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BSP leader's murder not political, 8 suspects held over killing

Sanjay Kumar Chennai, July 6: The city Police on Saturday said the killing of Tamil Nadu BSP chief K Armstrong by a group of assailants was not political in nature and that all angles were being probed. Eight suspects in the case were nabbed within three hours of the crime on Friday, City Police Commissioner Sandeep Rai Rathore told reporters here and denied that the BSP leader faced any threat to his life. "The chances of a political motive are very low, though previous enmity could not be ruled out," the Commissioner said. Divulging details on the slaying, he said Armstrong was hacked at 7.15 pm when he was proceeding towards his under-construction house in Perambur here. Four persons accompanying him were also injured. Armstrong was rushed to a local hospital by his supporters and later succumbed, Rathore said. "Initial investigation, CCTV footages, cell phone tower location and eyewitness account led to the police arresting eight persons whom we strongly suspect are involved in commissioning the offence," he said. On the allegation by certain political parties that those arrested were not the real culprits, he replied only further investigation would prove. "But right now we have sufficient evidence to prove that they would have committed the offence," he said. It also seemed "a little premature" to claim the murder was a retaliatory killing. Nevertheless, this angle too was being probed into, he said and added Armstrong did not figure in the threat category. So police watched him only as a political leader, in so far as this incident was concerned.

Train drivers draw Rahul Gandhi's attention to 'serious safety issues' in Railways

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, July 6: The All India Loco Running Staff Association's (AILRSA) South Zone president said on Saturday loco drivers handed a memorandum to Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, blaming poor working conditions for recent train accidents. R Kumaresan, who played a crucial role in organising the interaction between the former Congress president and the loco pilots at the New Delhi railway station on Friday, told PTI that they wanted to bring to Gandhi's attention "serious safety issues" faced by drivers and passengers in the Railways. "Recent accidents, including collisions in Indian Railways, apart from other issues, have brought forth the urgent necessity to resolve the working conditions of loco pilots since it is said that there is human failure," the association said in the memorandum. Highlighting the plight of train drivers, the note said loco pilots, especially those who drive goods trains, work 14 to 16 hours a day and get to go home after three or four days. It said these drivers work for more than four consecutive nights

and instead of getting weekly rest, they are given rest once in 10 days. The memorandum said a task force on safety appointed by the Railways in 2017 found that overshooting of red signals happens mostly when loco pilots return after "inadequate weekly rest". "Since they (drivers) are denied leave to attend to their domestic work, they perform domestic work during rest periods and therefore, rest is insufficient for them," it added. "Whereas all staff are entitled to a weekly rest between 40 and 64 hours but loco pilots are entitled to only 30," the note said. According to Kumaresan, the Railways uses the term "periodic rest" instead of "weekly rest" in its rules under which loco pilots are entitled to 16 hours of rest at the headquarters. "The 16-hour headquarters rest is to get relieved from the duty strain. Complete rest can be 30 consecutive hours after the expiry of 16 hours of headquarters rest," the memorandum said. Kumaresan said the union,

along with other associations such as the Indian Railway Loco Runningmen Organisation, moved the Regional Labour Commissioner, Bengaluru, and the Karnataka High Court over this issue and both ruled in favour of the loco pilots but the Railways is reluctant to implement the changes. "To ensure safe train operation, loco pilots should be given 30 consecutive hours of rest after the expiration of the headquarters rest of 16 hours only. Indian Railways as a model employer should hon-

our the judgment," the drivers said in their representation. The memo also highlighted the issue of continuous night duties, which the loco pilots feel invites accidents. According to Kumaresan, various studies conducted by the Railways, as well as outside agencies, suggest that working on the second consecutive night leads affects mental alertness and makes drivers vulnerable to operational lapses. "These studies have recommended that continuous night duties should be limited to two. However, the Railway Board, in stark contrast, issued orders for four consecutive night duties," he said. The loco pilots also drew Gandhi's attention towards long duties at a stretch, saying it increases fatigue. Loco pilot unions said that in 1973, there was a nationwide strike by loco-running staff led by M Rathina Sabapathy under the banner of the AILRSA for eight hours of duty at a stretch and an agreement took place with the government on August 13 of the same year.



PM Modi speaks to UK counterpart Keir Starmer, both agree to work for early free trade agreement

New Delhi, July 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke to newly elected British Prime Minister Keir Starmer as the two leaders agreed to work towards an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK free trade agreement, a statement said. Modi congratulated him on assuming charge and a remarkable victory of his Labour Party in the election. The statement said both the leaders recalled the historic relations between the India and the UK and reaffirmed their commitment to further



deepen and advance the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the countries. Appreciating the positive contributions of the Indian community in the social, economic and political development of the UK, they agreed to continue to promote the close people-to-people ties. Modi also extended an invitation to Starmer for an early visit to India as the two leaders agreed to remain in touch, the statement said. In a post on X, Modi said, "Pleased to speak with @Keir\_Starmer. Congratulated him on being elected as the Prime Minister of the UK. We remain committed to deepening Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and robust India-UK economic ties for the progress and prosperity of our peoples and global good."

Six-storey residential building collapses in Gujarat's Surat

Surat, July 6: A six-storey residential building collapsed in Pal area of Surat city on Saturday afternoon, leaving at least four to five people trapped under the rubble, officials said. A woman was rescued alive from the debris, while a search and rescue operation is on with the help of NDRF and SDRF as local people claimed four to five persons might have been still trapped, said Surat district collector Sourabh Pardhi. "A six-storey building collapsed during the afternoon in the Pal area of the city. We learned that four to five flats were occupied in the building. One woman has been rescued. Four to five people are still feared trapped. Search and rescue operations are ongoing with the help of NDRF and SDRF. We hope that the operation will end in a couple of hours," said Pardhi. Surat Police Commissioner Anupam Singh Gehlot, who arrived at the scene to oversee the rescue operation, confirmed that the voices of trapped persons were heard at the beginning of the rescue efforts.

Bhagwant Mann refrains from speaking on charges levelled by Sheetal Angural

Jalandhar, July 6: On the second consecutive day of campaigning for the Jalandhar West bypoll, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann mentioned Angural-Rinku duo today. However, he did not mention the charges levelled by Angural. After during the former AAP MLA to release evidences against him, the CM has been refraining from speaking on charges levelled by Sheetal Angural directly. However, he made many indirect references to both Sheetal Angural and Sushil Rinku today. The CM today held meetings at Raseela Nagar, Tahli Wala Chowk and Dussehra Ground in Jalandhar West constituency. Addressing congregations in the West segment, the CM repeatedly said AAP committed a mistake by choosing the former Jalandhar West candidate for the party. The CM said, "Jalandhar West should never have gone to bypoll. It's happening due to the vested interests and greed of one man. First AAP made Angural MLA from here and now he wants to win again on the BJP ticket. But God does everything for a reason. The chair had to be vacated for a decent man." Speaking at another meeting, the CM said, "If there was a machine to check the vices in people's hearts, I would have bought it."

India unveils light tank 'Zorawar' expected to be inducted into Indian Army by 2027

Navdeep Singh Sahni Hajira (Gujarat), July 6: In a major boost to Indian forces deployed opposite China in Ladakh, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and private sector firm Larsen and Toubro (L&T) are at an advanced stage of trials of the indigenous Light Tank 'Zorawar'. DRDO chief Dr Samir V Kamat today reviewed the progress made in the project at the Larsen and Toubro plant at Hajira in Gujarat. He said it is expected to be inducted into the Indian Army by 2027 after all trials. Developed in a record time of two years for high altitude areas of Ladakh, the tank is testimony to Indian progress in indigenous manufacturing. DRDO and L&T have integrated unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) in loitering munitions

in the tank learning lessons from the Russia and Ukraine conflict. Light Tank 'Zorawar' with 25 tonnes in weight and it is the first time, a fresh tank has been designed and made ready for trials in

indeed an example. In a short period of two to two-and-a-half years, we have not only designed this tank but made a first prototype. And now the first prototype will undergo development trials over the next six months, and then we will be ready to offer it to our users for user trials." Fifty-nine of these tanks will be provided to the Army initially and it will be a front runner for the major programme of 295 more of these armoured vehicles. The Indian Air Force can supply two tanks at a time in the C-17 class transport aircraft as the tank is light and can be run at high speeds in mountain valleys. The trials are expected to be completed in the next 12 to 18 months and be ready for induction. Even though the first ammunition is coming from Belgium, DRDO is ready to develop the ammunition indigenously.



Conduct NEET-UG again in transparent manner: Kharge

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, July 6: The Congress demanded Saturday that the medical entrance exam NEET-UG be conducted again and all "paper leak scams" thoroughly investigated under the Supreme Court's supervision. Amid the growing clamour for the cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG 2024 over alleged malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency told the apex court on Friday that scrapping it without any proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality would be counterproductive as it could "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates. The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses, and the Union education ministry have been at the centre of media debates and protests by students and political parties

over alleged large-scale malpractices ranging from question paper leaks to impersonation in the test held on May 5. In a post on X in Hindi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Modi government has told the Supreme Court that no paper has been leaked in NEET-UG. "This blatant lie is being told to lakhs of youths. Their future is being ruined," Kharge said. The Congress leader pointed out that the education ministry has

said that "there have been irregularities or cheating only at a few places" but this is "misleading". The BJP-RSS has promoted the "education mafia" by taking control of the entire education system, he claimed. "Be it NCERT books or leakage in exams, the Modi government is bent on destroying our education system," Kharge alleged. "We reiterate our demand that 'NEET-UG should be conducted again. It should be conducted online in a transparent manner,'" he said. Kharge also demanded that all "paper leak scams" should be thoroughly investigated under the supervision of the Supreme Court, and strict action should be taken against the culprits. "The Modi government cannot escape from its misdeeds," he said on X. The Union education ministry and the NTA filed separate affidavits opposing the pleas which have sought the scrapping of the exam plagued by controversy, a re-test and a court-monitored probe into the entire gamut of issues involved.



Supreme Court to hear pleas against verdict on same-sex marriage on July 10

New Delhi, July 6: The Supreme Court will consider on July 10 petitions seeking review of its October 2023 verdict refusing recognition to same sex marriages in India. A five-judge Bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Justice S Ravindra Bhat, Justice PS Narasimha and Justice Hima Kohli had on October 17, 2023, unanimously turned down petitions seeking to allow same-sex marriages under the Special Marriage Act, saying it's for Parliament to effect changes in the law for validating such unions. Since two of the judges — Justice Kaul and Justice Bhat — have retired, the Bench has been reconstituted with the inclusion of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice BV Nagarathna. Review petitions are generally heard "in chamber" — and not in an open court — by a procedure called "hearing by circulation" where advocates representing the parties are not allowed to argue. But in exceptional cases, the top court allows open court hearing, if convinced about its need. The CJ will have to take a call on the review petitioners' demand for an open court hearing.

Hathras stampede: Key accused Madhukar held in Delhi's Najafgarh

Naresh Malhotra Noida, July 6: Devprakash Madhukar, the main accused in the July 2 Hathras 'satsang' stampede, was arrested from Delhi by the Uttar Pradesh Police which claimed he was recently contacted by some political parties and suspected that self-styled godman Bhole Baba's events were "funded" by a political party. Two more suspects, Rampurakash Shakya, 61, and Sanju Yadav, 33, were held in Hathras in connection with the stampede that left 121 people dead, according to the police. Madhukar, 42, was arrested late on Friday from Delhi's Najafgarh area by a Special Operations Group of the Hathras Police, Hathras Superintendent of Police Nipun Agarwal said. The officer said Madhukar worked as a fundraiser for events of self-styled godman Surajpal, alias Narayan Sakar Hari, alias Bhole Baba, and collected donations. "His financial transactions and money trails are being looked into, and call detail records are also being checked," Agarwal

added. However, on Friday night, Madhukar's lawyer A P Singh had claimed he had surrendered before the police in Delhi, where he had come for medical treatment. Around 2.15 pm on Saturday, Madhukar was brought by the police to the Bagla Combined District Hospital in Hathras for a medical examination amid heavy security deployment in and around the government hospital. Madhukar had his face covered with a handkerchief and a stole tied around his head. Madhukar, the 'mukhya sevadar' of the satsang where the stampede occurred. He is the only accused named in the FIR lodged at Sikandra Rao police station in Hathras in connection with the incident. Agarwal said the investigation also revealed that some political parties had contacted him some time back. "A detailed investigation is being conducted regarding the col-



lection of funds to see if such programmes and other resources are being funded by any political party. From the investigation so far, it appears that some political party is connected with them for its political and personal interests," the police officer said. "All the bank accounts, movable and immovable properties, money trail, related to the accused Devprakash Madhukar are being investigated, in which assistance will be taken from other agencies as per the need," he added. The IPS officer said after preliminary interrogation, accused Madhukar said he had been working on contract as a junior engineer in MNREGA in Etah district since 2010. He has been associated with the (Bhole Baba's) organisation for years and organises programmes and collects funds for it. "Madhukar was the main organiser of the satsang pro-

gramme in Fulrai village on July 2 and the permission for this programme was taken by him. Thus, two roles of Madhukar have come to light—the main organiser and fundraiser," he added. Agarwal said the accused and the sevadars/organising committee members working under his direction were "fully responsible" for the barricading, entrance gate, exit gate, seating arrangements, parking and other facilities around the pandal of the satsang. "Madhukar and other sevadars prevented the police administration from any kind of interference inside the event venue. At the event venue, his sevadars were looking after all the arrangements in the form of commandos in different costumes," he said. "No person was allowed to do videography or photography at the venue. Thus, the arrangements were not done properly and the traffic system etc was affected by violating many conditions mentioned in the permission letter issued by the administration," the SP said.

## Tirunelveli cops teach 20K school kids ill-effects of caste bias

**TIRUNELVELI:** Tirunelveli city police raised awareness against caste and communal differences among 20,000 school students in the last two days, following instructions from Commissioner of Police Pa Moorthy.

In view of caste-based clashes that broke out among government school students at Sripuram, Munneerpallam, Pazhavoor, and Maruthakulam a few days after schools reopened in June this year, the police said the drive was imperative to foster harmony.

