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Telangana anticipates 'above normal' monsoon: IMD reports

Hyderabad: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast an 'above normal' monsoon for Telangana this year, spanning from June to September. In its recent announcement on Monday, the IMD pointed to weakening El Nino conditions as a significant factor contributing to this prediction.

IMD's analysis revealed a trend in La Nina years, indicating that most years experienced either above normal or normal monsoon patterns. Exceptions to this trend were noted in 1974 and 2000, which recorded below-normal rainfall.

Kavitha sent to judicial remand till April 23



GNS News Agency, April 15

Hyderabad: The Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi on Monday sent BRS MLC K Kavitha to judicial custody till April 23 in connection with a corruption case linked to the Delhi excise policy case. She was produced before the court on the expiry of her three-day police custody granted earlier. Though the CBI sought 14-day judicial remand, the Special Court awarded only nine days of judicial custody. The CBI argued that Kavitha did not cooperate with them during the interrogation in connection with the case.

Speaking to media after coming out of the court, Kavitha said she was not in CBI custody, but the BJP custody. "The CBI is asking the same questions that are being asked by the BJP in public. There is nothing new. They have been asking the same questions repeatedly for the last two years," she said. The BRS leader was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 15 and sent to judicial custody after the ED questioned her in connection with the money laundering case linked to the excise policy case. She has been lodged in Tihar jail where the CBI arrested her on corruption charges in connection with the Delhi excise policy case on April 11. She was placed in CBI remand for three days and has been now sent to judicial custody.

Lamborghini set ablaze in Hyderabad over money disputes



GNS News Agency, April 15

Hyderabad: A Lamborghini reportedly worth over Rs. 1 crore was allegedly set on fire at Pahadishareef in the city on Saturday. According to the police, Neeraj, businessman and a resident of Narsingi, wanted to sell his sports car and sought help of his friend Ayaan to search for a potential buyer.

Ayaan in turn, told about it to his friends Aman Haider and others who started searching for a buyer. The man managed to get in touch with one Ahmed, who evinced interest in buying the car. Ahmed asked Aman to bring the vehicle to a farm house at Mamidpalli village in Pahadishareef so that he could take a test ride and discuss the deal. Aman, along with a friend came in the car to Mamidpalli to show the car and finalize the deal. "When Aman reached Pahadishareef, Ahmed told him that Neeraj owes him money and asked about his whereabouts. He later, set ablaze the car after pouring petrol on it," said Pahadishareef Inspector, P Gurusu Reddy. On information, the Pahadishareef police reached the spot and informed the fire department. Before the help arrived the vehicle was gutted down. The Pahadishareef police registered a case. The Inspector said preliminary enquiries have revealed there were some financial issues between Neeraj and some other persons.

Rahul Gandhi's helicopter checked by poll officials in Tamil Nadu

GNS News Agency, April 15

A helicopter carrying Congress MP Rahul Gandhi was checked by election officials in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris on Monday, sources told India Today TV. The flying squad officials searched the helicopter after it landed in the Nilgiris, police said.

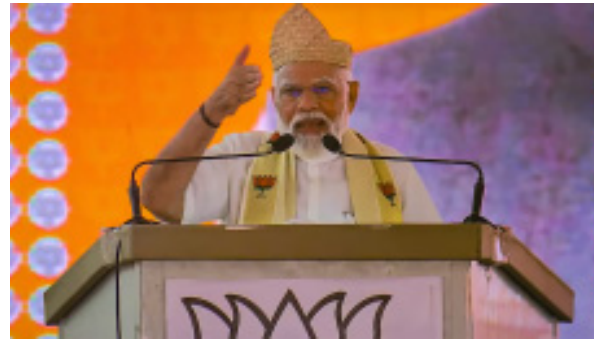
Sources in the poll panel said that Rahul Gandhi's helicopter search was a part of standard instructions to ensure free and fair elections. "Checking/ search of helicopters (Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee) is part of standard instructions to ensure inducement -free polls, which has led to huge amount of seizures in the current elections," sources said.

Yuvraaj couldn't save UP seat, came to Kerala: PM jabs Rahul Gandhi

GNS News Agency, April 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said Kerala's ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress-led UDF were "deteriorating the condition" of the state. He said that all Left governments, whether in Kerala or West Bengal, "possess a common character: 'nothing left and nothing right'". While addressing a public rally in Palakkad, the Prime Minister also took a dig at the Congress MP from Wayanad Rahul Gandhi, saying the party's "yuvraj" (crown prince) would ask for votes from the people of Kerala, "but won't utter even a single word on your issues and interests".

He said the Opposition parties also hinder the efforts of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance towards the development



of Kerala, as well as the entire region. He also accused them of trying to obstruct National Highway projects and of misusing funds allocated by the Central government for the state. "From West Bengal to Kerala, all the Leftist governments possess a common character: 'nothing left and nothing right'. This means that wherever the Left governs, nothing is 'left behind', and nothing 'done is right'," the Prime Minister asserted. Prime Minister Modi said the people of

Kerala "need to be wary of both the LDF and UDF".

"In Kerala, Congress calls the Left people 'terrorists'. But in Delhi, Congress and these 'terrorists' sit together, eat together and make strategies for elections," he claimed. Without mentioning Rahul Gandhi's name, Prime Minister Modi said the "Congress yuvraj" (prince) was unable to protect his family's bastion in Uttar Pradesh, in reference to the Amethi Lok Sabha constituency, and "made his new base in Kerala". He

said the Congress leader will seek votes from the people of Kerala but won't raise his voice in their interests.

He also criticised the Congress over a "back-door agreement" with the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), the political wing of an organisation banned in India for anti-national activities, for the Lok Sabha elections. Prime Minister Modi's visit to Kerala came a day after the BJP released its 'Sankalp Patra', or poll manifesto, for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Kerala will vote for its 20 Lok Sabha seats in a single phase on April 26. While addressing the Palakkad rally, the Prime Minister said, "We will ensure that Kerala gets great connectivity, strengthen infrastructure by building expressways and highways and also establish a great network of high-speed Vande Bharat trains."

Inflation, unemployment biggest country challenges: Priyanka Gandhi

GNS News Agency, April 15

Jaipur: Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday termed unemployment and inflation as the biggest challenge of the country, and questioned the silence of the Central government on these two issues. The Congress leader said this in Rajasthan's Jalore while addressing a rally in support of Vaibhav Gehlot, the Congress candidate from Jalore-Sirhot LS seat.

Vaibhav is the son of Congress veteran and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Priyanka Gandhi urged the voters to think before pressing the buttons on the polling day. The Congress leader, without naming any party, said "massive campaigns are being held to take the voters' attention away from the burning issues of the country". "Unemployment is at its peak, but no one is talking about it. You have been shown that the country is progressing and everyone is happy. When we see Presidents and Prime Ministers of other countries coming to



India for important programmes like the G-20 Summit, we do feel proud of that. However, the country's poor people are still struggling, and this is a reality," the Congress leader said. Addressing the gathering, Priyanka Gandhi also said "certain promises like Rs 15 lakh in every bank account and 2 crore jobs still remain unfulfilled".

'Won't allow Manipur to break apart', declares Amit Shah in Imphal



GNS News Agency, April 15

Lok Sabha elections: Amit Shah vows peace in Manipur, alleges "attempts of infiltration are being made to change the demography of Manipur". Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday alleged that "attempts were made to alter Manipur's demography through infiltration", adding that the Lok Sabha election is between the forces "trying to break Manipur and those keeping it united". "The most important thing is that no matter how much one tries - 'hum Manipur ko tutne nahi denge' (we won't allow Manipur to break)," ANI quoted Shah as saying at a rally in Manipur's capital Imphal. "Establishment of peace in Manipur by taking all communities on board and without breaking the state is the priority of the Narendra Modi government," the minister said. "I want to tell this today that our (CM) Biren Singh may not say this, but he kept a big demand before PM Modi - Manipur cannot remain united without inner-line permit. The BJP government has strengthened Manipur by giving inner-line permit," Shah added. At least 219 people were killed after ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3 last year, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. "Destiny of country will change when that of northeast and Manipur will change," Shah said during the rally. PM Modi says 'marked improvement' in situation in Manipur have dedicated our best resources and administrative machinery to resolving the conflict.

Because of the timely intervention of the government of India and efforts by the Manipur government, there has been a marked improvement in the situation of the state," the prime minister had said. Last year, PM Modi while addressing Parliament had expressed his commitment to addressing the suffering of the people of Manipur. "I want to assure the people of Manipur that India is with you. Parliament is with you. We will together find a solution to this challenge," he had said.

India has the power to strike at enemy territory, says Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

GNS News Agency, April 15

Addressing an election rally at Kathua district of Jammu division, Rajnath Singh said, "India has the power to strike into the enemy's territory from our soil as we have the world's best military might." "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has emerged as the world's strongest country on all fronts. We proved our strength on September 28 through surgical strikes," he said. He said regional parties in J&K like the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and also the Congress misused Article 370 for their political benefits. "I saw pictures of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi playing with snow in Kashmir. How could they have played with snow had Article 370 been still there? Mehbooba Mufti once stated that 'Khoon Ki Nadyaan Bahangi Jammu and Kashmir Mein Agar Article 370 jayega'. Let me assure you, not khoon ki Nadyaan, but streams of milk and water along with development and prosperity will flow in J&K. She also said that nobody would pick up the 'Tiranga' in J&K if Article 370 would go, but today in every house and government building, the Tiranga is flying high," the senior BJP leader said.

Gold prices surge amid middle east tensions

New Delhi: Gold price rose on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday tracking the global market for the precious metal which firmed up amid the worsening geopolitical crisis in the Middle East region following Iran's drone and missile attack on Israel.

Gold futures, maturing on June 5, 2024, stood at Rs 72,302 per 10 grams on the MCX at 11:30 a.m., an increase of Rs 541 over Friday's close of Rs 71,843. In the international market, spot gold price is trading around \$2,360 per troy ounce, which is around 0.70 per cent higher from its Friday close.

Building collapse in Muzaffarnagar: 2 dead, 17 injured



GNS News Agency, April 15

Muzaffarnagar: As many as two labourers were killed, and 17 others were injured after the roof of an under-construction building collapsed in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar on Sunday, officials said. According to the officials, the rescuers, along with local police, pulled out 19 labourers buried under the debris of the market building. However, two people succumbed to their injuries, they added. The injured are undergoing treatment in the hospital.

The incident took place in Talda village under the Jansath police station limits when several labourers were working inside the house, the police said. Two people, including the landlord and contractor, have been apprehended in connection with the incident. "Authorities have apprehended two suspects, including the landlord and contractor, in connection with the incident, which occurred as a result of the market building collapsing in the Jansath police station vicinity," the official said. Taking note of the incident, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed the administration to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured and the safe rescue of the trapped persons.

CM Kejriwal's judicial custody extended in money laundering case till April 23



A Delhi court on Monday extended Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody till April 23 in the money laundering case related to an alleged excise policy scam being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

GNS News Agency, April 15

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday extended Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody till April 23 in the money laundering case related to an alleged excise policy scam being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo was produced before Special Judge Kaveri Bawaja of the Rouse Avenue Court on the expiry of his previously granted 14-day judicial custody. Now, CM Kejriwal's and co-accused BRS leader K. Kavitha's judicial custody will end on April 23 in the ED's case.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court issued notice on CM Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest and subsequent remand by the ED in the same case. It will hear the matter next on April 29. In April, while seeking CM Kejriwal's judicial custody, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S.V. Raju, for ED, stated that it reserves the right to request the AAP supremo's further custody in the future. "... in view of the ruling of the Hon'ble Apex Court in case V. Senthil Balaji Vs. State....., the ED reserves its right to seek further custody remand of the accused," the court had noted.

Raju had submitted that the accused had been evasive and had concealed crucial information during custodial interrogation. He presented two main grounds for seeking judicial custody -- first, that the accused is highly influential and has the potential to tamper with evidence or influence witnesses if released, which could hinder ongoing investigations, and second, the complexity of economic crimes, requiring thorough investigation to uncover additional proceeds of crime and identify other individuals involved. The ED arrested CM Kejriwal on March 21 after questioning him for over two hours at his official residence in Delhi. The ED has termed CM Kejriwal the "kingpin and the key conspirator" of the alleged excise scam in collusion with other ministers of the Delhi government, AAP leaders, and other persons.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Iran vs Israel

IRAN launched a missile and drone attack on Israel on Saturday night, turning into reality the greatest fears that had gripped the world after the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas, a close ally of Iran. Tehran's attack comes less than two weeks after Israel's April 1 bombing of the Iranian consulate in Damascus — which killed a top General of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and several military advisers — and one day after Iran seized an Israel-affiliated cargo vessel, which has 17 Indian nationals among its 25-member crew. Tel Aviv has claimed that Iran's attack has been 'foiled', with hundreds of missiles and drones being intercepted with the help of the US and other allies. It also said that the bombardment caused injuries to over 10 persons, including a seven-year-old girl, and 'minor damage' to an airbase. After the April 1 bombing, the Iranian leadership had vowed revenge, with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declaring that Israel would be 'punished' for it. On Sunday, having demonstrated that it had the capability to hit deep inside the Israeli territory, Iran declared through its Permanent Representative to the UN that its retaliation had 'concluded', and warned Israel not to respond. Apart from the US, several Israel allies — including the UK and France — have reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding Tel Aviv. More importantly, they must join forces to persuade Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu not to strike Iran, for that could plunge West Asia into a full-blown war. India, which has good relations with both countries, has been urging restraint; its immediate goal must be to rescue its nationals — including the ship crew and the labourers who migrated recently — from the region that may soon turn into a bigger war zone. The events since the October 7 attack, with Israel using disproportionate force that has caused thousands of civilian deaths and a humanitarian crisis in Gaza,

'Head of sports bodies should be someone from the sports field rather than any politician'



GNS News Agency, April 15

Nitin Kirtane, an Indian professional tennis player said he would consider the party before voting and would look at who could be the face of the Prime Minister. Nitin Kirtane, an Indian professional tennis player said he would consider the party before voting and would look at who could be the face of the Prime Minister.

