aamir Khan and Aishwarya Rai's Pepsi ad here:

He then spoke about casting Aishwarya in the ad, who was already a popular name in the modelling world. "Everybody — from the client to the peon in my office — had their own vision of what Aishwarya's character should look like. Aishwarya walked into my office... one of the girls dragged her from Kailash's office where she had



"Both of them had just launched their careers," Kakkar said during a chat with Kreative Talkative while mentioning that Shah Rukh Khan had his own reasons for wanting to be in the commercial. "He wanted to own a flat in Bombay. Somebody wanted to sell their flat to him. 'Mujhe Rs 6 lakh chaahiye (I need Rs 6 lakh) to own a flat,' that was his be-all and end-all in terms of his ichha (wish)."

gone for an audition. She looked like a typical student wearing torn jeans with slightly rumpled hair, but nice mane of hair. She had the most startling eyes that I had ever seen. When I went to get the cast approved, they (the clients) said, 'Not bad, now show us the rest (implying to see other options for the role).' I said there was no rest and they said, 'What do you mean, you are not giving us a choice?' and I replied I can't since they don't make them in twos," he added.

Lionel Messi joins group training with Inter Miami, another step toward his return after ankle injury



GNS News Agency, August 31

Lionel Messi returned to group training with Inter Miami on Wednesday, more than six weeks after the Argentine captain left the Copa America final with a badly sprained right ankle. There is still no official timetable for when Messi, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, will play again for Inter Miami — which has the best record in Major League Soccer so far this season. Inter Miami visits Chicago on Saturday, then doesn't return to MLS play until a Sept. 14 match with Philadelphia. If Messi doesn't play this weekend, that means he'd have two more weeks to continue rehabbing before returning to game action. "To see him on the field is great," Inter Miami goalkeeper

Drake Callender said after the Wednesday workout. "I know he's been getting treatment every single day, training every single day. He's dealt with things before. He's been there, done that and he's still doing it at the highest level. To see him recoup from the kind of injury we saw at Copa America and be available for us this season, it goes to show the quality of care we have here." Messi has 12 goals and 13 assists in 12 MLS games with Inter Miami this season. He's missed 14 of the club's league matches, including each of the last eight either because he was playing for Argentina or recovering from the ankle injury. Also missed by Messi in that span: all four of Inter Miami's matches in Leagues Cup play, as the team tried to defend the trophy it won a year ago. Messi last played on July 14, leaving in the second half of Argentina's win over Colombia in the Copa America final. He was dealing with leg issues throughout that tournament, plus left the field briefly in the first half of the final because of a left ankle issue — then got hurt again in the second half and had to leave for good. If Messi doesn't play until the Sept. 14 match, he'll have had exactly two months to recover and rehab plus gear up for the MLS playoffs. Inter Miami is the only team so far to have clinched a playoff berth and is currently four points clear — with a match in hand — over the LA Galaxy for the best overall record in MLS.

Cricket West Indies CEO gives reasons for Jay Shah's ICC elevation

GNS News Agency, August 31

Jay Shah's success in pulling off lucrative broadcast deals and organising major events was the prime reason for the BCCI secretary getting unanimous support in his bid to become the International Cricket Council's (ICC) new Independent Chair. "The ICC board doesn't want to waste too much time on internal politics. If you look at Jay's leadership at the BCCI, it has been wonderful. He has hosted the Women's Premier League, successfully oversaw the 50-over World Cup in India and has signed huge broadcast deals with IPL and for BCCI," Cricket West Indies CEO Johnny Grave told The Indian Express.

That would explain Shah being elected unopposed on Tuesday, with 15 of the 16 directors backing his candidature in the nomination stage. It is the sort of backing not even Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan or Shashank Manohar enjoyed at the ICC. The foremost reason seems to be the uncertainty around the broadcast deal with Disney Star that has cast a shadow over plans for a dedicated fund for Test cricket. Shah, the England Cricket Board and Cricket Australia have been behind the initiative that could guarantee Test cricketers from other countries a match fee of \$10,000. Although the economics of it are being worked out, unless ICC sorts out the issues with broadcast partner Disney Star, the plan could be a non-starter. "We are talking about the Indian sub-continent rights holder, who contributes the major chunk of the revenue. We have seen Jay pull off lucrative deals for IPL and bilateral cricket. It is the need of the hour at the ICC as well," a board member privy to developments pointed out.

