

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

## Cyberabad Police nab choreographer Jani Master in Bengaluru

Hyderabad: Choreographer Shaik Jani alias Jani Master was taken into custody by the Cyberabad Police in Bengaluru on Thursday. The Cyberabad Police were on the lookout for Jani Master after a case was registered against him for allegedly threatening and sexually assaulting an assistant choreographer during shootings. The victim had lodged a complaint with the Raidurgam police initially and after registering a 'zero FIR', the Raidurgam police transferred the case to Narsingi police station on jurisdictional grounds. The police invoked Sections of POCSO Act and other laws against Jani Master after which he went into hiding. The victim had alleged that the well known choreographer had threatened and sexually assaulted her multiple times.

## Design Democracy 2024 to be held in Hyderabad from Oct 4 to 6

Hyderabad: Design Democracy 2024, Hyderabad's premier design festival, is set to captivate the city from October 4 to 6 at HITEX, Halls 1 and 3. Bringing together creators, professionals, and enthusiasts, the event promises a transformative celebration of design, art, and innovation.

Spearheaded by founders Pallika Sreewastav, Shailja Patwari, and Arjun Rathi, with brand director Mansi Negi and curator Supraja Rao of the Museum of Telangana, this landmark event is positioned to shape the future of the city's design landscape, a press release said.

## PM Modi calls Rahul Gandhi's 'Devta' remark a sign of 'Naxal mindset'

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Asking people to cast their votes wisely in the ongoing Assembly polls that are linked to the "future of Jammu and Kashmir", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday (September 19, 2024) that they should ensure the political sunset of the Congress, National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which have "inflicted wounds" in the region for years together.

Addressing a poll rally in Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu

and Kashmir's Reasi district, PM Modi also accused the Congress leadership of insulting Hindu gods and goddesses under a "well-thought-out conspiracy" and due to a "Naxal mindset", and asked people "should they not be punished for this"? This was the second election rally addressed by the Prime Minister in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday (September 19, 2024) and the third in a week. He addressed another rally in Srinagar earlier in the day. On September 14, PM Modi addressed a rally in Doda district.

Doda district.

"This election is for choosing the future of Jammu and Kashmir. This election is meant to take the 'new Jammu and Kashmir' to new heights," the Prime Minister said while urging the voters to ensure the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victory in the polls. "The three families of the Congress, NC and PDP inflicted wounds on the people here for years together. We have to ensure the political sunset of these parties by pressing the button next to the lotus, the symbol of the BJP. I



## Harish Rao slams Congress for inaction against CM Revanth Reddy's offensive remarks against KCR

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Hyderabad: Senior BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao lambasted the Congress leadership for its hypocrisy over abusive language and personal attacks against political opponents. He said the Congress leadership was allowing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to use abusive language against BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, but objecting to the same against Rahul Gandhi. He appealed to the Congress leadership for strict disciplinary action against Revanth Reddy for his inflammatory and derogatory remarks. In a strongly worded open letter to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Harish Rao said while the Congress rightly condemned BJP leaders for their offensive remarks



against Rahul Gandhi, the party remains silent on Revanth Reddy's abusive and defamatory remarks against Chandrashekhara Rao. He pointed out that Kharge repeatedly emphasised that foul and abusive language degrades political discourse and undermines India's democratic and constitutional values and Gandhian principles.

"The same standards are conveniently ignored or disregarded when it comes to Revanth Reddy. This tolerance of his crude and offensive conduct raises serious questions about the ethical and moral compass of the Congress party," he said. Revanth Reddy has allegedly called for KCR to be pelted with stones and hanged, alongside other highly offensive comments, even during the Rajiv Gandhi birth anniversary celebrations. Harish Rao said Revanth Reddy continues to publicly spew defamatory, filthy and highly offensive remarks against K Chandrashekhara Rao, which is against the Congress party's principles and ideology.

Drawing parallels to the Mahabharata, the former Minister likened the Congress' inaction to King Dhritrashtra's willful ignorance of his son Duryodhana's misdeeds. He stated that this double standard not only undermines democratic values but also sets a dangerous precedent of unchecked dictatorial behaviour. Further, Harish Rao charged Revanth Reddy with fostering a dictatorial atmosphere in Telangana, stating that police forces act under his command, filing false cases against BRS leaders, while ignoring offences committed by his associates. He called on Kharge to take action, emphasising that allowing Revanth's behaviour would erode constitutional principles and tarnish the Congress' claims to moral leadership.

## Fact finding committee to investigate in Gandhi deaths, KTR

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Hyderabad: The BRS working president, K T Rama Rao on Thursday said that a fact-finding will investigate into the reasons behind the surge in fatalities of mothers and infants at Gandhi Hospital. Instead of passing of deaths as mere numbers, State government should join the fact finding committee and work towards the betterment of everyone, K T Rama Rao said. Taking to social media platform X on Thursday, Rama Rao posted "BRS's fact finding committee will investigate and we will share our findings with public and the State government."

### JEWELS IN TELANGANA CROWN MILESTONES IN PRAJA PALANA

**200 units free power**

**21 per cent fitment to TSRTC employees**

**4.5 lakh Indiramma houses**

**Official conduct of Gaddar birth anniversary**

**Free RTC bus travel for women**

**28,030 Government Jobs Filled**

**Rs 10 Lakh Free Medical Assistance under Rajiv Sri Arogyasri**

**Mahila Shakti for women empowerment**

**Rythu Nestham**

**Rs One lakh crore loans to Women SHGs in five years**

**Interest free loans to Women**

**Salaries on first of every month to all government employees**

**Cabinet Sub Committees on GO 317 and 46**

**Rajiv Rahadari Elevated Corridor**

**Narayanpet - Kodangal lift irrigation**

**Mega DSC to fill 11062 posts**

**Group-I notification to fill 563 posts**

**Rs 40,000 crore investment agreements in Davos**

**Loan insurance for women community**

**Change of Vehicle Registration to TG from TS**

**16 Caste based Corporations**

**Gaddar Awards**

**Bowenpally Double Decker Corridor**

**Genome Vally Phase 2**

**Caste Census approved**

**Efforts to reform Dharani Portal**

**Solved more than one lakh grievances in Dharani**

**Praja Palana commenced**

**First sign on Six Guarantees**

**Constitution of Girijana Corporations**

**White Ration cards to all eligible**

**Jobs to 2008 qualified DSC candidates**

**Prajavani**

**Cylinder at Rs 500**

**TSPSC Revamped**

**Rs 10 lakh accident insurance for women**

**Free Travel for Women in TSRTC Buses**

**Rs 10 Lakh Free Medical Assistance under Rajiv Arogyasri**

**200 Units of Free Power**

**Rs 5 Lakh Financial Assistance to Built Houses**

**Cylinder at Rs 500**

**Path to progress... Welfare of all... Our people's governance**

Issued by Special Commissioner, I&PR Dept. Govt. of Telangana



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Delhi's new CM

OUT on bail in the excise policy case, AAP chief and outgoing CM Arvind Kejriwal has entrusted party leader Atishi with the onerous task of putting Delhi's governance back on track. Welfare schemes and development works have been in limbo in the national capital for almost six months following Kejriwal's arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The growing public discontent with the AAP government has prompted him to step down and throw the ball in the voters' court. With the Assembly elections just five months away — unless they are held ahead of schedule — he is seeking a 'certificate of innocence' from the people of Delhi.

It will be a race against time for CM-designate Atishi to ensure that various pending projects are expeditiously completed and the flagship schemes cover all intended beneficiaries. New promises will have to be announced in a bid to retake control of its populist narrative. Considering Kejriwal's many run-ins with the Lt Governor, it is too much to expect that Atishi will have a cordial relationship with the Centre's appointee. Another big challenge will be to carve a niche for herself and dispel the notion that she is a rubber-stamp CM under her mentor's control.

Kejriwal would be well advised to focus on revitalising his party, whose 'politics of honesty' has been severely undermined by the accusations levelled against him and other AAP leaders by the ED and the CBI. AAP, which was accorded the status of a national party last year, is trying to gain a foothold in Haryana after drawing a blank in Delhi and winning only three out of 13 seats in Punjab in this year's Lok Sabha elections. The strategy of playing the victim card and accusing the BJP-led Centre of political vendetta has to be complemented by earnest efforts to redress people's grievances in Delhi as well as Punjab.

## What's in a name? From Allahabad to Port Blair, a look at the cities that have been renamed

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Union Minister Amit Shah on Friday announced that Port Blair, the capital city of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has been officially renamed to 'Sri Vijaya Puram', stating that the decision was inspired by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "to free the nation from colonial imprints". In a post on X Shah stated that "while the earlier name had a colonial legacy, Sri Vijaya Puram symbolises the victory achieved in our freedom struggle and the A&N Islands' unique role in the same." Port Blair is the 8th major city to have been renamed in the last decade. How is a city renamed?

The renaming process typically begins with a proposal made by a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the state assembly which outlines the reasons for the name change. The proposal is then discussed in the assembly and a simple majority vote is required for the proposal to pass. Once passed, the proposal is sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs at the central government level where various agencies, such as the Survey of India and the Department of Posts are consulted before issuing a No Objection Certificate (NOC). Upon receiving the NOC, the state government can issue an official notification in the state gazette to finalise the name change. Let's take a look at all the cities that have received a new name. Rajahmundry to Rajamahendravaram In Andhra Pradesh, Rajahmundry city in the East Godavari district was renamed 'Rajamahendravaram' in 2015, restoring its historical name and reflecting the region's cultural heritage. The new name was derived from a Chalukya dynasty ruler of the 11th century. Gurgaon to Gurugram Haryana's largest city Gurgaon was renamed Gurugram in 2016, reflecting the area's historical significance. Legend has it that Gurgaon derived its name from Guru Dronacharya, Mahabharata's master of archery, and was said that the village was given as a 'gurudakshina' giving the name Gurugram.

Allahabad to Prayagraj The city of Allahabad was officially renamed Prayagraj in December 2018. The change was driven by the Uttar Pradesh government's desire to restore the city's ancient name, which reflects its association with the confluence of sacred rivers, the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati. Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting where the decision was taken, senior Cabinet minister Siddhartha Nath Singh said, "The people of entire Allahabad, the sages and seers wanted that Allahabad should be known as Prayagraj. All the sages and seers had given their unanimous approval for the same." Naya Raipur to Atal Nagar The capital of Chhattisgarh, New Raipur, was renamed Atal Nagar in 2018 in honour of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Additionally, Chief Minister Raman Singh announced that the Bilaspur University, a medical college, state capital expressway and the under-construction Central Park will also be renamed Vajpayee's honour.

Hoshangabad Nagar to Narmadapuram In 2022, Madhya Pradesh Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that Hoshangabad Nagar was renamed Narmadapuram highlighting its connection to the Narmada River which holds cultural and spiritual importance. Aurangabad to Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar In Maharashtra, Aurangabad was officially renamed Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in 2023, in honor of the Maratha king Sambhaji Maharaj, son of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji, who was killed by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. In 1988, stalwart Bal Thackeray announced that the city would be known as 'Sambhaji Nagar' and since the demand to rename it sprang up.

Osmanabad to Dharashiv In the same year, another city in the Marathwada region Osmanabad was renamed Dharashiv. Where Osmanabad was derived from the last ruler of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan, the new name originated from the ancient Dharashiv caves. According to the Bhartiya Sanskriti Kosh, the name has been believed to come from the two guards, Dhara and Shiv, who were deployed to protect the caves. Other notable changes Birsinghpur Pali to Maa Birasini Dham: Birsinghpur Pali, Madhya Pradesh was renamed Maa Birasini Dham in 2018, reflecting the local cultural and religious sentiments. The new name was chosen to honour the goddess Birasini. Nagar Untari to Shri Banshidhar Nagar: In 2018, Nagar Untari in Madhya Pradesh was renamed Shri Banshidhar Nagar, paying tribute to a local historical figure.

## 'Puts entire judicial system to shame': Karnataka HC expresses concern over long delay in trial of child sexual assault cases



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Karnataka HC allowed the recalling of witnesses in the case in the Bengaluru Rural Pocco court to allow a cross examination of the witnesses by the defence but also ruled that the cross examination must be completed in nine days for the nine witnesses. Long delay in the trial process of cases of sexual offences against children despite the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, 2012, mandating completion of trial in a year, puts the entire judicial system to shame, the Karnataka High Court has said.

The court made the observation on September 10 in a plea in a Pocco case, where a five-year-old child from Bengaluru region was allegedly raped and murdered, that has been pending for seven years. The case came up before the high court in connection with a plea by one of the accused persons for an order to facilitate the cross examination of nine witnesses which had been disallowed by the trial court after the defence lawyer was absent for the cross examinations.

"Section 35(2) of the Pocco Act mandates closure/ completion of trial, as far as possible, within a period of one year from the date of taking cognizance of the offence. Cognizance in the case at hand is taken in the year 2017, seven years have passed by, the offenders of law are yet to be brought to justice," the high court observed in its orders. "Delay in such cases, where the offences are heinous based on facts that are horrendous, is a sad reflection of the legal and judicial system. It is in such circumstances, the entire criminal justice system is put to shame," Justice M Nagaprasanna of the High Court observed.

"Though the statute mandates completion within one year, here are scores of cases pending before the concerned courts despite passage of several years, even of offences of rape and under the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012," he said. The HC, however, allowed the recalling of witnesses in the case in the Bengaluru Rural Pocco court to allow a cross examination of the witnesses by the defence but also ruled that the cross examination must be completed in nine days for the nine witnesses. "In these circumstances, though granting the relief sought by the petitioner, I deem it appropriate to direct the concerned court to conduct the cross-examination of the witnesses on a day-to-day basis i.e., nine days from the date of its commencement, as there are nine witnesses to be cross-examined," the Karnataka HC has stated. "No adjournment on whatsoever ground shall be granted to the counsel for the accused for the purpose of cross-examination. From the ninth day — the day the cross-examination concludes the concerned Court shall conclude the trial within three months," the HC said.

## CPIM youth leader Kalatan Dasgupta arrested for 'plotting attack on junior doctors' protest'

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

CPIM's youth organisation DYFI leader and CPIM state committee member Kalatan Dasgupta was arrested on Saturday morning for allegedly plotting an attack on junior doctors' ongoing dharna at West Bengal's Salt Lake. On Friday, an audio clip went viral where a person could be heard talking over a call to another about attacking the protesters. TMC leader Kunal Ghosh posted the audio clip on X, demanding a proper police inquiry. He also alleged that the CPIM and BJP are carrying out a "conspiracy" to tarnish the state government's image.

On Friday night, the Bidhannagar police commissionerate arrested one Sanjit Das from Garfa of South Kolkata. On Saturday morning, they arrested Kalatan Dasgupta from an agitation at Fierce Lane, according to CPIM members. Bidhannagar DC Biswajit Ghosh said, "We have verified the audio clip. It is genuine and on the basis of that, we first arrested Sanjit Das. We interrogated him and he confessed about the plotting and conversation with Kalatan. Then we arrested him. We will produce them at court on Saturday and will appeal for 14 days of police custody." "We have some other names that we are also investigating, and searching for them as well," Ghosh added.