It is a misconception that sports personalities are apolitical or disinterested in the political scenario of our country. As the Lok Sabha elections approach, Pune-based sports figures are actively discussing politics at home or within their social circles, evaluating candidates and their potential contributions to the development of sports in India. Snehal Shinde, a Pune athlete who clinched gold with the Indian Women's kabaddi team at last year's Asian Games in China, stated that she will strongly consider whether the candidate will work for the betterment of sports and players. She mentioned that a candidate should possess essential qualities, such as being in touch with ground reality, which would allow them to understand players' barriers in their daily lives. "I believe that sports and politics should be kept separate, as it diminishes the opportunities for deserving players. Also, the head of the sports associations should be someone from the sports field rather than any politician," she said. While discussing political matters, Shinde mentioned that she actively participates in political discussions with her fellow players, where they discuss the advantages they would get after the victory of a particular politician and what behaviour that individual would exhibit towards sports.

Indian Tennis player Vaishnavi Adkar from Pune will be voting for the first time. Despite lacking political awareness, Adkar said she would first have a political discussion with her family and conduct some research on the candidates. "Although I will be voting for the first time, I will conduct some research before casting my vote... Regardless of class, the candidate should be unbiased and should have no personal gains at the expense of the public," she said. Adkar will be leaving tomorrow for her tennis event, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) W35, happening in Tunisia, after which she will return to participate in voting.

Nitin Kirtane, an Indian professional tennis player said he would consider the party before voting and would look at who could be the face of the Prime Minister. "I will look at the future because there is so much work that can be done in the beautiful city of Pune. In the last two-three years, we have seen major developments such as the metro, airport terminal, and others," he said. Maansingh Nigade, a Ranji cricketer is travelling back to India after playing in the Bali Blast Championship T10 held in Indonesia. He referred to an election as a waste of time, "as political leaders have no certainty to remain in one party for their agendas." Nigade said he never took part in the voting but said, "A political leader should know what they are doing while leading a country and should work towards the uplift of the public rather than favouring huge companies."

A 23-year-old Kabaddi player and captain of Puneri Paltan, Aslam Inamdar, who represented Pune in the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) season 10 this year, emphasised the importance of candidates who ensure sports facilities in villages for the local communities. He said the person should be easily approachable as they are not a leader of a particular caste or religion. "A politician gets votes from various castes, sects, and religions. Thus, they should work for all of them regardless of whether a person is poor or rich," he said. Tejal Hasabnis, a professional women cricketer of the Maharashtra team, said she is keen to cast her vote.

Bombay HC issues notice to Mumbai University, others on plea against 'widespread violation' of mandatory 75% attendance by law students



GNS News Agency, April 15

Mumbai University, Bombay High court, attendance, 75 per cent attendance. The PIL filed by a full-time faculty member at a college in Mumbai, claimed there is "widespread violation" of the mandatory 75 per cent attendance rule. The Bombay High Court on Wednesday issued a notice to Mumbai University (MU), Bar Council of India (BCI) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) on a PIL seeking directions to the university to strictly enforce and comply with the mandatory 75 per cent attendance rule at colleges affiliated to the MU.

The PIL has been filed by a faculty member of a law college. It seeks to bring students of both three-year and five-year programmes under the ambit of the mandatory 75 per cent attendance rule. The PIL filed by Sharmila Sandesh Ghuge, a full-time faculty member of the Jitendra Chauhan Law College, Mumbai, claimed there is "widespread violation" of the mandatory 75 per cent attendance rule.

"The central concern revolves around the fact that many students fail to meet the mandatory 75 per cent attendance mark as stipulated by Ordinance 6086 of the University of Mumbai. The low attendance is primarily because of students interning with law firms or being employed while pursuing their law degrees, compounded

by the lack of action on the part of law colleges and university authorities to enforce attendance requirements," the plea claimed. Ghuge claimed before a division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Arif S Doctor that she had sent numerous letters to the MU, the BCI and the UGC expressing her concerns about non-compliance and inaction, to which the UGC had sent a reply asking the MU to look into the matter. However, despite reminders and follow-ups, there has been a lack of substantial response or action by the respondents, hence the petition.

She claimed that in the first week of the academic year, only 50 per cent of the newly-admitted students attend the lectures and it further decreases to 30 per cent in the second week. In the later weeks, hardly 10 per cent of the students attend lectures, leaving classrooms empty, the plea mentions. The petitioner argued that in a five-year course, there is an average attendance for the first two years, but soon the students start bunking lectures, however, nothing is mentioned in the Ordinance about the repercussions of students not complying with attendance criteria. The plea went on to note, "This is often used as leverage by the Students. Colleges also do not take action against the defaulters and issue students having zero per cent attendance with hall tickets because of the fear of legal action against them."

The PIL sought directions to the Mumbai University to ensure compliance with the mandatory 75 per cent attendance rule and establish a committee of independent experts, stakeholders in the field of legal education dedicated to monitor attendance at law college and to make regular reports on attendance patterns and take action against defaulters. The PIL also sought direction to the BCI to consider a proposal for long-term internships so as to encourage students to attend lectures, to the MU to take disciplinary actions against students and institutions found to be in consistent violation of the requirement, regular inspection and review of law colleges under the MU among others.

Delhi Cabinet minister Raaj Kumar Anand quits AAP, says party 'mired in quicksand of graft'

GNS News Agency, April 15

Addressing a press conference at his residence after tendering his resignation to party general secretary Sandeep Pathak, he said, "I had entered politics when Kejriwal had said that if its politics changes, the country will change. But today, I say with much regret, that politics did not change but political leaders did. The AAP was born out of a movement against corruption, but today this party is mired in the same quicksand of graft." The social welfare minister further accused the AAP of not giving due respect to Dalits and individuals from backward communities in the CM Arvind Kejriwal-led party's organisation. "They (AAP) put Babasaheb (Ambedkar)'s picture in each press conference, each government office but when it comes to following his ideals. Reservation is mandated by law but when it comes to actual representation — not even a single one of our 13 MPs is a Dalit or someone from the backward communities," Anand said.

"It has become impossible for me to continue working as part of this government. I tender my resignation from this party, this government and the post of its minister because I do not want my name to be added in such corrupt actions. I do not believe that we have the moral right to continue in government any longer," he added. The AAP MLA's resignation comes at a time when Kejriwal is in judicial custody in connection with the now scrapped Delhi excise policy. Meanwhile, Anand is under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate and DRI in an alleged money laundering case relating to unaccounted business investments in hawala payments sent to China



in 2023.

In November last year, after conducting searches at 13 places, including Anand's premises, the ED alleged that evidence relating to unaccounted business investments and hawala payments sent to China in 2023 was recovered from some of his key employees. This, according to the agency, was apart from Rs 74 lakh in cash along with various incriminating documents/digital records that were also recovered. An ED spokesperson said, "The ED initiated the investigation on the basis of a prosecution complaint filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence against Anand and other connected persons/entities for commission of offences under various sections of the Customs Act. As per the complaint, Anand made hawala payments to China and evaded customs duty amounting to about Rs 7 crore on various imports. The Hon'ble Court has taken cognizance of the offence vide order on August 11."

Inquiry launched into Kejriwal sending messages to AAP MLAs from jail: Sanjay Singh

GNS News Agency, April 15

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh on Wednesday claimed that an inquiry has been launched into Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal sending messages to his MLAs through his lawyers from Tihar jail.

After Kejriwal sent a message to AAP MLAs asking them to visit their constituencies and solve people's problems, a "threat was issued" that his meetings with his lawyers and family members would be stopped, Singh claimed at a press conference without naming anyone. The AAP Rajya Sabha MP alleged that he and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann wanted to meet Kejriwal in jail but the meeting was cancelled by the prison authorities, even though a token number had been issued for it. Kejriwal has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam. He is in judicial custody till April 15 and is currently lodged in Tihar jail. Since his arrest on March 21, he has sent messages to his party leaders and directions to Delhi ministers through his wife and lawyers. Singh hit out at the Modi government and the ruling BJP, saying that they want to keep Kejriwal in Tihar under "Hitlarshahi" to break him emotionally. "Kejriwal will neither break nor bow down to any torture," he said, adding that Delhi's 2 crore people will respond to this in the Lok Sabha elections. Eight-nine policemen stay around Kejriwal during his meetings with his law-



yers in jail. This is against rules as inmates are allowed to speak to their lawyers privately, Singh said.

The excise policy case The case against Kejriwal pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 that was later scrapped. The ED has accused Kejriwal of being involved in the "entire conspiracy of Delhi liquor scam, in drafting and implementation of the policy, for favouring and benefiting the quid pro receiving kickbacks and eventually using part of proceeds of crime generated out of the scheduled offence in the election campaign for Goa Assembly elections".

SCR operates summer special trains to clear passenger rush

Hyderabad: To clear the extra rush during the summer season, the South Central Railway has announced several summer special trains. Accordingly, Train No. 07223 Secunderabad-Santragachi will make 11 trips on Fridays between April 19 to June 28 and Train No. 07224 Santragachi-Secunderabad will make 11 trips on Saturdays between April 20 and June 29. Train No. 07225

Secunderabad-Shalimar will make 11 trips on Mondays between April 15 and June 24 and Train No. 07226 Shalimar-Secunderabad will make 11 trips on Tuesdays from April 16 to June 25. Train No. 07223/07224 Secunderabad - Santragachi - Secunderabad Summer Specials will stop at Nalgonda, Miryalaguda, Nadikude, Sattenapalle, Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru.

Wary of CAA, migrant workers in Pune get documents in order



GNS News Agency, April 15

CAA The Act has been criticised by minority groups and the Opposition who feel that it singles out Muslims. Though the Centre has clarified that the CAA will not take away anybody's citizenship, many like Sheikh, a migrant labourer in Pune, are wary and leaving nothing to chance. A week before Farukh Sheikh came to Pune in late March, he travelled to the local panchayat office in his hometown, Gopalpur village in West Bengal's Malda district, to get the age on his voter's card corrected. "The voter's card showed I was a year younger than my Aadhaar card. With the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in place, I decided to get all my documents corrected to avoid any trouble in the future. The correction was long due but this year I got it done," he said.

Sheikh is among the thousands of migrant labourers who work at Pune's Market Yard — 80 per cent are from West Bengal. Every year for the last 10 years, he has been leaving his home and travelling to Pune to work as casual labour. Sheikh, who stays in Pune for around 10 months, says many others in his village have visited the local panchayat office to get their documents corrected. "We heard of what happened in Assam... many people lost everything they had," he said. The Centre on March 11 notified the rules for the implementation of the CAA which fast-tracks the process of granting Indian citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who migrated to India owing to religious persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The Act has been criticised by minority groups and Opposition parties who feel that it singles out Muslims. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has clarified that the CAA will not take away anybody's citizenship, many like Sheikh are wary and leaving nothing to chance.

Sheikh's cousin Asfaq, who is from the neighbouring district of Murshidabad, said they called up relatives working in Mumbai asking them to get their documents in place. "In 2019, when CAA and NRC [National Register of Citizens] were hot topics, all of us started looking for documents so that we did not face uncertainty," he said. His cousin, who also works in the Market Yard, was quick to add that if the government wanted, it could cause trouble for anyone. "There must be legal recourse we can take. That is the reason we got all our documents checked," Sheikh countered.

Sheikh's uncle, who did not wish to be named, said he had called home to see if all his documents were in place. "I am not that literate but I still want to be on the right side of the law," he said. At his village, he said, the panchayat had conveyed a special camp to enable people to correct discrepancies in their documents. "We were asked to link at least one document with our Aadhaar card. Those who were not present were asked to do so over their phones," he said. With Lok Sabha elections around the corner, the CAA is a hot topic in West Bengal. But Sheikh says he, like many other migrant workers in his village, will not be able to cast his vote. "The election has come during peak mango season... almost half the men in our village are out for work. We will not be able to vote," he said.

Dehradun woman on Ola bike taxi dies in accident on Dwarka expressway in Gurgaon

GNS News Agency, April 15

A young woman working at an interior designing firm in Gurgaon died after an Ola bike taxi she hailed was hit by an unidentified vehicle in the city on the Dwarka Expressway, connecting Delhi and Gurgaon, on Monday, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Tanushree Dutt, 24, a resident of Dehradun, the police said. The driver, Satendra Singh, sustained injuries in the accident that took place at Sector 36 A of Gurgaon around 7 pm, said an officer. Officials pointed out that two-wheelers were not allowed to ply on the 16-lane expressway ever since its inauguration.

According to the police, the woman was picked from Sector 49 and was heading to a residential society at AVL Sector 36A near the expressway where she stayed with her uncle. "A speeding vehicle hit me from behind, causing me to fall to a side. The passenger who was sitting behind also fell on the road. When I regained consciousness, I saw that the woman was in a critical condition. I immediately called my company, police control room, and friends," said the driver, adding that both of them were shifted to a hospital in a government ambulance. Tanushree Dutt had succumbed to injuries on reaching the hospital, said Singh who stays in Badshahpur. The driver of the vehicle that hit the bike taxi fled the scene, Singh stated in the complaint. Police said they were in the process of identifying the vehicle that caused the accident.

After post-mortem, the body was handed over to relatives who took it to their native place in Dehradun, the police said. Tanushree Dutt is survived by her parents and two brothers. According to the woman's uncle, Yogesh Gairola, Dutt came to Gurgaon three months ago and had joined an interior designing firm. "She graduated from Chandigarh University. She was staying with my family. She would call to inform us whenever she would get late. Around 9.45 pm on Monday when she didn't reach home, we got worried and I stepped out to check.

A little away from the society, I saw a small crowd and got to know of the accident," Gairola said. The police have registered a case under sections 279, 337, 304A, and 427 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Sector 37 police station.



In his first poll rally in Bengal, Amit Shah targets Mamata over CAA: 'Didi can oppose as long as she wishes'



GNS News Agency, April 15

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday accused the Mamata Banerjee-led government of misleading the people over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), saying the Centre is committed to granting citizenship to Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh refugees. Addressing his first rally ahead of the Lok Sabha election in West Bengal, Shah came down heavily on the TMC government for its appeasement politics, failure to stop infiltration, and the recent attack on National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials in East Medinipur district's Bhupatinagar.