Disney Star is currently in talks with the ICC to reduce its \$3-billion commitment made for four years that ends in 2027. Any such revision could have an immediate effect on the prospective Test match fund that could be worth around Rs 125 crore. According to this plan, this amount will cover the match fees, touring costs and operational costs for boards outside the Big 3. "I don't see the Test match fund coming until the next Future Tours Programme that starts in 2027," Grave said. "Unless a new economic model is worked out, it would be challenging to bring it now. A lot is riding on the broadcast deal." For the plan to get the green light before 2027, there are talks of converting the Champions Trophy which is currently played in the ODI format into a T20 tournament. Shah's role in this could well be crucial as he has repeatedly stressed on finding a balance between T20s and keeping Test cricket healthy. "From whatever I read of Jay after taking charge, he seems to acknowledge the issues. It is a good sign because I can see a strategic ap-

proach from the ICC, especially with the Olympics coming up. The game has strived for unity and you need everyone aligned on complex issues," Grave said. "Outside of England and Australia, broadcasters value only the shorter forms. A dedicated Test match fund would send a message that the format remains the pinnacle even among players. There is a lot of migration happening towards T20s. I certainly believe the Test cricket fund will help other boards to operate cricket efficiently." Pressing issues more than the Test fee for cricketers, the "touring fee" could be the game-changer for member boards. Recently, the ECB announced that it would be paying Zimbabwe for touring England in 2025. It is understood that Shah wants a similar arrangement in place for others, a reason why he wants the dedicated Test match fund to be Rs 125 crore or higher. Needless to say, it has found the backing of member boards. At present when it comes to bilateral series, host countries walk away with all the revenue. Touring teams getting a fee would increase their revenue extensively, especially when they tour India, England and Australia. "For member boards, hosting matches and touring costs a lot. And it is not just Test cricket. For example, our first-class system costs \$5 billion and those are losses. If the current model is changed, boards will be able to invest in players, develop them and refine them. That is where a lot of boards struggle. An appropriate model has to be found," Grave added. The need to prioritise Test cricket is among the reasons member boards reckon Shah would be crucial. After he took charge as BCCI secretary, despite the packed calendar, India has played bilateral series with all full-member nations except Pakistan. Over the last 12 months, the BCCI has sent its T20 team to Ireland and Zimbabwe and even hosted Afghanistan at home. It is an aspect where England and Australia often fall short. And Shah did all of it while still prioritising Test cricket as he also announced new incentives for India's long-format players.

trol themselves. If you see it from up close, you'll definitely notice it. Even if you're playing on some other board, you keep hearing some coughs every now and then just notice that there's a person in the room who is very nervous. Yet, he's able to improve his chess level."

"Gukesh being hyper-focused could be an issue because maybe at some point, he will be upset or angry if he loses," said the Dutchman, who will be in action in the second edition of the Global Chess League for the PBG Alaskan Knights franchise. Ahead of the final round to be played on Wednesday night, Gukesh was tied third with four other players including R Praggnanandhaa. Ding, meanwhile, is tied eight while Anish is last in the 10-player field. As someone who has played in the Candidates before, Anish knows a thing or two about how difficult it is to win the event and qualify for the World Championship. For Gukesh to become the youngest player to win the Candidates at the age of 17, that too in his first try, is particularly commendable, says Anish. "Very few players have won the Candidates on their first try. We've had a lot of these preconceived notions where we thought this is how it should go."

To win an event of this sort, one has to truly believe that you can. I believe Gukesh did! He's very fortunate with his style in terms of it being very unstable. It means that he can peak very high and he did it at the right moment (the Candidates). The fact that he was off form for half a year before (the Candidates) is irrelevant. It matters what your peak is, and that you achieve the peak at the highest stage. "That's also a quality of an exceptional player, exceptional champion, that you are able to bring your best game when it matters. I believe there are two types of players: those who perform worse and those who perform better at the highest stage. And if you are that second type who performs better at high-stakes events like Gukesh, you are very likely to become a champion."

Analysing India's medal contenders at Paris 2024 Paralympics: Avani Lekhara, the shooter who made headlines before Manu Bhaker



GNS News Agency, August 31

Hopes are high for the Indian contingent at the Paris Paralympics to deliver their best-ever showing at the Games, with the benchmark set in Tokyo. Three years back, India finished the Tokyo Paralympics with 19 medals including five gold, eight silver, and six bronze. As has been the case at these Games, para athletics is where once again India's highest percentage of medals would be expected in Paris as well. But this time around, para badminton, shooting para sport and para archery too have been earmarked for significant results. Sumit's rise from the Tokyo Paralympics is one of the stories of Indian sport in recent times. He shot to the limelight in some style with a series of world record-breaking throws in Tokyo (where he won gold with 68.55 metres eventually). Sumit has since gone on to win gold at the World Championships twice (Paris 2023 and Kobe 2024), as well as the Asian Para Games last year. In Hangzhou, he broke the World Record again with 73.29m. He is not only India's flag bearer at the opening ceremony but also the flagbearer for India's para athletics program.