Meanwhile, Kalatan Dasgupta said the arrest is a "conspiracy to divide the movement of Justice for Tilottama. This is a baseless allegation." CPIM leader and advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said, "Police



should have first got Kinal Ghosh in custody and interrogated him. Police claimed one accused had accepted that it was his voice. We have seen how the prime accused in the (R G Kar) rape and murder case has changed his statement. It is possible that using AI, a conspiracy has been hatched to malign the protests." BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya said, "I have known Kalatan for years. He can't do such things. It is another conspiracy of TMC." Dasgupta was arrested under sections 224 (threat of injury to any public servant), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), 353 (2) (circulating any statement or report containing false information, rumours, or alarming news), 351 (2) (criminal intimidation) and 61 (criminal conspiracy) of the BNS.

## 'We heard screaming, saw the fire but couldn't escape': 13 affected in Ghatkopar fire

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Thirteen people, including two minors, suffered from suffocation after a fire broke out in a seven-storey residential building in Ghatkopar early on Saturday. No casualties were reported while nearly 90 residents—trapped inside—were rescued safely by the firemen and locals. The incident was reported at 1.35 am Saturday inside the Shanti Sagar Building situated in Ramabai Colony inside Ghatkopar East's Pantnagar. A senior BMC official said the structure was a rehab building of MHADA.

On Saturday, fire broke out in the building's electric meter cabin. While flames remained confined to electrical wirings and installation of the electrical cabin located on the ground floor, smoke spread through the structure, leading to suffocation amongst several residents. Furthermore, locals said the cabin from where the fire spread was situated near the building's entrance gate. With the entry and exit points of the building ablaze, as well as intensive smoke logging, residents could not escape the building. Nearly 90 persons were stranded on several floors of the building, as per the BMC. "At night, when we suddenly heard a lot of screaming, we figured that there had been a fire. Because the staircase area was filled with smoke, there was no way to go down and we began coughing and choking on the smoke. Then, my family and other residents went to the terrace and waited to be rescued," Ranjana Sonawane, a sixth floor resident told The Indian Express. Sonawane was with her daughter and two minor grandchildren, when the fire broke out.

Several residents said the fire brigade arrived more than an hour after the fire broke out, thus delaying the rescue operation. Chandan Nikalje, a member of Ramabai Ambedkar residents society, who helped in the rescue operation, said, "The fire brigade came nearly one and a half hours after the fire broke out. Before they could arrive, we used ladders to rescue residents but only up to the second floor. We could do nothing about helping those on the upper floors." Meanwhile, Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) rescued nearly 80–90 persons stranded on various floors of the building via the stairs. However, owing to smoke inhalation, 13 persons including two minors were severely affected and admitted to the civic-run Rajawadi hospital. One was taken in OPD and discharged and seven people have taken discharge against medical advice. Five victims—Jasim Salim Sayyad (17), Abid Shah (22), Sweety Sandip Kadam (45), Laxmi Laxman Kadam (50) and Laxman Rambhau Kadam (60)—are still undergoing treatment in hospital. As per medical officials, the condition of victims remains stable. In a bid to douse the



blaze, meanwhile, the fire brigade pressed a hose line from three motor pumps. A senior official from MFB said, "The fire broke out in the meter cabin, and we responded to the call as soon as possible. It could have been a short circuit, but the exact cause is yet to be ascertained." Meanwhile, Nikalje said that the building has been occupied since 2016 and "earlier too, we had appealed to the developer to conduct an inspection of the electrical cabin as it was unsafe but to no avail."

## Stolen diamond helps police nab murderers of Maharashtra petrol pump owner

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

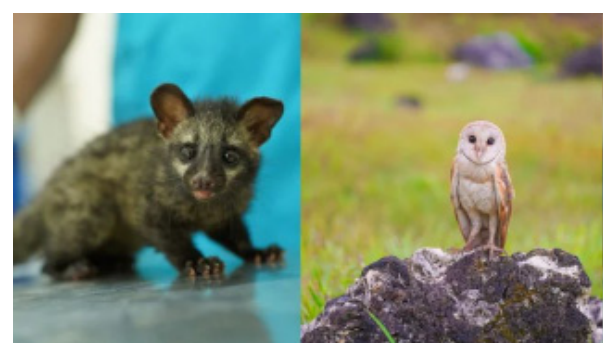
The inability to sell a stolen diamond in Nepal landed two people in the police net for the murder of a petrol pump owner in Maharashtra.

Based on a tip-off, the police on Wednesday arrested the accused, Mukesh Khubchandani and Anil Rajkumar, from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, where they had come to sell the valuables they had allegedly stolen from the murder victim R G Kakrani.

Kakrani, who owned a petrol pump, was found dead in his car on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district on August 25, said Datta Shinde, Additional Commissioner of Police, Mira Bhayander Vasai Virar.

The victim was reportedly abducted and strangled by his driver Khubchandani and two others and was robbed of cash, a diamond ring, and a watch, he said.

## With timely intervention, Maharashtra Forest Department rescues wild palm civet, barn owl



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

The mammal, injured in a suspected case of road accident, was rescued by the Maharashtra Forest Department and was kept under care at the multi-specialty hospital in Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre (MLRC) — run in collaboration between Wildlife SOS and the Maharashtra Forest Department. The mammal, injured in a suspected case of road accident, was rescued by the Maharashtra Forest Department and was kept under care at the multi-specialty hospital in Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre (MLRC) — run in collaboration between Wildlife SOS and the Maharashtra Forest Department. An injured Asian palm civet was rescued by the Maharashtra Forest Department from Belhe village near Junnar in Maharashtra, and eventually treated by the Wildlife SOS veterinary team at the Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre (MLRC). After a remarkable recovery, the civet was released back into a suitable natural habitat.

In a suspected case of road accident, the Maharashtra Forest Department stepped in time to rescue an Asian palm civet from Belhe village in Junnar range. Being discovered on the roadside, the forest department brought the animal to the multi-specialty hospital in MLRC — which is run in collaboration between Wildlife SOS and the Maharashtra Forest Department. While being diagnosed, the doctors discovered that the animal had sustained a minor injury to its mouth and thereby provided injectables. Dr Avinash Visalkar, Veterinary Officer, Wildlife SOS said that their team then treated the animal with oral medication and provided multivitamins. "We also ensured a nutritious diet of fruits and chicken. After four days in care, the civet had recovered and we deemed it fit for release," he said.

To ensure its safe return to the wild, the Wildlife SOS and forest department team released the animal in a nearby forest with a high palm civet population. Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder and CEO, Wildlife SOS stated, "Smaller mammals such as Asian palm civets are threatened by road accidents as they can be difficult to spot. In this case, we are thankful to the forest department for bringing the animal on time for treatment. But we would also tell people to be more vigilant of the presence of wild animals while driving in natural spaces."

In a separate instance, a barn owl was rescued from Barav village in Junnar and brought to MLRC by the forest department. The distressed bird was provided vitamin supplements, and after being under care for a whole day, the bird was released back into the wild. Smita Rajhans, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Junnar Division pointed out that whenever their team finds an animal in distress, it shifts them to the multi-specialty hospital in Junnar for medical care. "The recovery and release of the civet and the owl shows our commitment to saving wild animals who are in peril, and the hospital plays a huge role in it," Rajhans said.

## Dr Kanwal Vilku: Pioneer who conquered Antarctica and continues to serve at 76

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

At the age of 76, Dr Kanwal Vilku is a woman who has broken barriers, not only for herself but for an entire generation of Indian women. In 2001, she became the first Indian woman to set foot on Antarctica and lived there for 472 days, a feat that still holds the record for the longest stay by any woman on the continent. Today, despite her many accomplishments, Dr Vilku's journey of resilience and service continues.

Born in Shimla in 1948, Dr Vilku's ambition to become a doctor was kindled at the tender age of 9. "I was passionate about becoming a doctor, I used to write Doctor Kanwal when I was young," she recalls. Pursuing her dream, she enrolled in Jabalpur Medical College, where she obtained her MBBS degree. Over the years, her pursuit for knowledge led her to earn several more qualifications, including a postgraduate degree in immunohematology and blood transfusion, an advanced certification in dermatology and endocrinology, a four-year diploma in fine arts and applied arts, and even an MBA in HR. Her career saw her stationed in various challenging terrains across India — from Srinagar to Arunachal Pradesh, and from Chandigarh to Punjab. But her most defining moment came when she was selected for the Indian expedition to Antarctica. In 2001, at the age of 52, Dr Vilku embarked on this adventure, where she was the sole woman in a group of 25 men. "Our work was complex and diverse," she says. "We were studying life in relation to Antarctica, and my job was to ensure our team remained medically fit."

I also studied the effects of the South Pole's magnetism on the human body. "The extreme cold, isolation, and unpredictable snowstorms posed serious challenges. Yet, Dr Vilku's adventurous spirit, rooted in her childhood experiences as an athlete and ice skater, helped her thrive. "I grew up watching my mother — a rare woman in her time — play sports, and that spirit of adventure stayed with me," she explains. Dr Vilku also found solace in art during her time in Antarctica, creating colours from unconventional materials like crushed expired medicines and rocks. In addition to her scientific duties, she had to contend with the physical toll the environment took on the body. "Common issues in Antarctica include cold injuries, psychological problems," she says, reflecting on the harsh realities of life at the South Pole. Yet, through it all, her determination and grit never wavered. After retiring from Central Health Services in 2008, Dr Vilku could have opted for a quiet life, but that was not her path.



## ‘Income tax inspector’, ‘widower’, ‘bigamist’: How an Odisha conman duped multiple women on pretext of remarriage



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

He would allegedly pose as a government employee looking for “eligible” middle-aged women to have a “second-marriage” with. He would then court and marry them, move in with them, and click their most intimate photos, which he would then allegedly use for blackmail. On Friday, police arrested 41-year-old Biranchi Narayan Nath, a con artist from Chhendipada in Odisha’s Angul district who allegedly hoodwinked multiple women into matrimony. The arrest came on the back of a complaint made by one of his victims, a woman from Cuttack. Although the exact scale of this alleged fraud is still unknown, police sources say that victims were not only from the state but also from Rajasthan, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi and that the scam could run into a few crores. According to sources from the Odisha crime branch, Nath created multiple profiles on a matrimonial site specifically meant for second marriages. In these, he allegedly would pose variously as a railway employee, an income tax commissioner or an officer of customs and the central excise department to target vulnerable women. “The accused targeted middle-aged women who were unmarried, separated, widows or divorced women. Initially, he approached the victims, sending marriage requests through the website. This was followed by phone conversations and visits to their home. He emotionally manipulated them by promising lifelong support for their children and companionship,” said an officer of the crime branch.

To earn his victims’ trust, the suspect would allegedly promise to find them jobs once they were married. Then, he would allegedly go through the wedding rituals and eventually threaten to release online the intimate photos and videos he took with them if they didn’t comply

with his demands. According to investigators, Nath never took his victims to his own place, and always gave them fictional addresses. He also allegedly went by aliases such as Manas Ratha and Pravakar Srivastav to dupe the women, although he did on occasion use his own name. At least eight cases are registered against him in different police stations across Odisha, sources said. Cases have also been registered in states like Rajasthan, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi. In her complaint before the police, the woman from Cuttack said she lost her husband in a road accident in the year 2022 and was living with her two daughters when she met the suspect. “To have a secure future for herself and her children, she decided to remarry. She had also registered in the same matrimonial portal as him in October 2023,” the officer quoted earlier. Last October, she allegedly received a match request from one Pravakar Srivastav, a 43-year-old Railway ticket inspector from Khamar in Angul’s Talcher tehsil. In his profile, he allegedly claimed he worked at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, and that he was a widower who lived with his father, “a manager at SBI in Rourkela”.

On October 7 last year, “Srivastav” allegedly visited the victim’s home and voiced his desire to marry her. While her family sought more time to consider the proposal, he would frequently call her to make an “emotional” connection, sources from the crime branch said. “During video calls, he clandestinely captured her nude videos. He later took her on trips outside Odisha, too, then used these videos to force her into a physical relationship,” the officer said. He then allegedly married her and lived with her for five months, during which he “continued to exploit her sexually and financially”. “He also physically assaulted her whenever she resisted,” this source said, adding that the suspect blackmailed her into paying Rs 5 lakh and also took 32 grams of gold before he disappeared. According to the sources, it was Nath’s mobile phone that helped track him down to his home village of Chhendipada. He has been booked under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 384 (extortion), 385 (putting person in fear of injury in order to commit extortion) 419 and 420 (cheating), 465, 467, 468 and 469 (all dealing with forgery) of the Indian Penal Code along with provisions of the Information Technology Act. “Significant digital evidence, including private photographs, videos of several women and fake IDs have been recovered from him and they are being analysed to determine his involvement in other cases,” the source said.

## ‘This is govt of BJP, not biryani eaters’: MLA accuses SP of ‘protecting’ POCSO accused in Madhya Pradesh

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Amid protests by local right-wing groups, the authorities in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal Friday invoked the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against three men arrested for allegedly harassing and blackmailing two minor girls on social media. As tensions continued for the third consecutive day, BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma demanded that Bhopal (Rural) Superintendent of Police step down for “protecting” the accused. “Be warned, this is a BJP government, this is (CM) Mohan Yadav’s government, not that of Biryani eaters,” Sharma, the MLA from Huzur, told reporters.

The three men — Armaan, Zeeshan and Anas — were arrested and booked Wednesday under various charges, including molestation and blackmail, under the BNS, the IT Act, and the POCSO Act. Friday, Bhopal District Magistrate Vikram Singh invoked the NSA against them “to prevent them from acting in any manner detrimental to the maintenance of public order.” Led by right-wing groups, protesters hit the streets over the past couple of days alleging that the local police were attempting to cover up the case. On Thursday, they gathered outside the local police station, demanding a thorough investigation into the case. The protests subsided only after the collector, Vikram Singh, assured them of action. MLA Sharma, speaking on the sidelines of an event in the city, said: “I congratulate the unity shown by Hindu organisations. The negligence by the police in the investigation is wrong... The Bhopal SP gives protection to the accused, otherwise the investigation would have swiftly been done. The society did not have to gather. I want to tell the SP: Stop being friends with the accused. Be warned, this is a BJP government, this is (CM) Mohan Yadav’s government, not that of Biryani eaters. If daughters will be harassed then not just TI, even the SP will be changed.”



When contacted by The Indian Express, Sharma said, “What is the point of invoking NSA now after three days? Why did the police act after society came on the streets? The SP is involved in this case. There are many such incidents in this district. At least 7-8 incidents of cow slaughter also took place, the SP is suspect.” When asked what he meant by “biryani eaters”, Sharma said, “I meant that the BJP government is not a government of appeasers. We don’t follow appeasers and take action against the accused. This is not a government of Biryani eaters.” When contacted, the SP, Pramod Kumar Sinha, refused to comment on Sharma’s allegations. “The police have taken action against the accused and invoked the NSA today,” he said.