"We have passed a CAA law in the country. Mamata Didi Bengal ke logon ko gumrah kar rahi hain (Mamata Didi is misleading the people). She is saying that if you apply then you will lose your citizenship. But Mamata Didi you don't know that these people do not have citizenship. Today, I have come here to tell all refugees not to be scared to apply for citizenship under CAA as no case or proceedings will take place against anyone who applies. This is the Modi government's law and no one can oppose this," Shah said at a public meeting in the Balurghat Lok Sabha constituency in South Dinajpur district. While addressing election rallies, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has claimed that once anyone applies for citizenship under CAA they will be branded as a foreigner.

The Union Home Minister said, "Mamata Didi can oppose [CAA] as long as she wishes. But we are committed to granting citizenship to Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh refugees who have come here. This is our promise. I want to ask Mamata Didi what she would lose if these refugees got citizenship. On one hand, you lay the red carpet to welcome infiltrators and Rohingyas in Bengal and on the other, you are misleading the Hindu, Buddhist

and Sikh refugees. Didi your politics will not work this time as Modi ji has notified CAA rules." Shah also slammed the TMC government for filing a case against NIA officials, investigating the 2022 Bhupatinagar blast case, after they were attacked by villagers — the second time in three months that central agency teams were targeted in the state. The NIA team was attacked after they detained two accused in connection with the Bhupatinagar blast case. Based on complaints lodged by the family members of the arrested, the state police lodged a First Information Report (FIR) against the NIA officials.

"A bomb blast took place in 2022 in Bhupatinagar which killed three people. Those who were behind the bomb blast must be put behind bars. When NIA conducted an investigation into this following a High Court order, Mamata Didi registered a case against them to protect those involved in the blast. Mamata Didi should be ashamed. But be assured, all those involved in the blast will be hanged upside down as the High Court has directed the NIA to probe the matter," said Shah. Continuing his attack, the Union Home Minister said Mamata Banerjee has been protecting the people responsible for atrocities on women in Sandeshkhali due to her appeasement politics.

"Despite being a woman chief minister, you are doing politics over the Sandeshkhali incident. Under your watch, TMC leaders carried out atrocities on women, and people attacked ED officials but you are protecting these people because of your appeasement politics. Women of Bengal have seen that you are standing by the offenders in Sandeshkhali. Who is protecting the culprits in Sandeshkhali? If you vote for the TMC then it would mean that these people will get a free hand in carrying out atrocities," said Shah. Shah also asked people to help the BJP win 30 seats from Bengal in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "In 2014, people gave us 2 seats. In 2019, you gave us 18 seats which helped the BJP get over 300 in the country. Now in 2024, you have to increase the tally from 18 to 30 so that the BJP crosses 400 seats in the country," said Shah. "For a stronger India, you have to build a strong Bengal. But as long as infiltration continues, Bengal cannot be strong. Can Mamata Didi stop infiltration? She won't do it as infiltrators are her vote bank. Only Narendra Modi and the BJP can stop this," he added. The BJP's Sukanta Majumdar will contest against Biplab Mitra of the ruling Trinamool Congress in the Balurghat Lok Sabha constituency, where voting will take place on April 26. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.

3 senior Chandigarh IAS officers who went to Paris switched hotels, made unauthorised expenditure, says audit report

GNS News Agency, April 15

Three senior IAS officers who went on a trip to Paris in 2015 during their tenure in the Chandigarh Administration made unauthorised expenditures of Rs 6.71 lakh on the foreign tour, changed hotels, and overstayed for a meeting that was meant for one lower-ranking official, as per a special audit report of the Director General of Audit (Central). The audit report, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, also revealed that the original invitation was meant for the chief architect of Chandigarh but the three IAS officers went on this trip meant for one lower-ranking official.

In 2022, The Indian Express highlighted the serious irregularities by the three IAS officers — Vijay Dev, then Chandigarh adviser; Anurag Agarwal, then home secretary; and Vikram Dev Dutt, then secretary (personnel). The information accessed through Right to Information (RTI) Act applications showed how they even switched from their "already booked five-star hotel" to a more plush property to get a better view of Arc De Triomphe and then gave each other approvals to increase their budget, all at the cost of the taxpayer.

An invitation was received from Foundation Le Corbusier's Paris, France, regarding a meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the architect's death of Le Corbusier to be held on June 15, 2015, in Villa Savoye, in Poissy. Confirmation was sent to Philippe Belaval, Le President Du Centre des monument nationaux, Foundation Le Corbusier, Paris. A letter was sent to the Director Services Government of India, Ministry of Home, Delhi, regarding the grant of cadre clearance for three officers of Chandigarh Administration to attend the meeting. The audit report mentions that these three IAS officers made a seven-day visit for this meeting. Vijay Dev and Vikram Dev Dutt approved each other's tour programmes, and Vijay Dev approved Anurag Agarwal's itinerary — all on June 10, 2015, as per the report.

The report submitted to the Chandigarh Administration mentions, "Originally invitation was meant for Chief Architect UT Chandigarh however, the visit was made by Secretary level officers. No certificate regarding the visit was obtained from the Ministry of External Affairs in re-



gard to participation." It was stated that "the visit was for 7 days and the matter was neither presented nor approved by the screening committee," even though norms state that "no foreign travel visit should be exceeding five days without obtaining the approval of the screening committee." It was also said that the nomination of officers concerned was not obtained from the minister.

As per norms, it was also specified that "the visit abroad of the Secretary is to be recommended in case lower level officer could not be substituted". However, in this case, all three top IAS officers jetted off to Paris, overstayed and even switched hotels. The revised amount of Rs 9.10 lakh meant Rs 1.51 lakh per night for six nights for the then adviser, and Rs 4.43 lakh meant Rs 73,916 per night for six nights. The revised hotel accommodation shot up to Rs 17,97,360, and the unauthorised expenditure reached Rs 6,72,284.

The exchequer paid for these hotel tariffs in addition to the business class tickets from Delhi to Paris and back (costing Rs 1.77 lakh each) and a daily allowance. Initially, the booking was done on June 8, 2015, and the revised bill was dated July 13, 2015. The audit report mentions that the visit of the officers to attend the meeting was not sponsored by the inviting foundation and UT Administration Chandigarh incurred all the expenses. As per RTI details, Chief Architect Kapil Setia spent eight days in Paris from June 12 to 19 for this meeting, and his perks of Rs 4,49,476, a travel allowance of Rs 1,01,219, and a daily allowance of Rs 22,682 were approved as expenditures.

Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar jail. Sources said Mann will return to Punjab Singh was earlier a staff officer to former chief secretary V K Janjua and is due to retire on September 30. His resignation comes at a time when Punjab is facing a dearth of IAS officers and has even written to the Centre seeking more officers. Singh is the second IAS officer to put in his papers recently. A few days ago, IAS officer Parampal Kaur, who was tipped to be the BJP candidate from the Bathinda Lok Sabha constituency, had resigned from service. Her resignation too is yet to be accepted. This is not the first time that an IAS officer has had to wait for a posting in Punjab. IAS officers DK Tiwari (1994 batch), Nilkanth Avhad (1999 batch), Ajit Balaji Joshi (2003 batch), Neelima (2008 batch) and Gurpreet Singh Khaira (2009 batch) had to wait to get their postings.

Veteran BJP leader and former Union minister S S Ahluwalia to take on Shatrughan Sinha in Asansol Lok Sabha seat

GNS News Agency, April 15

After days of speculation, the BJP has announced Surendrajeet Singh Ahluwalia as its Lok Sabha elections 2024 candidate from Asansol in West Bengal, the country's oldest coalfields on the Bengal-Jharkhand border.

Ahluwalia's name was among the nine in the tenth Lok Sabha candidates list announced by the BJP on Wednesday. Earlier, the party had fielded Pawan Singh from Asansol, but he subsequently withdrew his candidature. It was believed that former MLA and Mayor of Asansol, Jitendra Tiwari, would replace him as the BJP wanted to field a Hindi-speaking candidate from Asansol to contest against Trinamool Congress (TMC) heavy-weight Satrughan Sinha. However, the party has now turned to Asansol-born Ahluwalia.

"Ahluwalia is an experienced politician. He is also a known Bengali-speaking leader who can give a tough fight to the Bihari babu Shatrughan Sinha. He is fluent in Bengali and Hindi. He was born in Asansol, so people would easily connect with him," said Gopal Singh, a voter who owns a business in Asansol. Over 45 per cent of Asansol's voters are non-Bengalis, and around 10 per cent of them are Sikhs. Ahluwalia attended St. Joseph School, Asansol for his schooling, graduated from Bidhan Chandra College, Burdwan University, and completed his LLB from University College of Law, Calcutta University.

Ahluwalia served as Minister of State for Urban Affairs and Employment (Department of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation) and Parliamentary Affairs in the P V Narasimha Rao cabinet from September 15, 1995, to May 16, 1996. He was also deputy opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha from June 2010 to May 2012.

From 1986 to 2012, he was a Rajya Sabha MP rep-



resenting Bihar and Jharkhand. In 1999, he joined the BJP, and in the 2014 Lok Sabha election, he won from the Darjeeling constituency with the active support of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. Ahluwalia played a significant role as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee investigating the 2G scam. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP fielded Ahluwalia from Burdwan-Durgapur constituency, as he was replaced by Raju Singh Bista from Darjeeling. Ahluwalia won the 2019 election with a margin of 2,439 votes, securing 5,98,376 votes, defeating Mamta Sanghamita of the TMC, who got 5,95,937 votes.

Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh's candidature from the Asansol Lok Sabha seat faced massive criticism from the TMC. The ruling party alleged that many of his songs were derogatory towards women and Pawan Singh announced his withdrawal from the electoral race without specifying any reason. Another probable candidate, Tiwari, was dragged into a controversy when the TMC claimed he met the National Investigation Agency (NIA) SP and hatched a conspiracy to arrest TMC workers in connection with the 2022 Bhupatinagar blast.

Pune Zilla Parishad cancelled 135 projects at one go; state auditor says it's peoples' loss

GNS News Agency, April 15

On June 13, 2020, the standing committee of the Pune Zilla Parishad adopted a unanimous resolution to cancel all works that were approved before the 2018-19 fiscal and were yet to begin. In a single stroke, 135 projects budgeted at Rs 763.94 lakh were cancelled. In 2023, the Maharashtra Accountant General (AG) flagged the drastic action in its annual audit report, saying it "ultimately resulted in depriving the citizens...of basic infrastructure".

The report, a copy of which was made available to The Indian Express under the Right To Information Act, 2005, shows that the 135 projects were proposed by the Zilla Parishad members between 2015-16 to 2018-19. The projects were related to the construction of roads, bridges, community halls etc, the development of religious sites, works related to the health department etc. Though the 135 projects had been sanctioned and budgeted, work was yet to begin. "Cancellation of works ultimately resulted in depriving the citizens of ZP Pune of basic infrastructure. This reflects improper planning of Zilla Parishad, Pune, while developing the infrastructure," the audit report said.

The audit report also flagged 117 unfinished projects related to the construction of rural roads, development of tribal areas, repair of roads and bridges etc. Work on these projects had begun between 2018 to 2022 but they were yet to be completed, the report said. In both instances, the Zilla Parishad had cited issues like non-availability of land, delay in issue of work order due to the monsoon etc.

The Pune Zilla Parishad covers all rural areas of



Pune, barring those that fall under the jurisdiction of the Pune Municipal Corporation, the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation and the three Cantonment boards of Pune, Khadi and Dehu. The term of the previous Pune Zilla Parishad ended two years ago. Like several other local bodies in Maharashtra, elections to the Pune Zilla Parishad have been delayed due to petitions pending before the Supreme Court related to providing Other Backward Class (OBC) quotas in civic bodies. Pandurang Pawar, a former Zilla Parishad member from Junnar taluka, said the unfinished projects were proposed by members themselves. "At times, members propose work at the urging of their voters but then they get entangled in issues like land disputes, land acquisition problems etc. We need a more proactive role from the administration and the people's representatives to ensure that works don't just remain on paper," he said.

A rare show of one of India's finest artists in Pune

GNS News Agency, April 15

Prabhakar Kolte is one of the country's leading abstractionists and teacher to artists, such as Atul Dodiya, Jitish Kallat and Sudarshan Shetty. As Camp-based Vesavar Art Gallery completes its first year in Pune, it is with the works of Prabhakar Kolte that they are celebrating. The exhibition, Saga, will be held till June 9.

"The genesis of Saga is in another exhibition, El Dorado, which was held in June 2023. Kolte Sir had come to the gallery for the show. He said that he liked the space and expressed a desire to exhibit here. It was a moment of pride and humility for us that a great artist wanted to exhibit his works with us," says Pranali Harpude, artist, curator and one of the founders of Vesavar.

pune art gallery A diploma holder in painting from the Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, Kolte's works have spanned the impulses created by nature, his journeys into himself and the emotions caused by the upheavals of the world around him. This isn't the first time Kolte has responded to the emotional call of a space. In 2018, he had agreed to an exhibition after more than 10 years because he was drawn to the venue, Nine Fish Art Gallery in Byculla, Mumbai. The gallery used to be a mill and since Kolte's father was a clerk at Century Mill, the artist had spent his early life in a nearby chawl.

art gallery in pune The works embody Kolte's vi-



sionary style that arise from "his desire to infuse specific energies into his art" The exhibition at Vesavar Art Gallery, Saga, comprises 24 large canvases, marking Kolte's first such show in Pune. The works embody Kolte's visionary style that arise from "his desire to infuse specific energies into his art". A diploma holder in painting from the Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, Kolte's works have spanned the impulses created by nature, his journeys into himself and the emotions caused by the upheavals of the world around him.