Mariyappan Thangavelu is already a two-time Paralympic medalist. He won gold at Rio 2016 (T42) with a clearance of 1.89m before finishing with a silver in Tokyo with 1.86. Thangavelu's gold medal at the last World Championships also augurs well, in a field not too different from what we will see in Paris this time. In fact, this could be a very productive event for India with Sharad Kumar and Shailesh Kumar also in the fray in the 8-man field. USA's Sam Grewe and Ezra Frech will be the Indians' main rivals for the podium. Before Manu Bhaker in Paris, there was Avani Lekhara in Tokyo. A teenager back then, Avani was sensational at the last Paralympic Games, where she won two medals, including a gold that made her the first female Paralympic champion in India's history. In Paris, she will compete in three events: Women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1, Mixed 10m Air Rifle Prone, Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions SH1. The gold medal

she'd be defending is in the 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 event, and that will be first up for her. Also in shooting, Manish Narwal is a firm contender in Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 where he is the reigning Paralympic and World Champion. Still only 17, Sheetal Devi is already no stranger to making headlines. Armless Archers are rare in the world and Sheetal has made rapid strides in a short time since getting into the sport. She will be one of the three archers shooting with the help of their feet along with the pioneer himself Matt Stutzman and Piotr Van Montagu. Sheetal will be competing in two events: Women's Individual Compound Open and Mixed Team Compound Open. She had won silver in the individual event at the World Championships in Plzen last year and would be keen to go one step further. Harvinder Singh, history-maker in Tokyo when he won India's first archery medal at any Summer Games, is also in recurve contention in Paris in two events. There are quite a few medal contenders among male shuttlers in Paris, but all eyes will be on Krishna Nagar who will be looking to defend his gold medal from Tokyo. In the absence of Pramod Bhagat, who was handed an 18-month suspension recently, Krishna is the only returning champion from three years ago. He is seeded third in his class, where Chu Man Kai has the top billing and will be the man to beat. Indian men who have received top seeding are Tokyo bronze medallist Suhas Yathiraj (SL4) and Nitesh Kumar (SL3).

Still only 19, Manisha Ramadass already has built up a solid CV, having won gold at the 2022 World Championships and finishing with a silver earlier this year. India's Thulasi Mathi Murugesan is the top seed in this category, but Manisha comes with more singles success in her favour. Yang Qiu Xia of China, however, would perhaps start the favourite as the reigning Paralympic and World Champion. Elsewhere, Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan is the top seed in SH6 while Tokyo Paralympian Palak Kohli is in contention in two events and would be keen to earn her first medal. One of the more impressive medals in Tokyo for the Indian contingent came in table tennis when Bhavina Patel punched well above her world ranking back then of 12 to win silver, the country's first ever table tennis medal at Olympics or Paralympics. She beat higher-ranked opponents all along, even defeating the Rio 2016 gold medallist Borislava Peric-Rankovic in the quarters and silver medallist Miao Zhang in the semis. The win against the Chinese was especially impressive. This time, Bhavina enters the tournament as the 4th seed and will once again have to overcome the likes of Peric-Rankovic and a couple of Chinese opponents if she has to go back-to-back. Bhavina is also entered to feature in Women's Doubles — WD10 alongside Sonal Patel.

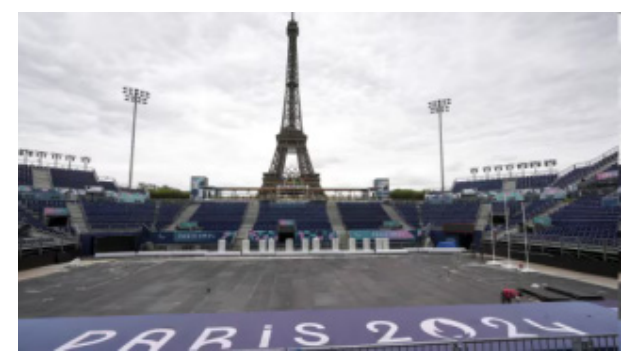
What happens to sporting, other equipment after Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics are over

GNS News Agency, August 31

The Eiffel Tower Stadium will convert from a beach volleyball court for the Paris 2024 Olympics to a blind football field for the Paralympics. (PHOTO: AP) The Eiffel Tower Stadium will convert from a beach volleyball court for the Paris 2024 Olympics to a blind football field for the Paralympics. After every Olympics and Paralympics, there is plenty of speculation about what will happen to the venues that are built at extraordinary costs to the public exchequer. But organising an Olympics and a Paralympics also requires large-scale sporting and other logistical equipment that the organising committee of the Games has no use for after the marquee event ends. So what happens to the equipment? As the organisers of Paris 2024 have revealed, 75 percent of the 1.2 million items of sports equipment used for the Paris Games was leased to begin with and will head back to the original owners such as sporting federations. The rest of the one-fourth of the sporting paraphernalia that was purchased will be donated to the French sports movement. For this, Paris 2024 had an internal Second Life Commission in the organising committee.