## Asha Kiran shelter home deaths: Delhi L-G orders show cause notice against administrator

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

The L-G also directed the Delhi health secretary to ensure that doctors are appointed to vacant posts at the shelter home within a week. The L-G also directed the Delhi health secretary to ensure that doctors are appointed to vacant posts at the shelter home within a week.

Following the deaths of 14 inmates in July at the state government-run Asha Kiran shelter home, Delhi L-G V K Saxena has ordered that a show cause notice be issued to the shelter’s administrator. In a letter to the Delhi chief secretary, the L-G said an explanation has been sought from the administrator on why disciplinary action should not be initiated against him for failing to discharge his duties. According to documents filed before the Delhi High Court in a PIL last month, unhygienic living conditions, lack of drinking water, and staff crunch affecting the care of inmates were among the issues that were flagged to the administration at the home.

The L-G also directed the Delhi health secretary to ensure that doctors are appointed to vacant posts at the shelter home within a week. “The Social Welfare Department, in consultation with NIMHANS and the Health Department, should reassess the requirement of specialists trained to understand the special needs of intellectually challenged inmates and undertake necessary measures for their recruitment,” he said.

In his letter to the chief secretary, the L-G said action



should be taken regarding infrastructure upgradation and added that procurement of additional equipment should proceed on a war footing. He said despite clear instructions from this Secretariat, adequate compensation to the parents/guardians of the deceased inmates has not been intimated. He also instructed the Asha Kiran administration to maintain digital records of inmates at the time of admission, which tracks the history of treatment, health parameters, and nutritional inputs. The L-G also told the CS that an enquiry had been initiated by his office and sought a white paper on the matter. “I had asked for a white paper on the revamp and refurbishment of all such facilities under the Social Welfare Department for decongestion, outlining short- and long-term measures.

## Umar Khalid begins 5th year in jail amid debate on what’s terror



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Umar Khalid, a “veteran of sedition,” as a Delhi Police chargesheet in March 2020 described him, entered his fifth year in jail this week on terror charges. “A veteran of sedition, the investigation of this case has established how far accused Umar Khalid has travelled from 2016...,” the 40-page chargesheet begins against the 37-year-old former JNU student. At the heart of the case against Khalid is what constitutes a “terrorist act” and who determines that. In the last five years, courts — twice by the trial court (in March 2022, May 2024) and once by the Delhi High Court (July 2024) — have indicated that courts have to accept the state’s version without going into the merits, however unsubstantiated it might seem, at least while hearing bail pleas. The three bail decisions have cited the Supreme Court’s 2019 Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali ruling to hold that courts cannot analyse the crux of allegations while considering bail in a UAPA case. The trial is yet to begin against Khalid.

Under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), an offence, under Section 15 that defines a terrorist act, criminalises any “with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security economic security, or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India.” However, the provision qualifies that striking terror is by use of “bombs, dynamite or other explosive substances or inflammable substances or firearms... or any other means.” The prosecution’s case is that a “chakka jam” that Khalid allegedly conspired to organise would also fall under the definition of “any other means.” The evidence, for what the police allege is a months-long conspiracy, is in over two dozen statements by Saturn, Crypton, Romeo, Juliet, Echo. These are among the protected witnesses whose identities are kept secret by the prosecution — they have testified that Khalid took part in alleged “secret meetings” and confided in them that his eventual plan was to organise a chakka jam when then US President Donald Trump visited Delhi in 2020. A reading of the statements shows that the prosecution’s evidence is that Khalid allegedly talked about “spilling blood” and made provocative speeches including say-

ing that “aandolan khoon maangta hai” in “secret meetings” in the presence of relative strangers and also clicked pictures of these meetings and posted them on social media. However, Khalid’s lawyers have repeatedly pointed out that these statements are hearsay and were revised several times, even recorded nearly 11 months after the FIR was registered. In any case, Khalid’s counsel senior advocate Trideep Pais told the Delhi HC in June this year that these statements were not followed by any recovery of weapons or literature to show that he was associated with an unlawful, banned terror organisation. The state’s version is accepted by courts even on circumstantial evidence against Khalid. For example, Khalid was not in Delhi when the riots took place but in Amravati in Maharashtra. However, this, the Delhi police argued, creates a “perfect alibi” for himself, while being a “silent whisper” in organising protests and a “chakka jam” in “mixed neighbourhoods” in Delhi. For example, a statement by a protected witness ECHO states that Khalid allegedly said “chakka jam hi aakhri raasta hai”, “khoon bahana padega”. In March 2022, a Karkardooma court rejected Khalid’s first bail plea holding that the allegations were “prima-facie true” on the perusal of the chargesheet and accompanying documents for the limited purpose of bail and as such the “embargo created by Section 43D(5) of UAPA.” This is the restrictive bail provision under UAPA where courts are barred from granting bail unless they can determine that the allegations are prima facie untrue. Upon appeal, the Delhi HC, too, in October 2022 accepted the trial court’s view. It said that Khalid’s name finds “recurring mention from the beginning of the conspiracy till the culmination of the ensuing riots. Admittedly, he was a member of the WhatsApp group of Muslim students of JNU and participated in various meetings at Jantar Mantar, Jangpura Office, Shaheen Bagh, Seelampur, Jaffrabad and Indian Social Institute on various dates... He referred to the visit of the president of USA to India in his Amravati speech.” Records show a “flurry of calls” after the riots between the appellant and other co-accused. “The cumulative statement of the protected witnesses indicates the presence and active involvement of the appellant in the protests, engineered against the CAA/NRC,” the court said. While the appeal against the HC decision was accepted by SC, Khalid’s lawyers withdrew the plea when it came up for hearing. Clearly, lawyers strategised the withdrawal to avoid another unfavourable decision and, instead, chose to go back to the trial court. However, the trial court, for a second time, rejected Khalid’s bail in May 2024. This decision is also under challenge before the HC. Meanwhile, there are pleas before the Supreme Court challenging the wide ambit of how Section 15 of the UAPA is interpreted. The court will have to define what constitutes striking terror “by any other means.” This decision can bring relief to Khalid before his trial begins.

## 3 sandalwood trees go missing from New Club (Poona) campus, police register theft case

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Pune sandalwood theft The police have booked the sandalwood thieves under section 303 (2) for theft under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. (Unidentified people have chopped and stolen three sandalwood trees from the sprawling premises of New Club (Poona) on the Rajendrasinghi Road in Pune Camp area between August 30 and September 4, the police said. The sandalwood thieves are suspected to have entered the club premises by breaking the fencing, said sub inspector Swapnil Lohar with the Bundgarden police station where the case was registered.

The employees at the club noticed the trees were missing from the compound and informed the police, said Lohar who added that an investigation is on to identify and trace the accused people. The police have booked the sandalwood thieves under section 303 (2) for theft under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Sandalwood thefts have been rampant in the city in the last couple of months.



A five-member gang stole sandalwood logs worth Rs 15,000 from the Sushildatta bungalow at Adarsh Nagar in Market Yard area on August 23. In a similar incident, a gang of about eight people had threatened a woman with sharp weapons and stole a sandalwood tree from near her residence on Prabhat Road on August 11.

## How a Parsi translator and some fisherfolk gave a Pune Ganapati temple a unique history

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Cloaked in the everyday bustle of Narayan Peth, stands a two-storeyed Ganapati temple that has seen the transformation of Pune. This temple was built during the Maratha period of the early 1800s. This is the Bombay Ganapati, named after a type of fish, called Bombil. “It is said that fisherfolk used to sell bombil, also known as the Bombay Duck, nearby. The temple’s name could also come from the Marathi term bombilya — one who speaks loudly,” reads a plaque at the temple.

A more popular name for the temple is Modi Ganapati. According to Shailesh Bhatt, one of the owners of the temple and the fifth generation of his family to look after it, “The idol of Siddhivinayak in the temple used to be originally placed on a platform. The platform was located in a field near the garden of a Parsi man, named Khushrusheth Modi. He was a translator for the Peshwas and the British.” The idol is made of red clay, has a right-facing trunk, and stands three feet tall. Both right hands are concealed by the thick trunk. A left hand rests on the lap while the other holds a trident. The altar is made of brass and the idol wears different crowns on special occasions. Surrounded by a few shops, the temple has been identified in records dating back to 1811. The idol is likely to be more than two centuries old.

The sanctum sanctorum (garbha griha) is 10x10 feet and the temple is made of bricks. The present-day visitor will see that the interior is tiled. The sanctum and temple dome were erected earlier, but the tiled assembly hall (sabha mandap) in front, completed around 1868, depicts detailed woodwork architecture from the Peshwa period. The temple also has paintings of Ganpati in many forms, and texts chronicling Ganpati throughout the yuga cycle.

Bhatt says that towards the end of the Peshwa era, a man belonging to the Kashyap Gotra Math family, originally from Shirgaon in Ratnagiri, settled in Pune. “One of the descendants of this Kashyap Gotra Math family built the temple for Ganpati. After some time, the ownership of the temple passed on to my (Bhatt) family,” he adds. The temple holds historical significance for hosting key post-Independence events. “In 1948, after India gained free-



The idol is made of red clay, has a right-facing trunk, and stands three feet tall. Both right hands are concealed by the thick trunk. A left hand rests on the lap while the other holds a trident. The altar is made of brass and the idol wears different crowns on special occasions. Surrounded by a few shops, the temple has been identified in records dating back to 1811. The idol is likely to be more than two centuries old.

dom, the culmination of a grand ritual involving one crore recitations of the Atharvashirsha mantra took place here. For 21 days, Lord Ganpati was bathed with water as part of the ceremony,” says Bhatt. He adds, “The first meeting of Pune’s Vedshashtrtejak Sabha was also held at this temple. Popular national kirtankar Shri Kolhatkar also kicked off his kirtan performances here.” Even now, devotees participate in several rituals at the temple. Prominent among these is the recitation of parts of the Puranas. This tradition began in 1869, when a renowned scholar from Pune, Shri Shendeshashtri, started to recite the Puranas from 5 pm to 6 pm in front of this temple. The Shende family carried forward this tradition for generations and continues to do so even today. So, embedded in the heart of the older part of Pune, the Modi or Bombay Ganpati continues to stand for the faith that defies time and is bound by tradition.



## 'Sensitive' inputs delaying High Court chief justice appointments: Centre to Supreme Court



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that "sensitive material" with the government is delaying the implementation of the SC Collegium's recommendations for appointments of chief justices to high courts. Attorney General R. Venkatramani told a bench of Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that he has received certain inputs from the Union government which are sensitive in nature.

He also told the top court that revealing these issues in the public domain would neither be in the interest of the institution nor of the judges involved. "I would like to place the inputs and my suggestions in a sealed cover for perusal by the judges," Venkatramani told the bench. The matter has now been posted for hearing on September 20. The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Harsh Vibhore Singhal seeking a direction that a time limit be fixed for the Centre to notify the appointment of judges recommended by the apex court collegium. It has also sought a direction to plug the 'zone of twilight' of there being no time for notifying the collegium's recommendations for the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary. The plea said that in the absence of a fixed time period, "the government arbitrarily delays notifying appointments thereby trampling upon judicial independence, imperilling the constitutional and democratic order and disparaging the majesty and sagacity of the court". The plea said if any name is not objected to or the appointments are not notified by the end of such fixed time period, then appointments of such judges must be taken as notified.

## Government records rediscovered during cleanliness drives to be exhibited

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Swachh Bharat Mission - Around 10,000 files of historical significance were handed over by the government to the National Archives of India (NAI) after being discovered during the annual special campaign under the Swachh Bharat Mission, it is learnt. Around 10,000 files of historical significance were handed over by the government to the National Archives of India (NAI) after being discovered during the annual special campaign under the Swachh Bharat Mission, it is learnt. (Wikimedia Commons) After special cleanliness drives over the past three years led to thousands of historical records being rediscovered in Union government offices, the public is likely to get a look at the documents at a new exhibition soon, has learnt.



ments have been duly conserved for display and an exhibition will be organised next month. Some documents include copies of the report of the Administrative Reforms Commission, which was appointed in 1966 to make recommendations on reform and reorganisation of public administration. The 1964 report of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, known as the Santhanam Committee after its chairman MP K Santhanam, is also among the records found. While government records older than 25 years, except classified information, are supposed to be transferred to the NAI, many ministries and departments have not been doing so over the years. At a meeting to discuss preparations for the cleanliness drive with officials from different ministries on September 6, NAI Director General Arun Singhal said that though there had been a substantial increase in reporting to the archives by ministries, many departments had still not appointed records officers. He said this must be done immediately, as per the minutes of the meeting.

The fourth special campaign is set to begin on October 2, with preparations starting from September 16. Apart from physical cleanliness, the campaign includes clearing pending grievances from the public and references from MPs and the Prime Minister's Office. Ahead of the campaign, the DARPG issued guidelines to all ministries on August 23 to streamline the grievance mechanism. It asked ministries to dispose of grievances through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System within 21 days, reducing it from the earlier 30-day target.

## Two years of Project Cheetah: India awaits Kenya's approval for new batch

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

The MoU process to bring a new batch of cheetahs from Kenya is in progress, with India having finalised its part and awaiting approval from the African country, a senior official has said. Cheetahs for the breeding centre being built in Gujarat's Banni grasslands will also be brought from Kenya, SP Yadav, the director general of the International Big Cat Alliance, told PTI editors during a recent interaction here.

As part of the first-ever intercontinental translocation of the big cats, 20 cheetahs have been brought to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh so far — eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023. Since they arrived in India, eight adult cheetahs — three females and five males — have died. Seventeen cubs have been born in India, with 12 surviving, bringing the total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno to 24. Currently, all are in enclosures. The grand initiative completes two years on September 17.

The 'Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India' talks about bringing around 12-14 cheetahs each year from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries for five years to establish a founder stock. "The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process is in progress. India has finalised its part, and the Kenyan government needs to approve it. After that, both governments will sign the MoU," Yadav, who is the adviser to the Centre's Cheetah Project Steering Committee, said. "Discussions are ongoing with South Africa. It has already identified 12 to 16 surplus cheetahs. They must either give them to another country or euthanise them. That is the current situation," Yadav added. In South Africa, animals are kept in sanctuaries based on their carrying capacities. If the population exceeds this capacity, they either export the animals or euthanise them, as they cannot sustain an overpopulation, he explained. Yadav said cheetahs for the conservation breeding centre being established in Banni will also be brought from Kenya and that "winter is the ideal time to bring them". The cheetah conservation breeding centre being developed in a 500-hectare enclosure can accommodate 16 cheetahs, officials have said. Yadav also dismissed reports suggesting that a Namibian cheetah named Pawan died from poisoning last month. He clarified that there were no signs of poisoning such as saliva oozing from the mouth or liquid seeping from the nose. "There was no such thing. It is purely speculation," he said.