Not given a new posting, another IAS officer resigns in Punjab

GNS News Agency, April 15

Jalandhar Karnail Singh IAS resignation Singh was earlier a staff officer to former chief secretary V K Janjua and is due to retire on September 30. His resignation comes at a time when Punjab is facing a dearth of IAS officers and has even written to the Centre seeking more officers. A 2015-batch IAS officer in Punjab, Karnail Singh, resigned on Wednesday after he was not given any new posting following his removal as the deputy commissioner of Kapurthala on January 30. Sources close to Singh said that he was "upset" at not being allotted work. While Singh has submitted his resignation to Chief Secretary Anurag Verma, it has to be approved by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and then cleared by the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India. Mann, however, is in Delhi where he was to meet Delhi Chief

Growing a greener tomorrow

In the wake of the ongoing farmer protests, the spotlight has once again turned to the deep-rooted challenges faced by agricultural communities across India. Amid demands for fair prices, agricultural reform and better livelihoods, the need for sustainable solutions to address these issues has become increasingly urgent.

Agriculture is facing a dual challenge: the impacts of climate change and rising greenhouse gas emissions from the sector. This underscores the urgency of developing climate-resilient agricultural practices. However, these challenges also exacerbate threats to food security and farmers' incomes. A recent estimate suggests that transitioning from the traditional rice-wheat farming system to alternative systems in Haryana and Punjab could

potentially reduce farmers' income by Rs 35,000 per hectare. Concurrently, the expansion of paddy cultivation in these regions has led to a decline in the water table and escalated air pollution due to paddy residue burning, highlighting the necessity of diversifying cropping patterns.

Here, the pressing question emerges: which alternative crop should take precedence? Given the aforementioned challenges, the selection of an alternative crop should be guided by the following criteria: Firstly, the chosen crop should align with consumption preferences and possess nutritional value, ensuring that consumer interests and nutrition security remain uncompromised. Secondly, the crop should have market value, safeguarding farmers' income.

Railway clerk from Kalyan gets call saying son caught in rape case, cheated of Rs 48,000



GNS News Agency, April 15

A railway clerk from Kalyan was duped by a man who contacted her and claimed that her son, an MBBS student, was caught in a rape case and sought money from her to 'save' him, Government Railway Police officials in Mumbai said. The woman sent Rs 48,000 to the man, only to realise later that she had been cheated. On Monday morning, at around 10.44 am, the woman was at her workplace at Shahad railway station in Thane district when she received a data call. Though the caller did not identify himself properly, his display photo was that of police officials. He told the complainant that her son has got stuck in a rape case in Pune.

"Her son is studying MBBS in Nanded and the caller told her that he was caught in a rape case in Pune. She was so panicky that she did not even think that her son was in Nanded and not in Pune. Fraudsters take advantage of this and make money," Senior Inspector Pandharinath Kande of Kalyan GRP said. "Under the pretext of not taking any action and getting her son out of the case, he asked the woman to send money via UPI on a number. The woman was so scared that she immediately transferred Rs 48,000," a police officer said.

"Her son is studying MBBS in Nanded and the caller told her that he was caught in a rape case in Pune. She was so panicky that she did not even think that her son was in Nanded and not in Pune. Fraudsters take advantage of this and make money," Senior Inspector Pandharinath Kande of Kalyan GRP said. "Under the pretext of not taking any action and getting her son out of the case, he asked the woman to send money via UPI on a number. The woman was so scared that she immediately transferred Rs 48,000," a police officer said.

Take money offered by rivals but vote for MVA: Uddhav Sena's Maval candidate Sanjog Waghere

GNS News Agency, April 15

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjog Waghere, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidate from the Maval constituency in Maharashtra in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, has caused a stir with his remark asking voters to take money offered by rival parties but vote for the MVA.

Waghere first made the appeal at a campaign rally in Maval two days ago. After a video of his statement went viral, he stood by it. "Yes, I have appealed to the voters to take the money being offered to them... At the same time, I have urged them to vote for the MVA candidate," Waghere told The Indian Express on Wednesday. Waghere said he made the statement because he had information that voters were being lured with money. "Voters, especially those belonging to Ganesh Mandals and several other organisations, are being offered money to vote en masse... I got this information from my party workers and also from other party workers who are part of the MVA," he said.

Asked whether he has complained to the State Election Commission, Waghere said, "I have not complained so far because I need concrete proof. I will submit the proof to the Election Commission when I get the



proof." Asked whether his rivals are tempting voters with money, Waghere said, "I have not named anyone so far. Unless and until I have the proof, I will not make wild allegations." Sitting Maval MP Shrirang Barne of Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde is Waghere's main rival candidate in the constituency. When contacted, Shrirang Barne said, "The statement is ridiculous. If he (Waghere) has any proof, he should hand it over to the Election Commission but should not indulge in making such wild remarks. I know why he is making such a statement. He is seeing his defeat."

Who is Shashikant Shinde of NCP (Sharad Pawar) pitted against BJP's Udayanraje Bhosale in Satara?



GNS News Agency, April 15

Sixty-year-old Shinde has been the member of the Legislative Council since 2020 and stood with Sharad Pawar after the split in NCP despite most of the party leaders and legislators joining Ajit Pawar faction. Sixty-year-old Shinde has been the member of the Legislative Council since 2020 and stood with Sharad Pawar after the split in NCP despite most of the party leaders and legislators joining Ajit Pawar faction.

After a lot of deliberation, the NCP (Sharad Pawar)

has selected Shashikant Shinde as its candidate for Satara Lok Sabha constituency in Maharashtra to take on the probable BJP candidate Udayanraje Bhosale, descendant of Maratha king Shivaji. Who is Shashikant Shinde who has won the confidence of Nationalist Congress Party founder Sharad Pawar for the seat that has always supported the veteran Maratha leader?

Sixty-year-old Shinde has been the member of the Legislative Council since 2020 and stood with Sharad Pawar after the split in NCP despite most of the party leaders and legislators joining Ajit Pawar faction.

He was elected to the state Legislative Assembly four times in a row, but lost to Mahesh Shinde of Shiv Sena in 2019. In the first two elections, he won from the Jaoli Assembly segment in Satara district. After the delimitation, he contested from Koregaon and won in 2009 and 2014. He was the Water Resources Minister in the Cong-NCP government in 2013. He is a resident of Koregaon in Satara district. "I am very thankful to the party for giving me the opportunity to contest in Lok Sabha election from Satara seat. I have always supported Sharad Pawar and will do so in future," said Shinde.

Son of former SAD Punjab minister among 5 arrested for drug peddling in Shimla

GNS News Agency, April 15

The Shimla police arrested two-time former Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Punjab minister Sucha Singh Langah's son Parkash Singh and four others, including a woman, for allegedly possessing and consuming drugs at a private hotel Parkash Singh is a resident of Chandigarh. The other four have been identified as Avni Negi from Sangla in Kinnaur, Ajay Kumar, 27, from Patiala, Shubham Kaushal, 26, from Kansal at Sector-1 in Chandigarh, Balbinder, 22, from Nayagaon in Mohali.

Sources said, "The Shimla police raided the hotel room following secret information. Parkash Singh introduced himself as the son of a senior politician of Punjab. Upon questioning, he revealed the name of his father. Three of them were high on drugs when the raid was conducted. Around 42 gm of heroin was recovered from their possession. The entire operation was videographed as per the instructions of senior officers." Five people, including Parkash Langah, son of former Akali minister



Sucha Singh Langah, were arrested with drugs by Shimla Police late last night. A police officer said, "Some of the arrested suspects claimed that Parkash used to sell them the drug. Their claims are being verified. We have learnt that Parkash was earlier also arrested for drug peddling in Punjab in May 2021. All the arrested suspects will be produced in a local court."

Two locals who came to Hemant Soren's defence among 5 named in ED's prosecution complaint

GNS News Agency, April 15

Apart from former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren, two people who live near the 8.86 acres of land in Ranchi that has been at the centre of a money laundering case against him, and had given statements in his defence, have been named as accused in the Enforcement Directorate's prosecution complaint. While the ED alleges that Soren illegally obtained the parcel of land through his associates as part of a land grabbing syndicate, Raj Kumar Pahan, who lives in the Bariatu area of Ranchi, rejected the claim saying he was among the de-

scendants of the original owners of the plot and that had not been sold to anyone. Pahan is also among those named in the ED prosecution complaint, along with one Hilariyus Kacchap, who has said he was engaged in farming in the plot of land after taking it on lease from Pahan. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Ranchi took cognizance of the prosecution complaint - the first one filed by the ED in this case - on April 4. The ED case emanates from an investigation into alleged illegalities in the buying and selling of defence land involving one revenue inspector.

Muslim poet who wrote marsiya for sons of Guru Gobind Singh finds space at Central Sikh Museum



GNS News Agency, April 15

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Tuesday installed the portrait of Allah Yaar Khan Jogi, a poet, at Central Sikh Museum on the premises of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple). Jogi had written the marsiya for the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh. Three more portraits were installed at Museum Tuesday including of Baba Hazara Singh, former Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib Sri Anandpur Sahib Giani Harcharan Singh Mahlon and Professor Kartar Singh.

The ceremony to unveil the portraits was conducted

by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghuraj Singh. "Allah Yaar Khan Jogi has expressed the sacrifices of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, in poetic form as Shahidan Wafa and Ganji-e-Shahidan, which is an inspiration for the Sikh Sangat," said Jathedar. Jogi wrote two compositions, 'Shahidan-e-Wafa' describing the sacrifice of younger sons Sahibzada Jorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fathe Singh, and the second one 'Ganj-e-Shahidan', depicting the valour of the elders sons Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh in the battle of Chamkaur. Born in 1870 in Lahore, Jogi was also a hakeem. The poem 'Shahidan-e-Wafa' was written in 1913. It consists of 110 stanzas and a total of 660 lines. In 1915, he penned the poem 'Ganj-e-Shahidan'. Jogi also traveled and sung his poems with a resonating voice, stirring the souls of people.

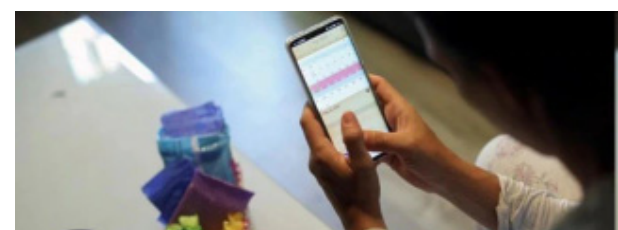
During the last phase of his life, he resided in Anarkali Bazaar, Lahore. He was proficient in Urdu, Arabic, and Persian, holding a high degree of expertise in classical literature. He passed away in 1956. "He also faced opposition from some groups in Muslim community for singing and writing marsiya for sons of Guru Gobind Singh. He was labeled as an infidel and prohibited from ascending the steps of the mosque for 30 years," said Chetan Singh, former director of Bhasha Vibhag.

Wary of data privacy, Pune's young women give limited info to period tracking apps

GNS News Agency, April 15

Now that there are too many ways for women to track their period cycle, Utkarsha Kulkarni, 28, uses a chatbot on WhatsApp called Sirona and also her digital watch for the same. "The chatbot tracks periods by processing all data entered by us, so if we fail to update the data then it might give you false results," says Kulkarni. Period tracking apps have been in the market for many years now, and more and more young women are using them. The notifications about their period cycle can be used to plan and avoid pregnancies, plan holidays, understand body behaviour and stock up on period essentials in time. But as Kulkarni mentions, the algorithm works on information inputs given by the user. These apps can collect information like name, location, email ID, browsing history and the sensitive health data like period cycle dates, sexual activity details like date, protected or unprotected, reminders for oral contraceptives, mood swings, pregnancy test results, tracking cervical mucus, etc. "More than the accuracy, I am concerned about my data privacy. So I only use it for tracking more than anything else", said Kulkarni. Kulkarni also doesn't use any other feature of the bot even though it provides content to read about menstrual health and community engagement features too. "I don't really engage in any posts or comments and also trust only 20-50% information these apps provide. It is just useful with period date notifications. We need to look at our routine like lifestyle changes including diet, meditation, exercise routines, etc on our own," says Kulkarni.

This is when these apps are adding new features every other day and finding a way to market themselves differently. An app called Natural Cycles markets itself as a contraceptive, whereas Glow was launched to help couples get pregnant. There are apps specifically for people who have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which let users record information like percent of face



covered in acne, daily PCOS symptoms log. Some provide fertility diet plans and counselling for couples trying to conceive.

But 26-year-old Niharika started using the app once she became sexually active; mainly because she just couldn't remember her period dates. She started getting notifications about her ovulation phase, a reminder to avoid unprotected sex. But that's all she uses the app for. "I am very concerned about privacy, but also can't remember dates, so I use it as I have no option. They also have other features like informative posts, etc. But I don't read or trust most of what they say except my ovulation date estimate which is in any way mathematical. It just helps me keep a calendar of periods," she said. Sakshi Agrawal, 19, chose to not use these apps. "I don't feel there is a need and also I don't like to give my health related data to third party platforms," she said. Vaishnavi Awatade, 26, has never used a period tracking app. She got PCOS when she was 21 and wasn't aware there are apps dedicated to managing the lifestyle of people with PCOS. "There are a lot of things that I need to follow on a daily basis like avoiding sweets and packaged food, exercising everyday irrespective of erratic work hours, managing my sleep schedule, proper calorie and water intake, etc. While an app would help with all these things. It mainly requires a lot of discipline, which comes from within," said Awatade.

BBC splits operations in India with launch of Collective Newsroom



GNS News Agency, April 15

A year after its offices were surveyed by tax officials, the BBC has split its newsgathering operations from Wednesday with the launch of Collective Newsroom, an Indian-owned media company that will produce content for the British broadcaster. The Collective Newsroom is helmed by Chief Executive Officer Rupa Jha and fellow directors Mukesh Sharma, Sanjoy Majumder and Sara Hasan. "Publishing from India, Collective Newsroom will create programmes and content for our first client, the BBC, and is available to make content for other news providers across India and around the globe," a statement from Collective Newsroom said. The arrangement with the BBC includes the contract to produce content for BBC News Hindi, the BBC's language service with the

largest audience, the statement said.