"Moorthy instructed the police personnel to foster harmony among students. Deputy



Commissioners Adharsh Pachera and V Geetha organised awareness programmes against caste and communal differences at schools during the morning assembly. The students were advised not to socialise with their peers based on caste and religion. They also warned that disciplinary and legal action will be taken against violators. The consequences of registering an FIR against a student include inability to enrol for private or government jobs in future," the police said. An official statement said in the last two days, 27 police officials visited 25 schools across the city.

# Politicos condemn BSP state president K Armstrong's murder

**CHENNAI:** Expressing shock over the murder of BSP state president K Armstrong by unidentified persons on Friday night, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami charged that the state's law and order situation is at its worst condition now. "The state president of a national party is getting murdered. How come the assailants gained the courage to commit such a crime? It is because there is no fear of the police, government or the law in Tamil Nadu. All those responsible for the murder of Armstrong should be brought to book, and Chief Minister M K Stalin should make arrangements for the peaceful conduct of his funeral procession," Palaniswami said in a statement. Taking to social media platform 'X', BSP chief Mayawati expressed condolences and urged the state government to punish the guilty persons.

BJP State president K Annamalai said he was startled by the news. "Violence and brutality have no place in our society. But it has become a norm in Tamil Nadu in the last three years under the DMK regime. Having left the law and order of the state in tatters, Stalin should ask himself if he has the moral right to continue as the CM," he added. Condemning the murder, TMC president GK Vasani said such incidents have increased fear psychosis among the people. MMK chief MH Jawahirullah also condoled the demise.



In a statement late night, PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss said the manner in which the gang murdered the state president of a national party at a spot where people gather, clearly shows how far the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu has deteriorated. "Stalin should own up responsibility for the murder," Anbumani said.

Meanwhile, TNCC president K Selvaperunthagai hailed Armstrong's services to the members of SC/STs and

urged the police to take immediate action against those responsible for his death. VCK President Thol Thirumavalavan also condemned the murder and sought stringent action against the assailants. Noting that the BSP leader's murder comes just two days after AIADMK functionary Shanmugam's murder in Salem, DMK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant claimed the law and order situation had totally collapsed in TN.

## Mahadayi inspection will expose Karnataka: Goa CM Pramod Sawant

**BELAGAVI:** While the Progressive River Authority for Water and Harmony (PRAWAH) of the Union Government is set to inspect the project sites of Kalasa-Banduri on July 7 at Kankumbi, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant issued a strong statement on Friday claiming that the inspection will expose the illegal diversion of water to Malaprabha basin and the wrongdoings of Karnataka government with regard to Mahadayi project. Sawant welcomed the PRAWAH inspection during monsoon stating that it was the right time to understand the flow and diversion of water (at Kalasa Banduri project sites). Speaking to a section of media in Panaji on Friday, Sawant said, "Let Karnataka approach the PM for the project clearance. We (Goa) have already made a case before the Prime Minister, highlighting the importance of the Mahadayi river to Goa." Sawant said his government would put the facts of water diversion with proof before the Supreme Court as the matter was listed for August. Meanwhile, several organisations in Belagavi have questioned the need for the inspection of PRAWAH at a time when Mahadayi Water Dispute Tribunal (MWDT) has already pronounced its award and the Supreme Court subsequently issued orders for sharing of water as per the tribunal's order.

As to why the Goa government is keen on getting PRAWAH to visit the project sites on the border is that it is under the impression that the State Government is taking up various works under the Mahadayi project in violation of the tribunal's orders, said Ashok Chandargi, chairman, Kannada Organisations Action Committee. He said that the Karnataka government is waiting for environment and wildlife permission to go ahead with the Kalasa-Banduri project. "When that was the fact, the State Government should have prevented the visit of PRAWAH to the project sites. Goa feels it could halt Karnataka from diverting the Mahadayi water by showing PRAWAH to take note of the works, which it claimed were taken up at the Kalasa-Banduri project sites, illegally by Karnataka," he said. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Water Resources Minister DK Shivakumar and officials concerned should bring the actual state of things with regard to the Mahadayi project to the notice of PRAWAH when the latter holds a meeting in Bengaluru on July 8, Chandargi said. The Kannada organisations have alleged that the Goa government was trying to put pressure on various departments at the Centre in an attempt to prevent the implementation of Mahadayi project. For the past six years, Goa has been objecting to the project even as the MWDT has awarded 13 tmcft share of water to Karnataka, the organisations added.

# Change in demographic profile major cause of declining student strength in schools

**KOCHI:** Though the directive from the Kerala State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) can be cited as the trigger for many educational institutions taking the co-education route, there is more to it than meets the eye. Till the end of the 2022 academic year, the state had 280 girls schools and 164 boys schools in the government and aided sectors. But now the numbers are coming down. This year itself 45 schools turned co-ed. As per the KSCPCR order issued in 2022, there is no need to teach boys and girls in separate schools in the existing social context. "Moreover, the existence of such schools can only be seen as a turning away from advanced education and psychological theories. There is no justification for such schools to exist," says the order. "The reasons are many," says S Irudaya Rajan, chair of the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala, who has been studying the demographic trend in the state. The prime one is the big drop in the state's population, he explains. It should be noted that the birth rate for Kerala fell from 17.2 births per 1,000 inhabitants in

2001 to 13.2 births per 1,000 inhabitants in 2020. He also pointed towards the migration of youth to foreign shores not only for studies but also for jobs as another cause. "Most of these youth prefer to settle down in the countries they have migrated to. So besides empty houses, the state will soon have to face a situation of empty schools," he adds. "It has been a gradual fall," says D Dhanuraj, founder-chairman of the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR). According to him, there has been a big drop in the fertility rate. "It should be noted that the number of schools went up when the demand for educational institutions increased following an increase in the number of children per family. However, the fertility rate which stood at 1.9 a few years ago has now dropped to 1.6. It should be understood that this might fall even lower," he says. The decline in fertility rate is more prominent in the southern districts of Kerala, says Dhanuraj. Kerala today has a total of 12,974 schools catering to the educational needs of the children till high school. "This excludes higher secondary and vocational higher



secondary schools," says Irudaya Rajan. Both Dhanuraj and Irudaya Rajan agree that the days of exclusive schools for boys and girls are over. "They are no longer practical. Another thing that needs to be pointed out is that even when they are converted to mixed schools, there is no guarantee that they will be able to tide over the shortage of students. This is because other co-ed schools too are struggling with a drop in student strength," says Irudaya Rajan. And the data supports their statements. As per the statistics published in the Sametham portal of the general

education department, there has been a gradual fall in the number of students taking admission in Class I. From 3,16,682 in the 2019-2020 academic year, it fell to 2,44,646 (figure as of the first week of June 2024) in the 2024-25 academic year. Giving more insight into the demographic shift, Irudaya Rajan says, "When you look at a family way back in the 1970s, nearly all had more than three children. However, comparatively, during those days, the number of schools to cater to these many children was less. Then the demand was there but the supply was less. This led to the setting up of new schools in government, aided and unaided sectors." "Now let us fast forward to the present. You won't find a family that has more than two children. Today the situation is such that even two children are becoming a rarity. Most couples prefer one child. Then there are youth who prefer to not even marry. All these contribute to the declining population of Kerala, and this in turn is affecting the education sector. There is no doubt that in the coming years, many schools will close down," he adds.

## Agriculture Department intensifies crackdown on fake fertilisers, seeds in Guntur

**GUNTUR:** The agriculture department has intensified vigil to combat the sale of counterfeit fertilisers and substandard seeds. During the recent Rabi season, despite officials' inspections and seizures of unauthorised fertilisers and seeds worth crores, many farmers incurred losses from purchasing fake fertilisers and low-quality seeds at inflated prices. Union Minister Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar recently drew attention to this issue during a review meeting on agriculture and related departments. In response, agriculture and vigilance department officials have heightened their scrutiny and conducted inspections. Last Friday, joint teams from the agriculture, vigilance, and enforcement departments inspected six farm input shops, seizing 10.31 quintals of

mirchi and cotton seeds valued at Rs 28.31 lakh. Samples of these seeds have been sent to labs for quality testing. In light of the seriousness of the situation, a toll-free number has been set up for the public to



report issues related to agriculture products. Nanna Venkateswarulu, agriculture officer of Guntur said, "It is mandatory for all shops to display prices of products, and severe action will be taken against those charging prices exceeding the maximum retail

price (MRP)." Additionally, officials are addressing concerns about bulk storage of seeds and fertilisers leading to artificial scarcity and price hikes. This forces farmers to purchase cheaper inputs of inferior quality, which are susceptible to pests, viruses, and bacteria, thereby reducing yields. To counteract these issues, vendors must now submit sales details and obtain prior permission from agriculture officials before selling cotton and mirchi crop seeds. Non-compliance will result in heavy fines, legal action, and criminal charges. Awareness programmes are being held to educate farmers about crucial parameters to consider when purchasing farm inputs, aiming to prevent them from falling victim to such vendors.

## Kadirur village in Kerala 'on a raid' to become national kabaddi hub

**KANNUR:** For Kadirur residents, kabaddi is not just a sport but an emotion. The deep-rooted passion for the sport permeates the community, with many households in the panchayat boasting at least one kabaddi player. For them, kabaddi holds as much significance as cricket or football, if not more. Currently, this village in Kannur district has 13 state and national players. The panchayat's goal is to become a national hub for kabaddi talent within a few years. To realise this dream, and to give further impetus to the sport, the panchayat has launched a flagship project aimed at nurturing kabaddi talent. As part of the initiative, 70 students from Kadirur Government High School have been

selected for specialised training, bringing the total number of trainees under the panchayat project to 140. To support the endeavour, the panchayat has made an annual estimate of Rs 5 lakh to provide necessary facilities for the players. As an initial step, the panchayat has purchased synthetic mats spending Rs 2.5 lakh. The panchayat hall has now transformed into a top class training camp. "A number of kabaddi clubs have existed in the panchayat for the past several decades. Kabaddi is the spirit of our people. Earlier, players used to practice on muddy grounds. When they compete in professional matches, it becomes very difficult for them to perform as those matches are held on synthetic mats.

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## 'Elusive' by another name is 'footpath' in Namma Bengaluru

**BENGALURU:** In all the repertoires of urban development mechanisms, one persisting mystery about Bengaluru baffles all. Most parts of the city—which is firmly on the global map for reasons linked to business, tourism and medical services—have no footpaths. And where there is indeed a semblance of footpaths, they are in a poor condition, encroached without fear of the law, or claimed by motorists as extensions of roads. In the background, enforcement remains conspicuous by its absence. In fact, the lack of enforcement to ensure that footpaths are clear for pedestrians to walk safely is so striking that on rare occasions when authorities do crack their whips, it turns into a dramatic show begging for public appreciation. What is equally baffling is

the poor understanding—or the lack of it—about the importance of footpaths. While urban mobility models indicate increasing use of public transport, cycling and walking rather than using private vehicles, footpaths are given a short shrift despite their crucial potential in promoting that very aim. That we lack understanding about the importance of safe footpaths is visually evident in the upmarket Sadashivnagar neighbourhood. The residences of the high and mighty—be they from the political, business or the celebrity class—commonly have encroached footpaths right outside their lavishly structured houses. Why just Sadashivnagar, most existing footpaths across Bengaluru are either encroached or uneven; worse, some have gaping holes,

threatening to swallow an entire human of any shape or size. Barring the Central Business District and a few areas in Bengaluru, the city has no signs of anything coming close to being defined as a "footpath". The result: children, elders and the specially-abled are forced onto the roads, facing the risk of being mowed down by speeding vehicles. The motorists, on their part, anyways use footpaths as parking lots or as means to overtake others. In that attempt, the threat of running down some unsuspecting biped struggling to navigate the footpath, remains. A recent study conducted by an association working for social and ecological justice, Action Aid (India), titled 'On Foot: A Study on Safety and Risk Assessment of Child Pedestrians', conducted.

## Meticulous planning in place for UPSC exams in Vijayawada, says NTR collector

**VIJAYAWADA:** NTR district Collector Dr G Srujana has instructed officials to take necessary measures to ensure the smooth conduct of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) Personal Assistant and Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Nursing Officers examinations under the auspices of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on July 7. She held a

review meeting with officials from departments concerned, including UPSC observer Ashok Kumar, DRO Srinivasa Rao, route officers, examination centre supervisors, and assistant supervisors at Pingali Venkaiah Conference Hall in the Collector's Office on Friday. During the meeting, Srujana outlined several measures to be implemented for the successful

administration of the examinations. She informed that EPFO tests will be conducted at nine centres and ESIC tests at 16 centres in Vijayawada. A total of 2,401 candidates will appear for the EPFO exam, while 5,433 candidates will attend the ESIC test. She emphasised the need for meticulous planning and arrangements to ensure the exams.

NEWS BOX

Reigning Potholes, Raining Misery

**Gurgaon.**Roads in Udyog Vihar, the city's economic hub that is home to corporate offices, are riddled with craters and the problem is exacerbated during the monsoon as stretches go under water, leaving motorists and pedestrians with no way to navigate safely.Lanes and bylanes of Udyog Vihar-1 to -5 are marred with damaged roads, potholes and craters that make even daily commute a bumpy ride to work. Bottlenecks become a particularly frequent problem as sections of roads get inundated after rainfall.Around 2,500 factories and offices, among them dozens of IT firms, textile industries, and automobile and pharmaceutical industries, are located in the region, according to industries association.

Prem Chand Sharma, a sampling manager for a private firm in Udyog Vihar-3, said on Friday that roads were eroded after monsoon showers this week. "The drain is on an elevation, so water gets accumulated on the road for a longer duration. It ends up creating more potholes in the middle of the road," Sharma said.

Astiva Verma, who works as finance executive in a textile manufacturing unit in Udyog Vihar 2, said he is not able to gauge the depth of potholes as streets get waterlogged near his office in Udyog Vihar-2.

"Potholes aren't just a safety risk, but they also cause damage to vehicles," Verma said.Industrialists also criticised the development authority for the state of roads in the "Millennium City's corporate hub.