"This re-use programme reflects Paris 2024's desire to develop access to physical activity and sport for as many people as possible, particularly those who are from areas lacking in sports facilities, such as Seine-Saint-Denis, which ranks 103rd out of France's 105 departments with regard to access to sports infrastructure," the organisers said ahead of the start of the Paralympics on Wednesday. The organisers provided some examples of how the equipment will be repurposed. The French Volleyball Federation (FFVB) will inherit equipment like balls, nets, posts and sports floors which it will make available to its sports centres across France. The French Badminton Federation (FFBaD) will receive equipment for both its Olympic and Paralympic disciplines which will head to venues like the one at Pays de la Loire. The French Taekwondo Federation (FFTTA) will redistribute sports equipment used during the Olympic and Paralympic Games to a number of clubs in the Paris region, including Dugny. Some of the facilities that were temporarily set up for Paris 2024, will also be shifted in some form to different venues. The sand from the temporary Eiffel Tower stadium that hosted the beach volleyball event will be reused to create the equivalent of three pitches in the departmental park at Marville and one at Taverny in the Val d'Oise. The Skateboard Street competition area at Parc Urbain La Concorde and the warm-up area will be relocated to Seine-Saint-Denis. The temporary swimming pools installed at the Paris La Défense Arena in Nanterre will be re-used in Seine-Saint-Denis, Sevran (Paris Terres d'Envol) and Bagnolet (Est-Ensemble), as part of a legacy initiative.

Gerflor, which supplied 33,000m² of sports flooring for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, will be reinstalling almost forty pitches in municipalities and clubs in the Paris region and throughout France. There will be at least 12 different second-hand fairs that will be hosted by Paris 2024 organisers around France — for the first time in the history of the Games — to give a second life to thousands of souvenirs like uniforms, cups, flags, towels used by the athletes, elements for decorating the venues and even products from the ceremonies. The Paris 2024 organisers also said that 90 percent of the six million assets which were deployed during the Games will be taken back by service providers



and partners. For example, Lyreco, supplier of over 60,000 items of furniture for the Games, will use the furniture it leased for Paris 2024 to launch a new range of second-hand furniture in France. The Paris 2024 organisers said that one of their partner organisation RGS will donate over 50,000 pieces of furniture to the Emmaus Movement, which provides furniture for people in challenging situations who are accessing their first permanent home. Meanwhile, thousands of other items (ranging from accessibility equipment, to trolleys, hand trucks, fans and vacuum cleaners) used for the Games will be sold via an online platform which is open to communities, businesses, sports federations or associations where they can bid on mobility equipment (such as bicycle helmets or locks); digital equipment; handling equipment (trolleys, hand trucks); furniture and household appliances (umbrellas, vacuum cleaners, fans); signage; accessibility equipment etc.

Dimitrov defeats Hijikata, advances to third round

GNS News Agency, August 31

New York: Ninth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria overcame Australian Rinky Hijikata in straight sets, 6-1, 6-1, 7-6(4), in a men's singles second-round clash on Day 3 at the 2024 US Open here on Wednesday.

Dimitrov, the 33-year-old from Bulgaria, immediately dominated the first game and did not concede any points to the No. 62-ranked Hijikata. He took game one in a brisk three minutes, setting the pace early on. He controlled the match with deep shots to keep Hijikata at the baseline with little opportunity to approach the net.

The 23-year-old Hijikata ranked No. 62 in the ATP Rankings, traded advantages with the Bulgarian in game two, but two unforced errors closed the game and gave Dimitrov the first break of the set. Just when it seemed Hijikata was primed to push a winner at Dimitrov, he couldn't close and struck the balls into the net, posting 11 unforced errors in the first set.

Dimitrov's momentum continued, and he easily took the first two sets from Hijikata and only dropped two games in the process. But Hijikata did not surrender so easily. He came back in the third set, managing to push Dimitrov to a tiebreak. Dimitrov was first up to the line and relied on his lethal serve to quickly go up 2-0. Hijikata, the comeback competitor that he is, battled back, and it took Dimitrov six match points before finally taking the victory.