"I'm thrilled that Collective Newsroom has officially launched with a clear, ambitious mission to create the most credible, creative and courageous journalism, and with a wealth of experience and talent in our incredible teams," Jha said. "Across our remit we will create and publish journalism for BBC News in six Indian languages: Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu, as well as in English for the BBC News India YouTube channel, and produce other English content," the statement said. A BBC report said that the broadcaster will retain its newsgathering team in India for its English language digital, television and radio outlets headquartered in London and the Collective Newsroom will produce content for its six other Indian language services. "Audiences will quickly come to know Collective Newsroom as an independent news organisation that leads with the facts, works in the public interest and hears from diverse voices and perspectives," Jha said. In February last year, the Income Tax Department carried out surveys at the BBC's offices in Delhi and Mumbai over alleged discrepancies in the transfer pricing documentation and diversion of profits. A survey is an exercise to collect information such as books of account or other valuable articles from companies that the Income Tax Department believes could assist in any proceeding under the I-T Act by uncovering hidden or unreported income and property.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar accuses Shashi Tharoor of defamation, sends legal notice

GNS News Agency, April 15

Union Minister of State for Information Technology and Electronics Rajeev Chandrasekhar has sent a legal notice to Congress MP Shashi Tharoor accusing him of making defamatory statements against the BJP leader on a TV channel recently.

Chandrasekhar, who is facing off against Tharoor in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency in the upcoming polls on April 26, has alleged that the Congress MP disseminated "patently false information" regarding bribing of key voters and influential figures such as parish priests, among others, by the BJP leader. The notice has claimed that the statements by Tharoor were made with an intent to harm Chandrasekhar's reputation and image and that his remarks also disrespected the entire Christian community of Thiruvananthapuram and

its leaders by accusing them of engaging in cash-for-votes activities. It has also contended that the Congress MP's statements were in violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The notice also claimed that the statements were also targeted at injuring the BJP leader's election campaign and benefiting Tharoor in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The legal notice to the Congress leader has sought that he "immediately withdraw" all the allegations made against Chandrasekhar on April 6, tender an unconditional public apology to him on print and electronic media and to "cease, refrain and desist from defaming, harassing, hampering the reputation" of the minister in the future. It has warned that failure to comply with the stated conditions within 24 hours of receipt of the notice would lead to initiation of appropriate criminal and civil proceedings in a competent court of law.

China's Xi says nobody can stop 'family reunion' with Taiwan



strait are Chinese, Xi said. "There is no rancour that cannot be resolved, no problem that cannot be discussed, and no force that can separate us."

China has never renounced the use of force to bring democratically-governed Taiwan under its control, and has ramped up military and political pressure to assert its sovereignty claims. Ma told Xi that tensions have caused unease for many Taiwanese.

"If there is a war between the two sides, it will be unbearable for the Chinese people," Ma said, using a term that refers to people who are ethnically Chinese rather than their nationality. Chinese on both sides of the strait absolutely have enough wisdom to handle all disputes peacefully and avoid heading into conflict. Responding to the meeting, Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said it deeply regretted that Ma did not publicly convey Taiwan's people's insistence on defending the sovereignty and democratic system of the Republic of China, which remains Taiwan's formal name. Beijing should stop intimidating Taiwan and resolve its differences with Taipei through respectful, rational dialogue, it added. Xi called Ma "Mr. Ma Ying-jeou" rather than former president, given neither the Chinese nor Taiwanese governments formally recognise the other. Ma called Xi by title as head of the Communist Party - general secretary. Tsai and her government reject China's territorial claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future.

China says it will only talk to Tsai if she accepts that both sides of the strait are part of "one China", which she has refused to do. Xi has only rarely made public remarks about Taiwan in recent months. Speaking to U.S. President Joe Biden in early April, Xi urged Washington to translate "Biden's commitment of not supporting 'Taiwan independence'" into concrete actions. Xi has also not commented publicly on Taiwan's January presidential election, won by current Vice President Lai Ching-te, viewed by Beijing as a dangerous separatist and who takes office on May 20. Ma remains a senior member of Taiwan's main opposition party the Kuomintang (KMT), which in January lost the presidential election for the third time in a row, but has no official party position.

BEIJING, - GNS News Agency, April 15, Chinese President Xi Jinping told former Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou on Wednesday that outside interference could not stop the "family reunion" between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and that there are no issues that cannot be discussed. Since the defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war to Mao Zedong's communists, no serving Taiwanese leader has visited China. Ma, president from 2008 to 2016, last year became the first former Taiwanese leader to visit China, and is now on his second trip to the country, at a time of simmering military tension across the strait.

Ma had been widely expected to meet Xi this time around, having first met Xi in Singapore in late 2015 for a landmark summit shortly before the current Taiwan president, Tsai Ing-wen, won election. Meeting Ma in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, where foreign leaders normally hold talks with top Chinese officials, Xi said that people on both sides of the strait are Chinese. "External interference cannot stop the historical trend of reunion of the country and family," Xi said, in comments reported by Taiwanese media. Xi did not elaborate but in Chinese terminology referring to external interference over Taiwan is generally aimed at the support Taipei gets from Western countries like the United States, especially arms sales which infuriate Beijing. People on both sides of the

Floods swamp swathes of Russia and Kazakhstan but worse still to come

ORENBURG, GNS News Agency, April 15, Floods engulfed cities and towns across Russia and Kazakhstan on Wednesday after Europe's third-longest river burst its banks, forcing over 110,000 people to evacuate and swamping parts of the Russian city of Orenburg.

The deluge of melt water overwhelmed scores of settlements in Russia's Ural Mountains, Siberia, Volga and areas of Kazakhstan after major rivers such as the Ural, which flows into the Caspian, rose more 70 cm (2 foot 3 inches) beyond its bursting point to over 10 metres. In Orenburg, a city with a population of 550,000 about 1,200 km (750 miles) east of Moscow, hundreds of homes were flooded and at least 7,700 people were evacuated as the Ural river rose swiftly beyond the critical level of 9.3 metres. Footage showed areas near the city under water. In Kurgan, a region which straddles the Tobol river, 4,500 people were evacuated and fears grew that thousands - or even tens of thousands - more would need to be evacuated. "The forecast is unfavourable," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "The water level continues to rise in flood zones, large amounts of water are coming to new regions."

The flood situation was acute in parts of Western Siberia, the largest hydrocarbon basin in the world, where the peak is expected in three to five days, and some areas around the Volga, Europe's largest river, the emergency ministry said. Residents in Orenburg said it was the worst flooding in living memory while Russian officials said it was the worst flooding in the area since record began. Kazakhstan said 96,000 people had been evacuated.

Russia said 10,500 houses were flooded across 37 regions, most in the Orenburg region. Upstream on the Ural, which flows into Kazakhstan, floodwaters burst through an embankment dam in the city of Orsk on Friday. In Kazakhstan, people worked through the night to build up dykes and strengthen embankments. A state of emergency remained in effect in 8 of the country's 17 provinces, down from 10 at the end of last week. Pope Francis expressed his sympathy for the victims. "I also want to convey to the people of Kazakhstan my spiritual closeness at this time, when a massive flood has affected



many regions of the country and caused the evacuation of thousands of people from their homes," he said during his Wednesday weekly audience in St Peter's Square. Spring flooding is a usual part of life across Russia as the harsh winter snows melt, swelling some of mighty rivers of Russia and Central Asia. This year, though, a combination of factors triggered unusually severe flooding. Russian emergency officials said the soil was waterlogged before winter and then was frozen under very high snow falls which then melted very fast in swiftly rising spring temperatures and heavy rains.

One Russian official, the Presidential Plenipotentiary in the Urals Region, Vladimir Yakushev, was quoted by Russian media as suggesting that Kazakhstan was to blame for not coordinating the discharge of water more effectively. President Vladimir Putin spoke to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan about the floods on Tuesday. The Kremlin said the worst was still to come for the Siberian region of Tyumen and the Urals region of Kurgan. The Kremlin said Putin was getting updated on the situation but had no immediate plans to visit the flood zone. Sirens in Kurgan, a city on the Tobol river, a tributary of the Irtysh, warned people to evacuate immediately. Kurgan Governor Vadim Shumkov said that if the Tobol rose in the city to 9 metres, then 17,800 people would have to be evacuated but that if it rose to 14 metres then the figure rose to 280,000 people.



would study it further before responding. Israel's assessment is that Hamas does not want to strike a deal yet, the two Israeli officials said. In the seventh month of the war, Hamas wants an end to the Israeli military offensive, a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, and permission for displaced Palestinians to

return home. Israel's immediate aim is to secure the release of hostages seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 cross-border rampage.

It says it will not end the war until Hamas no longer controls Gaza or threatens Israel militarily. More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed since the Israeli offen-

sive began, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, with most of the 2.3 million population displaced and much of the enclave laid to waste. Israel pulled back most ground forces from southern Gaza this week after months of fighting, but still says it plans to launch an assault on Rafah, on Gaza's southern border with Egypt.

EU lawmakers vote on migration system revamp ahead of bloc's election



BRUSSELS, GNS News Agency, April 15, European lawmakers are holding a vote on Wednesday on a revamp of the bloc's migration system that the pro-EU political centre casts as a proof of its viability against the far right ahead of the bloc's parliamentary election in June. It promises to cut the times for security and asylum procedures, and increase returns to reduce unwanted immigration from the Middle East and Africa, a high priority on the EU's agenda.

After eight years of feuds between the bloc's 27 member states, the compromise proposals lay out a balance between the obligations of arrival countries such as Italy and help from rich destinations such as Germany. But it has been squarely criticised by anti-immigration, eurosceptic and far-right parties for not going far enough to stop migration, while leftists and rights activists have lambasted it as a major blow to human rights.

The bloc's top migration official, Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson, expected majority of European Parliament members to back all the parts of the

fact, but said she could not be sure. Failure to get it through would be a blow for the broad political centre ahead of the continent-wide parliamentary election in two months in which the far right is expected to gain seats.

Migration has been a hot-button issue in the EU since more than a million people - mostly Syrian refugees - arrived across the Mediterranean in 2015, catching the bloc unprepared amid scenes of chaos and suffering. More than 46,000 people have entered the EU - a wealthy bloc of some 450 million inhabitants - so far this year outside of regular border crossings, according to U.N. data, which also estimates 400 people perished while attempting to get in. "We have an obligation to the citizens of Europe to show that Europe can actually work, that it can deliver," said a Dutch liberal lawmaker, Sophie in't Veld, adding she would vote for most of the package but abstain on some parts.

"But we also have to recognise that there are very justified doubts and concerns about this package and I think everything hinges on the implementation," she said naming the chief risk of "prolonged detention in very bad conditions" on EU borders. While Johansson said the overhaul only worked as a whole, some lawmakers in the 705-strong parliament said it could still be put in place even if some parts fail to win a majority in votes starting from 1500 GMT. Belgian NGO Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen said the reform was worse than status quo because it would allow large-scale interment, including of children, and member states could buy themselves out of hosting new arrivals. It added the EU was wrong in asking foreign states to handle migrants without enough human rights safeguards. If approved by the parliament, the revamp would be rubber-stamped this month by member states. They would then have two years to implement it, though analysts warn not to expect major changes on the ground overnight.

South Korea opposition set for big win in legislative election in blow to Yoon

SEOUL, GNS News Agency, April 15, South Korea's main opposition party and its allies were projected to win a majority in Wednesday's elections for the country's legislature, exit polls showed, in what would mark a significant blow to President Yoon Suk Yeol.

A joint poll released by broadcasters KBS, MBC and SBS estimated that the opposition Democratic Party (DP) and its minor allies could secure between 183-197 seats in the single-chamber, 300-seat parliament, and Yoon's conservative People Power Party (PPP) and its affiliates would win 85-100. Another poll conducted by cable network JTBC showed the opposition camp was likely to get 168-193 seats, while it put the PPP coalition on 87-111.

The bitterly fought race was seen by some analysts as a referendum on Yoon, whose popularity has suffered amid a cost-of-living crisis and a spate of political scandals. Official results are not expected to be released until the early hours of Thursday, but exit polls in previous elections have given a broadly accurate reflection of the results.

Nearly 29.4 million people, or 66.3% of eligible voters, had cast their ballots as of 6 p.m. (0900 GMT), according to the National Election Commission, including 14 million who had voted before election day. It marked the highest ever turnout for a parliamentary election at this point, though the numbers were down from the 2022 presidential vote that narrowly brought Yoon to power.

The exit polls indicated that the DP-led opposition, which already dominates the legislature, would increase its majority but fall short of securing a super majority of 200 seats, which would have stripped Yoon of his veto power. But their expected landslide victory could hamper Yoon's policy efforts to boost the economy, improve fiscal health and lift record low birthrates, as well as to bolster trilateral security cooperation with the United States and Japan.

A liberal splinter party led by former justice minister



Cho Kuk, which has emerged as a dark horse, was projected in the polls to win up to 15 seats and to become a third-party force that could influence control of the assembly. Opposition leaders have accused Yoon and the PPP of mismanaging the economy and failing to rein in inflation, with Cho vowing to make Yoon a "dead duck" president by gaining sufficient seats.

PPP chief Han Dong-hoon, who had said an opposition majority would create a crisis for the country, said the exit polls were "disappointing" but said he is awaiting final results, without elaborating. Democratic Party head Lee Jae-myung has yet to comment on the polls. Cho said the numbers highlighted voters' desire to hold Yoon's administration accountable for what he called a "prosecutor dictatorship," referring to Yoon's previous role as prosecutor general. Cho pledged to push for a bill to appoint a special counsel to look into alleged irregularities involving PPP chief Han's family. Han has previously dismissed such allegations. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Reporting by Jack Kim, Sebin Choi, Daewoung Kim and Hyonhee Shin; Editing by Lincoln Feast, Ed Davies and Shri Navaratnam

Ukrainian lawmakers approve first reading of army service for convicts

GNS News Agency, April 15

Allowing Ukrainian convicts to serve in the military came a step closer on Wednesday as lawmakers approved a first reading of a bill designed to help replenish and rotate troops exhausted after two years of war with Russia. The bill envisages prisoners who join the army becoming eligible for parole. Those convicted of crimes against humanity, sexual violence, murder or crimes against national security would not be allowed to serve, lawmaker Oleksiy Honcharenko said on Telegram.