In some areas of Udyog Vihar -2, craters have been filled with bricks and debris to allow motorists passage.

Praveen Yadav, president of Gurgaon Udyog Association, said that pre-monsoon repairs and maintenance of roads was the responsibility of development authorities. "Multiple agencies are overseeing different roads, including HSIIDC, GMDA and MCG. This makes it more challenging. While we contribute significant revenue for the state, basic amenities in the area are lacking. Authorities must carry out immediate road repairs as the safety of employees depends on it," Yadav said.

Arun Garg, deputy general manager of HSIIDC, which maintains most of the roads in Udyog Vihar, said that the industrial authority carried out pre-monsoon checks and repairs. "But potholes may have developed in some areas. I will direct officials to visit the sites and fix the issues within a week. We will continue the repair work post-monsoon as well," Garg said.

Drain out water from flooded spots in 1 hour after rain, officials told

**Gurgaon.** Divisional commissioner Ramesh Chandra Bidhan, while reviewing the arrangements made to tackle waterlogging situation in the city on Friday, instructed the authorities to ramp up efforts to drain rainwater within an hour from flooded sites during monsoon.The 14 officers appointed to monitor situations at 112 spots prone to flooding have been directed to conduct site visits and take necessary measures to prevent waterlogging and drain accumulated water quickly. They are required to check the condition of drainage systems, culverts, and other critical infrastructure.

Despite the district administration's efforts to identify critical waterlogging sites, the number of such areas has remained unchanged for several years. The administration has been repeating the process of identifying spots and appointing nodal officers, but there has been little impact. "Nodal officers have been given specific instructions to ensure that the pump sets are operational, and the necessary manpower and fuel are available to operate them. They have been also asked to make all necessary arrangements based on their discretion and to be alert from the beginning to prevent waterlogging," Bidhan said, stressing the importance of draining accumulated rainwater within half an hour to an hour after showers stop to prevent water stagnation and inconvenience to the public.

The district administration has also been directed to collaborate with other departments, such as MCG, PWD and irrigation department to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to prevent waterlogging. The administration should also involve the local community and encourage them to take necessary precautions to avert flooding in their areas.

Nishant Arora, a resident of sector 65, emphasised the need for authorities to focus on long-term solutions to prevent waterlogging, in addition to temporary measures. "This includes construction of proper drainage systems, cleaning and maintenance of existing drainage systems, and development of green spaces to absorb excess water," said Arora.

Murugappa gets land to set up factory for nebulisers, needles

**Noida.** The Chennai-based Fortune India 500 company, Murugappa Group, was allotted 11 acres of land on Friday to set up a factory in the Medical Device Park. The unit will manufacture fluid analyzers, nebulizer kits, blood tubing, AV fistulas, dialysis machines, anesthesia kits, anesthesia needles, and anesthesia masks.Officials said that TI Medical, a joint venture between Murugappa Group's engineering firm Tube Investments of India (TI) and Premji Invest, applied to invest under the super mega investment category. Tube Investments holds a 67% stake in the venture, while Premji holds 33%. The company plans to invest Rs 215 crore in project.

The Yamuna Authority is developing the Medical Device Park on 350 acres in Sector 28. So far, the Authority has allotted 71 small and three large plots in the park. Construction of 10 factories is currently underway, with five to six expected to become operational by the end of the year.The Murugappa Group is a Rs 742 billion conglomerate with operations in nine countries including USA, Chile, France and Sri Lanka..

We also published the following articles recently Murugappa group company MWTS signs R&D pact with Jiva WaterLearn about the partnership between MWTS and Jiva Water to introduce innovative Jiva Water Devices across industrial, agricultural, and home consumption sectors. The collaboration aims to enhance water quality and promote water circularity, offering sustainable solutions for various applications

Builders told to conduct surveys to check upkeep flaws in condos

**Gurgaon.** The department of town and country planning (DTCP) on Friday issued notices to 38 developers, asking them to conduct comprehensive surveys of their group housing societies and also address all maintenance problems within seven days.The order comes after plaster chunks fell off balconies of two residential societies — Paras Dews in Sector 106 and Signature Global Solera in Sector 107 — on Thursday. The incident caused panic among residents, who sought immediate intervention from local authorities, including the district administration and the DTCP.In the notice issued by district town planner (enforcement), Manish Yadav, DTCP has instructed the developers to address critical maintenance issues like water supply, sewage, stormwater management, and the prevention of waterlogging on roads due to rainwater. "The builders are required to submit an action taken report on any deficiencies or

observations noted during the surveys within a week," the notice read. A DTCP official said that despite multiple complaints and safety concerns raised by the residents, builders have shown an indifferent attitude towards addressing these issues.The developers, mostly from new sectors, which have been issued notices include CHD Developers, NBCC Limited, Paras Buildtech, Raheja Developers, Satya Developers, Vatika, Ansal Housing, Vatika Limited, Eros Group, ATS Infrastructure, SS Builder, BPTP Limited, Vipul Limited, Bestech, M3M Limited, Spaze Towers, Central Park, Tulip Infratech, Signature Global, Mapsko and others.he urgency of the situation was underscored by plaster falling incidents on Thursday. SS Hooda, a resident of Paras Dews, emphasized the imminent danger, noting that the falling plaster could have caused

injuries.imilarly, residents in Solera reported that the plaster fell from at least four units on Thursday and another chunk fell from the eighth floor in tower A2 on Friday due to which one person sustained injury. As seen in a video posted on X, the user Vikas Dabas wrote he was climbing stairs and as he reached the eighth floor, a chunk of plaster fell on him and he sustained injury.The steel is visible and it could have led to an accident, he said in the video.When contacted, spokesperson for the developer said that the project was delivered and possession handed over in 2018. It was transferred to the RWA one and a half months ago. "A structural audit has been completed for Solera. We acknowledge the recent unfortunate incident, which involved a small plaster piece falling due to the rainy season. The necessary repair work will be completed within the next few days," he said.



Road filled with filth: Chargesheet ordered against sanitation inspector

**Gurgaon.** Taking cognisance of the poor condition of sanitisation in the city. The meeting was attended by DC Nishant Kumar Yadav, additional MCG commissioner Balpreet Singh, and all nodal officers appointed for monitoring the campaign.During the meeting, Bidhan reviewed ward-wise cleanliness campaigns and emphasised that all nodal officers must ensure that no polythene is visible on the roads. He also stressed that no garbage should be seen on the greenbelt areas along roads. The nodal officers were instructed to ensure regular cleaning of all garbage dumping points and to ensure that garbage at these points is disposed of in the designated tractor trolleys.The divisional commissioner urged nodal officers to work towards eliminating garbage dumping points in their wards as soon as possible. Expressing

dissatisfaction with authorised agency Sukma for not providing 100% manpower for cleaning, he instructed MCG officials to prepare a daily list of manpower provided by the agency, hold payments for absentees, and issue daily notices to the agency.He also reviewed the door-to-door collection process and instructed the concerned agency to prepare and share a detailed collection schedule.Bidhan said sanitation workers who are performing well in their wards should be honoured by the corporation to inspire other employees. He mentioned that the manpower provided by private agencies should be included in this effort. The commissioner also clarified that any nodal officer who performs well in their ward will be recommended to the government for a commendation letter.

**Gurgaon:** MCG is facing strong opposition over establishing a waste processing unit. A group of residents staged a protest against MCG for the civic body identified 7 acres of land in Daultabad for setting up a waste processing plant. Ramping up their protest, residents dug up an access road leading to the designated land. They argued that the earmarked land is close to residential areas, with several housing societies and villages in the vicinity.Residents also submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner, demanding the relocation of the proposed waste processing site. senior MCG official, however, said that the site will neither produce foul smell nor be an eyesore."The site will be used for processing waste, initially from zones 1 and 2. The tender for developing the site for waste processing is underway, and we will scientifically develop the site as per rules. Later, a waste-to-green coal plant will be established here, and an MoU with NTPC Vidut Vyapar Nigam Limited for setting up the facility will be signed soon. People are not fully aware of the functionality and technology used in the waste-to-green coal plant, as it does not produce any foul smell or eyesore," he said.

Land earmarked for waste plant, locals ramp up stir

Residents fear the waste processing unit in such a centrally located area will have severe health consequences.Furthermore, the land identified is a low-lying area with a high water table. "The proposed site is located in a densely populated, low-lying area. Toxic leachate seeping into the ground would contaminate groundwater, causing severe health consequences. MCG must understand that their ill-conceived decision impacts all," said Sunny Daultabad, a resident. "All residential societies and gated complexes in this area have been mandated by their respective environmental clearance certificates to maintain zero discharge facilities. This statutory requirement ensures that these societies independently manage and process their waste for a cleaner and healthier environment. The proposed centralized waste processing facility undermines dedicated efforts and compliance of residential societies and poses environmental and health risks," said Navdeep Singh, convener of the Dwarka Expressway Gurugram Development Association.The proposed establishment of a green coal plant, officials said, is a sustainable alternative to traditional waste, as it can be blended with regular coal for power generation in thermal power plants. Once operational, it will consume 600 tons of waste and produce 200 tonnes of green coal, leaving very little residue.However, the residents remained skeptical.

Mercury rises by 3.5°C in one day, but expect more rain next week

**GURGAON.** Showers that began in the early hours of Thursday and went on till after sunrise brought down temperatures in the city, with both maximum and minimum falling three notches in 24 hours. The minimum temperature settled at 24 degrees Celsius, down from 27.5 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, and also the lowest in the state on Thursday. Daytime temperature touched 30 degrees Celsius, three notches below Wednesday's 33 degrees Celsius. 'Moderate' rainfall began around 3.45am on Thursday and continued till 7.30am. The rest of the day saw drizzle in parts of the city.According to data by the Met department, the city recorded 49mm of rainfall in 36 hours, with the largest chunk from Thursday's four-hour rainfall. Kadipur and Harsaru recorded 56mm of rain, and Wazirabad received 27mm. Badshapur received 32mm of rainfall, and Sohna and Manesar received 56mm and 54mm,

respectively. Pataudi and Farrukhnagar recorded 19mm and 23mm of rain, respectively.AcaGurgaon: The city witnessed 25mm rainfall on Friday morning and is likely to witness rain at least for one more week. The temperatures, however, rose by over three notches despite showers. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), favourable conditions are prevailing for the continuation of monsoon showers in Delhi-NCR for the next one week or even more. However, the intensity and spread of the rainfall may vary during this period. The monsoon trough, which is a low-pressure area that brings rainfall, is currently in close proximity to Haryana, with an embedded cyclonic circulation close to the area. The minimum temperature on Friday was recorded at 27.3 degrees Celsius, up from Thursday's 24 degrees while the daytime temperature was 33.5 degrees, against 30 degrees on Thursday.Favourable features over

Punjab and Haryana will also help in sustaining rainfall over the national capital. This means that the region can expect to have cloudy skies and the sunshine will remain suppressed for the next 5-6 days."The capital region can expect moderate showers on July 5 and 6. However, the spread and intensity of the rainfall are likely to reduce in the subsequent three days," an IMD official said. The season increases the risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria, and chikungunya. Therefore, it is important for residents to take necessary precautions such as using mosquito nets and repellents and ensuring that there is no stagnant water in and around their houses.Dr Sanjay Wazir, neonatologist and pediatrician, Motherhood Hospitals, Gurgaon, said, "Sudden temperature changes weaken children's immune systems, making them more susceptible to respiratory issues such as cough, sore throat, sneezing, wheezing, and colds. To protect children.

Monsoon clouds are here, but humidity will make it muggy

**Gurgaon:** Residents in the city continued to experience a humid weather on Monday with the relative humidity at 70%, accompanied by partly cloudy sky. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a "yellow alert" for heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next four days.The combination of high humidity, partly cloudy sky and intermittent sunshine in some parts of the city is expected to create a muggy and uncomfortable atmosphere. The maximum temperature in the city on Monday was 36.3 degrees Celsius, which was 1.7 notches below Sunday's 38 degrees. The minimum temperature was recorded at 28 degrees Celsius. "There is a yellow alert for four days in the region. We cannot specify the areas which will witness rain. In south Haryana, Mahendragarh and Rewari have been witnessing heavy to very heavy rain since the last two days. We are alerting people about the upcoming weather conditions. The monsoon clouds are still gathering pace in Haryana and Punjab," Shivender Singh, a scientist with IMD, said. As monsoon begins, it is crucial for residents to stay informed about the latest weather advisories and take appropriate measures, including carrying umbrellas or raincoats when going outdoors, steering clear of low-lying areas susceptible to waterlogging, and maintaining proper hygiene to prevent the spread of water-borne illnesses. The season in India typically is from June to September, with the country receiving around 70% of its annual rainfall during this period. While the monsoon brings much-needed relief from the scorching summer heat, it also brings with it a host of challenges, such as waterlogging, traffic congestion and the spread of water-borne diseases.Meanwhile, the health department on Monday launched the "Stop Diarrhoea" campaign, emphasizing on the importance of cleanliness and oral rehydration solutions. An oral rehydration therapy (ORT) corner has been established and ORS packets and zinc tablets were distributed to children under the age of five years. The campaign will continue from July 1 to August 31. A total of 157,909 children will be targeted under this campaign.We also published the following articles recentlyRainfall in Delhi brings relief amid hot and humid conditionsIMD predicts ongoing discomfort for outdoor activities in Delhi due to warm and humid weather conditions.Humidity raises discomfort, but city likely to see heavy showers till July 4Delhi braced for heavy rain and gusty winds as the IMD issued an orange alert. Residents awaited relief from the oppressive heat and humidity, with a forecast of decreased temperatures. The city experienced excessive rainfall in June, emphasizing the need for preparedness against unpredictable weather conditions.Parts of Delhi-NCR receive heavy rain, IMD predicts week-long rainfallDelhi experienced heavy rainfall, with a forecast of moderate to heavy showers and gusty winds.