Asked if cheetahs can drown, he said that it had rained heavily that night and there are nallahs (streams) with boulders and rocks. "We do not know what happened,



but the symptoms suggest that the cheetah died from drowning. There was no other reason. There were no marks on the body. Two doctors conducted the post-mortem and confirmed drowning. There was water in the lungs. It was unfortunate," Yadav added. Asked about the low prey base in the Kuno National Park and the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, he said, "The number of cheetahs in the wild will depend solely on the prey population. We will not release more cheetahs if the prey population cannot support them. That is within our control." Yadav said that the staff at Kuno will administer prophylactic medicine to the cheetahs in the wild through tranquilisers. If they are unsuccessful, "there is no option but to recapture the animals", he said. Prophylactic medicines are given to prevent infection.

Due to differences in circadian rhythms between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, some cheetahs developed thick winter coats during the Indian summer and monsoon last year, in anticipation of the African winter (June to September). Three of these cheetahs — a Namibian female and two South African males — died after wounds beneath their winter coats, on their backs and necks, became infested with maggots and led to blood infections. Asked about the secrecy associated with Project Cheetah, Yadav said that the perception of secrecy is misleading. "Cheetah introduction has gained unprecedented media attention — more than any other animal conservation effort before. No country, not even developed ones, has dared to undertake an experiment of this kind. If you look at the Western media, it is hard for them to believe that India can accomplish this," he said. On the progress of Project Cheetah, Yadav said when South Africa lost its entire cheetah population, they imported the animal from Namibia, and it took them 20 years to establish a viable population. "In India, we lost all the tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan in 2005. It took nearly 15 years to re-establish a stable population there. It takes time; it is not instant coffee," he said.

## Water leakage in main dome of Taj Mahal due to incessant rain in Agra; ASI claims no damage to monument



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

The main dome of the Taj Mahal in Agra witnessed water leakage due to incessant rain for the past three days which inundated a garden on the premises. The purported video of the submerged garden on the Taj Mahal premises went viral on Thursday and caught the tourists' attention. However, a senior official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra circle, said there

is leakage in the main dome due to seepage and there is no damage to it. Talking about the leakage in the main dome of the Taj Mahal, Rajkumar Patel, Superintending Chief of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra circle, told PTI, "Yes, we have witnessed the leakage in the main dome of the Taj Mahal. After that when we checked it was due to seepage and there was no damage to the main dome. We have checked the main dome through a drone camera." On Thursday evening, a purported video of 20 seconds went viral on the internet in which one of the gardens of the monument submerged with rain water. It caught the attention of the tourists, who visited the Taj Mahal and many shot video of it. A local resident, who is working as a government approved tour guide, said Taj Mahal is the pride of Agra and the entire nation, adding it provides employment to hundreds of locals and those who are working in the tourism industry. "Proper care should be taken of the monument because for the tourism industry people it is the only hope," said Monika Sharma, a government approved tour guide.

Agra witnessed an incessant rain from the past three days due to which water logging problem could be seen in most of the parts of the city. One of the National Highways was choked with rain water, crops submerged with rain water and posh localities of the city witnessed water chocking due to continuous rain. The Agra administration has ordered the closure of all schools due to rain.

## Environment ministry grants in-principle nod for Vedanta's oil exploration in Assam's Hoolock Gibbon habitat

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Vedanta's Cairn Oil and Gas proposal sought permission for oil and gas exploration drilling on 4.49 hectares in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Assam's Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary. (Facebook/Cairn Oil & Gas, Vedanta Limited) Vedanta's Cairn Oil and Gas proposal sought permission for oil and gas exploration drilling on 4.49 hectares in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Assam's Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary.

The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has granted an in-principle approval to Vedanta's Cairn Oil and Gas proposal for oil and gas exploration drilling on 4.49 hectares in the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Assam's Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, home to the endangered Hoolock Gibbon, India's only ape species. The FAC's in-principle nod, also known as Stage-I clearance, comes on the back of a recommendation for project approval by Assam's principal chief conservator of forests and chief wildlife warden. In its meeting held on August 27, the panel noted that the chief wildlife warden, Assam, and the regional office of the Union environment ministry had recommended clearance for the project. The chief wildlife warden had noted in his recommendation that the project site falls in the ESZ of Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary, Jorhat, and there was significant movement of wild elephants in the area connecting the sanctuary and Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest. The chief wildlife warden also submitted to the FAC a wildlife conservation plan and human-animal conflict management plan and earmarked Rs 5.57 crore for implementing them.

The conservation plan has proposed measures such as the planting of native species, the erection of wildlife protection signages, awareness programmes, and consultation with local stakeholders for Hoolock Gibbon conservation. The endangered ape species faces threats such as qualitative loss of habitats, fragmentation



of habitats, poaching and unscientific plantation, the conservation plan had noted. The regional committee's recommendation stated that during the exploration, safety measures as laid down in a report of the parliamentary committee on petroleum and natural gas should be followed. The FAC endorsed the regional committee's prescriptions and said the "state government shall ensure the compliance of conditions" in the parliamentary panel report. The report was prepared by the standing committee on petroleum and natural gas in the backdrop of the May 2020 Baghjan oil and gas leak which caused widespread environmental damage and displacement of people in Tinsukia district. The standing committee in its report had made many recommendations ranging from periodic safety reviews and promotion of safety culture to self-reliance in tackling emergencies in oil and gas installations, among others. Compensatory afforestation in lieu of using forest land and felling of 17 trees has been proposed on non-forest land in Tinsukia district, the FAC's minutes noted. Following the in-principle approval, conditions related to compensatory afforestation, payment for afforestation, transfer and mutation of land for afforestation and other conditions have to be complied with before the project is considered for final approval.

## As English-medium schools gain popularity, their Hindi counterparts see sharp drop in Rajasthan



English medium schools in Rajasthan have become the first choice of parents which is why the number of Hindi medium private schools have gone down in recent decades.

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Suman Saini, a washerwoman in Jaipur, had taken a loan from her relative to pay the fees of her son who studies in a private English medium school. When asked why she was not sending her son to a government Hindi medium school, she said, "The world needs people who can speak English. My nephew studies in Class 10 in Hindi medium. But he is now worried about his future because during admissions, all colleges stress on English language. I do not want my son to suffer because of this. Hence, even if a Hindi medium private school is within my budget, I will do everything possible to send my son to an English medium school."

English medium schools in Rajasthan have become the first choice of parents which is why the number of Hindi medium private schools have gone down in recent decades. According to the data available on the Rajasthan Education Department's website, there were 37,000 private Hindi medium schools in Rajasthan which has come down to 13,780 in the last ten years. Looking at the im-

portance of English medium schools, even the Rajasthan Government has opened over 2,000 such schools. Anil Sharma, president of School Shiksha Pariwar, while talking to The Indian Express said that in the future only English medium schools will be the norm.

"You cannot blame the parents because all higher education is in English. Entrances for the JEE, CLAT, AIIMS, NEET are all held in English. Not being able to speak in English is seen as an embarrassment for most Indians. Hence, parents are opting to admit their children into English medium schools. I believe in the next ten years, there will be no private Hindi medium schools in Jaipur," said Sharma. Many private Hindi medium schools have now converted into English medium schools and those who are functioning are recording a decline in admissions. CEO of Tagore Group of Institutions, Ruchika Solanki said her organisation has both English and Hindi medium schools. According to her there has been a 70% drop in admissions in Hindi medium schools as most parents prefer English medium until affordability becomes an issue, in which case parents go for Hindi medium. As the choice of parents towards English medium is rising, there is a rise in the number of private English medium schools catering to low-income groups.

Om Prakash Jagaka, director of Shri Pratap School, Chomu, who has students belonging to the unorganized sector said, "Schools that charge low fees are rising as most parents now-a-days prefer to send their children to English medium schools. Most of our children come from a background where their parents work in an unorganized sector who are always in search of English medium schools whose fee is low. Even though the quality of education is not taken into consideration in most of the cases, still English medium tag is enough for such parents." There is, however, a problem that parents have noticed in students studying in English medium schools who do not have quality teachers. They says students in such schools can't fluently speak Hindi or English. "In older times, a Hindi or English medium student used to be well-versed with the language but now with the quality of English medium schools going down with poor quality teachers, students do not have command on any language. Only the number of private English medium schools is increasing, not the quality," lamented Dilip Meena, a guard in Jaipur who sends his son to an English medium school.



## Trump pledges to deport Haitians from Ohio city; Biden calls for attacks to stop



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump pledged to conduct mass deportations of Haitian immigrants from the Ohio city of Springfield shortly after President Joe Biden on Friday (September 13, 2024) called on the attacks on the community to cease. The city for days has found itself at the centre of a social media maelstrom after right-wing agitators latched onto false claims that Haitian arrivals were eating household pets.

"We will do large deportations in Springfield, Ohio," Mr. Trump said at a press conference at his golf resort near Los Angeles. Mr. Trump did not repeat the assertion he made during Tuesday's presidential debate with Demo-

crat Kamala Harris that immigrants were eating dogs and cats, remarks that have been widely mocked. The majority of the 15,000 Haitians in Springfield are there legally. Trump's longstanding pledge to conduct mass deportations usually refers to those in the country illegally. Two elementary schools were evacuated and one middle school in Springfield was closed on Friday after anonymous bomb threats were made against the community for the second day in a row, according to ABC News. At the White House, Mr. Biden urged the attacks on the Haitian community to stop. "It's simply wrong. There's no place in America. This has to stop - what he's doing. It has to stop," Mr. Biden said.

Mr. Trump has cited the tensions in Springfield as another example of the need for hardline immigration policies. The influx of Haitians has boosted the economy but also has strained social services. Haitian community leaders across the United States said the Republican candidate's remarks could put lives at risk and further inflame tensions in Springfield. We need help, not hate," Springfield's mayor, Rob Rue, told ABC News. City officials say they have received no credible reports of anybody eating household animals. Karen Graves, a city spokesperson, said she was not aware of recent hate crimes targeting Haitian residents but that some had been victims of "crimes of opportunity," such as property theft.

## Imran Khan booked for inciting Pakistan government officials to mutiny: Report

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Pakistan's top investigating agency has registered a case against jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan for allegedly inciting government officials to mutiny through his social media posts, according to a media report. A Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team comprising investigation and technical officers visited the Adiala Jail to question Mr. Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, in connection with a controversial post on his official X account.

"A case has been registered against Mr. Khan by the FIA for inciting government officials to mutiny," the Dawn newspaper said citing sources. The FIA personnel returned empty-handed after Mr. Khan, 71, insisted that he would not join the interrogation without the presence of his lawyers.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar in a statement earlier said the FIA would probe into the handling of the PTI founder's social media accounts, which were being used allegedly to "create chaos and anarchy" in the country, and "undermining the national security." Mr. Tarar said it would be ascertained who was the handler of his social media accounts, and whether such posts were being made at his behest or it was done on directives of someone else. He said a botched attempt had been made to conspire against the sitting chief justice and heads of other institutions. Through these posts, he tried to mobilise the people against two major State institutions. "His acts were highly condemnable," Mr. Tarar said. Mr. Khan, who has been incarcerated at the Adiala Jail since last year, has often criticised the powerful establishment through his longish posts on X. On Friday,



Mr. Khan posted a long note on his X account, which said, "This is not the first time in the history of this country that one individual (referring to Army Chief Gen Asim Munir) has put the entire country at stake to protect his hold on power. (General) Yahya Khan also betrayed the Awami League and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to stay in power." He recalled the events from 1971 when 90,000 soldiers were taken as prisoners during Bangladesh's Liberation War and how former president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto himself admitted to the loss of 50,000 innocent lives. "Even today, the same story is being repeated. Once again, one person has taken over control and is destroying the system to prolong and strengthen his hold on power," he said, adding that a small powerful elite dominates all the resources, power, and control of the country. The Supreme Court is the only institution somewhat safe from their influence, and now it is also being attacked, he said.

## Amid grim forecast, Maldives says it is 'well prepared' to avert default



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Despite global lenders and rating agencies flagging a "high risk" of debt distress in the Maldives, the government said it is well prepared to stave off a financial meltdown. Addressing Colombo-based journalists on Friday evening (September 13, 2024), Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Muizzu and Minister of Finance Mohamed Shafeeq ruled out a possible default and pointed to "crucial steps" taken by the government towards fiscal consolidation and reform. The top officials' assurance comes days after rating agency Moody's downgraded the island country's credit rating and warned of a full-blown debt crisis and possible default, amid looming deadlines for foreign debt servicing.

President Mohamed Muizzu assumed office in November 2023 after a big election win — he has a comfortable majority in Parliament or People's Majlis as well — but currently faces a daunting challenge as the Indian Ocean archipelago grapples with high external debt. The Muizzu administration is taking advice from the International Monetary Fund, but there is no immediate plan to sign up for its programme, the Ministers said, expressing confidence that its bilateral partners would step in.

China is the Maldives' largest creditor and India is another key lender. The two countries are financing a host of infrastructure projects that the government hopes will aid better connectivity and economic development. "Both India and China are very sensitive to our challenge and are willing to help," Mr. Zameer said, pointing to "many options" on the table, including a possible debt freeze, currency swaps, and local currency settlements. "We will discuss these as and when there is a need."

On Friday (September 13, 2024), the Maldives' Ministry of Economic Development & Trade signed an agreement with the People's Bank of China to establish a local currency settlement framework. Authorities are in talks with India for a similar arrangement. "We are already taking all the necessary steps including reform of State-Owned Enterprises and our health sector. We are switching from blanket to targeted subsidies and rationalising our public expenditure," Mr. Shafeeq said. Following the downgrade by Moody's, the Finance Ministry said it was engaging with all its bilateral and multilateral partners to

meet the financing requirements, and that a "strong performance" in the vital tourism sector was expected to boost growth. Tourist arrivals have seen an uptick in 2024. Chinese arrivals lead the list, contributing 12% of visitors, while arrivals from India declined sharply from 11% of visitors to 6%, the World Bank said in its May 2024 update. The period coincides with strained bilateral ties between India and the Maldives, on the heels of the "India Out" campaign around Mr. Muizzu's election last year, and amid controversial statements made by two junior ministers in his government that triggered a call to "boycott Maldives" within India.

Emphasising that relations have since seen a marked improvement, Mr. Zameer said Indian tourist arrivals are "picking up very well" and the neighbours are keen to strengthen ties. "We have had high-level engagement", including External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's visit to the Maldives in August, and the countries' "very pragmatic" leaders have addressed the "initial mistrust", he said. President Muizzu is expected to travel to New Delhi soon on his first bilateral visit, although he has met Mr. Modi on the sidelines of other global meets and at Mr. Modi's swearing in ceremony this year. "I think India-Maldives ties now are as good as they were during President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's time, which is considered the best time in our relationship," Mr. Zameer added.

## China says German naval ships in Taiwan Strait 'increase security risks'

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

China on Saturday (September 14, 2024) accused Berlin of heightening security risks in the Taiwan Strait, a day after two German vessels sailed through the sensitive waters. "The German side's behaviour increases security risks and sends incorrect signals," Chinese military spokesperson Li Xi said in a statement. "Beijing's troops in the area would 'resolutely counter all threats and provocations,'" Mr. Li added.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius confirmed on Friday (September 13, 2024) that the frigate Baden-Wuerttemberg and the supply Frankfurt am Main sailed through the strait. U.S. military ships as well as those operated by other countries have often sailed through the sensitive waterway.