A separate bill setting out large fines for citizens who fail to abide by mobilisation rules was also passed at the first reading. It is not clear how many extra personnel would be eligible to join the military if the steps become law. The convicts bill is likely to see changes before the final reading, in order to eliminate the risk of corruption, another lawmaker, Yaroslav Zhelezniak, said. No date has been set for the final reading after it is further discussed by a committee of lawmakers. Kyiv troops have been fighting against the better equipped Russian military, with vast mobilisation potential, since the full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine's parliament has also



started reviewing the final reading of a complex bill amending the army mobilisation process after months of criticism and discussions, with a vote on that expected on Thursday. It is expected to widen Kyiv's capability to call up new servicemen amid significantly fewer volunteer fighters and numerous cases of draft evasion as the war has dragged on.

'God Particle' Nobel laureate Peter Higgs dies at 94

Washington, DC: Peter Higgs, a British physicist and Nobel Prize winner behind the 'God' particle, passed away at his home in Edinburgh, Scotland, at the age of 94, The Washington Post reported. His reflections on the origins of mass sparked a nearly five-decade, multibillion dollar search for a subatomic particle, later known as the 'Higgs boson', which was thought to hold the key to understanding the nature of the universe. In a statement, the University of Edinburgh announced his passing on April

8 but did not cite a cause. His hypothesis required the presence of a particle that was undiscovered then. It was eventually dubbed the God Particle, a playful nod to its apparent significance in the creation explanation. According to The Washington Post, five others published similar ideas at almost the same time, as it would require thousands more scientists, working in vast multinational collaborations, to eventually find the Higgs boson. However, the groundbreaking idea became associated with the Higgs.

With solar industry in crisis, Europe in a bind over imports from China



Europe's green energy transition is stuck between a rock and a hard place. A flood of cheap Chinese solar panel imports is driving record solar energy installations. But those same imports are crushing Europe's few local solar manufacturers. Governments and industry are split over how to respond. Record solar capacity

Europe just had a bumper year for green energy. European Union countries installed record levels of solar capacity, 40% more than in 2022. The vast majority of those panels and parts came from China — in some cases, 95%, International Energy Agency data show. Yet, the green energy boom hasn't helped Europe's few local solar panel manufacturers, which have hit a crisis point, crushed by cheaper imports and oversupply. Announcements of production closures are piling up, and the sector has warned half of its capacity could shut within weeks unless governments step in. Policymakers are scrambling to respond, but are split over how to do so.

German Economy Minister Robert Habeck wrote to the European Commission in November, expressing concern that the EU executive was about to slap trade restrictions on Chinese solar imports, a letter seen by Reuters showed. "I have heard that the Commission may be intending to impose safeguard measures against imports of photovoltaic (PV) modules from China. I have very strong concerns about this," the letter said. Mr. Habeck warned restricting Chinese imports could kill off Europe's rapid expansion of green energy and make 90% of the PV market more expensive. It risked bankruptcies among EU companies that assemble and install solar panels using

imported parts, he said. A spokesperson for Germany's Economy Ministry declined to comment on the letter. Germany's own planned support for the sector has been thrown into turmoil by a government budget crisis.

Elsewhere, Spain has not ruled out tariffs on imports of solar panel materials. The Netherlands wants to cover solar PV imports with the EU's carbon border tax, a government official told Reuters. And Italy last week announced a €90 million (\$97 million) investment in a PV panel factory in Sicily. Price war in a speech on Monday on the solar sector's problems, EU Financial Services Commissioner Mairead McGuinness offered no new support. She pointed to EU measures already underway, including a law due to be finalised on Tuesday, which aims at fast-tracking permits for local manufacturing and giving products made in the EU, such as panels, an advantage in future clean tech tenders. On trade restrictions, Ms. McGuinness struck a cautious tone. "Given that we currently rely to a very important degree on imports to reach EU solar deployment targets, any potential measure needs to be weighed against the objectives we have set ourselves when it comes to the energy transition," she said. The industry itself is divided over the solution. Solar manufacturers have urged governments to step in to buy up excess inventories of solar modules to ease the oversupply — and, if this cannot be done fast, consider trade barriers. But the broader green energy industry is opposed to import curbs.

"You can't reduce dependency on China in the short term or you don't build the projects," Miguel Stilwell d'Andrade, CEO of Portuguese utility EDP, told. Inflationary impact He noted solar panel prices have climbed in the United States, which has duties on Chinese imports. "It is having an inflationary impact ... the price of panels is more than double that of Europe," he said. Even local manufacturers say hopes of a competitive local industry are dim. Europe is in a "price war" with China, said Gunter Erfurt, CEO of Swiss panel maker Meyer Burger, which plans to close its loss-making German solar module factory, citing an absence of supportive European policies. With some Chinese solar firms able to sell even below production costs, Europe is playing catch up. "The solar industry in China has been strategically subsidised with hundreds of billions of dollars for years," Mr. Gunter Erfurt told

'Rigid, statutory fiscal targets are getting discredited globally,' says Finance Secretary

Almost no country seems to adhere to fixed fiscal goals anymore, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan said in an interview to The Hindu, emphasising that the country's high growth trajectory should enable a gradual decline in its debt to GDP ratio. He also noted that inflationary risks haven't disappeared so the central bank, which is reviewing the monetary policy this week, has to strike a delicate balance between growth and price rise concerns. The White Paper on the economy's mismanagement prior to 2014 and the transition since then, promised by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the interim Budget, is expected to be tabled in this session of Parliament, Mr. Somanathan, who heads the panel reviewing the National Pension System for government employees, said. Deliberations are on and they had already consulted States and Central government staff associations, he said. Edited excerpts: The Budget gives some broad directions on the government's focus areas for its next term. Can we expect more action points in the identified reform areas in the full Budget likely in July?

Definitely, you can expect more details. But it's too early to say what they will be, as things will evolve between now and then. It's a matter of timing between the new government taking charge and the presentation of the Budget. The fiscal outlook is not likely to change substantially, but the composition of programmes or scheme expenditures may change. But nothing can be ruled out. It is, after all, a vote on account and not a full Budget. So, who am I to preempt any decision that could very legitimately be taken? We have made fiscal projections with the information, policies and data available to us today.

The plan to lower borrowings and tackle the fiscal deficit has surprised many. Is there an underlying message to Mint Street?

Unlike monetary policy communication, where communication is itself a part of the policy, our Budget is not intended as a message to anyone, whether it is bond markets, rating agencies or the central bank. It is a communication of the substance of government's fiscal policy, and the direction it wants to take for our own long-term welfare and benefit. It may have implications or inputs for others in their decision making. That is for them to take into account. There is no intention to use this to communicate anything — that is a burden this statement cannot bear — it can only bear the burden of being a truthful account of what we expect fiscally. That is all it is.

Some banks facing UPI connectivity challenge: NPCI



UPI connectivity challenge, connectivity disruptions, NPCI news, bank UPIs, NPCI technical issues, retail payments operations, payment settlement systems, indian express news UPI, the real-time payment system, powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing and merchant payments into one hood.

Some of the banks experienced Unified Payment

System (UPI) connectivity disruptions on Tuesday due to internal technical issues, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said.

NPCI, the umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in the country, said it was working with such lenders to resolve the issue.

"Regret inconvenience on UPI connectivity as few of the banks are having some internal technical issues. NPCI systems are working fine and we are working with these banks to ensure quick resolution," NPCI wrote on the microblogging site X. ("We experienced some difficulties on UPI which seems to be part of a larger ecosystem. We are back in operations now and regret any inconvenience faced," HDFC Bank said on X. UPI, the real-time payment system, powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing and merchant payments into one hood. In value terms, UPI transactions reached a record high of Rs 1.84 lakh crore compared to Rs 1.82 lakh crore in December. In terms of volume, the number of transactions increased to 1,220.3 crore from 1,202.02 crore in December.

Meet the brains behind the sole Indian project to be shortlisted for 2023 Global Pluralism Award



Taking a step forward to create an inclusive society, The Global Centre for Pluralism recently announced its top 10 finalists for the 2023 Global Pluralism Award. The sole Indian project to make it as a finalist is India Love Project (ILP), which is a storytelling initiative known for its affinity towards promoting interfaith, intercaste and LGBTQ+ relationships through "positive stories of love and marriage". As per the press statement, ILP was selected from among 200 submissions from 60 countries.

Thrilled at the global recognition, the founders and senior journalists Niloufer Venkatraman, Samar Halamkar and Priya Ramani expressed their excitement as well as appreciation for acknowledging their efforts. Niloufer expressed in an exclusive interaction that it was "fantastic". "It's fantastic that our Instagram project, started overnight in October 2020, has been given this global recognition among so many diverse groups. It's certainly very encouraging, and we feel excited to learn more from the other short-listed organisations about how we can contribute further to creating a more plural and inclusive society," said Niloufer.

What's the learning out of their incredible journey?

According to Niloufer, the learning is that the biggest battle couples face when they want to choose their own life partners is the limitations set by orthodox cultural values, and by extension, "the challenge is their parents, who want to enforce these". "We feel that the public needs to be continuously reminded that we are actually a plural society. We are a country of multiple cultural traditions that we must all recognise, respect, and celebrate. We as a society are becoming so conditioned to respond in a homogenous way to key life choices that we cannot accept any difference. While we at ILP are talking mainly about inter-faith, inter-caste and LGBTQ+ choices, this lack of respect for difference is all around us," expressed Niloufer, who is looking forward to a docu-drama mini-series on Amazon Prime produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Entertainment Pvt Ltd and an ILP book too. Other finalists, who have been working on a range of disciplines, from peacebuilding to translation, social enterprise, sports therapy, storytelling, and technology, are based out of Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Palestine, South Africa, and the US. In a press statement, jury chair Dr Marwan Muasher of the

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former foreign minister and deputy prime minister of Jordan said, "The Award finalists have made outstanding contributions to fostering pluralism in some of the world's most challenging contexts. They are strengthening their communities by helping to build a foundation of mutual respect, cooperation, and shared purpose." Notably, among the top 10 finalists, three winners and seven honourable mention recipients will be announced in October and recognised at a ceremony to be held in November in Ottawa, Canada. According to the press statement, each winner will receive a prize of \$50,000 (CAD) to further their work in support of pluralism. Here's the complete list of finalists (mentioned in alphabetical order), as per the press statement:

Build Up (Kenya/United States/Global) works with peacebuilding institutions and a network of peace innovators to tackle polarisation and make peacebuilding processes more inclusive of diverse voices and perspectives with a specific focus on digital technologies. Deeyah Khan (Norway/United States) is a documentary filmmaker and activist countering extremism and fostering understanding and empathy across ideological, religious and racial divides. Esther Omam (Cameroon) is a peacebuilder, mediator and human rights defender mobilizing women and youth from across Cameroon to advocate for an end to conflict and hostilities. The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions – GIN-SSOGIE (South Africa/Global) supports LGBTQ+ people of faith from the Global South and East to advocate for an end to violence and persecution against sexual and gender minorities. India Love Project (India) challenges exclusion and prejudice in India by sharing love stories of non-traditional unions between interfaith, inter-caste and LGBTQ+ couples on social media. Lea Baroudi (Lebanon) is a peace mediator using art, culture and social enterprise to provide Lebanese youth with the rare opportunity to build a future outside of violent extremism and sectarianism. Politizel Civic Education Institute (Brazil) is a non-partisan and non-profit organization tackling polarisation in Brazil by producing free and unbiased political education, training civic leaders to solve public policy problems and training teachers to educate youth to become engaged citizens. Red de Intérpretes y Promotores Interculturales Asociación Civil (Mexico) is an Indigenous youth collective in Oaxaca, Mexico tackling exclusion by providing otherwise unavailable Indigenous language interpretation to those involved in legal proceedings. REFORM: The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development (Palestine) is a non-governmental organization building solidarity between groups in Palestine by empowering them to get involved in social life and influence decision-making. Touché (Belgium) is a social enterprise providing support to current and former prisoners and at-risk youth and, in the process, advancing a positive view of anger and aggression.

9-year-old fights for life against Nipah in Kerala: Experts urge for precautionary measures to safeguard children

As a nine-year-old infected with the deadly Nipah virus fights for life in Kerala, the Kerala Government has ordered for monoclonal antibody from ICMR or Indian Council for Medical Research to treat the child. Notably, while it is the only available anti-viral treatment for Nipah virus infection, it has not been clinically proven yet. According to a PTI report, the boy remains critical and is on ventilator support. "We have ordered the monoclonal antibody with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) and it will be brought to Kozhikode soon. The imported medicine is already available with the ICMR," said Kerala Health Minister Veena George, according to PTI.

Notably, the Nipah virus (NiV) is a zoonotic virus that can be transmitted from animals to humans. It can also spread through contaminated food or direct contact between people. "Fruit bats are the primary cause of this virus. Those who contract it may suffer from severe conditions such as acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis. Unlike airborne infections, NiV is transmitted via bats and pigs. It poses a fatal risk not only to humans but also to animals," said Dr Jagdish Kathwate, consultant neonatologist and paediatrician, Motherhood Hospital, Pune. The Kerala government has indicated that the prevalent virus strain is the Bangladesh variant that spreads from human to human. While it has a high mortality rate, it is less infectious, the government was quoted as saying by PTI. Learning from the case, here's taking a closer look at the preventive strategies, especially in the case of children. Nipah virus infection in children demands vigilant care, experts urge.

Dr Kanchan S Channawar, senior paediatrician and pediatric intensivist, Kamineni Hospitals, LB Nagar, Hyderabad said that Nipah virus infection is rare but can be extremely serious, especially in children. "Immediate medical attention and adherence to preventive measures are crucial in controlling its spread and minimising its impact. It's essential to stay informed about the latest developments in the management and prevention of Nipah virus infection, as the situation and recommendations may change over time," said Dr Kanchan. According to Dr Nanditha Rathinam, consultant — paediatrics and paediatrics intensive care, Manipal Hospital, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore, Nipah virus predominantly affects the lungs and brain. "It may cause respiratory symptoms like cough and sore throat, or even rapid breathing, fever, and gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea and vomiting. In severe cases, it may cause encephalitis (swelling of the brain) leading to disorientation or seizures. Encephalitis may even be catastrophic and lead to coma or death," said Dr Nanditha.