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (BHARAT SARKAR)  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAIL MANTRALAYA)  
(RAILWAY BOARD)  
No. 2018/Track-I(P)/RSP-EUR/Vol. I Date: 05.07.2024  
CORRIGENDUM NO. 6  
Sub : E-Tender No. TKP-1-2024 for Supply of Long rail exchange (unloading and loading) System and its Annual Maintenance Contract for 05 (Five) years (Existing EURs to be provided by Indian Railways).  
The interested tenderers are advised to visit the website <http://treps.gov.in> for Corrigendum details.  
Further, the tender closing date and opening date of e-bids have been changed to 30.07.2024.  
(Alok Kumar)  
Executive Director/Track (P&P)  
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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**AMARNATH YATRA SPECIAL TRAIN-2024**  
In order to clear extra rush of pilgrims during Amarnath Yatra, Railways will run the following Special Train between Jabalpur & Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra as per details given below:-

Train No.:	01707	↓ STATIONS ↑	Train No.:	01708
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.
---	06:00	Jabalpur	23:25	---
22:50	22:52	Hazrat Nizamuddin	06:21	06:23
23:15	23:30	New Delhi	05:55	06:10
12:15	---	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	---	18:10

DATE OF RUN: 01707 from Jabalpur on every Monday from 15.07.2024 to 05.08.2024 and 01708 from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on every Tuesday from 16.07.2024 to 06.08.2024.  
STOPPAGE: Katni Murwara, Damoh, Saugor, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Gwalior, Morena, Agra Cantt., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, Shakur Basti, Rohtak Jn., Jind Jn., Jakhal Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Jalandhar Cantt., Pathankot Cantt., Jammu Tawi & Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan stations.  
ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC-2 Tier, AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & General.  
For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.  
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20/5/24  
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NEWS BOX

There will be no change in foreign policy with India, irrespective of who becomes President of Iran: Ambassador Elahi

World Iran-India ties will continue to be robust, irrespective of who wins the Presidential elections. The results are expected this afternoon and the contest is between centrist Masoud Pezeshkian versus Hardline Conservative Saeed Jalili. n Friday, Iranians voted in a Presidential run-off as the results of the June 28th elections were inconclusive with nobody getting a clear majority. Four polling stations were set up in India - Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad - to facilitate the over 3000 Iranian population to come out and vote.

There will be no change in the foreign policy between Iran and India, irrespective of who comes to power. Iran-India is involved in a major infrastructural project Chabahar port - and that agreement will always be honoured. Infrastructure development is one of the bases of cooperation between our two nations," Iranian Ambassador to India, Iraj Elahi told this newspaper.

Iranians while exercising their vote in Delhi were seen getting their thumb pressed against the ink stamp, followed by putting their thumb impression against the candidate of their choice. Iranian voters are identified by their identification number (similar to Aadhar in India) which has to match the number listed against their name in the system. On the June 28th poll Pezeshkian led with 42.5 per cent votes while Jalili managed 38.7 per cent. Both ran short of an outright majority. In Iran, the winning candidate must get 50 per cent +1 votes to be elected. However, in the run-off, the candidate who gets more votes is declared the winner.

Pezeshkian is a physician and was the Minister of Health while Jalili was the deputy foreign minister and National Security Advisor of Iran and negotiator of nuclear issues.

US lawmaker says Israeli hostage photos were vandalized in protest

Washington Democratic US Representative Brad Schneider's office was targeted by what he called on Friday "a vile act of hate," after pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrated outside his office in the US Capitol building and tore down posters of Israeli hostages held in Gaza.

Schneider, a staunch supporter of Israel, posted a photo of the posters crumpled on the floor. "This was a shameful act on any day, but especially on July 4, our country's Independence Day," Schneider said on social media. Schneider, who is Jewish, represents a district covering the suburbs north of Chicago, Illinois. nstagram page "Direct Actions for Palestine" said protesters demanded the lawmaker support restoring US funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) and ending the war.

Washington suspended funding to UNRWA after Israel alleged that members of the UNRWA staff had ties to extremist groups, a claim the UN said Israel has yet to provide evidence for. An Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Palestinian Hamas militants killed 1,200 people, while about 250 other people were abducted to Hamas-governed Gaza as hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on Gaza has killed over 38,000, according to the local health ministry, flattened most of the enclave and caused widespread hunger. The US Capitol Police said in a statement that it was "aware and investigating" the incident related to the US lawmaker's office but could provide no further details. Schneider also said his home was targeted last weekend, with "approximately 50 masked demonstrators banging drums, blowing horns and screaming antisemitic chants" at 2:30 a.m. Protesters were criticizing Schneider's votes to defund UNRWA, according to the "Direct Actions for Palestine" Instagram page. A clip showed them as saying: "If we don't get no justice, then you don't get no sleep."

The conflict has also led to protests around the United States, Israel's most important ally, over US support for Israel. Rights advocates have noted a rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia.

How Texas is still investigating migrant aid groups on the border after a judge's scathing order

World Texas is widening investigations into aid organizations along the US-Mexico border over claims that nonprofits are helping migrants illegally enter the country, taking some groups to court and making demands that a judge called harassment after the state tried shuttering an El Paso shelter. The efforts are led by Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, whose office has defended the state's increasingly aggressive actions on the border, including razor wire barriers and a law that would allow police to arrest migrants who enter the US illegally. Since February, Paxton has asked for documents from at least four groups in Texas that provide shelter and food to migrants.

That includes one of the largest migrant aid organizations in Texas, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, which on Wednesday asked a court to stop what the group called a "fishing expedition into a pond where no one has ever seen a fish." The scrutiny from the state has not stopped the organizations' work. But leaders of some groups say the investigations have caused some volunteers to leave and worry it will cast a chilling effect among those working to help migrants in Texas. Here are some things to know about the investigations and the groups: What started the investigations? Republican Gov. Greg Abbott sent Paxton a letter in 2022 urging him to investigate the role non-governmental organizations play in "planning and facilitating the illegal transportation of illegal immigrants across our borders." Two years earlier, Abbott began rolling out his multibillion-dollar border security apparatus known as Operation Lone Star. Without citing evidence, Abbott's letter referenced unspecified "recent reports" that some groups may be acting unlawfully. Paxton later accused Annunciation House in El Paso, one of the oldest migrant shelters on the border, of human smuggling and other crimes. The groups have denied the accusations and no charges have been filed. Other Republicans and conservative groups have cheered on Texas' effort. Which groups are targets? Many nonprofit organizations on the Texas border are faith-based and have operated for years - and in some cases decades - without state scrutiny. Several groups have coordinated with Abbott's busing program that has transported more than 119,000 migrants to Democratic-led cities across the US.

Iran reformist Pezeshkian defeats hardliner Saeed Jalili in presidential runoff

Iran's reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian got more than 17 million votes while hardliner Saeed Jalili garnered more than 13 million out of about 30 million votes cast in a runoff presidential election.

Tehran Iran's reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday won a runoff presidential election against ultraconservative Saeed Jalili, the interior ministry said. ezhshkian got more than 17 million votes and Jalili more than 13 million out of about 30 million votes cast, electoral authority spokesman Mohsen Eslami said, adding that voter turnout stood at 49.8 per cent. The election, called early after the death of ultraconservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, followed a first round marked by a historically low turnout last week. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who wields ultimate authority, had called for a higher turnout in the runoff,



emphasising the importance of the election. He said the first round turnout was lower than expected, but added that it was not an act "against the system". The ballot comes against a backdrop of heightened regional tensions over the Gaza war, a dispute with the West over Iran's nuclear programme, and domestic discontent over the state of Iran's sanctions-hit economy.

REFORMIST SUPPORT

In last week's first round, Pezeshkian, who was the only reformist allowed to stand,

won the largest number of votes, around 42 per cent, while Jalili came second with around 39 per cent, according to figures from Iran's elections authority.

Only 40 per cent of Iran's 61 million eligible voters took part in the first round -- the lowest turnout in any presidential election since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The candidacy of Pezeshkian, a relative unknown until recently, has raised the hopes of Iran's reformists after years of dominance by the conservative and ultraconservative camps. Iran's main

reformist coalition supported Pezeshkian, with endorsements by former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, a moderate. ezhshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon, has called for "constructive relations" with Western countries to revive the nuclear deal in order to "get Iran out of its isolation". Jalili, 58, is Iran's former nuclear negotiator who is widely recognised for his uncompromising anti-West stance. During his campaign, he rallied a substantial base of hardline supporters and received backing from other conservative figures. Ahead of Friday's runoff, Pezeshkian and Jalili took part in two televised debates during which they discussed the low turnout, as well as Iran's economic woes, international relations and internet restrictions. Pezeshkian vowed to ease long-standing internet restrictions and to "fully" oppose police patrols enforcing the mandatory headscarf for women, a high-profile issue since the death in police custody in 2022 of Mahsa Amini. The 22-year-old Iranian Kurd had been detained for an alleged breach of the dress code and her death sparked months of nationwide unrest.

Biden's latest gaffe featuring Trump, says he'll beat him 'again in 2020'

New Delhi US President Joe Biden on Friday (local time) made yet another gaffe when he vowed to beat his Republican rival and former president Donald Trump "again in 2020" instead of saying 2024. He, however, corrected himself quickly and said he would do it "again in 2024".



Biden's latest slip of the tongue came amid concerns from a section of Democrats about the 81-year-old president's ability to serve a second four-year-term after last week's lacklustre performance at the first presidential debate with Trump. There have been calls for Biden to step aside given his health and age concerns.

However, Biden remained adamant during a campaign rally in Madison, Wisconsin, telling a cheering crowd that he was staying in the race. The presidential election is due to be held on November 5. "You probably heard that I had a little debate last week. I can't say it is my best performance. But ever since then, there's been a lot of speculation. What's Joe going to do? Is he going to stay in the race? Is he going to drop out? What are you going to do?" he said. "Well, here's my answer, I

am running and I am going to win again," the president said, with the crowd chanting 'Let's go, Joe'. He also admitted that some people were pressuring him to withdraw from the race. "I'm the nominee of the Democratic Party. You voted for me to be your nominee, and no one else. You, the voters, did that. And despite that, some folks don't seem to care who you voted for. Well, guess what they are trying to push me out of the race," he said. "Well, let me say this as clearly as I can - I'm staying in the race, I'll beat Donald Trump. I will beat him again in 2020," the president said, before realising his mistake, adding, "I am going to do that again in 2024." Biden asserted he would not let a 90-minute debate wipe out his work done in the

last three-and-a-half years. Earlier on Thursday, the 81-year-old president tripped up when he described himself as the "first black woman to serve with a black president" as he continued to struggle to reassure voters he was still fit to lead again. The New York Post reported. Biden made the gaffe when he was trying to describe having served as former President Barack Obama's vice president and then choosing Kamala Harris as his deputy. "By the way, I'm proud to be, as I said, the first vice president, first black woman, to serve with a black president," he told host Andrea Lawful-Sanders of Philadelphia's WURD black radio station. On Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre denied reports that Biden was planning to step aside from the race. "Absolutely not," she said. Her response came after The New York Times had reported that Biden had told a key ally that he knows he may not be able to salvage his candidacy if his next few public appearances do not go well. However, the ally emphasised that Biden is still deeply in the fight for re-election.

Delaware judge rules in favour of late pop star Prince's former business advisers in estate dispute

World A Delaware judge has declined to throw out a lawsuit brought by former business advisers to the late pop music icon Prince against two of his siblings and other heirs in a dispute over his estate. The judge also agreed with plaintiffs L Londell McMillan and Charles Spicer Jr that an agreement purportedly replacing them as managers of a limited liability company established by three siblings was invalid. Prince passed away in 2016 from an accidental fentanyl overdose, leaving no will. His six siblings inherited equal shares in the estate. Three of them assigned their combined 50 per cent interest to Prince Legacy LLC and granted McMillan

and Spicer each a 10 per cent interest in the company, along with extensive and exclusive management authority. However, one sister, Sharon Nelson, later regretted the decision and spearheaded an effort to remove McMillan and Spicer as managing members by amending the LLC agreement.

Chancellor Kathaleen St Jude McCormick determined that the terms of the initial LLC agreement are unambiguous and prohibit the defendants' attempts to amend it. She stated that the agreement remains in effect and McMillan and Spicer continue as managing members. "As a matter of contract law, this is the only

reasonable interpretation," the judge wrote. McCormick also ruled that the plaintiffs can pursue a claim that the defendants breached the LLC agreement by acting without authorization to amend it and remove McMillan and Spicer. The lawsuit arises from disagreements involving Tyka Nelson, Prince's sister, and five half-siblings: Sharon Nelson, Norrine Nelson, John R. Nelson, Omarr Baker, and Alfred Jackson. Tyka, Omarr, and Alfred sold their stake to a music publishing company called Primary Wave Music, LLC, which later assigned its interests to an affiliate, Prince OAT Holdings LLC. Alfred has since passed away.