But the Baden-Wuerttemberg's voyage was the first time in more than two decades that Berlin's navy had done so, according to German media reports. Beijing views Taiwan as a renegade province and claims jurisdiction over the body of water that separates the island from the Chinese mainland.

## Myanmar junta makes rare request for foreign aid to cope with deadly floods



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Myanmar's junta chief made a rare request Saturday (September 14, 2024) for foreign aid to cope with deadly floods that have displaced hundreds of thousands of people who have already endured three years of war. Floods and landslides have killed almost 300 people in Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand in the wake of Typhoon Yagi, which dumped a colossal deluge of rain when it hit the region last weekend.

In Myanmar, more than 235,000 people have been forced from their homes by floods, the junta said Friday, piling further misery on the country where war has raged since the military seized power in 2021. In Taungoo — around an hour south of the capital Naypyidaw — residents paddled makeshift rafts on floodwaters lapping around a Buddhist pagoda. Rescuers drove a speedboat through the waters, lifting sagging electricity lines and broken tree branches with a long pole. "I lost my rice, chickens, and ducks," said farmer Naung Tun, who had brought his three cows to higher ground near Taungoo after floodwaters inundated his village. "I don't care about the other belongings. Nothing else is more important than the lives of people and animals," he told AFP. Flee by any means. The rains in the wake of typhoon Yagi sent people across Southeast Asia fleeing by any means necessary, including by elephant in Myanmar and jetski in Thailand.

"Officials from the government need to contact foreign countries to receive rescue and relief aid to be provided to the victims," junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said on Friday, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper. "It is necessary to manage rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures as quickly as possible," he was quoted as saying. Myanmar's military has previously blocked or frustrated humanitarian assistance from abroad. Last year it suspended travel authorisations for aid groups trying to reach around a million victims of powerful Cyclone Mocha that hit the west of the country. At the time the United Nations slammed that decision as "unfathomable." AFP has contacted a spokesperson for the UN in Myanmar for comment.

After cyclone Nargis killed at least 138,000 people in Myanmar in 2008, the then-junta was accused of blocking emergency aid and initially refusing to grant access to humanitarian workers and supplies. "Terrible experience" The junta gave a death toll on Friday of 33, while earlier in the day the country's fire department said rescuers had recovered 36 bodies. A military spokesman said it had lost contact with some areas of the country and was investigating reports that dozens had been buried in landslides in a gold-mining area in central Mandalay region. Military trucks carried small rescue boats to flood-hit areas around the military-built capital Naypyidaw on Saturday, AFP reporters said. "Yesterday we had only one meal," Naung Tun said from near Taungoo. "It is terrible to experience flooding because we cannot live our lives well when it happens."

"It can be okay for people who have money. But for the people who have to work day to day for their meals, it is not okay at all." More than 2.7 million people were already displaced in Myanmar by conflict triggered by the junta's 2021 coup. Vietnam authorities said Saturday that 262 people were dead and 83 missing. Images from Laos capital Vientiane, meanwhile, showed houses and buildings inundated by the Mekong river.

## Malaysia widens probe into 'horror' care home child abuse

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Malaysian police expanded their probe Friday (September 13, 2024) into a major conglomerate with links to a banned Islamic sect, after hundreds of children were rescued from alleged abuse at care homes believed to be run by the group. Investigators stormed 20 charity shelters across two Malaysian states on Wednesday, arresting 171 suspects including religious studies teachers and caregivers, and bringing to safety over 400 children. In what is believed to be the worst such case to hit Malaysia in decades, police suspect the victims — aged from one to 17 — had been subjected to sexual and physical attacks. They were also allegedly forced by the care home staff to abuse each other. Investigators were "working towards" further raids and arrests as the probe on the organisation called Global Ikhwan Services and Business (GISB) continued, said police inspector-general Razarudin Husain.

Investigations and health checks so far show that at least 13 minors had been sexually abused, Razarudin said at a press conference. The children, who are temporarily being housed in a police training centre in Kuala Lumpur among other locations, are still undergoing medical examinations, added the police chief. Razarudin had said on Wednesday that children as young as five were burnt with hot spoons, while others who were ill were not allowed to seek treatment until their condition became critical. "The caretakers also touched the children's bodies as if to carry out medical checks," he said. GISB has denied the allegations and said they do not run the care homes raided in the states of Selangor and Negeri Sembilan.

"It is not our policy to do things that go against Islam, and the laws," the group said in a statement this week. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said he has urged relevant authorities to "investigate thoroughly" without delay. "This concerns the faith of the community. It is important and a serious matter, involving abuse of power, misuse of religion," he told reporters after performing Friday prayers. The Selangor state government said they



were going to "conduct regular checks" at religious schools to ensure there was no abuse and urged residents to contact the authorities if they had any information. Multi-ethnic Malaysia has a dual-track legal system, with Muslims subject to sharia (Islamic law) in certain areas. DNA samples GISB has long been controversial for its links to the now-defunct Al-Arqam sect and has faced scrutiny by religious authorities in the Muslim-majority country. Al-Arqam was banned by the authorities in 1994 for deiant teachings, while GISB members had in 2011 set up an "Obedient Wives Club" that called on women to be "whores in bed" to stop their husbands from straying. According to its website, GISB says it is an Islamic company that runs businesses from supermarkets to restaurants, and operates in several countries including Indonesia, France and the United Kingdom. Police believe the 402 minors in the care homes were all children of GISB members, Razarudin told AFP on Thursday. "We feel that there's a need for DNA samples to be taken." Religious authorities in Selangor state said this week they were closely monitoring GISB's activities. "[We] remain vigilant about any facts leading to deviations from true Islamic teachings," they said. The United Nations children's agency underlined the "unimaginable horror" faced by the victims. The children "will need long-term professional medical and psychosocial support," said Robert Gass, UNICEF's Malaysia representative.

## Kamala Harris says she is different from Biden, claims she offers a 'new generation of leadership'

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Vice President Kamala Harris, who presents herself as the candidate of change as she unseats President Donald Trump, said on Friday (September 13, 2024) that she's different from President Joe Biden because she offers "a new generation of leadership". In her first solo television interview, since she became the Democratic Presidential nominee, Ms. Harris also criticised the "hate and division that we see coming out of Donald Trump". She said she thinks people are "exhausted" by his style of leadership.

She also said she's a gun owner and doesn't want to take away anyone's guns, but she believes a ban on assault-style weapons is necessary and consistent with the Second Amendment. Anchor Brian Taff of WPVI-TV in Philadelphia asked Ms. Harris to describe one or two areas where she's different from the President. "Well, I'm obviously not Joe Biden" and "I offer a new generation of leadership," Ms. Harris said, adding that things once taken for granted cannot be overlooked anymore. "For example, another plan that I have that is a new approach is to expand the child tax credit to \$6,000 for young families for the first year of their child's life because that is obviously a very critical stage of development of child, and so my approach is about new ideas, new policies that are directed at the current moment," she said. "And also, to be very honest with you, my focus is very much on what we need to do over the next 10, 20 years to catch up to the 21st century around, again, capacity but also challenges." The interview was conducted in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, as Ms. Harris campaigned there Friday (September 13).

Donald Trump, his running mate Sen. J.D. Vance and other Republicans have criticised Ms. Harris for largely avoiding media interviews or interacting on the record with reporters who cover her campaign events. She and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, gave a joint interview to CNN last month. Her campaign



recently said she will begin to do more local interviews, and the National Association of Black Journalists announced Friday that some of its members will interview Ms. Harris on Tuesday (September 17, 2024) in Philadelphia. Ms. Harris used a question about the former president's appeal and how she would speak to his supporters to criticise Trump and his leadership style. "I also believe that I am accurate in knowing that most Americans want a leader who brings us together as Americans and not someone who professes to be a leader who is trying to have us point our fingers at each other," she said. The Vice President suggested that her support from Republican officials, including former Vice President Dick Cheney and his daughter, former Rep. Liz Cheney, is a result of people being "exhausted" with Mr. Trump.

"I think people are more willing now, in light of the hate and division that we see coming out of Donald Trump to say, Hey, let's put country first and I think that just makes us stronger and more healthy as a country," she said. Mr. Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. The Vice President, 59, is a former San Francisco district attorney, California attorney general, and U.S. senator. She offered a few answers when asked to share one thing she would like people to know about her they don't yet know.



## NSE co-location case: How Sebi found violations in 2019 but saw no evidence in 2024



Five years after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) came down heavily on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) for alleged lapses in high-frequency trading offered through its co-location (colo) facility, directing the exchange to disgorge Rs 624.89 crore and prohibiting seven top officials including Ravi Narain and Chitra Ramakrishna, both former managing directors and CEOs, from associating with a listed company or a market intermediary for a period of five years, the market regulator has disposed of the charges and let them off the hook. The Sebi order will benefit Ravi Narain and Chitra Ramakrishna, Anand Subramanian (former group operating officer), Ravindra Apte and Umesh Jain (former chief technical officers), Mahesh Soparkar (former senior vice president – special projects), Deviprasad Singh (former head of the IT operations) and the NSE which has been gearing up for its mega IPO.

What's the co-location case?

The NSE faced allegations that some brokers got preferential access through the co-location facility at the stock exchange, early login and 'dark fiber' — which can allow a trader a split-second faster access to data feed of an exchange. Even a split-second faster access is considered to result in huge gains for a trader. The allegations of unfair access were first raised by a whistle-blower in January 2015.

The whistle-blower wrote to the Sebi alleging that a few brokers were able to log into the NSE systems with better hardware specifications while engaged in algorithmic trading, allowing them unfair access and advantage. The unfair access issue pertains to 2012-14 when NSE used to disseminate price information through a unicast system. In such a system information is disseminated to one member after another. The letter to Sebi alleged that sophisticated market manipulation has been taking place for several years at the NSE co-location centre. It also said that NSE had allowed non-empowered internet service provider (ISP) to lay fiber in its premises for few stock brokers. According to the latest Sebi order, all the evidences, material and objective facts which have formed the basis of current SCN (show-cause notice) were also part of the earlier show cause notice and were examined by SAT and based on such examination, it was held that there was no evidence to suggest violation of PFUTP Regulations or SECC Regulations by the NSE and its employees. "When these evidences, material and objective facts did not lead to violation of PFUTP Regulations or SECC Regulations, they cannot lead to determination of collusion or connivance where the establishment of violation would additionally require presence of "conspiracy" or "secret or indirect consent or permission" making such establishment of violation more difficult," the order said.

The fact that OPG Securities was logging on to the secondary server till May 2015, even after the warning in the first half of June 2012 does indicate indirect consent by the NSE to OPG, Sebi order said. However, the fact that 93 trading members were logging to the secondary server during this period reduces the probability of collusion or connivance. Further, it is seen that in spite of multiple reports of Deloitte, EY, SEBI External Committee where external experts have examined email dumps, communication record for a reasonable period of time, still, no direct or indirect evidences, material, objective facts of collusion and connivance have been reported. This has further reduced the probability of collusion or connivance between OPG and its directors with Noticees (seven NSE officials), the regulator said. Sebi orders in 2019, 2021 found violations:

On April 30, 2019, Sebi came down heavily on NSE for alleged lapses in high-frequency trading offered through its co-location facility and directed to disgorge Rs 624.89 crore and barred the exchange from accessing the market for funds for six months. Sebi also asked Narain and Ramakrishna to disgorge 25 per cent of their respective salaries drawn during a certain period. They were also prohibited from associating with a listed company or a market infrastructure institution or any other market intermediary for a period of five years. In 2021,

SEBI in its 96-page adjudication order said NSE failed to comply with the provisions of Stock Exchange and Clearing Corporation (SECC) Regulations in "letter and spirit" and Ramakrishna and Narain are "vicariously liable for the acts of omissions/commissions committed by NSE during the investigation period". SEBI said the conduct of the NSE and Ramakrishna are "blameworthy being in defiance of the obligations casted under SECC Regulations". "... the default is grave and the gravity of this matter cannot be ignored. Therefore, no lenient view should be taken and the case deserves imposition of monetary penalty..." said SEBI order passed by adjudicating officer Amit Pradhan.

The adjudication by SEBI has concluded that NSE failed to provide a level playing field for members subscribing to its tick-by-tick data feed system. This TBT data feed is used for algorithmic trading. However, January 2023, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) set aside market regulator SEBI's Rs 625 crore disgorgement order against the NSE, its ex-CEOs Chitra Ramakrishna and Ravi Narain in the co-location scam. In its order, SAT pulled up the market regulator, asking, "how SEBI directed NSE to conduct an investigation against itself."

Action against OPG: In a separate order on Friday, SEBI directed Delhi-based broker OPG Securities Pvt Ltd, owned by Sanjay Gupta, Sangeeta Gupta and Om Prakash Gupta, to disgorge Rs 85.25 crore with an interest of 12 per cent (per annum). "I hold that the total amount of unlawful gains of Rs 85.25 crore (Rs 40.41 crore as intraday and Rs 44.84 crore as overnight) is held to be the unlawful gains that OPG earned by virtue of consistently connecting to the secondary server of the NSE colocation facility. Key accusations against the broker included the alleged collusion between the NSE and OPG whereby the latter was accused of logging in to Tick by Tick Data Feed (TBT) ahead of other members.

Investigations by CBI: CBI probe into the NSE co-location scam has revealed that one of the key accused OPG Securities intentionally logged into the secondary server of the exchange on 670 occasions in five years from 2010, for illegal profiteering. In May 2018, the CBI registered an FIR against a stock broker, Sanjay Gupta promoter of OPG Securities for allegedly manipulating the NSE system for two years to get first access to markets when they opened. The probe agency has alleged that he had managed to manipulate SEBI inquiry against the role of OPG Security in the misuse of TBT (tick-by-tick) architecture of servers by paying bribe to the officials of the stock market regulator. Gupta was booked by the CBI along with unidentified officials of the NSE and stock market regulator SEBI, who could have connived to allow the illegal activity to continue for years. Ramakrishna was arrested in the co-location scam nearly four years after an FIR was registered by the agency in May 2018. The Income Tax department too began its probe into the alleged tax evasion of any, by brokers and other entities who booked unlawful gains. Ramakrishna was again arrested in the money laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate on July 2022.