Treatment is primarily supportive as no specific antiviral therapy exists. "Preventive measures include avoiding contact with sick animals, practising good hand hygiene, and refraining from consuming raw date palm sap, a potential carrier," said Dr Kathwate. Dr Kathwate also urged parents and guardians to stay informed about local outbreaks and follow public health guidelines to protect their children and prevent the spread of the Nipah virus in the community.

Dr Kanchan listed preventive tips

*Children should avoid close contact with individuals who are infected with Nipah virus, especially those



with respiratory symptoms or encephalitis.

*Encourage children to wash their hands regularly with soap and water, especially before eating and after using the restroom. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can also be used when soap and water are not available.

*In endemic areas, children and adults should avoid consuming raw date palm sap, as it can be contaminated with the virus if bats have access to the sap.

*Children should not eat fruits that appear to have been bitten or licked by bats, as they may carry the virus.

*Healthcare workers and caregivers should use appropriate PPE when caring for infected individuals to prevent transmission.

**"In the future, if a vaccine becomes available, consider getting vaccinated if you live in an area with a risk of Nipah virus transmission," said Dr Kanchan.

Woman mistakes Apple AirPods for vitamin, swallows it

San Francisco: A woman in the US accidentally gulped down one of her Apple AirPods thinking of it as a vitamin, a report has claimed. Tanna Barker is going viral after admitting in a TikTok video that she swallowed one of her AirPods, reports Android Authority.

In the video, she explained that she was out for a walk with a friend and having a conversation and during that she took one of the earbuds out of her ear to hear more clearly. Barker then decided to take her vitamins and popped the AirPods in her mouth. After that she realised that the vitamins were still in her hand. "Halfway through my walk, I decided to take my vitamins, so I put my vitamins in, took a drink, and I was like, man, those are stuck," Barker was quoted as saying. "So I guzzled my water, kept on going, said bye to Kathleen, and went to go get my AirPods. And my pills were in my hand. I swallowed my AirPods," she added. According to the report, she seems to be doing well, even taking moments to laugh at herself about the whole situation. Baker mentioned that she immediately called doctors and friends for advice and they all told her the same thing — to let it pass naturally, the report said.

Imtiaz Ali says people 'didn't understand a single word' of Jab We Met song 'Mauja Hi Mauja': 'What is he saying? It's not a Punjabi film'



for Netflix India, Imtiaz disclosed that many expressed skepticism towards the song's potential due to their limited understanding of Punjabi. However, despite the doubts, Imtiaz, driven by his own fondness for the song, remained confident in its potential.

Speaking about the same, he said, "When we were composing the song 'Mauja Hi Mauja' at that time nobody was able to understand anything, but because Irshad Kamil is from Punjab, he said that 'Mauja Hi Mauja' would be fun. It felt nice, the sound was great. When someone says it like this, you get the meaning. And then he wrote the song and a lot of people said that they are not able to understand a single word of it. 'What is he saying? Why is he saying this? It's not a Punjabi film.' But we liked it and the song was loved by people." "Jab We Met's music was composed by Pritam with lyrics by Irshad Kamil, who again collaborated with Imtiaz for Amar Singh Chamkila. 'Mauja Hi Mauja' was sung by Mika Singh.

In Imtiaz's upcoming film, Amar Singh Chamkila, the role of Amar Singh Chamkila is portrayed by Dilipt Dossanj, while Parineeti Chopra essays the character of Chamkila's real-life partner and collaborator, Amarjot Kaur. The film's music is composed by AR Rahman. The film is scheduled for release on Netflix on April 12.

Fans have been waiting for the release of filmmaker Imtiaz Ali's upcoming film Amar Singh Chamkila. Even before its release, the film is winning hearts nationwide with its music album. Since the film is based on the life of late Punjabi singer Amar Singh Chamkila, the film's music has the essence of Punjabi music that was popular in the region in the 1980s. In a recent interview, Imtiaz shared an intriguing anecdote about another Punjabi hit song, "Mauja Hi Mauja," from his iconic film Jab We Met.

During a conversation with Anubhav Singh Bassi

Chiranjeevi meets brother Pawan Kalyan as he campaigns for Lok Sabha elections.

Powerstar Pawan Kalyan and his elder brother Megastar Chiranjeevi met on the sets of the latter's upcoming film Vishwambhara. The meeting signifies how well the tables have changed! Back in 2008, Telugu star Chiranjeevi launched his political party Praja Rajyam Party. The Telugu superstar put his acting career on hold and concentrated on his political career for about ten long years. He only acted in cameos of his son Ram Charan's films, Bruce Lee and Magadheera.

All the while his brother, Pawan Kalyan was delivering back-to-back hits in that period with films like Jalsa and Gabbar Singh. Now, in 2024, while Chiranjeevi, who resumed his acting career, is busy with his acting stints, Pawan Kalyan is busy campaigning for the upcoming Lok Sabha election in which he is contesting from Pithapuram.

Chiranjeevi took to social media to share the video from their meeting. The video has been edited with racy background scores for both actors. Pawan Kalyan made a grand entrance with his entourage. Living up to his



image as a politician, he was dressed in a white outfit. On the other hand, Chiranjeevi was vibrant and stylish as he was getting ready for his shot. A huge set of the Hindu god Hanuman was erected for the film, and the whole film crew along with the two stars posed in front of it. Actress Trisha, who is playing the heroine, was also seen in the video. The actress was gifted with a sapling by Pawan Kalyan.

Priyamani explains how Bollywood, South film industries are different: 'Everyone does everything in South'



In her two-decade-long career, Priyamani made her acting debut with the 2003 Telugu film Evare Atagaadu, and has worked in several languages, including Kannada, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam. The actor, who seamlessly switches between Hindi and films made in South Indian languages, says there are a few visible differences between the two industries. The 39-year-old, who is promoting her Maidaan, starring Ajay Devgn, in an interview with Bollywood Bubble, said, "The shoot and casting process both are different. In Hindi films, the casting directors call you and once you have said, they fix a

meeting with the filmmakers unlike in the South where you get a direct call either from the producer or the director or project manager. In the Hindi film industry, the casting directors take creative calls unlike in the South."

Priyamani said the complete demarcation between departments working on the sets of a Hindi film has also taken her by surprise. "In Bollywood, one department doesn't get involved in the other vertical's job whereas in the South, everyone is doing everything to finish the work faster. There is no concept of a dedicated costume assistant in the South irrespective of the budget," she shared.

She shares that if she ever needs to fix her dress in a scene, her staff is always available to do that unlike in Bollywood, where hair and makeup assistants do the job. "There are a lot of men who are working on the sets in the costume and makeup departments in the South and respect them for the work they do. Back in 2002, when I started working, leaving the heroine everyone on the set was a male as they helped fix our sarees and makeup now things are changing and you can see women entering the space," shared Priyamani, who shared the screen space with Shah Rukh in Jawan and Chennai.

'Thalapathy' Vijay constructed Sai Baba temple for mother Shoba: report

Following a heavily successful film career, Tamil superstar "Thalapathy" Vijay is gearing up to bid goodbye to films and give his undivided attention to politics. In line with this, on February 2 this year, Vijay announced his decision to join politics and informed the people that he and his fans' club have decided to name the party, Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK).

Meanwhile, a photo of the actor recently went viral on social media, wherein he was seen posing with a group of priests at a Sai Baba temple, sparking curiosity about its location and timing.

Now, a new report has emerged making some startling revelations about the temple's ownership. According to Times Now, the temple was constructed by none other than Vijay himself for his mother Shoba, a devoted follower of Sai Baba. The report further mentions that the temple is located on a piece of land owned by the actor in Korattur, situated in the western part of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The temple happened sometime in February this year and that the viral photo was clicked during his visit back then and not recently.

Born to filmmaker-producer SA Chandrasekhar and director-playback singer Shoba, Vijay's family embraces diverse religious backgrounds, with his parents having an inter-faith marriage — Chandrasekhar is from a Catholic Christian family and Shoba is a Hindu. "Contesting the 2026 assembly elections and winning them to provide the political change the people of the state aspire to is



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our goal. After receiving recognition from the Election Commission, after the Lok Sabha election is over, our journey presenting our party ideology, principle, party flag, and symbol and our plans for the growth of the state of Tamil Nadu will begin," he said in a statement issued announcing his entry into politics.

Kartik Aaryan's Rooh Baba brings Kolkata's Howrah bridge to a standstill during Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 shoot.



Kartik Aaryan is currently busy shooting the second leg of his upcoming film Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 in Kolkata. Recently, he was spotted at the Howrah Bridge at 5 am, dressed in his character Rooh Baba's attire — black robe, bandana, sunglasses, and Rudraksha beads. Kartik also shared a behind-the-scenes picture from the set on Instagram.

Despite the area being cordoned off, a large number of fans gathered on the Howrah Bridge to catch a

glimpse of the actor. Kartik took time between shots to wave and smile at his fans. In another video, he was seen riding a motorbike with a sidecar across the iconic bridge. Kartik also filmed scenes at the Mallick Ghat flower market and Laha Bari in Central Kolkata.

Kartik also shared a behind-the-scenes photo from Howrah Bridge with Kolkata's iconic yellow taxis in the background. He captioned it, "Kolkata Howrah You ??." In February, Kartik announced actor Tripti Dimri's participation in the film by sharing a photo with her. Tripti will play a lead role alongside Kartik Aaryan. "The thrills and chills intensify with the addition of Animal actress Tripti Dimri on board," Kartik wrote, unveiling Tripti's face. "Welcome to the world of Bhool Bhulaiyaa @tripti_dimri."

Additionally, Kartik confirmed that Vidya Balan would reprise her iconic 'OG Manjulika' role in the third installment of the franchise, exciting fans for a complete Bhool Bhulaiyaa reunion. In Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, Tabu played the dual roles of Anjulika and Manjulika. The film also starred Kiara Advani in a lead role. Directed by Anees Bazmee and produced by Bhushan Kumar, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 is set to hit theatres on Diwali this year.

NTR Jr fans tell Tillu Square actor Anupama Parameswaran not to speak at the film's success event.



Tillu Square, the sequel of the 2022 film DJ Tillu has also struck gold at the box office and has collected Rs 60 crore in 12 days, a huge number for the film that doesn't feature leading stars. To celebrate the success, the makers of Tillu Square organised a success meet that had NTR Jr as the guest of honour.

NTR Jr's presence led to a huge number of fans thronging the event. The focus of the event shifted from Tillu Square's success to the RRR actor as the fans kept demanding the Telugu superstar take the stage. Things reached a crescendo when the film's heroine Anupama Parameswaran took the stage to deliver her speech. Even before the actress could start the speech, the impatient NTR Jr fans started making a lot of noise asking her not to speak. Anupama asked the audience, "Should I talk or not?" Much to her shock, she got a resounding 'No' from the audience. The fans kept asking NTR Jr to deliver his speech. Anupama, who was visibly, disappointed said, "Okay, I am not going to talk." When the host of the event tried to make her talk, the actress was again asked to stop.

Anupama finally said, "I will just take one minute. Thank you so much for your love. I will not waste all of your time. And NTR Garu thank you so much for coming here. I am not feeling bad because I understand what their emotions are. I am also excited and waiting for the moment." Anupama later took to Instagram to share a picture with NTR Jr and director Triviram Srinivas (who was also at the event as guest). She wrote, "NTR Gaaru, the epitome of mass appeal, has always mesmerized me with his unparalleled talent, from his acting finesse to his mesmerizing dialogue delivery. Sharing the stage with him was an absolute blessing, and I dream of witnessing his magic unfold live one day. Can't wait to stand up and clap for Devara." The video of the incident has gone viral on social media with many criticising the fans for disrespecting Anupama in the name of fandom. "It's her event which she had to share her happiness on the success but these people over there were so rude that they didn't allow/want her to talk (Sic)," wrote one user. Anupama was also praised for handling the situation with maturity and charm.

Preity Zinta shares a photo from her first photoshoot, director Shekhar Kapoor recalls the old days: 'You still look great'



Preity Zinta first started her movie career in the 1990s and even though she is not an active part of the movies now, she still interacts with her fans via social media quite often. Recently, Preity shared a picture on her Instagram from her first photoshoot, when she was just 20. Director Shekhar Kapur also commented on Zinta's picture.

Sharing the picture, Preity Zinta wrote, "Was going through some old stuff and found this photo! OMG!!! My first photo shoot ever... I was all of 20 & I thought I knew everything I needed to know about the world... except how to pose for a photoshoot."

A lot of fans also commented on the post sharing how gorgeous Preity looked. A fan wrote, "You will always be my favorite, no matter what...", another user wrote, "Irreplaceable PZ! You were so lovely be-

fore and now also..." Director Shekhar Kapur also commented on the picture saying, "I remember you looking like that...but you still look great." Preity was originally supposed to make her film debut with Shekhar in his film Tara Rum Pum Pum but the film was shelved.

Preity Zinta who made her debut with Mani Ratnam's Dil Se in 1998 was last seen on the big

screen in 2013 with the film Ishq In Paris. The actor starred in some iconic films like Kal Ho Naa Ho, Veer Zaara, Dil Chahta Hai, Koi...Mill Gaya, Lakshya, and many more.

A few weeks ago, Preity had shared a photo from Dil Se and also shared an anecdote in the caption, "This picture was taken on the first day on the set of Dil Se. I was so excited to be working with Mani Ratnam sir & Shah Rukh Khan.

When Mani sir saw me he smiled and politely asked me to wash my face.... But sir... my make-up will come off, I said smiling That's exactly what I want... Pls wash your face.... He smiled back. I thought he was joking Then I realized he was not !!! So thanks to the amazing Santosh Sivan (our Director of Photography) I filmed with a freshly washed face and got away with it. I guess he shot me Dil Se."

Neeraj Chopra to compete at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on the road to Paris 2024



GNS News Agency, April 15

Chopra, who begins his road to the Paris Olympics at the Doha Diamond League Meeting on May 10, had won a silver in the 2022 edition of the Paavo Nurmi Games but was forced to withdraw from the 2023 edition as he was recovering from an injury. "Javelin throw Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra will return to Turku in June. Chopra will compete in the Paavo Nurmi Games after a year's break and will meet a high-quality group of competitors. The competition will take place in Turku on June 18," said Arttu Salonen, charged with athlete procurement at the Paavo Nurmi Games on their official event website.