Republicans turn their focus to Harris as talk of replacing Biden on Democratic ticket intensifies

NEW YORK. For years it's been a Republican scare tactic. A vote to reelect President Joe Biden, the GOP often charges, is really a vote for Vice President Kamala Harris. It's an attack line sometimes tinged with racist and misogynist undertones and often macabre imagery. But after Biden's dismal performance at last week's presidential debate, which has sparked Democratic calls for him to step aside, what was once dismissed as a far-right conspiracy - Harris replacing Biden - could now have a chance of coming to pass. And Republicans, including Donald Trump, are ramping up their attacks. Trump and his allies have been rolling out new attack lines against Harris, insulting her abilities, painting her as Biden's chief enabler and accusing her of being part of a coverup of his health. It's an effort, campaign officials insist, that is not a reflection of their concerns about a potential change at the top of the ticket, given Biden's insistence he is not leaving the race. But in a post marking Independence Day on his Truth Social site Thursday, Trump singled out Harris, calling her his "potentially new Democrat Challenger"

and giving her a new derisive nickname: "Laffin' Kamala Harris." She did poorly in the Democrat Nominating process, starting at Number Two, and ending up defeated and dropping out, even before getting to Iowa, but that doesn't mean she's not a "highly talented" politician! Just ask her Mentor, the Great Willie Brown of San Francisco," he wrote. (Harris dated Brown in the mid-1990s.) He post came after Trump campaign senior advisers Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles released a statement earlier this week that offered a different, but similar, moniker, calling her Biden's "Cackling Copilot Kamala Harris." Trump also posted an expletive-laced video, which was first being reported by the Daily Beast, in which he was captured on the golf course calling Biden an "old broken down pile of crap" and declaring that he'd driven the president from the race. (Trump, in interviews, has repeatedly said he did not expect Biden to be pushed aside.) "He's quitting the race," Trump said. "And that means we have Kamala. I think she's going to be better. She's so bad. She's so pathetic," he said. Allies have also joined the attacks, painting Harris as a chief



defender of Biden's faculties and accusing her of lying to the American public. Biden, the White House and his campaign insist he has no plans to drop out of the race. During an interview with ABC News that aired Friday night he said that only "the Lord Almighty" would drive him from the race. hite House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre pushed back against the tenor of attacks against Harris, particularly Trump's decision to invoke a decades-old relationship and other sexist rhetoric. I think it's gross, I think it's disturbing," Jean-Pierre told reporters Friday aboard Air Force One. "She

should be respected in the role that she has as vice president. She should be respected like any other vice president before her who was in that room. It is appalling that I'm going to be careful here, that a former president is saying that about a current vice president. And we should call that out - it is not OK." It remains unclear how Harris would fare against Trump, compared to Biden. Replacing a candidate this late in a presidential cycle - much less an incumbent president who has already sailed through the Democratic Party's primaries - would be unprecedented in modern history, and the mechanics are complicated and potentially messy. Polling shows that Harris' favorability ratings are similar to Biden's and Trump's. A June AP-NORC poll found about 4 in 10 Americans have a favourable opinion of her. But the share of those who have an unfavourable opinion is slightly lower than for Trump and Biden, and about 1 in 10 have no opinion of her yet.

Reformist Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff election, besting hard-liner Jalili

DUBAI. Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's runoff presidential election Saturday, besting hard-liner Saeed Jalili by promising to reach out to the West and ease enforcement on the country's mandatory headscarf law after years of sanctions and protests squeezing the Islamic Republic. ezhshkian promised no radical changes to Iran's Shiite theocracy in his campaign and long has held Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the final arbiter of all matters of state in the country. But even Pezeshkian's modest aims will be challenged by an Iranian government still largely held by hard-liners, the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, and Western fears over Tehran enriching uranium to near-weapons-grade levels. vote count offered by authorities put Pezeshkian as the winner with 16.3 million votes to Jalili's 13.5 million in Friday's election. Supporters of Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and longtime lawmaker, entered the streets of Tehran and other cities before dawn to celebrate as his lead grew over Jalili, a hard-line former nuclear negotiator. But Pezeshkian's win still sees Iran at a delicate moment, with tensions high in the Mideast over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, Iran's advancing nuclear program, and a looming U.S. election that could put any chance of a detente between Tehran and Washington at risk. The first round of voting on June 28 saw the lowest turnout in the history of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranian officials have long pointed to turnout as a sign of support for the country's Shiite theocracy, which has been under strain after years of sanctions crushing Iran's economy, mass demonstrations and intense crackdowns on all dissent. Government officials up to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei predicted a higher participation rate as voting got underway, with state television airing images of modest lines at some polling centres across the country. However, online videos purported to show some polls empty while a survey of several dozen sites in the capital, Tehran, saw light traffic amid a heavy security presence on the streets. The election came amid heightened regional tensions. In April, Iran launched its first-ever direct attack on Israel over the war in Gaza, while militia groups that Tehran arms in the region - such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels - are engaged in the fighting and have escalated their attacks. Iran is also enriching uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build several nuclear weapons, should it choose to do so. And while Khamenei remains the final decision-maker on matters of state, whichever man ends up winning the presidency could bend the country's foreign policy toward either confrontation or collaboration with the West.

## Odisha: BJD legislator Sarada Prasad Nayak leads protest against SER eviction drive

**ROURKELA:** BJD legislator and former minister Sarada Prasad Nayak on Friday led a rally demanding rehabilitation of slum dwellers who are being evicted for laying the crucial third line of South Eastern Railway (SER) at Rourkela. Nayak stopped SER contractual workers from demolishing unauthorised structures on railway land. Leading the affected persons in a procession, Nayak sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi through Rourkela ADM Ashutosh Kulkarni demanding their rehabilitation under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U). He said slum dwellers residing on SER land for decades are part and parcel of Rourkela city and intricately linked with the local economy. The Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) was renamed and introduced as PMAY in 2016 which like its predecessor has the provision for rehabilitating slum dwellers on land owned by Central government agencies. While stating in the last eight years, SER has deliberately avoided the rehabilitation issue, he sought the intervention of the prime minister to give justice to thousands of poor slum dwellers identified for eviction. Sources said on the day heavy machineries of SER deployed at Kumbharpada area for removal of unauthorised structures were stopped from operating.

Contractual workers at the site said they informed the SER authorities about the issue and are waiting for further instructions. It is alleged as all political parties are opposing the eviction without rehabilitation, a few people with vested interests are taking advantage of the situation and have initiated fresh efforts to grab vacant SER land.

# Incentives galore for artisans, businesswomen in Karnataka

**BENGALURU:** To promote local art and modernise traditional industries, the state government has revamped its industrial policy to provide incentives to artisans and women entrepreneurs. Accordingly, the revamped policy provides a 75% grant for machinery and tools for associations of artisans and craft complexes. Besides, incentives such as loans on 4% interest and 10% market development assistance for handicraft products will be extended. Industries Minister MB Patil said the state now offers free training in e-marketing and ICT at the National Institute of Design and the National Institute of Fashion

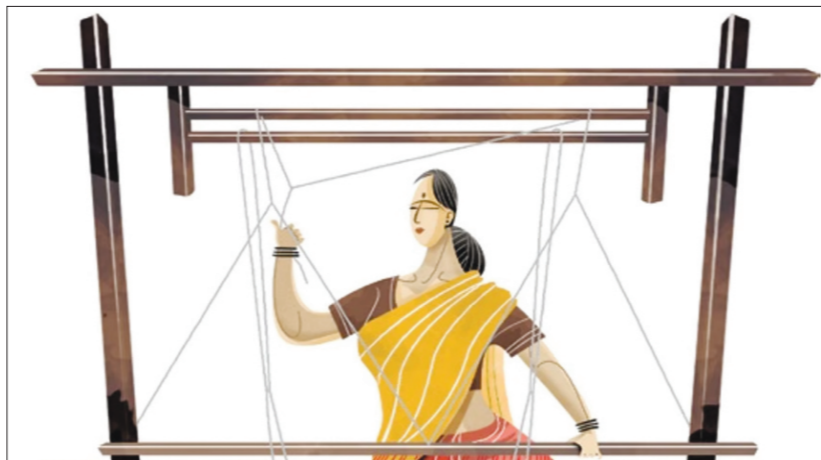
Technology, among others, with a scope for study tours. Patil said the artisans have been getting concessions for their stalls at key locations. Steps have been taken to encourage them to participate in the national-level 'haat' event to showcase and sell their products. Officials from the Commerce and Industries Department said the move to offer loans on 4% interest towards working capital will help reduce the financial burden on artisans. The affordable credit plan will help artisans manage their cash flow, purchase raw

material, and invest in upgrading their products. An official said the 10% MDA on turnover of handicraft products will help artisans get financial support that directly correlates with their sales. This assistance can be used for marketing and promoting their products, enabling them

promotion subsidy across all categories and a 10% subsidy for micro and small industries in urban areas. They will also be provided extended benefits such as an additional one to four years of electricity tariff exemption, a technology adoption subsidy covering up to 50% of costs, and a 50% subsidy for technology business incubation centres.

Patil said as part of the Global Investors' Meet '25, Karnataka will organise 'SME Connect '25 vendor development conclave' to connect MSMEs with potential buyers within the dedicated clusters. "The objective is to facilitate business and industry collaboration by providing a platform for local manufacturers to showcase their products and connect with

potential buyers. Through this initiative, the state aims to integrate local resources and indigenous products with new investments and projects, ensuring that local businesses play a vital role in Karnataka's economic growth," he said. Patil said comprehensive training and upskilling programmes will be organised for MSMEs, including on Industry 4.0 technologies, to ensure that industrial growth is inclusive, benefiting rural areas and promoting overall economic development of the state.



to reach broader markets. MDA also encourages artisans to enhance the quality and appeal of their products to boost turnover and receive higher assistance. Patil said to support and encourage women entrepreneurs, the revamped policy will provide them many specific incentives, including 5% land allotment by Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) and Karnataka State Small Industries Development Corporation (KSSIDC). In addition, women-led MSMEs will benefit from a 5% additional investment

## AI, drone & special app to manage Rath Yatra crowd in Odisha

**PURI:** Crowd management poses one of the biggest challenges for police during Rath Yatra. In order to ensure the global festival and all rituals associated with it are conducted smoothly, Puri police have decided to go hi-tech this time. At a meeting on the day, additional DGP Dayal Gangwar said police will use artificial intelligence (AI) based CCTV cameras which have already been installed at Badadanda, the venue of the festival and at other strategic places of the town to keep a watch on crowd. The footages from the cameras will be monitored live from two integrated control rooms. For the first time, all vehicles coming to Puri including two-wheelers will be counted. This will help the authorities take steps to prevent congestion and traffic snarls in the town.

This apart, a public announcement drone (PAD) will be flown over Puri-Bhubaneswar NH to inform devotees of black spots. Authorities have identified around 30 traffic black spots along Puri-Bhubaneswar, Puri-Brahmagiri and Puri-Konark highways. The drone weighing around 15 kg is equipped with a public announcement system and can fly 30 to 100 metre above the ground.

Besides, police have launched a WhatsApp Chatbot App to help devotees plan their routes. A QR scanner code has been released for the public which can be downloaded into any Android mobile phone.

With the help of the App, one can get on-time information on traffic restrictions ahead, nearby parking places, hotels, drinking water fountains, toilets, presence of lifeguards along the beach and other such facilities. Gangwar said traffic restrictions for the festival will be enforced from midnight of June 6. Police are expecting 100 to 150 tourist buses, 400-500 regular buses, and 190 special buses to arrive in the town from various parts of the state.

## Telangana HC permits 12-year-old rape victim to abort 26-week pregnancy

**HYDERABAD:** After 26 weeks of ordeal, a 12-year-old gang-raped victim finally got relief as the Telangana High Court on Friday permitted her to undergo medical termination of pregnancy. The victim's mother, a domestic worker, had approached the high court on Thursday after Gandhi Hospital doctors refused to terminate the pregnancy citing medical problems. The bench headed by Justice B Vijaysen Reddy then directed the Gandhi Hospital doctors to refer the matter to a medical board and submit a report by Friday morning. The doctors then replied that if the high court permits them, they would perform the abortion. It may be recalled that the 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped by 10 persons in Neredmet in the city. The police registered cases against the accused under POCSO Act and arrested them.

As per the orders of the high court, the Gandhi hospital authorities submitted a report on Friday stating that termination is not advisable and they would proceed if the high court permits it. Dr M Raja Rao, superintendent of Gandhi Hospital, told TNIE: "The pregnancy is well into the second trimester. Terminating at this stage poses severe health risks to the young mother". "Medical guidelines typically restrict terminations beyond 20 weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, be it

humanitarian or any such grounds, the termination can be done only with court orders. In this case, our evaluation found that proceeding with a termination would endanger the girl's health significantly," the Gandhi Hospital superintendent explained.

**Support measures put in place: CWC chairperson** Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Medchal Raja Reddy said: "When the girl's mother first approached the hospital, we informed her that, medically, termination was not advisable due to the advanced stage of the pregnancy". "Despite this medical advice, she pursued legal recourse, resulting in the High Court's directive to reassess the situation", Reddy said. Immediate support measures have been put in place for the young victim, said Raja Reddy and emphasised the CWC's commitment to providing the necessary aid and future care plans for the child. "We have provided a compensation amount of Rs 25,000 to support the immediate needs of the victim," he stated. The 12-year-old victim is a school dropout. Her elder sister is also a school dropout and their mother works as a domestic help. It can be recalled that the Neredmet police in June registered a case based on the complaint filed by the victim's mother. Neredmet police, in the last week of June, apprehended 10 accused involved in the offence.

## New laws may lead to more litigations

**BENGALURU:** The three new enactments - Bharatiya Naagarika Suraksha Samhitha (BNSS), 2023, Bharatiya Nyay Samhitha (BNS), 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023 - replacing the CrPC, IPC and the Indian Evidence Act, are not only challenging for the advocates, but also to magistrates, judges and the police, opined former advocate-general BV Acharya. He said the new enactments have only 10-15% changes as compared to old statutes. It could have been done by bringing amendments to existing statutes, with which lawyers, magistrates, judges and the police are well acquainted. Now, they have to keep a chart to know which corresponding Sections in the statutes to apply.

After CrPC came into effect in 1973, the Supreme Court interpreted many Sections till the new enactments came into force. Replacing the existing statutes with new statutes leads to more litigation and complications, he said, adding, "We can't call CrPC a colonial law because it was enacted in 1973. I strongly object to the change of the nomenclature in Hindi, which is against Article 348 of the Constitution, which says that the title of the statute



should be in English." Senior advocate Hasmath Pasha said lawyers should not face any difficulty as the contents of the provisions are "as it is, what it was", except for changes in Sections. As pointed out by Acharya, Pasha too said changes could have been introduced in the previous statutes.

He pointed out that there could be an increase in litigation because more power is given to the police. For instance, the police are given 14 days to register a case after conducting

preliminary enquiry for the offences with punishment between three and seven years. This will lead to more litigation. The laws should be in the interest of society and not give more powers to the police, he added. Another advocate, wished not to be named, said lawyers would be under pressure because they would not be able to get relief to the litigants expeditiously due to the procedure to be followed concerning digital evidence. It is practically impossible to get a certificate done on digital evidence from the Forensic Science Laboratory on time, considering its present infrastructure. This will delay the trial, the accused will languish in jail, speedy justice will be a distant dream, and the pendency of cases will increase. It may also lead to corruption to get the report early. Infrastructure including the staff should have been upgraded at all institutions before enacting new laws, he added. He said advocates will see more litigations since new enactments give more powers to police, concerning search, seizure, arrest and custody, which is draconian. Jails already brimming will get further jam-packed because of more undertrials and delays in trials.