Ramakrishna and faceless conman: Even as the co-location case was going on, Sebi also penalised the NSE and its former MDs and CEOs, Chitra Ramakrishna and Ravi Narain, and others for violating securities contract rules in the case related to the appointment of Anand Subramanian as group operating officer and advisor to the MD. The regulator levied a fine of Rs 3 crore on Ramakrishna, Rs 2 crore each on the NSE, Narain and Subramanian and Rs 6 lakh on V R Narasimhan, who was the chief regulatory officer and chief compliance officer. Chitra Ramakrishna, who was the MD and CEO of the NSE till 2016, was guided by a faceless conman "Siddha Purusha/Yogi", a Paramahansa who may be largely dwelling in the Himalayan ranges, for 20 years, says an order issued by market regulator in 2023. The faceless "yogi" was responsible for the appointment of Anand Subramanian as group operating officer and advisor to the MD, who was not known in the industry. Subramanian was allegedly an accomplice with the unknown person (faceless yogi) who influenced the decision of Ramakrishna and thereby benefitting himself by being re-designated as 'Group Operating Officer and Advisor to MD' and having the compensation being paid to him increase substantially each year, upon the advice of the unknown person to Ramakrishna, said the Sebi order signed by Whole-time Member Ananta Barua. As per the opinion of human psychology expert, Ramakrishna has been exploited by Subramanian by creating another identity in the form of Rigyajursama to guide her to perform her duties according to his wish. Ramakrishna was manipulated by the same man in the form of different identities; one as Subramanian who enjoyed her trust and other as Rigyajursama who had her devotion and dependence," Sebi said.

## Sri Lanka to lift ban on vehicle imports by Feb 2025

All importations would also be limited to under three years of manufacture. All importations would also be limited to under three years of manufacture.

Sri Lanka will lift the restrictions on the import of all vehicles in a phased-out manner by February next year as part of the island nation's efforts to "restore normalcy in the economy", according to an official release. The ban would be lifted from October 1 in three phases as part of a broader economic recovery strategy tied to the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an official statement by President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office said on Friday.

The Cabinet approval granted to allow motor vehicle imports comes after four years of "stringent import restrictions" imposed to preserve the island nation's foreign exchange reserves during the acute economic crisis, the President's Media Division said.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, Sri Lanka imposed import restrictions to preserve forex reserves. The need then was to use the depleting foreign reserves for essential imports such as medicine, fuel and food. "With the significant improvement in forex reserves and the strength of the rupee, the Cabinet of Ministers has decided to lift all vehicle import ban/restrictions by February 2025. This decision is part of our ongoing efforts to restore normalcy in the economy and meet the needs of our people," Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said in a post on X.

Under the first phase, the importation of public transport vehicles would be permitted from October 1. The second phase of allowing the importation of commercial vehicles would take place from December 1. The third



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phase would be in force from February 1, 2025, allowing the import of motor cars for private use, the statement said. All importations would also be limited to under three years of manufacture.

The import of new vehicles is expected to "stimulate economic activity by increasing government revenue, particularly from vehicle imports, which have historically been a significant revenue stream for the country," it said. As the reintroduction of imports will put pressure on foreign exchange reserves, extra customs duties will be imposed to minimize its impact. Depleted foreign reserves in April 2022 led to an unprecedented economic crisis in Sri Lanka, forcing the island nation to announce its first-ever sovereign default.

## Gastro problems could heighten Parkinson's disease risk by 76 per cent, study finds



Digestive problems, including ulcers in one's food pipe or stomach, could increase the risk of Parkinson's disease by 76 per cent, according to a new study. Analysing endoscopy reports of 9,350 patients, the authors found that people having upper gastrointestinal conditions — specifically, ulcers or other types of damage to the lining of the oesophagus, stomach, or upper part of the small intestine — were far more likely to develop Parkinson's disease later in life. These findings, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open Researchers add to a growing body of evidence that ageing-related or neurodegenerative dis-

ease, long thought to originate in the brain, could begin in the gut. Gut health Here's what to note (Gastrointestinal problems are known to be common in patients suffering from neurodegenerative disorders, the authors said. The researchers at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, US, said that gastrointestinal troubles experienced by patients of Parkinson's disease often appear up to two decades before symptoms such as tremors or stiffness in arms or legs, which interfere with one's movement and are usually the grounds for diagnosis.

They said that digestive issues can involve constipation, drooling, difficulty in swallowing and a delayed emptying of the stomach. Constipation and difficulty in swallowing were strong risk factors related with a more than doubling of Parkinson's disease risk, the authors said. One of the possible biological mechanisms underlying these relationships between the gut and risk of Parkinson's disease could be problems in regulating dopamine, a brain chemical known to play a key role in digestion, they said.

The authors also proposed that gastrointestinal conditions could trigger the building up of the protein 'alpha-synuclein', which is how Parkinson's disease presents in the brain. Future research could help understand these mechanisms better, they added.

## On Uthradam morning in Kerala's Malabar, 'Onapottan' Theyyams visit to bestow blessings

Keeping up with tradition, the 'Onapottan' Theyyams visited the Panthiradi manor on Uthradam morning this year too. On Saturday, nine of these Theyyams—adorned with beards, crowns, and Onam-special umbrellas—were warmly welcomed by the residents with lit lamps, and offered them rice, new clothes, and dakhshina (money) as part of the customary rituals. "In the villages of Malabar, Onapottan Theyyam's is the first image that comes to mind when we think of Onam. 'Oneshwaran' is another name for them. Elders believe Onapottan represents Mahabali," said P P Dineshan, local resident and a teacher. The Theyyam and the customs



Onapottan is a Theyyam figure unique to the Onam season, whose mission is to announce the arrival of the festival. Each year, the journey begins from the Panthiradi manor in Kozhikode's Nittoor village. From there, they get on with their sacred walk through the small winding roads of the village. Onapottan Theyyams walk fast — they wait for none and stop nowhere. At times, they dance, and even run. This is to ensure they cover as many households as possible and bestow blessings to the maximum number of residents. They are mute, and hence the name. "As per tradition, Onapottans must remain silent from Uthradam morning until the end of the journey on Thiruvonam day," said Dineshan.

"The right to be an Onapottan Theyyam is reserved to the members of the Malaya community. Earlier, they used to live in Vadayam region of the district, but were later relocated to Nittoor's Velloilippil region to make the manor visit early in the morning easier," said Kappekkat Prakashan, a member of the manor. The Onapottan's attire is beautiful and elaborate. The face is painted with a mixture of red arsenic and vermilion, while the crown is adorned with flowers from the West Indian jasmine (techi) plant. The Theyyam wears a red cloth, with intricate de-

signs, around the body, has a decorative carry bag on the shoulder, and an umbrella made from palm leaves.

However, what truly distinguishes the Onapottan at first glance is the beard. The long white beard, made using banana tree fibre, is worn above the Onapottan's mouth. After a disciplined forty-one days of fasting, on Uthradam day, those who play Onapottans bathe at dawn, make offerings to their ancestors, and perform rituals before donning the attire. The ornaments are crafted from the Indian coral tree, which is harvested a year in advance and dried before being shaped by hand. The ornaments are crafted from the Indian coral tree, which is harvested a year in advance and dried before being shaped by hand (Express Photo) Creating this elaborate costume is a painstaking process, often taking several months. "The preparation begins in January and continues until August or September," said Rajesh Panicker, a specialist from Nittoor village. "The ornaments are crafted from the Indian coral tree, which is harvested a year in advance and dried before being shaped by hand." However, Panicker noted that finding raw materials has become increasingly difficult in recent years.

## What's the difference between popsicle, gelato and sorbet? Experts shed light

Anushka Sharma recently shared a picture of a plate full of bright, colourful popsicles, reminding us of summer vacations. The modern food scene has evolved beyond traditional soft serves and orange lick lollies, with gelatos and sorbets gaining popularity for their fruity and flavourful offerings, especially for vegan and lactose-intolerant consumers. But, how exactly do these frozen treats differ from each other? indianexpress.com spoke to experts to uncover the nuances.

What's the difference between a popsicle, gelato, and sorbet?

"A popsicle is a frozen treat made by freezing flavored liquid—usually juice or a sweetened water-based liquid—on a stick. It has a hard, icy texture," said Najrul Beg, executive chef at Hyatt Place, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur. In contrast, gelato is an Italian-style ice cream known for its intense flavour and creamy, smooth texture. It's denser than regular ice cream due to less air being incorporated. Made with milk, sugar, and sometimes cream, it has various toppings like fruit, nuts, or chocolate, Beg said. "The process of making gelato is long and complex. It starts with a custard base, which is then mixed with milk and sugar. It's then slowly churned while freezing to achieve that creamy consistency," shared Gagan Anand, founder, Scuzo Ice 'O' Magic.

Sorbets, on the other hand, are dairy-free frozen desserts made from sweetened water and fruit juice or puree. They are smooth and icy, and are a vegan option for dessert lovers. "The absence of milk sets it apart from



a gelato," he said.

Which one's healthiest for weight watchers out of the three?

Sorbet is generally the healthiest option for weight watchers because it is lower in fat and calories compared to gelato, agreed both. However, it can still be high in sugar, so they recommended portion control. Popsicles can also be a low-calorie option, but store-bought versions can contain added sugars, corn syrup and artificial ingredients, which counters the point. And although gelato has less fat than traditional ice cream, it still has a higher calorie content compared to sorbet or popsicles, especially because of the dairy content, they said.

## Michelin chef Vikas Khanna responds to viral video of his 'savage' reply to BBC interviewer: 'India is so multidimensional and multicultural'

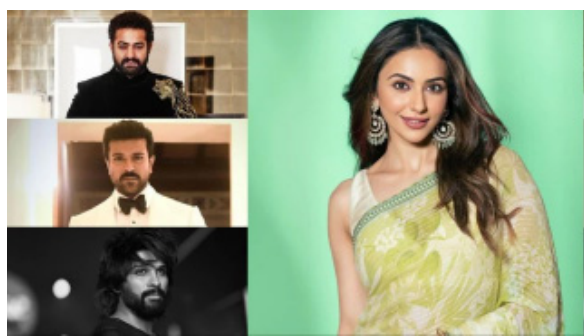
Chef Vikas Khanna has reacted to a resurfaced viral video showing his firm response to a BBC interviewer who implied his sense of hunger stemmed from his humble background in India. In an Instagram post, Khanna addressed the trending video, saying, "As this is trending worldwide, I must address this issue. Every nation has its greatness and faults. India is so, so multidimensional and multicultural; one of the fastest-growing economies. Our cuisine is valued as our greatest soft power, our family structure, spiritual power and wisdom, literature, science, research, technology, music, culture has defined its space in the world." "Our Chefs are ruling the global stages and our role in the World of science & technology is symbolic to who we are & our educational systems. But somehow this is the only question signifi-

cant to some..." the post read.

He also shared the video in question dating back to 2020, when Khanna organised large-scale food distribution drives during the pandemic, winning appreciation from many. "You understand how precarious it can be in India," the interviewer asked. It shows Khanna calmly explaining that his hunger didn't originate from his upbringing in India, where community kitchens provided for everyone, but rather from his struggles in New York as a young immigrant aspiring to open a Michelin-starred restaurant. Khanna said, "I understand, but my sense of hunger didn't come from India so much because I was born and raised in Amritsar and we have a huge community kitchen where everyone gets fed. The entire city can eat there.



## 'Jr NTR is born star, Allu Arjun can read people's minds, Ram Charan is bratty with friends': Rakul Preet Singh on Telugu superstars



Actor Rakul Preet Singh has only fond things to say about her Telugu co-stars Jr NTR, Allu Arjun, Ram Charan, Ravi Teja and Mahesh Babu. The actor, who started her journey with Telugu films more than 10 years ago, was asked about the best qualities of these stars, who have also become pan-India names in the last decade.

Appearing on the BeerBiceps podcast, Rakul was asked what she thinks of Jr NTR, with whom she worked on the 2016 actioner Nannaku Prematho. "He is a terrific

actor. There are some people who are born actors, and he is a born star." Next, the actor spoke about Allu Arjun and said Bunny, his nickname, is her "most favourite person." The duo worked in the action film Sarrainodu, which released in 2016.

"His quality is that he reads people very well and is extremely ambitious. He is obviously a talented actor, and a great dancer, but Allu Arjun has this ability to read people's minds, get the vibe really well. He is a dreamer, very ambitious. He is also hilarious. I am very fond of him, the way he is with his family, Sneha, just the person that he is," she added. The actor then spoke about her Dhruva co-star Ram Charan, calling him a great dancer and a phenomenal actor. "All of them have this in their DNA. He is also very bratty with his friends, in a good way. He is a very real person; you have fun conversations with him. He is naughty, besides being the star that he is. He is an effortless dancer. I'd be scared to match steps with Allu Arjun, him or Jr NTR because they are such good dancers! They don't need rehearsals." Rakul Preet Singh also lauded Mahesh Babu, calling him a "hardworking family oriented" man and actor Ravi Teja, who she said was an extremely funny person.

## Did Ishaan Khatter offer dance tips to Nicole Kidman for The Perfect Couple? Actor reveals why his character is called Shooter Dival

Actor Ishaan Khatter is making waves with his second major English-language role, starring alongside Hollywood legends such as Nicole Kidman and Liev Schreiber in Netflix's hit thriller series The Perfect Couple. As Shooter Dival, an outsider among Nantucket's elite, Khatter brings a compelling presence to the murder mystery that has captivated audiences worldwide. In an interview with indianexpress.com, Ishaan opened up about his enriching experience working with the iconic Nicole Kidman, performing a memorable dance number with the entire cast, and the intriguing story behind his character's name, Shooter Dival. Ishaan's eyes lit up as he spoke about working with Kidman. "It was wonderful. On a scale of production like this, all you hope for is a wonderful set of people to work with, and who's better than an icon like Nicole Kidman? I am happy to report that she is equally as wonderful as she is on screen." He praised the show's director, Susanne Bier, saying, "Our director Susanne Bier is a highly accomplished filmmaker, she has made some of the most bingeable series in the past few years with The Night Manager and The Undoing." Ishaan said that he feels blessed to have been a part of such a talented team. "I felt blessed to be in a setup like that, and what's more, it was a great part; there was meat on the bone, and there was enough for me to bite into it, and I enjoyed it."

Audiences would be justified in expressing their curiosity around Ishaan's character's name: Shooter Dival. He revealed that there was a backstory to the character, but it didn't make the final cut. "First of all, the character in the book that the series is based on was called Shooter Uxley. There is a backstory, in fact, we even shot it, but it didn't make it to the final cut." He explained that Shooter's name originates from his expertise in playing dice in boarding school. "That's how he met Benji, and that's how they became friends, and that became his nick-



name, because he shoots the dice." One of the most surprising aspects of The Perfect Couple is the way it begins. The vibrant flash mob-style song-and-dance sequence, reminiscent of Bollywood's iconic Farah Khan-style numbers, and choreographed by Charm La'Donna, which accompanies the opening credits and serves to set the tone of the series. Ishaan chuckled when asked if he gave dancing tips to Kidman and other co-stars. "Advice? I won't dare. I don't think I would give tips to anyone on that day because everyone was mortified of doing that dance." He recounts how the cast initially reacted to the dance sequence. "Everybody was stressed enough. It was really sweet and kind of amusing, honestly, to me because coming from here (Bollywood), it is bread and butter. This is what we do." However, the cast's initial hesitation transformed into joy once they began dancing. "Eventually, when we all danced, we all had the best time because that's what dance does; it is joyous." "It was a very clever decision on Susanne's part, and now we all love it. It just kind of makes light of the whole murder mystery trope. It throws off the audience, and they don't know what to expect going forward in the show because tonally it can be so mercurial," concluded Ishaan.