Other than Neeraj, the javelin throw competition will also feature 19-year-old sensation Max Dehning, the German who is latest entrant in the 90m throw club. "The goal is to throw the toughest javelin competition of the summer in Turku before the Paris Olympics. Negotiations with others continue. Naturally, we want top domestic names to cover Turku, led by Oliver Helander (who won gold in 2022 edition with 89.83)," added Arttu. One of the targets that Neeraj has been pipped against, and one that he has been vocal about over the years, is hitting the elusive 90m mark.

"I am very close to it. I want to hit that throw myself. I believe in the process. Whenever it will happen, it will happen. I am not in a hurry. I am happy with my consistent performances, this is my main focus," Chopra had said last year. According to his coach Klaus Bartonietz, though, Neeraj had touched the mark a year ago. "(He) threw 90.40 in training a year ago in spring in Turkey at the camp in Belek," Bartonietz was quoted by the Paavo Nurmi Games official website. "90 meters could have already been broken in the Stockholm record throw (of 89.94m, Chopra's PB). In Stockholm, Chopra threw 20-30 centimeters from behind the line, so it was a 90-metre throw. 90 metres is therefore only a matter of time. However, we say that it's just a number," he added.

Hockey, IND vs AUS: Sreejesh sensational but India lose again courtesy that one dreaded game-changing mistake

GNS News Agency, April 15

India's rivals in world hockey share a common belief. No matter how good India are on the day, it is held, a mistake is just around the corner. It could come in the form of a wrong decision in the middle of the park or a defensive blunder; very early in the game or towards the later stages. And so, they wait. Weather the counter-attacking storm, run to a defensive wall and wait patiently for that one error, which would present them with an opportunity to score. On Wednesday, Australia did just that. For three quarters, they waited and waited. Stole the ball, launched blinding attacks and fired a dozen shots at the Indian goal, only to be stopped by a heroic PR Sreejesh. They even went behind, a fine drag-flick by Jugraj Singh put India ahead against the run of play in the 41st minute.

It began with a harmless back pass towards Amit Rohidas inside the 'D'. All the Indian defender had to do was trap and pass it forward. But his first touch was heavy and the ball went away from him. The Australian attacker pounced on the error and got to the ball. Rohidas panicked and body-checked the forward. Penalty stroke. After a hard-fought battle till the final whistle, Australia emerges victorious once more in the 5-match series, now leading 3-0. ??

Jeremy Hayward sent Sreejesh the wrong way. And just like that, the match that was always in Australia's control swung decisively in their favour. Hayward scored again in the 49th minute from a penalty corner to seal a 2-1 win for Australia. The third defeat in a row means Australia clinched the five-match series in Perth. But for India, this defeat will hurt more than the previous two. Until that fateful Rohidas mistake, India were in the game. They, in fact, were in the exact position that coach Craig Fulton would have wanted them to. India even played the way he would want them to more often against the likes of Australia.

There weren't many flashy moves forward. Instead, India were happy to keep the ball and patient enough to recycle the possession when Australia put all bodies in their half. They switched flanks and didn't hesitate to play the ball backwards if all passing angles were blocked. In doing so, they made Australia run a lot more than they have in this series. Raheel Mohammad was once again at the heart of most creative moves India made up front. The young attacker from Bangalore is making a late push for inclusion in the Paris-bound team and given how impotent India's goal-scorers are, any flash of creativity will be welcome. India tried to control the match by keeping the ball a lot more and using the aerial passes to bypass



the midfield. This was the most noticeable improvement in this series, given how sluggish and sloppy India looked in the previous two matches. But they were far from perfect. At times, India's basic skills let them down. Especially in the attacking third, where a couple of missed traps foiled good counterattacks.

Fulton would have been happier with the fact that India kept the game close until the very end. It's something Sreejesh pointed out post-match, noting that the low scoreline was an improvement from the heavy defeats earlier. At the same time, the coach and his players must feel frustrated at how India kept on losing the ball in their own half. The constant turnovers meant India could never have sustained spells of pressure despite enjoying more possession than the earlier matches.

To top that, they conceded soft penalty corners all through the game. Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Harmanpreet Singh and Rohidas were all guilty of allowing the Aussies to find their feet inside the 'D' far too easily at times. If not for Sreejesh – the veteran has laid to rest any doubt as to which of the two goalkeepers should be on the plane to Paris – India could have been down by four or five goals in the first half itself. The goalkeeper, who will be 36 by the time Olympics begin, was constantly tested by the Aussies, who aimed both sides of his goal, and kept their shots low and high. Sreejesh was up to the task, and even pulled off an incredible double save in the third quarter to keep India in the match. He seemed like the only player in total control at all times. Although the rest backed him up with a much-improved performance, their best so far in this tour, it still wasn't enough to hold the mighty Australians to a draw, let alone beat them. And that, one gets a feeling, won't happen until India get rid of the one thing the entire hockey world knows will happen while playing them: one costly, game-changing mistake.



give any information about Burger's exclusion from the side. Trent Boult and Nandre Burger managed to find a lot of success with the new ball in the powerplay for Rajasthan. The two left-arm pacers have been instrumental in helping Rajasthan remain winless so far. Rajasthan (Playing XI) - Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jos Buttler, Sanju Samson (C/WK), Riyan Parag, Shimron Hetmyer, Dhruv Jurel, Ravichandran Ashwin, Trent Boult, Avesh Khan, Kuldeep Sen (In for Nandre Burger), Yuzvendra Chahal. Impact players nominated by Rajasthan - Rovman Powell, Tanush Kotian, Shubham Dubey, Keshav Maharaj and Navdeep Saini.

Gujarat (Playing XI) - Sai Sudharsan, Shubman Gill (C), Vijay Shankar, Abhinav Manohar (In for BR Sharath), Matthew Wade (WK) (In for Kane Williamson), Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan, Mohit Sharma, Umesh Yadav, Noor Ahmad, Spencer Johnson.

Sunil Gavaskar 'not worried' about Yashasvi Jaiswal's form: His bat will talk soon



GNS News Agency, April 15

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar showed confidence in Yashasvi Jaiswal to roar back to form, overcoming his slow start to the IPL 2024 campaign. The young batter is yet to showcase his prowess with the bat as he hasn't registered a single fifty-plus score in the 17th edition of the IPL. The young opener has not looked fluent at the start even as his batting partner Jos Buttler overcame a similar slow start and hit a match-winning hundred in Jaipur against RCB.

Gavaskar, while speaking to Star Sports on Wednesday, stressed the importance of Jaiswal scoring runs and giving Rajasthan strong starts. He admitted that it could

have been difficult to transition to T20 batting after coming from a memorable Test series. During the 5-match Test series against England, Jaiswal scored 712 runs and became the 2nd Indian after Gavaskar to score the most runs in a single Test series. However, he hasn't translated his success in red-ball cricket to T20 cricket in this season. "Riyan Parag is batting so well at number four, so they will cover as far as batting is concerned. Clearly, they would want Yashasvi to score runs, and it could be that, you know, after a very successful test match series mindset, to adjust to the T20 matches has not quite set in," Gavaskar said. RR vs GT: Live score

The former Indian captain also mentioned that Jaiswal's bat will talk loudly very soon and he isn't concerned about Jaiswal's lack of runs so far. Jaiswal has scored only 39 runs in the 4 matches for RR so far. "It can happen. But these are early days to just 10 more matches to go and then the knock-out stages as well. So I'm not worried at all. I don't think Rajasthan will be worried either, because sooner than later, that bat is going to talk and talk very loudly," Gavaskar added. IPL 2024 Full Coverage | IPL 2024 Points Table and Standings | 2024 IPL Full Schedule | The last edition of the IPL, Jaiswal was the top run scorer with 625 runs in his name, which included 5 fifties and a hundred. However, in this edition, with Jaiswal not being among the runs, Riyan Parag has stepped up with the bat to score 185 runs in 4 matches for RR so far.

Virat Kohli is one of few guys who has set fitness benchmark: Ajit Agarkar

GNS News Agency, April 15

BCCI chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar highlighted the far-reaching impact of Virat Kohli's fitness program on Indian cricket, noting its pervasive influence. Describing MS Dhoni as an instinct player in a sport deeply entrenched in data analytics, Agarkar emphasized Kohli's unmatched ability, despite being 35 years old, to excel in the most demanding fitness routines. "You look at guys like Virat (Kohli), he is one of those guys who set the benchmark. 10-15 years into his career, he has only got fitter, you can see the results. If someone like him sets an example and puts forward certain things that you need or certain fitness levels that you need, gradually it progresses across the ecosystem.

"Gradually it has progressed (to the younger generation). The one difference you have seen over the last 15-20 years or so is the fitness levels of players," said Agarkar on SportifywithPRG. Kohli has showcased exceptional form in the ongoing season, adding to his record with an eighth century in IPL's history. Kohli also leads the run charts with 316 runs from five games. Meanwhile, Dhoni's intuitive leadership has led to five IPL titles, despite stepping down as captain of the Chennai Super Kings. His mere presence on the field bolsters his team's confidence. According to the former India cricketer, Ajit Agarkar, no amount of artificial intelligence can replace Dhoni's remarkable captaincy instincts.

"The amount of data that's available, is incredible. You can plan a whole innings and I think everybody does it now, but it doesn't mean it will work all the time. You need a captain on the ground because not everything that you've planned is going to go your way." On a particular day it might, but most days it won't. And that's where you need human instinct. That's why you call MS Dhoni a great captain because he had a feel for the game. He knew what was happening and how the game was changing," opined the 46-year-old former India pace bowler. Agarkar stated that the IPL had become an excellent platform for spotting talent, but what was most important was a strong temperament that would separate them apart from the competition.



"You can see it, (IPL) keeps throwing up players out of the blue. Having been a selector for a few months, there are certain players who suddenly come and show even on the big stage. IPL is a fairly big stage because of the pressures involved, big crowds. "You might be bowling to the top batters in the world, or you might be facing one of the top bowlers in the world, and that's when you stand up and that's where you judge the temperament of a player, whether he can do it consistently," said Agarkar. "It's sometimes a difficult task because of the sheer numbers (of players coming through the domestic structure) that we have. But, eventually, the more you watch players and temperament sometimes separates it." Agarkar believes that a tight-knit team is more likely to win. "A tight-knit group generally helps. You don't need to be the best friends but you want to enjoy each other's success. If that doesn't happen sometimes it is a bit difficult."

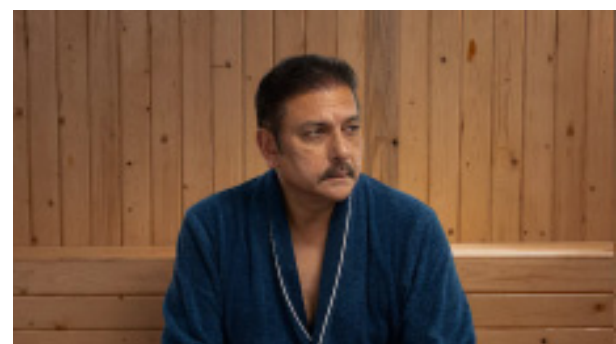
Suspense around Ravi Shastri's viral 'naughty' tweets ends: Account not hacked

GNS News Agency, April 15

No, Ravi Shastri's social media account was not hacked. After a series of tweets with photos of him in bath robe, the suspense over his 'naughty' social media posts came to an end on Wednesday evening when Virender Sehwag shared a video of an advertisement featuring the two legendary cricketers. Ravi Shastri and Sehwag teamed up for a new ad for a popular travel company, making full use of the buzz around the top cricketers in the IPL 2024 season.

Virender Sehwag and Ravi Shastri were at their hilarious best in the promotional video as they were enjoying the luxury of a five-star steam box. Sehwag urges Shastri to relax after the former captain, in his inimitable style, was trying to steal the thunder. Sehwag reminded Shastri that the real hero of the particular video segment were not the both of them, but the product that they were campaigning for.

Shastri also added a tinge of fun to his social media post, acknowledging Shastri's efforts in creating the buzz among his fans and followers on Wednesday. "Ravi bhai bol rahe the 'Bathrobe bhi utaar dete hai'" Sehwag wrote as caption, sharing a clip of the promotional video. Ravi Shastri left quite a few wondering whether his social media account was hacked with a series of tweets on Wednesday. The captions for the three photos posted by Shastri, who was seen posing in a blue bathrobe, attracted interest as he got the campaigning for his new promotional



video spot on. The IPL season has given wings to ad-writers as the likes of Rahul Dravid, Ravi Shastri, Kapil Dev and Venkatesh Prasad have featured in some well-written campaigns. Dravid's 'Indira Nagar Ka Gunda' was one of the most prominent and viral ad campaigns that dropped during an IPL season.

Ravi Shastri has been making it count in the commentary box as the former India head coach has been calling IPL 2024 games. After a successful stint as India's head coach until 2021, Shastri took a brief break and traveled the world. A lover of other sports, Shastri was often spotted at the stands in Wimbledon and other major tennis tournaments. The former India captain, known for his flamboyance and style, also watched the FIFA World Cup 2022 final live from Doha.

Man City and Real Madrid all-square in quarterfinal first leg thriller

Madrid: The Champions League quarterfinal first leg between Real Madrid and Manchester City ended all square after a 3-3 draw at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The game got off to a remarkable start, with City midfielder Bernardo Silva scoring against Real Madrid for a third successive season as he caught out goalkeeper Andriy Lunin with a clever free-kick after only two minutes. Just ten minutes later, though, Madrid were level,

Eduardo Camavinga's effort from outside the box taking a wicked deflection off City defender Ruben Dias to wrongfoot Stefan Ortega. That gave the hosts momentum, and two minutes after equalising they took the lead, as Rodrigo running onto Vinicius Junior's delightful pass and poking a shot through Stefan Ortega's legs with the help of a touch off Manuel Akanji, Champions League reports. There was no let-up in the action in the second half,