## Andhra: Krishna Collector orders water quality measures to prevent diarrhoea spread

**VIJAYAWADA:** Krishna Collector DK Balaji on Friday inspected reservoirs in the district and issued guidelines to the officials on maintaining water quality. Further, he directed officials to take measures to prevent the spread of diarrhoea in the region. He inspected the upstream reservoir at Sulthanagaram in Machilipatnam mandal and verified records related to tap connections, tank cleaning, bleaching stock, chlorination, and motor leakages. Asked about the Panchayat staff's efforts towards cleaning the tanks and maintaining the quality of drinking water, Chittibomma Durga Prasad, a resident of the village, informed the district Collector that the water was regularly yellow. In response, the collector instructed RWS (Rural Water Supply) Department officials to collect water samples and send them to a lab for testing. Further, Balaji assured to provide pure drinking water to locals. In the meantime, he advised them to boil water before drinking. Officials were instructed to share photos of tank cleaning by the staff and to take steps to prevent contamination due to pipe leakages or other causes.

The Collector also mandated staff to obtain villagers' signatures in registers after cleaning the water tanks. Balaji inspected the Integrated Water Scheme in Tarakaturu of Guduru mandal, which supplies drinking water to 19 villages, and inquired about the water purification process. He visited the upstream reservoir in Balliparru village of Pamarru mandal to verify the tank cleaning process and to check if any diarrhoea cases had been reported. The ANM informed him that no cases thus far had been recorded. Later, he inspected the upstream reservoir in Kanumuru village of Pamarru mandal. A local resident, Somasekhar, informed Balaji that tank was cleaned three weeks ago and the quality of drinking water was good. He inspected the upstream reservoir in the Gandhi Sadan area of Vuyuru Municipality and inquired about the tank cleaning schedule.

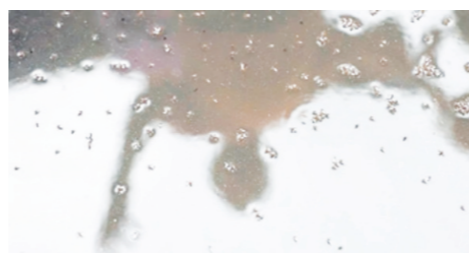
## Marginal drop of vector-borne diseases in Telangana

**HYDERABAD:** The health department on Friday said that the state has seen a marginal drop in the number of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue, compared to last year. The data was released by the director of public health and family welfare (DPHF) during a review meeting chaired by Health Secretary Christina Z Chongthu on preparedness for seasonal illnesses like dengue, malaria, gastroenteritis and viral fevers.

According to official statistics, the state saw a drop in the number of dengue and malaria cases in 2024 as compared to 2023. Incidences of dengue in May 2024 were 113, as compared to 188 in May 2023, whereas in June 2024, the number of dengue cases was 263, down from 284 in June 2023. Malaria cases in May and June 2023 were 29 and 14

respectively, while May and June 2024 recorded 21 and 9 cases, respectively.

Addressing the meeting, Chongthu said that though there was a



marginal drop in the vector-borne seasonal illness, districts must remain vigilant to ensure there were no untoward spike. She directed the heads of the departments to visit the vulnerable and high risk districts to review the situation on seasonal diseases. Chongthu also instructed the heads of the departments to convene a coordination meeting

with additional collectors (local bodies), district health officers, panchayat secretaries to review the preparedness for the availability of human resources, drugs and medicines, daily care reporting and Information and Education Communication (IEC) activities and awareness programme. The health department also issued an advisory to prevent dengue, the health secretary said.

As part of the precautionary measures listed in the advisory, the government has made elaborate arrangements try providing special beds, IV fluids, and essential medicines at all the public health facilities and ORS sachets at ANMs/ASHAs/Anganwadi workers to meet any exigencies, the health secretary said.

## Elevators still a death trap for KP Park residents in Chennai

**CHENNAI:** After a 60-year-old man recently fell to death in an elevator shaft in TNUHDB's KP Park tenements in Pulianthope, the residents said not much had been done to enhance elevator safety even after the fatal incident. Owing to the looming risk posed by the elevators, the residents, irrespective of age and physical condition, are forced to climb several flights of stairs to reach their homes. During a visit by TNIE to the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB) tenements, residents said that crucial safety features for elevators such as Automatic Rescue Device (ARD) system or Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) were not installed in some blocks. The generator has been non-functional and power outages occur often, leading to multiple instances of individuals getting trapped in elevators and requiring urgent rescue. A lift operator employed at the resettlement said, "I have operated lifts in various places, including hotels, and they are usually equipped with ARD systems. The absence of such a system here leads to people getting trapped during power outages and we have to coordinate rescue as soon as possible."

Explaining the issue further, a lift mechanic, who undertakes work in the area, said, "An elevator ARD system is designed to safely bring passengers to the nearest floor and automatically open the doors in case of a power failure, operating with a backup power source like batteries. In contrast, a UPS is a broader power-backup system.

## Andhra assembly speaker promises completion of MLA quarters in Amaravati in nine months

**VIJAYAWADA:** Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu on Friday announced that the residential complex for MLAs and MLCs would be completed within nine months. The Speaker and APCRDA (Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority) commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar inspected the under-construction residential complex for MLAs and MLCs in the capital city of Amaravati. Ayyanna told mediapersons that the initial cost of building the complex has been pegged at Rs 700 crore. As per the design, the complex will have 12 buildings, each comprising 12 floors. Each of the floors will have two flats, each spread across an area of 3,500 square ft. Between 2014-2019, the TDP government had

spent Rs 450 crore. The Speaker said 85% of the construction of the complex has been completed. Coming down heavily on the previous YSRC government for not completing the construction of the complex, Ayyanna said the delay has resulted in the corrosion of construction materials, and spike in the estimate. He said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's vision to build quarters for MLAs and MLCs was undermined by the previous government, causing a loss of nearly Rs 300 crore.

He announced that the construction of 288 quarters would be completed within nine months. The flats will have all necessary facilities such as drinking water, sewage, and drainage systems. An additional sum of Rs 300 crore is required for its construction, the Speaker said.

He also elaborated on plans to construct a library, housing books with rules and regulations of the Assembly to educate new members of the Legislative Assembly and Council.

Additionally, an annexure building will be built to accommodate the media. A canteen will also be established to serve officials and the public visiting the Assembly. Earlier, Ayyanna held a review meeting with APCRDA commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar and other officials at the Assembly committee hall. He instructed CRDA officials to complete the construction of the MLA and MLC buildings within nine months.

He also directed them to whitewash the Assembly building after addressing leakages and enhance the facilities at the

Annex Building where the media point is currently situated.

Furthermore, rooms will be constructed for the Assembly committee chairman, and a small canteen will be in place in the premises. He explained that most of the pending works only included finishing touches. Bhaskar also asserted that he is committed to improving the management of the existing Assembly building until the permanent Assembly building comes up.

Assembly Secretary General PPK Ramacharyulu, MLAs T Sravan Kumar and Vishnu Kumar Raju, Assembly officers Vijayaraju, PV Subba Reddy, Vanitha Rani, CRDA CE NRK Prasad, EE Vinod, DEE Trinath, and other officials were present at the review meeting.

### A team that took everyone along

THE entire nation was united and overjoyed when Team India won the T20 World Cup. Our cricketers not only snatched victory from the jaws of defeat in the final against South Africa in Barbados but also remained undefeated throughout the tournament where victory or defeat was greatly dependent on a single player or two. The Proteas were cruising to victory with only 30 runs required from the last five overs. South African batsman Heinrich Klaasen was at his destructive best, hitting one six after another. And just when we had lost all hope, he was dismissed by Hardik Pandya. This was the turning point. Later, in the last over, the amazing catch taken by Suryakumar Yadav at the boundary line off Hardik's bowling to dismiss David Miller sealed the fate of the South Africans. Suryakumar had to keep all his wits about him to not lose his balance and then jump back and catch the ball before it hit the ground. Hardik, whose captaincy of Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL) had drawn criticism because of the franchise's poor performance this year, regained his composure and form to shine in the final and most of the preceding games. He had replaced Rohit Sharma, a popular captain of Nita Ambani's franchise for years.

The wonderful pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah was as economical and effective with the white ball as he always is. He was well supported by another speedster, Arshdeep Singh, who peaked at just the right time. Irfan Kohli came good just when the team needed him the most. His performance in the final contributed massively to our victory. This was his last appearance in T20 Internationals. He will not forget the moment. Fellow Indians will certainly not forget the debt the nation owes to this big-hearted cricketer. I am honoured that he has chosen my city of Mumbai as his permanent residence in deference to his wife's wishes.

Another stalwart who has decided to hang up his boots in T20 cricket is the captain himself. Rohit has provided immense joy and much entertainment with the willow over the years. He has assumed the role of the wrecker-in-chief for India as well as Mumbai Indians. His sixes and fours, which he hits with gay abandon, have delighted his fans in international and league cricket. He was not that successful in this World Cup except in the Super Eight match against Australia, in which he narrowly fell short of a century. He was also part of the Indian team which won the inaugural T20 World Cup back in 2007 in South Africa. I welcome the Nagpur-born Rohit back to Mumbai, where he settled down as a young cricketer.

Flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant was another delight to watch, not just behind the stumps but in front too. Two other big hitters, Suryakumar and Shivam Dube, all-rounder Axar Patel — who bailed out the team at crucial moments — and Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav, all contributed their mite to the success of this team. It was a great team effort, spearheaded by a great leader.

Opponents were treated with respect. There was no room for complacency even when playing against minnows like the USA and Ireland.

Our political leaders can learn a few lessons from this World Cup-winning team. The most important lessons are in the domain of leadership. Take everyone along, utilise the strengths of each player and never treat your opponents as dirt to be trampled on. Even the RSS sarsangchalak gave that advice after the BJP's below-par show in the Lok Sabha elections, in which the saffron party lost substantial ground in its stronghold of Uttar Pradesh.

### Drawbacks of Agnipath scheme far outweigh its benefit

If the scheme is designed to inculcate discipline in the country's youth, as some have said, this can be achieved through less risky options.

THE Agnipath scheme came under scrutiny during the just-concluded session of Parliament. It also made headlines during the recent Lok Sabha elections. In a traditional army like ours, the introduction of a scheme that changes its basic structure must be backed by strong and cogent reasons.

Even though not so stated, the main reason for the change was to reduce the pension expenditure, thus saving money for the modernisation of the defence forces. That is understandable, since over 70 per cent of the defence Budget currently goes into meeting the revenue needs. Pensions have been singled out as a major drain. The One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme has been vilified, though unfairly. There are many other categories of pensioners who have been beneficiaries of the OROP or its equivalent. Soldiers only started getting benefits of the scheme in 2015, after over three decades of struggle. The number of pensioners is on the rise because of their longer life span. But this trend is temporary. Statistically, the numbers entering the pension scheme and those exiting it are likely to plateau soon. Unfortunately, India does not have a defence culture. An average citizen has scant knowledge of or interest in the subject. There is an age-old wish for the defence forces: 'may there never be wanting, and may they never be wanted'. A good army does not keep the country secure by fighting a war, but by preventing one. It does this through deterrence by remaining fully equipped, trained and ready. To keep it thus ever ready entails costs.

When an annual review is done, all ministries and departments show a tangible utilisation of the allocated funds. This is done by counting additional highways, universities, hospitals, airports, etc. But those entrusted with keeping the country safe have nothing to show in physical terms. The fact that every other development has been possible because of them is often overlooked. Their contribution is not perceptible, and their expenses are liable to be misconstrued as being wasteful. Consequently, they are the first to come in the crosshairs of the cost-cutting measures. The Army's manpower is internally reviewed regularly. However, it

needs to be remembered that weapons and technology per se do not win wars; it is the soldier who does. If that were not true, Israel, with far superior weapons and technology, would have achieved its avowed aim of finishing the ragtag Hamas a long time ago. But Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant is desperately asking for 10,000 additional soldiers. India has over 15,000 km of land borders. These run through the toughest terrain in the world. The situation on some 7,000 km of the land border remains perpetually active, calling for the deployment of troops. It is debatable whether the 12 lakh-strong Army is too large. Although Pakistan is no

army. As a result of the suspension of recruitment in the Covid-19 years, while retirements continued, the Army manpower had come down by nearly two lakh. Luckily, there was no war during the period. If considered prudent by the security policymakers, that reduced strength can be institutionalised. But whatever is retained must be homogenous. A hybrid army comprising a mix of regular and contractual soldiers cannot match a cohesive force.

After controversy erupted, certain benefits of the Agnipath scheme were put forward. One is the lowering of the age profile by two/three years. It may be mentioned that after the 1962 war debacle, the Army had sent out teams to different theatres to carry out physical tests at varying altitudes. Based on their findings, mandatory standards were prescribed for annual battle physical efficiency tests. Interestingly, the standards for all aged from 18 to 35 years were exactly the same. The age factor, therefore, is more of a post-event justification than a factor in favour of the continuation of the scheme.



It is true that the short service commission officers who served for five or 10 years performed laudably well in wars. But officers serve as leaders, where they take individual decisions at the cutting edge. The soldiers, on the contrary, always work as a team in which esprit de corps is their glue. This is difficult to achieve in a disparate group. It has also been reported that an internal survey of the Army found the scheme to have merit. The reality, however, is that the system does not allow the Army to publicly express disagreement with a government scheme. All internal analyses get dovetailed into support for the decision that has already been taken; it is not examined critically.

pole star, it is pertinent to remember that our western neighbour — with less than one-fourth of our size and nearly one-seventh of our population and an economy in a shambles — is maintaining 6.5 lakh personnel. By that yardstick, our defence forces' strength should be around 33 lakh instead of the present more than 14 lakh personnel. With our booming economy, the incessant drumbeat of our Army being too large and causing a burgeoning expenditure needs to be muted. Maintaining peace and security is not the purview of the Army alone. It requires a synergy of diplomatic, economic, political and other factors. Unfortunately, our relations with our immediate neighbours have remained strained over the years. It falls to the Army to 'manage' those relations by keeping the adversaries at bay. This underscores the need for keeping a strong

If the scheme is designed to inculcate discipline in the country's youth, as some have said, this can be achieved through less risky options. For one, the NCC (National Cadet Corps) scheme can be expanded and more Army personnel can be involved in the training than at present. The only known benefit of the scheme is bringing down the pension expenditure. This is clearly and quotably visible. The serious drawbacks of the scheme will only be known in the event of a war. But it will be too late by then.