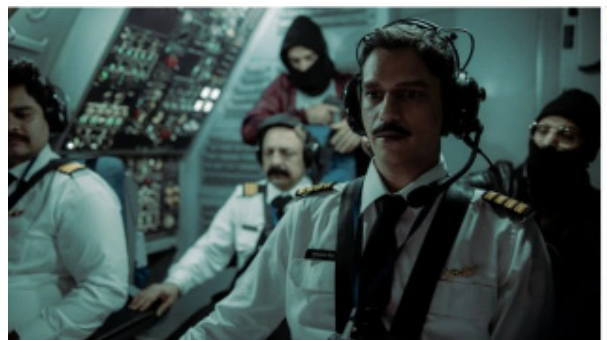
## IC 814: Former Punjab police chief addresses accusations of letting hijacked plane take off from Amritsar; warned Delhi, 'Goli chalegi, log marenge'

Former Director General of Police of Punjab, Sarabjit Singh, who found himself at the centre of the action when a hijacked Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu landed in Amritsar in December 1999, recalled the back-and-forth that he was having with authorities in New Delhi. Flight IC 814 was grounded in Amritsar for around 45 minutes, before it took off again and eventually touched down in Kandahar, where it remained for several days while the Indian authorities negotiated the release of the hostages with the terrorists. Letting the plane take off from Amritsar was seen as a major lapse on the part of the Indian authorities, because after that, it was in hostile territory. The events of the hijacking were recently dramatised in a Netflix series, titled IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack.

In an interview with The Tribune, Sarabjit Singh said that he learned about the hijack from the news. He was in Chandigarh, but based on a hunch, he instructed that two companies of commandos be posted at Amritsar airport just in case. He said that he was on the line with the then IB chief Shyamal Dutta, and the former R&AW chief AS Dulat. In the meantime, Sarabjit Singh said, the then DIG Border, Jaswinder Singh, had reached the ATC tower at the Amritsar airport, and had established contact with the flight captain, Devi Sharan.

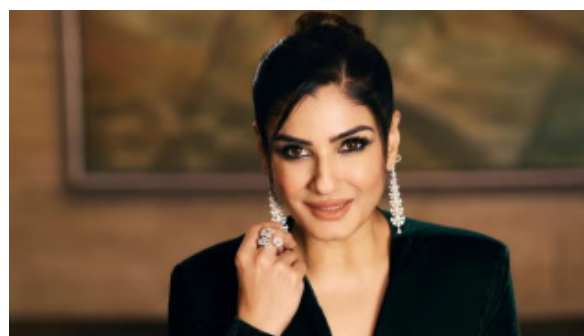
He said, "My first reaction, when I was told that the plane had landed in Amritsar, before I could talk to Delhi, was, 'Don't refuel'. Devi Sharan was stressing, 'Please give us fuel, please give us fuel'. In the meantime, Delhi is telling me to do something, and I said, 'Look, I have two companies out there, they're armed with automatic weapons, but we don't have any equipment specific to hijacking. We don't even have a ladder to reach the plane. Shooting will take place. And if shooting takes place, I cannot tell you how many will die.'"

Sarabjit told Shyamal Dutta that ground forces cannot see inside the plane and have no idea how many people would be harmed if they were to storm the cabin. Shyamal Dutta asked Sarabjit, "Can't you puncture the aircraft?" Sarabjit recalled his response, and said, "I had a laugh, and I told him, 'This isn't a scooter tyre. These are huge wheels, all tubeless, bullets won't do anything.'" In the meantime, Jaswinder was able to deny the refueling, because "the bowser people had gone for a meal", Sarabjit said. He added, "He called for the bowser, and without telling me, he had stationed two guys on the bowser to disable the wheels. My fear was that any sort of



action would trigger a reaction from the hijackers inside the plane." During this whole time, Sarabjit said, Devi Sharan was continuously 'pleading' for the plane to be refuelled. He even told the ATC that the hijackers had killed a passenger. "Jaswinder said, 'Sir, they've killed a person'. I said, 'Have they thrown a body outside? No? Then hang on. I'm not going to believe it till a body is thrown out.'" The game plan at the time was to buy time by denying fuel, and to wait for the NSG to arrive. Sarabjit learned that the plane only had less than 10 minutes of fuel left, and was shocked when Devi Sharan took off after waiting for 45 minutes. He flew the plane to Lahore, where they were given the fuel necessary to fly to Dubai, and then to Kandahar. He said, "I would give full marks to Devi Sharan for courage and coolness. He pretended to be scared, but I could see that the man was in full control of what he was trying to do... I could never have imagined that a chap with 9 minutes of fuel would've taken off. I was working on the concept no-fuel-no-takeoff... No pilot with a sensible mind would take off like this..." Responding to accusations that he didn't show the 'presence of mind' to keep the aircraft on the ground, Sarabjit said, "I had warned the people in Delhi that I have people waiting on the ground, but if we take action, there would be shooting, and people will die. As per our protocol, the central CMG handles hijacks, and they told me, 'Don't shoot'. I told Shyamal, 'If you're ready, I'll start', but he said, 'Don't. Disable the plane, but don't move in with your chaps'. I told him, 'Goli chalegi toh log marenge', and he said, 'Goli mat chalao.'" The standoff ended after a week, with the hijackers securing the release of three high-profile terrorists. IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack was released to positive reviews, but some criticism for its perceived misidentification of the hijackers.

## 'You are still my favourite', says fan after Raveena Tandon publicly apologises to him: 'I shouldn't have panicked'



Raveena Tandon recently took to social media to share an incident where she snubbed a fan in London. Raveena said that she was walking alone when a few men approached her and while she did realise that they might have just walked up to her for a photo, in that moment, she panicked and walked away.

However, after realising her reaction to the situation was inappropriate, the actress apologised to the fan through a note on her social media and said, "I have felt really bad after this incident. Hope I can meet you again and click a picture with you maybe. I hope you are reading this and know that, I shouldn't have panicked." It seems like her message has reached her fan, who has now reacted to her apology. Hours after Raveena's public apology to her fan, the man in question reached out to her. Raveena on Saturday, took to her Instagram Stories to share her fan's reply. It read, "Hi Raveena, my name is Bhavin Patel from London and the story which was up-

loaded on Instagram today regarding the incident, I want to let you know I was the guy." He added, "I was walking and I was pretty sure I saw you. I was excited and wanted a photo with you." He further added, "I can fully understand from a woman's point of view that it can be scary when guys approach, especially when you are away from home. You don't need to apologise. I was upset for what happened, but you are still my favourite."

Revealing why she panicked in London, Raveena said, "After the incident that happened in Bandra a few months ago, it has left me a bit nervous and traumatised, so when I am with people, I am okay, but alone, I get nervous these days. I should have probably given them a photo as maybe they were innocent fans, but I panicked and walked away fast and just asked a security guy for help." Raveena Tandon This is the public apology Raveena Tandon shared on her Instagram stories after finding her reaction inappropriate.

A few months ago, Raveena Tandon was accused of getting into a fight with a few people in Bandra. In the video, the man was heard saying that Raveena's driver hit his mother, and when asked about it, he started assaulting her. Claiming that the actor was drunk, the man said that when she stepped out of the vehicle, she started assaulting the woman as well. However, upon investigation, it was found that nobody was hurt by Raveena's car. The police confirmed that her driver was not driving rash, neither was he under the influence of alcohol. The actress received a clean chit from the police, however, the incident left her "traumatised".

## 'David Dhawan asked Govinda to play secondary roles,' Sunita Ahuja recounts what led to the spat between the two: 'David wasn't wrong'



Actor Govinda's wife Sunita Ahuja has spilled the beans on the reason behind the fallout between David Dhawan and the actor, who were the formidable director-star duo of the 90s. The long-time collaborators buried their differences recently, after years of friction. During the podcast Timeout with Ankit, Sunita was asked about the reason of their fight. She said it dates back to the time when David suggested that Govinda should take up secondary roles in films. "According to me, heroes should know when their time is up. You were the top star of the 90s, but if you still want to live in the 90s world, that's not going to work. David would have told him that he should do second lead roles as well like Amitabh Bachchan or Akshay Kumar had done. The problem is also the yes men around you; they poison you endlessly, feeding narrative into your head that you are a hero and must only do those parts. But that doesn't work, you must be with the trend."

"Maybe Govinda didn't like the idea of being a second lead, because in the 90s he only delivered solo hits with David. So maybe he couldn't take it, that 'why should

I be second to Akshay or whatever', so they had differences on that. I don't think David was wrong and Govinda was also right in his place, because he had never done a second lead role before," she added. Sunita Ahuja then said she has been a vocal critic of Govinda and is always quick to point out if he is faltering. This, she said, doesn't always go well with the actor as he is surrounded by "chamchas". "I always tell him. He says, mere ghar mein hi mere dushman hai. But I am like 'we are not your enemies, just telling you the reality, you should listen'. But ek hero ke aas pass chaar chamche hote hai (Heroes have yes men around them). I am not one of those. I really get angry on them and always say, they should launch their own 'Wah wah Productions' and launch more yes men," she added.

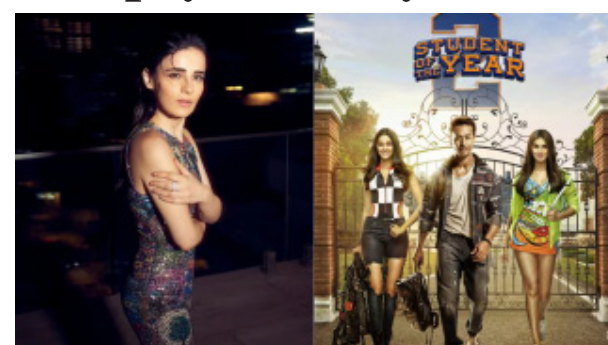
Govinda and David Dhawan's last film was the 2009 comedy Do Knot Disturb. Post that, Dhawan and Govinda parted ways. The director went on to make five more feature films, none starring Govinda. Some of their biggest hits include Swarg, Saajan Chale Sasural, Hero No 1, Raja Babu among others.

## Radhika Madan recalls giving her 'worst audition' for Student Of The Year 2, reveals she fell sick after that: 'I psyched myself'

Radhika Madan recently opened up about her journey to success after she transitioned from TV to films. She shared how she overcame anxiety by embracing detachment. Radhika, known for her roles in films like Pataakha and Angrezi Medium, recently shared her story of perseverance and self-discovery. She recalled the time she gave her "worst audition" for Dharma Productions' Student of the Year 2, which left her feeling anxious and sick. The film, backed by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, ultimately starred Tiger Shroff along with Ananya Panday and Tara Sutaria.

"I got a very big audition... It was for Student of the Year 2. I psyched myself so much. I was preparing so much, it wasn't even a two-page scene, I'd read it in my sleep as well. I psyched myself so much that I got sick before the audition. I had a fever, I had a cold, and I gave the worst audition of my life. I was so anxious," Radhika told Filmfare.

This experience served as a turning point for Radhika. She shared that she realised that her anxiety was holding her back and decided to adopt a new approach. "That day I promised myself that I am never going to feel this way, that I don't want to be in a limbo and feel this anxious in my life." Radhika's newfound mindset helped her land the role in Vishal Bhardwaj's Pataakha alongside Sanya Malhotra. "After that Student Of The Year (2) audition, after two weeks of giving the worst audition



of my life, I got the audition for Pataakha. I was told it was a Vishal Bhardwaj film, and I was like, 'He's not going to take me anyway, I'll go there and live my life. I'll live those two minutes to the fullest, no one can snatch that away from me.'" With this carefree attitude, Radhika nailed the audition. "I went with that approach, I had a blast, I was called back. Again, I didn't have any kind of expectation. I was like, 'I'm going to get three more minutes...' And then they were like, 'You are selected,' and I was like, 'Me?'" Radhika's success continued with Angrezi Medium, where she starred alongside Irrfan Khan. She reminisced about the audition process, "Why would anyone cast me, a new girl, with Irrfan sir? There was someone from the casting team who was acting like Irrfan sir; I thought to myself, '"



## Journeyman Pratham Singh and rising talent Tilak Varma stub out Shreyas Iyer's India D in Duleep Trophy



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Sixty-three years on, the predominantly zonal tournament now turned into a red-ball exhibition under the national selectors' watch, retains its charm for the trier. For Pratham Singh, an engineering graduate, a late-blooming cricketer was glued to uncertainty for six years until he struck his maiden First-Class hundred in his 29th match in February. On Saturday in Anantapur, Pratham doubled the tally with another second-innings hundred. As he raised his arms aloft in jubilation, the 32-year-old played like he belonged in his 30th red-ball outing, his Duleep Trophy debut for India A. For Tilak Varma, 22, the challenge was to match the initial promise and sustain his healthy red-ball numbers. But for a majority of tons in the Ranji Trophy plate league and brief injury concerns, the Hyderabad youngster had to get back among runs on a higher plateau to remain in contention.

The twin southpaw attack was too much for Shreyas Iyer's India D to contain on another listless day in the field. Consequently, India D were left to chase a daunting 487-run target shortly after tea on Day 3 as Tilak sauntered to his fifth FC hundred. While he had missed out on the first attempt, falling for seven, Pratham's overnight do-over teased his positive intent and shot-making profile. The Railways opener's rearguard had grabbed attention in his last Ranji Trophy game against Tripura in Agartala. Manning a 378-run chase where Railways had conceded the first-innings lead and stumbled to 31 for three, Pratham blunted the opposition with his stoicism, remaining unbeaten for 300 balls. Pratham, by then, had slammed his maiden red-ball ton (169 not out) and overseen the highest-ever chase (378) in Ranji history against a shell-shocked Tripura in their state capital.

On Friday evening, Pratham raced off the blocks with a swivelling pull for four off Harshit Rana. He carted seamer Vidwath Kaverappa to the point boundary before flicking and drilling Arshdeep Singh for successive fours through fine leg and long off. In the morning session's play on day 3, Pratham made his intentions clear as he

swept and lofted a threadbare spin attack. Employing some typical left-handed languidity, Pratham vaulted to his century as he walloped Kaverappa for a maximum over mid-wicket and followed up with successive boundaries. While Pratham placed India A in the driver's seat before tapping a delivery to first slip off Saurabh Kumar, Riyan Parag fluffed another chance with the blade. The instinctive slugger spanked left-arm spinner Saurabh with a mistimed six over long-on before holing out to a similar stroke soon after. Parag's tendency to give away high-voltage starts has subdued his campaign to four iffy knocks across two rounds with questions lingering over his defensive temperament. India D's frolic was short-lived as Tilak combined with Shashwat Rawat (64 not out) and blunted the bowlers.