### LAC imbroglio

India-China talks making no headway

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi have agreed to 'redouble efforts' through diplomatic and military channels for an early resolution of the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). It is tempting to regard this declaration as a breakthrough, but the problem is that many such averments have been made in recent years amid the prolonged standoff in eastern Ladakh. The two leaders, who met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Kazakhstan, are also apparently in agreement on the need to stabilise and rebuild bilateral relations. Yet again, peace and tranquillity are the buzzwords, but there is little inclination to go beyond the platitudes and make tangible progress on the ground.



The trust deficit is exemplified by the competitive development of border villages. India has reportedly decided to set up villages or habitations in Arunachal Pradesh 'closer to the LAC' in a bid to match China's

efforts. The Chinese have established over 600 'prosperous villages' (Xiaokang) along the LAC to bolster their territorial claims and enhance their military readiness. India's counter is the Vibrant

Villages Programme, which was launched last year. The ambitious project aims to cover around 3,000 villages in Arunachal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh and Sikkim. The focus on improving road and telecom connectivity, housing and tourism facilities has a larger objective — to encourage more and more villagers to become the eyes and ears of the soldiers in border areas.

Amid this all-out infrastructural push and troop buildup, the periodic talks at the diplomatic and military levels have often been inconclusive. A summit-level interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping has remained elusive. As Asia's largest powers, it is in the interests of both countries to engage in dialogue and address the thorny issues, including China's unwillingness to exchange maps of the LAC.

### Community service offers a window of opportunity

The key objective of community service is to promote among offenders a sense of responsibility towards society.

THE new criminal laws have come into force. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam have replaced the Indian Penal Code (1860), the Criminal Procedure Code (1973) and the Indian Evidence Act (1872), respectively. The transition will be very challenging for all stakeholders. Some teething troubles are bound to happen as the police and the judiciary will have to juggle the two systems of law.

The new statutes are aimed at providing justice in contrast to colonial legislation, which focused on 'punishment'. A progressive shift under the BNS is the introduction of community service as a form of punishment under Section 4(f). The BNS, however, does not define what community service entails. This will apply to six offences: attempting suicide to compel or restrain the exercise of lawful power, defamation, theft of property below Rs 5,000, misconduct in public by a drunken person, non-appearance at the specified place and time as required by a proclamation, and a public servant engaging in trade. The community service sentence can be awarded in addition to the prescribed punishment. This legislative change provides an alternative to imprisonment and reflects a rehabilitative approach.



Community service, as ordered by the court, offers the offender the opportunity of compensating society for the wrong s/he has done by performing unpaid work for the benefit of the community instead of going to prison. A proportionate use of imprisonment is essential for an effective penal system. India has over 5.73 lakh inmates in its 1,330 prisons, with an occupancy rate of 130 per cent. Undertrials constitute 75 per cent of the prison population. Not every suspect needs to be imprisoned. Non-custodial measures and, in particular, community service as a penal sanction are also in line with the United Nations Rules for Non-Custodial measures (The Tokyo Rules) of 1990. Positive experience with the introduction of community service has been seen in

many countries across the world, including the UK, the US, Australia and African nations such as South Africa and Zimbabwe. This sanction is based on the restorative and rehabilitative justice models, which hold offenders directly responsible for the damage they have caused to society. The key objective of community service is to promote among offenders a sense of responsibility towards society. Who will implement this judicial decision and the manner of its implementation remain a bit unclear as of now. Community service orders must be correctly worded in order to avoid possible confusion. The orders must specify the number of hours required to be worked; the days on which work is to be performed; the starting and finishing times of the work; and the place where the work is to be performed.

The work and the supervision required need to be specified. Hence, having detailed provisions is essential

for successfully implementing this provision. Staff will have to be trained for the supervisory work as well. Will it be probation officers, the social welfare department, the prison department or community service supervisors who will oversee it? These issues need to be resolved promptly. In India, it was only under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, that community sentence could be given. The judges and Juvenile Justice Board members have not always been clear in terms of what kind of sentence should be passed. The Pune Porsche accident case is a notable example of how one order can spark a legal debate on the appropriateness and arbitrariness of such a measure. Hence, having clear guidelines is very essential. This promising step requires careful planning for its successful implementation. Identifying the community work, places for work and the supervision and monitoring agencies in any state is a task for the

governments, along with capacity building and training of relevant stakeholders. There are international best practices in this regard that can be considered. Community service in Spain and Singapore requires that the work should have some relation with the offence committed. The number of work hours varies — a range of hours is specified. Work like cleaning public areas, tree plantation, maintaining public parks and buildings may also be ordered. Centres of community service can include government hospitals, health clinics, schools, orphanages and old-age homes, along with charitable organisations like Pingalwara. Sewa is an essential component of our culture; in the Sikh religion, the one who is declared tankhaiya is ordered to do kar sewa as penance and is then accepted back into the community. John Braithwaite, a criminologist, argues in favour of the 'reintegrative shaming' approach, which eschews stigmatisation to deal with the crime problem. The reintegrative process involves a reciprocal relationship between the offender and the community. In certain jurisdictions, community sentencing is monitored by specifically established boards/institutions. A breach of the community sentence can be dealt with through a fine, an increase in the hours of work or sending back the offender to prison. The role of the supervisor is important, as it involves monitoring the offenders' work, ensuring compliance with the sentencing order and reporting back to the court. This sanction helps an offender make reparation for offences and can enhance self-respect. Community service projects can also empower communities as the offenders engage in community-building service endeavours. There are many possibilities for better designing the sentencing landscape. Successful implementation of the new laws can happen only when all stakeholders and the community come together and work in tandem. Knowing the direction where we are going becomes important for all agencies.

Business meeting with clients to get positive results or output - with your own image and reputation is also Stabilis. Professional altitude at the meeting and could make an impression Manor. It is necessary to continue to update their skills. Additionally, whenever you go to a Inporrtet meeting, make absolutely sure you follow a few basic business Attikets, as it works to prevent negative effects.

**Time Access**

Perfect leader arrived at the meeting place at the time. Indeed, professional timing and place of the meeting is already Decide. Therefore Sr. or Jr., must take care of all time. Those arriving late to a meeting is deemed negligent. If you're hosting the meeting, according to the protocol is necessary to arrive on time.

**Proper Introduction**

Introduction to the Role of the Business Meeting is very important, therefore, Highest rank first or the most senior person to introduce yourself. At the time of introduction, smiles and decency should have. Also, when you arrive at a meeting, then greet Gests and Business Partners in a civil manor. To her handshake. Let them take their business card business card, it

will have the best effect.

**Sitting position**

Business meeting in accordance with Hararki Select a seating area. After sitting sit in seniors. Lead the meeting of the members should have the position of the head table. Similarly, clients or customers for meeting all Inporrtet need to reserve the power seat. Getting up at the end of the meeting, you have to follow the same Ethics. Professional Manor is considered good in this kind of meat.

**Listen first, then talk to keep**

Professional meeting and listen to others, you have to keep your thing. So when someone is speaking and some things you do not agree with them, then write on her notepad. Token not speaking to anyone in between. If there is any debate on any issue, it must be in the language and tone control completely. At the time of presentation or debate complete control over the language, so people will listen to you more closely.

**Constreshn**

# Key to Success in Business



**Inporrtet**

The patient should be listening to the speakers at the meeting. Then the question and answer session, so consider who said what and what the logic behind it, has he? When it becomes clear, then, that no one Kwashn Related to the meeting. Jmega your impressions and the rest of the meeting will not take you too lightly.

Professional meeting came several times on mobile calls are disturbing. Many big corporate houses in meeting the Strictly Mobile is instructed not to move. Meetings are taking the mobile, then switch off or put on silent mode. Lay on the table during a meeting or a hand-held mobile professionals Attikets also be considered against.

**Focus on the agenda**

Professional is pre-fixed agenda of the meeting. As such it becomes the responsibility of having to conduct the meeting that he attended a meeting agenda wander from anyone else. When that happens, then the meeting will be effective. People who want to keep their things, they should make arrangements in advance, To The Point. Start with the tag line 'strong point. Additionally, Ricorridg and documentation of Proceedings after meeting members to share Attikets part of the business. Simple Business Attikets such a significant affect on the image.



# Ship's Engineer



Today every business in the world by sea is shipped. The Naval Architect or Naval Engineers are in demand also grew. Today, most jobs are in the field. How to make career in this field.. The first short sea trade - used by small ship, but their place is taken by large

ships. Over time, the increasing size of ships increase in jobs in the region. If you have passion and deal with the challenges the country - is fond of foreign travel, then a career as Naval Architecture nautical miles at a speed of several permits. Ship Operations professionals in this field, technical maintenance etc are attached to tasks.

**Nature of Work**

Director of Indian Institute of Nautical Science and Engineering Kulshreshtha said Sanjeev, a special branch of engineering is it. Naval Architecture, Ship Building and Ship under shipping technology designing, construction, maintenance and equipment used in maritime traffic, etc., are taught such repairs ships and submarines. Naval engineering Ktrej can guess from the fact that the professional course related to it sit empty. Naval Engineers currently in demand not only in India but also abroad is cool.

**Courses and qualifications**

Naval Architect or ship technologist career as a naval architecture, marine engineering,

ship building or B.Tech., BE, B.Sc. Ship Building and Repairing of course can be. Indian Mritaim University, Cochin University of Science and Technology (Siuosatti), the Institute of Nautical Science and Engineering from the Indian Ship Building and Repairing course you can. In addition, the Institute of Ship Building B TECH. Course is also available, such as - Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering at IIT Madras B.Tech. Course you can. For admission to this course CET (Common Entrance Test) is conducted, the Aiamayu (Indian Mritaim University) does conduct. For admission in 12th physics, chemistry and math is required at least 55 per cent marks. In addition, 50 per cent marks in English in the 10th and 12th should be. The opportunity to apply those same students who do not pass the CET exam. 180 objective type written test for admission are concerned, the PCM / English / General Knowledge and reasoning are based on. Ship Building and Repairing all new BSc course. There is good scope of placement after the course.

**Job Oprchunitij**

After the course the shipyard, ship, cargo ship and can find jobs in the Merchant Navy. Ship Building Industry, naval dockyards and shipping companies, naval architects and ship technology nowadays in great demand by the people involved. To perform better in the field of promotion opportunities are good.

**Salary Jess in the field -**

such as your merit increase, promotion and salary increase will tend to be easier. There is no limit to growth. Assistant managers and CEO's salary starts from Rs 30 lakhs is reached. News Feature

## Careers with No Risk Insurance Underwriter

If a career option recession and uncertainty found in the environment, where the risk is minimal, then who would Nhinajmana involvement. Particularly if he is interested in finance or accounting. Insurance underwriters for such people the opportunity to become the Finance Sector Stabilis ourselves, because everyone needs insurance has become today.

**Work responsibility**

In addition to the client or the company's risk management underwriter, insurance is a study of the proposals, their background and their applications to accept or collect Information is discarded. Review and fix the responsibility of the insurance policy premium is also Inhinki, ie how much of an insurance company must charge the policy holder, it is the underwriter decides. Between the company and the policy holder can say that it serves as Mediator. Or renew insurance coverage to cover new individuals and companies, both he helps.

**Basic Skills**

Powerful ways you can keep your talk, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the knowledge of computers, you can debut as underwriter. Underwriters often have to take sudden decisions. The analytical and decision making skills are essential. Additionally, the maths should also be strong, because the whole thing is associated with the risk and premium calculation. They should also have the capability Judgment.

**Growth Options**

As underwriter, you can find opportunities to work in many Areas like - life insurance, health insurance, mortgage insurance and property

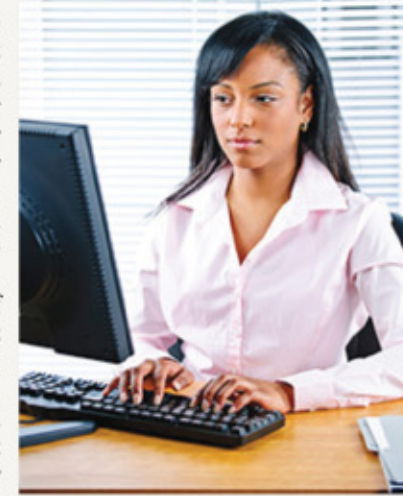
insurance. In addition, Auto, Loan, Commercial, Farm and group health insurance underwriter as growth in the area are good options. By the way, people who want to become medical underwriter, for them to have a medical background is Inporrtet.

**Courses and Institutes**

Insurance Companies to act as underwriter in Finance and Business Adimistreshn must be graduate. With specialization in the accounting, then even better. If desired, Insurance and Risk Management BA in Management and Marketing of Insurance or can. Graduate in any stream candidates can work as an insurance underwriter. There are many institutes and universities in India, from where you can do the course:

- Asia-Pacific Institute of Management Studies, Delhi
- Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida
- Guru Nanak College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai
- SS Institute of Management, Lucknow
- APJ Institut of Management, Jalandhar

Many opportunities in this field India is the underwriter of the new field, but it's enough growth opportunities. In addition to Finance and Commerce, Medical Professionals Traditional jobs are not coming from the background, medical underwriter can earn as well. Mathematical and analytical skills with the Basic Kwolifikeshn would benefit from having.