Back in the race Tilak opened the day for his side by thumping a full toss to the long-on fence for four. The reverse sweeps and zooming aerial cover drives put off Saransh Jain and Saurabh off their tracks. Operating smoothly within the popping crease and beyond, Tilak's assured footwork befuddled the tweekers as Iyer extensively resorted to spin in the phase. Effectively, 89 of Tilak's unbeaten 111 runs came against spin, including seven fours. India D's response to a 489-run target suffered another worrying start when opener Atharva Taide bagged a pair, registering a five-ball duck against his first-innings nemesis Khaleel Ahmed. While the left-arm pacer had struck with a sharp nip-backer the previous day, Khaleel's fuller ball caught Taide off-guard as he chipped to the mid-on fielder. Promoted to number three, an aggressive Ricky Bhui imminently wore the new ball down as his reticent partner Yash Dubey watched on. The right-handed Bhui bludgeoned seven fours off the pacers and crunched left-arm spinner Shams Mulani for a six, taking India D to 62 for 1 before tests.

Easwaran fights the odds In the other round two fixture, India B's determined pursuit of India C's whopping 525 dwindled progressively as Anshul Kamboj wreaked havoc on a flat strip. Captain Abhimanyu Easwaran's unbeaten hundred left India B with a fighting chance after Anshul single-handedly uprooted the middle order. Mumbai sensations Sarfaraz Khan (16) and Musheer Khan (1) were trapped cheaply by the Haryana seamer. Anshul then registered his maiden First-Class five-for when he cleaned up Nitish Kumar Reddy, ending his wait for the milestone in his 15th appearance. Holding on with the tail, Easwaran's 24th First-Class hundred eventually dragged India B to stumps with a 216-run first-innings deficit hanging over them ahead of the final day's play. Brief Scores: India A 290 all out and 380/3 declared (Pratham Singh 122, Tilak Varma 111 not out, Shashwat Rawat 64 not out) vs India D 183 all out and 64/1 (Ricky Bhui 44 batting).

## Former No. 1 Naomi Osaka announces split from coach Wim Fissette

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Naomi Osaka parts ways with coach Osaka had expressed frustration with her recent results after a second-round exit at the U.S. Open just over two weeks ago. Former world No. 1 Naomi Osaka has announced that she's no longer working with coach Wim Fissette. Osaka had expressed frustration with her recent results after a second-round exit at the U.S. Open just over two weeks ago. The 26-year-old Osaka won two of her four Grand Slam titles while working with the Belgian coach. Those were the 2020 U.S. Open and the 2021 Australian Open. It's the second time Osaka and Fissette have parted ways.

On her Instagram story late Friday, the Japanese player wrote: "4 years, 2 Slams and a whole lot of memories. Thanks Wim for being a great coach and an even greater person, wishing you all the best." She's currently ranked No. 75. Fissette began working with Osaka shortly before the start of the 2020 season. They had split in the summer of 2022 before teaming up again last year when Osaka returned to training following maternity leave. "In 15 years on tour, this was one of my best years working together with amazing people," Fissette wrote in an Instagram post on Saturday. "From every defeat, we



worked harder and better and grew a lot. We were very close to a breakthrough." After the U.S. Open, Osaka "decided to move forward with a new path," he added. "I accepted it knowing we close this second run with more good memories and gratitude for building her way back." At Flushing Meadows, Osaka lost 6-3, 7-6 (5) to Karolina Muchova in the second round. Afterward, she said: "It's a little rough, because I do take these losses really personally. It's like a dramatic word, but I feel like my heart dies every time I lose." Fissette had previously worked with players such as Victoria Azarenka, Kim Clijsters, Simona Halep and Angelique Kerber.

## Hockey, Asian Champions Trophy: India, Pakistan roll back the years with a fun, chaotic contest

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

To a casual hockey watcher, Saturday's Asian Champions Trophy group-stage finale between India and Pakistan would have seemed like a battle of equals. And therein lies the story. For Pakistan, in an abysmal state of despair after missing the last three Olympics, the 1-2 loss would feel like a moral victory. For India, flying high after a bronze at the last two Games, a slight indictment before the tournament's business end. "We are not happy," was midfielder Nilakanta Sharma's assessment of India's below-par performance during the post-match interview. His teammates were baited by Pakistan, who drew them into individual battles and dragged them to their level, knowing it was the only way to take home a point, if not all three. The Indians fell for it. Craig Fulton would not have liked how his team lost control but, unwittingly, it meant India and Pakistan rolled back the years. All game plans were shunned. There were breathtaking forward runs with the players convinced they possessed superpowers to dribble past the entire opposition. The defences were porous, making the match more fun. There was a generous sprinkling of drama – rash tackles, heated exchanges and both teams ending with one player less. For large parts, it resembled a basketball match where both teams took turns to have a go at one another's goal. In these times when structure is the buzzword, this shapeless hockey provided unbridled joy. It's what allowed Pakistan, against most expectations, to surprise India and take the lead. Nineteen-year-old Hanan Shahid, declared the rising star of the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai last year, picked the ball up at half line. Instinctively, the youngster whose dodging skills are spoken of highly in Pakistan hockey circles embarked on a mesmerising run that would have made a few old-timers nostalgic. He relied on his pace and supple wrists to beat the first Indian man, balanced the ball on the face of his



stick and dribbled the airborne ball to go past the second, and left the third defender flat-footed to enter India's 'D'. He released the ball in time for Nadeem Ahmad, who got the final touch from a close range to put Pakistan 1-0 up in the 8th minute. That Pakistan hockey is on life-support isn't the story anymore. It's players like Shahid who play with zero burden and possess all the skills a modern hockey player does, that keep the hopes alive of a revival. But Pakistan's plan to get India to play their way was fraught with risks as it relied on two things – that they would sustain the same energy levels for a full 60 minutes and that India would not regroup and raise their levels. Both these factors played a role in the eventual outcome. Harmanpreet, the difference-maker, will still take heart from the fact that they could summon their best game on demand. Immediately after Pakistan opened the scoring, India – who hadn't enjoyed a stable spell of possession yet – took control of the ball and passed it with more authority. By playing like this, India had steamrolled every opposition in the continental championship so far. It took a goal from the Green Shirts to remind them of that. After five minutes of patiently holding the possession, India clawed back into the match by winning a penalty corner that was flicked into the goal by captain Harmanpreet Singh in the 13th minute.

## Morne Morkel lays out his vision as India bowling coach, up-skilling of inexperienced bowlers



GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Morne Morkel India bowling coach Morkel, who has 544 international wickets across three formats with 309 of them coming in Tests, was "blown away" by how Indian cricketers went about things and "how professional they were". (X/BCCI) On his first day at the Indian Test camp as the new bowling coach on Friday, Morne Morkel had spent a lot of time at the nets with the pacers, observing their bowling and talking with them. At the end of the day, he would talk about how he will strive to "understand the guys's strengths and weaknesses", and help the new generation of bowlers to "up-skill and get them up to the standard". He also shared an emotional interaction with his father when his job as coach was confirmed by the Indian cricket board.

India's main pace unit is strong with the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Shami leading, but the bench strength consists of largely inexperienced bowlers. Morkel

would have a lot on his hands in shaping and moulding them. "It's one thing having talent and skill and how can you make those guys feel welcome in an intimidating environment," Morkel told Bcci.tv. "As soon as players have that comfort and feel they belong here, that's when the performance comes. I am looking forward to that and obviously up-skill them and get them up to the standard ... I understand that there will be expectations of winning and luckily I have experienced that in my playing days and I can share that knowledge," he added. The former South African pacer, who took 544 wickets across formats including 309 Test scalps, felt that the senior players will lead the way. "We are quite lucky to have quality senior players and they will lead the charge. Our responsibility is to support them and give them the best sort of advice." He also talked about how he was "blown away" by how Indian players went about things and "how professional they were". Morkel, whose previous international stint was as bowling coach of Pakistan during the 2023 ODI world cup, has worked with India's head coach Gautam Gambhir for three IPL seasons at the Kolkata Knight Riders. He would relive the moments when his job as India coach was confirmed. "When I ended the call, I sat for about five minutes in the room reflecting on it and then I first phoned my dad. He spoke to me, I didn't even go to my wife. You know, normally they say go to your wife first, but I spoke to my dad and I mean, being a cricket fan for years and knowing what was going to come up, this is quite a special moment for me. So yeah, I enjoyed it for about 5 to 7 minutes to myself and then obviously shared with the family that this is an opportunity and potentially that might happen. I'm just so delighted that we eventually got things over the line, and I'm here."

## When Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman stamped a record Duleep Trophy partnership, two months before Eden Gardens 2001

GNS News Agency, Sept 19

Two months before their Kolkata 2001 epic against Australia, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman had set a record Duleep Trophy partnership with South Zone. (File) Two months before their Kolkata 2001 epic against Australia, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman had set a record Duleep Trophy partnership with South Zone. In one turns the clock back to 2001 in Indian cricket circles, two individuals and an iconic venue will almost always prop up for long discussions.

When VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid convened mid-pitch on day three of a tumultuous Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test at the Eden Gardens in March 2001, everything was on the line for Sourav Ganguly's side. After slumping to a defeat against Australia in the first Test of the three-match series in Mumbai, India had allowed the visitors to wrest control within the first two days in Kolkata. Posting 445 in the first innings, Australia skittled India for 171 and enforced the follow-on. To regain the title, India had to tide the odds – only twice before had a team won after being asked to follow-on. India had slipped to 202 for four before tea on Day 3 after Ganguly's dismissal. In at 6, Dravid joined Laxman to see off the day at 254/4. The middle-order bulwarks soon wiped out Day 4 from Australia's bowling map as they batted to 589/4 and set course for history. India eventually clinched an emphatic final-day win – a 171-run victory while at it – and thumped the Aussies in the final Test in Chennai. Laxman's 281 and Dravid's 180 have remained epochal since, among the most recollected individual numbers in Indian cricket history. Their 376-run stand for the fifth wicket is the third-highest ever for an Indian Test pair, with the mark only crossed once since Kolkata 2001 (410 by Virender Sehwag and Dravid in 2006). Interestingly, the seeds of the Dravid-Laxman Kolkata classic in the excessive March heat were sown two months before, in faraway Surat, at the now-obscure Lalbhai Contractor Stadium. Batting for South Zone on January 19, 2001, in reply to West Zone's 376 in a Duleep Trophy 2000/01 fixture, the superstar



duo began their association for the third wicket after openers Sridharan Sriram (38) and Sadagopan Ramesh (99) laid a solid 139-run platform. No. 3 Laxman and Dravid in time stupefied a West Zone bowling attack led by current chief national selector, Ajit Agarkar. Batting for more than 92 overs across days two and three, Laxman racked up 217 off 282 deliveries with 25 fours and two sixes during his 404-minute stay. Meanwhile, Dravid went past 11,000 First-Class during his knock and crafted 188 from 292 balls (22x4, 1x6) in six hours and 15 minutes. Rahul Dravid has ranked VVS Laxman's 281 as the best Test knock ever played by an Indian. (Reuters) Rahul Dravid has ranked VVS Laxman's 281 as the best Test knock ever played by an Indian. (Reuters) Their 409-run association has remained the benchmark in the Duleep Trophy since and is still the only 400-plus run partnership in the history of the tournament since its inception in 1961-62. Dravid, the former India captain and head coach, ended his First-Class career with 23794 in 298 matches, the third-most for an Indian behind Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar. Laxman, the marathon man, accounted for 19730 in 255 matches with 55 centuries. Kolkata 2001 will be the most popular episode of the Indian stalwarts. But remember the Surat hotbed for the forging of that legendary Indian partnership.

## Bent left knee, hip movement: How groin strain impacts Neeraj Chopra's technique and 90m quest

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Ishaan Marwaha is talking about a sporting intangible that cannot be measured but only felt: Rhythm. It's in his head and something he can feel from his vantage point right behind the thrower's arm. But a hard one for him to articulate. So, when the millions watch in awe as Neeraj Chopra tumbles to the floor and rises with a roar, Marwaha is obsessed with the minutiae.

"I am just watching him how he is warming up," he says. "Or the technique. How is the leg work? If he is running fast because when he is running slow, we can feel it from outside, there is something wrong. Like it happened in Lausanne..." "Nobody has been as intimate with Chopra as Marwaha. Name a muscle in Chopra's elastic body and the physiotherapist – who's been with him since 2017, leaving behind his family and travelling the world to train and compete – has likely put optimum pressure on it many times. So, Marwaha knew something wasn't right when Chopra sprinted down the runway in Lausanne days after the Paris Olympics. That evening at the Diamond League, he wasn't seeing the all-conquering champion that Chopra is. Rather, Marwaha was watching an almighty battle between the athlete and his body. "His body wasn't functioning," Marwaha recalls. In the stands, he and Chopra's coach, Klaus Bartonietz, resigned to the possibility that the world and Olympic medallist would finish outside the top three in an international competition for the first time since 2018. Then, something special happened. The javelin throwers are a tight-knit bunch. Rio Olympics gold medallist Julius Yego noticed Chopra's struggle and sensed his growing frustration. Yego gave a brief pep talk and urged him to relax before the final throw. The words of one champion rang in the ears of another and Chopra released the javelin in his signature style – sprinting down the runway, using the full force of his shoulders and falling on his palms in follow-through.

The spear flew and kept flying. By the time it returned to earth, the javelin had travelled a distance of

89.49m, the farthest Chopra had thrown all season. Even Marwaha, who has seen Chopra pull off superhero stunts in everyday life for the last seven years, was left jaw-dropped. "We were very proud of him," he gushes. "We told Neeraj, 'tu agar yeh nikaal sakta hai, toh tu kuch bhi kar sakta hai (If you can do this, you can do anything)'" That night in Lausanne, we saw Chopra in a new avatar. It was the fighter Neeraj. Days before, in Paris, the world saw angry Neeraj. Anguished, too.

The mood swings have been there for a while. Even after winning the silver medal at the Olympics last month, Chopra was feeling 'low', according to Marwaha. Chopra has reached a stage in his career where medals alone do not thrill him anymore. He's chasing perfection. "I feel there is a better throw left in me," he had said after winning the Olympic silver. "Until I don't get that, shanti nahi mil paegi (I won't be at peace)." But the groin injury – about which he spoke in lengthy, emotional monologues in Paris – is restricting him from exploring his full range. The injury lives in Chopra's head rent-free and consequently, affects his technique. The groin injury lives in Chopra's head rent-free and consequently, affects his technique. (PTI) Marwaha, whose job it has been to keep him match-fit, explains the nature of the much-talked-about adductor. "In layman's terms, the adductor muscles are attached to our pelvic bone. This attachment is where Neeraj has had a strain," he tells The Indian Express. "In 2018, he had a Grade 2 injury in the adductor. That muscle healed but after that, repeatedly there has been a strain on the attachment." For those who see the world as a glass half full, Chopra's Olympic silver – responding to Arshad Nadeem's monster throw with his best of the season until that evening – and Diamond League second place have come despite this injury and living in the constant fear of aggravating it. The possibilities when Chopra is back to his full fitness make many giddy.