# Rainy weekend likely in Delhi, no respite in flood-hit Assam, Uttarakhand

**Torrential rainfall continued to batter flood-hit states, including Assam, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, with no respite on the cards for now, while Delhi is likely to receive light rainfall today.**

**New Delhi:** More rainfall is predicted in several parts of the country, including Delhi, on Saturday, while floodwaters did not recede in states, including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Assam, as torrential downpours continued to batter these regions. In Delhi, 0.6 mm of rainfall was recorded on Friday with the maximum and minimum temperatures pegged at 33.2 degrees Celsius and 27.1 degrees Celsius, respectively. Humidity was recorded at 75 per cent at 5:30 pm. Across North and Central India, isolated heavy rainfall was very likely in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Chandigarh on July 6, Uttarakhand Uttar Pradesh, East Rajasthan and East Madhya Pradesh between July 6 to 9, Punjab and West Madhya Pradesh on July 7, Vidarbha on July 8 and 9, and Chhattisgarh between July 7 to 9, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its daily bulletin. An orange alert for heavy rain was predicted in Uttarakhand and East Uttar Pradesh on July 6 and 7, and Punjab, West Uttar Pradesh and

West Madhya Pradesh on July 6, the weather office said. In the East and Northeast, isolated heavy rainfall was predicted in West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar between July 7 and 9, Jharkhand on July 7, Odisha on July 6 and 8, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura between July 6 to 9, according to the Met Department. An orange alert for heavy rain was likely in West Bengal, Bihar and Sikkim on July 6, Odisha on July 7, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya between July 6 and 9. In southern and western India, an orange alert was issued for Konkan and Goa and coastal Karnataka on July 6, Madhya Maharashtra on July 6 and south interior Karnataka on July 6, the IMD said. A red alert for extremely heavy rain was likely in coastal Karnataka on July 6. According to the weather department, heavy rain was predicted in Kerala and Mahe between July 6 and 8, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam between July 6 and 8, Telangana on July 8 and 9, coastal and south



Interior Karnataka between July 7 and 9 and north interior Karnataka on July 8. **FLOODS DISRUPT DAILY LIVES IN SEVERAL STATES**

In Assam, the flood situation remained grim with major rivers flowing above the danger mark and nearly 24 lakh people affected. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited several flood-hit areas in Dibrugarh, one of the 30 affected districts in the state, which is reeling from the worst

deluge in recent years. At least 77 wild animals have died -- either due to drowning or during treatment -- while 94 have been rescued from the flooded Kaziranga National Park as on Friday, an official said. Two people, including a child, were killed and another was injured in a landslide following incessant rainfall in the Dispur area of Kamrup Metropolitan district, taking the death toll in this year's floods, landslides and storms to 64. In Uttarakhand, which has received heavy rain over the past few days, a five-year-old drowned in a rainwater-filled pit in Dehradun and a teenager in a Haridwar rivulet. The continuous rain in the hill state triggered numerous landslides, blocking key roads, including the national highway leading to Badrinath. In Rudrapur district, debris from a landslide blocked the opening of an old tunnel on Friday. However, no casualties were reported, Superintendent of Police Vishakha Ashok Bhadane said.

## Supreme Court To Consider Requests To Review Verdict On Same-Sex Marriage

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court is scheduled to consider on July 10 a batch of pleas seeking review of its last year's judgement which refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage.

According to the cause list of July 10 uploaded on the top court website, a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud would consider in-chamber the pleas seeking review of the October 17 last year verdict. As per the practice, the review pleas are considered in-chamber by five-judge benches.

Besides the CJ, the other members of the bench will be Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Hima Kohli, BV Nagarathna and PS Narasimha. In a setback to gay rights activists, the top court had on October 17 last year refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage, saying there was "no unqualified right" to marriage with the exception of those that are recognised by law.

The top court, however, had made a strong pitch for the rights of queer people so they don't face discrimination in accessing goods and services that are available to others, safe houses known as 'Garima Greh' in all districts to provide shelter to members of the community facing harassment and violence and dedicated hotline numbers which they could use in case of trouble. Holding that transgender people in heterosexual relationships have the freedom and entitlement to marry under the existing statutory provisions, the top court had said an entitlement to legal recognition of the right to union, akin to marriage or civil union, or conferring legal status to the relationship can be only done through "enacted law". A five-judge constitution bench headed by CJ Chandrachud had delivered four separate verdicts on a batch of 21 petitions seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriages.

## Kerala records fourth case of rare brain-eating amoeba infection: Report

**New Delhi:** Kerala has reported another case of amoebic meningoencephalitis, a rare brain infection caused by a free-living amoeba found in contaminated waters, taking the total number of such cases to four. According to a report with news agency PTL, the patient is a 14-year-old boy, a resident of Payyoli in Kozhikode district of north Kerala, and is being treated



at a private hospital. The state has reported four such cases since May, and all patients were reported to be minors, three of whom have already died.

In the latest case, one of the doctors treating the boy said that he was admitted to the hospital on July 1, and his condition is improving, PTL reported. The doctor also said that on Saturday, the infection was identified quickly at the hospital and treatment, including medicines from abroad, was given immediately. On July 3, a 14-year-old boy infected with the free-living amoeba died in the state. Before that, two others -- a five-year-old girl from Malappuram and a 13-year-old girl from Kannur -- died on May 21 and June 25, respectively, due to the rare brain infection.

On Friday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan held a meeting in which several suggestions, including not to bathe in unclean waterbodies, were given to prevent further infections. In the meeting, it was also suggested that there should be proper chlorination of swimming pools and children should be careful when entering waterbodies as they are mostly affected by this disease, the statement read. The Chief Minister also said that everyone should take care to keep the waterbodies clean.

## NEET-UG counselling deferred until further notice amid paper leak row

**New Delhi:** The counselling for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET UG was on Saturday deferred until further notice. The new date for the counselling was yet to be announced.

Sources told India Today TV that the exam authorities want to wait for a court hearing in the case, which is scheduled for July 8.

Moments after the announcement, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the future of lakhs of students is unsafe in the hands of BJP leaders. "The whole NEET-UG issue is getting worse by the day. The non-biological PM and his biological Education Minister are adding

further proof to their demonstrated incompetence and insensitivity," he said in an X post. "The future of lakhs of our youth is simply unsafe in their hands," Jairam Ramesh added.

On July 5, amid the growing clamour for cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG, 2024 exam over alleged malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) told the Supreme Court that scrapping it would be "counterproductive" and would "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality. The NTA, which conducts the NEET exam for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH

and other related courses, and the Union Education Ministry have been at the centre of media debates and protests by students and political parties over alleged large-scale malpractices ranging from question paper leak to impersonation in the test held on May 5. The Union Education Ministry and the NTA filed separate affidavits opposing the pleas which have sought the scrapping of the exam plagued by controversy, a re-test and a court-monitored probe into the entire gamut of issues involved.

In their responses, they said the CBI, the country's premier investigating agency, has taken over the cases registered in different states.

## Hathras Stampede: Main Accused Surrenders In Delhi, Claims His Lawyer

**New Delhi:** Devprakash Madhukar, the main accused in the July 2 Hathras stampede which claimed 121 lives, has been taken into custody by Uttar Pradesh Police after he surrendered in Delhi, his lawyer claimed on Friday night.

Madhukar, the 'mukhya sevadar' of the 'satsang' where the stampede occurred, is the only accused named in the FIR lodged at Sikandra Rao police station in Hathras in connection with the incident. In a video message, Madhukar's lawyer A P Singh claimed that his client had surrendered in Delhi, where he was undergoing treatment.

Today, we have surrendered Devprakash Madhukar, who was called the main organiser in the FIR



in the Hathras case, after calling the police, the SIT and the STF in Delhi since he was undergoing treatment here," Mr Singh said.

"We had promised we would not apply for anticipatory bail since we did no wrong. What is our crime? He is an engineer and a heart patient. Doctors said his condition is stable now and

so we surrendered today to join the probe," the lawyer said. Mr Singh said police may now record his statement or question him but must take into consideration his health condition and ensure that "nothing wrong happens with him". Recently, the Supreme Court lawyer had claimed that he represents Surajpal alias Narayan Sakar Hari alias Bhole Baba, the self-styled godman at whose 'satsang' the stampede occurred. Uttar Pradesh Police had announced a reward of ₹ 1 lakh for information leading to Madhukar's arrest. Till Thursday, six people, including two women volunteers who were members of the organising committee of Bhole Baba's 'satsang', had been arrested in the case.

## Cheetah 'Gamini', Her 5 Cubs Enjoy Rain At Kuno National Park

**Union Minister Bhupender Yadav shared the joyous moment in a post on X, stating, "Together, they weave a timeless tale of familial harmony amidst nature's seasonal embrace."**

**New Delhi:** South African Cheetah 'Gamini' with her five cubs on Friday morning, enjoyed the rain at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh Sheopur. Cheetah Gamini was seen playing with her cubs, who also engaged in playful antics with each other. Union Minister Bhupender Yadav shared the joyous moment in a post on X, stating, "Together, they weave a timeless tale of familial harmony amidst nature's



seasonal embrace." Earlier on March 10, South African Cheetah 'Gamini' gave birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park. An announcement in this regard was made by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav on Sunday. The Union Minister said that the total number of Indian-born cheetah cubs has gone up to 13. "High Five, Kuno!

Female cheetah Gamini, age about 5 years, brought from Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, South Africa, has given birth to 5 cubs today. This takes the tally of the Indian-born cubs to 13. This is the fourth cheetah litter on Indian soil and the first litter of cheetahs brought from South Africa," Bhupender Yadav said in a post on X. He lauded the officers and staff at Kuno National Park for ensuring a 'stress-

free environment' for the cheetahs.

"Congratulations to all, especially the team of forest officers, vets, and field staff who have ensured a stress-free environment for cheetahs, which has led to successful mating and birth of the cubs. The total number of cheetahs, including cubs in Kuno National Park, is 26. Gamini's legacy leaps forward: Introducing her adorable cubs!" he said. Earlier in January this year, Namibian Cheetah 'Jwala' gave birth to four cubs at Kuno National Park. Cheetahs were declared extinct in India in 1952, only to be reintroduced through the ambitious project in 2022. In 2022, eight cheetahs - brought from Namibia - were introduced in India under Project Cheetah. Subsequently, twelve cheetahs from South Africa were also translocated and released in Kuno National Park in February 2023. A cheetah translocated from Namibia, died at Kuno National Park in January this year. So far, seven adult cheetahs and three cubs born in India have died since March 2023.



How startups are cutting ballooning

# Salary Bills



combination of factors is driving more startups to scout for talent from tier-II B schools and engineering colleges at lower salaries. HiveMinds, a startup in social media, has chosen to approach tier-II B schools as it finds itself low on the priority list of the top-notch ones. "The top B-schools fix slots for bluechip companies in the first few days and they get the cream of students. Startups like ours, which cannot offer a hefty remuneration, get slotted on the last day and get the

remaining ones," said CEO of HiveMinds MS Shan. The limited fund flow into startups is one of the reasons for the hunt shifting to the non-IIM category of B-Schools. Vinod M, CEO, Cloudcherry said due to healthy funding or the promise of it last year, companies were more enthusiastic about recruiting from top B-schools at higher pay. "The funding sentiment has cooled down now and only heavily-funded startups would go on to recruit in top B-Schools," he said. Vinod said divergence, a skill required in startups, may not necessarily be available in Tier-1 schools. Going to the Tier-II B-Schools has clearly given him a wider choice of options. They offer more scope for interaction at a pace that helps recruiters analyse and take a more measured decision. "Such options are not available with Tier-1 schools where we are pressured to make a decision fast," said Shan. PSG College of Management, Coimbatore had four new startups hiring students this time around. "Technology startups such as Zoho and Kaar Technologies looking for managerial positions have turned to us," said the institute's placement director Umesh C. Startups find graduates from engineering colleges like VIT and SRM take risks and work for lower salaries than

graduates from top B-schools demand. "We prefer to hire from B-Schools such as NMIMS or engineering colleges," education startup ChalkStreet CEO Venkat V said. B-Schools have reported a surge in recruitment from startups. Management Development Institute from Gurgaon has had 57% more startups visiting them compared to last year. Students too were keen in getting placed in them with 15 of the 17 offers getting accepted. "The 'Startup India Stand Up India' campaign will act as a catalyst in the ecosystem

providing huge growth opportunity for students," said Kanwal Kapil, chairperson, placements from MDI. For internships too, startups are gaining more currency, said students of Mumbai-based B-School KJ Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research. "We are more open to taking risk which is reflected in the drive to take up a job in a startup than in a secure environment of a MNC or an Indian corporate," second-year student anil kumar said.

## A survival guide for Office rookies



ur first job teaches you lessons no college does. Here's how you survive the initial months of your career Young and reckless -that's what we are in our 20s. We motorcycle our way through life with no helmet on, until we hit the career highway. Suddenly, we are expected to be responsible and mature, or at least on the path to being 'settled'. The transition from wild to mild is not easy and takes some discipline. But steer clear of these major faux pas and you'll be cruising in auto-mode in no time.

**Don't be late**  
If you have a nine-to-five job, stick to the company's official timings. If you have flexible work hours, stick to your word instead. Walking in at 1pm when you promised to report at 11 am reflects on your commitment. In your first year, you want people to take you seriously. And how will anyone do that if you can't even honour your own word?

**Don't use office as Tinder**  
Office romance isn't a cardinal sin, but get to know your colleagues and the rules of your workplace better first. The first year is definitely not the right time for you to swipe imaginary rights on those hotties in office. How about you learn more about the job first?

**Stay sober at parties**

Office parties involve a lot of free booze and that's reason enough to get drunk, right? Wrong! Many inappropriate things can be said and done when drunk and you don't want to face the consequences of something you don't even remember doing!

**Don't abscond**  
Sometimes, it's hard to deal with the repercussions of unpleasant decisions that we take at the workplace -like quitting the job. But remember, this is professional, not personal. Your organisation will be far more appreciative if you resign formally and serve your notice period instead of pulling a disappearing act. Take Shreeji



Doshi's case, for example. A fresh graduate, he joined a company while simultaneously appearing for post-graduate courses' entrance exams. Just ten days into the job,

he secured admission in a premium college. Unsure of how to break the news to his boss, he simply stopped reporting to work. "That affected our relationship completely. If I had manned up, we would have probably remained in touch," says Doshi. Absconding can also lead to a bad reputation in the job market, blacklisting and even legal tussles.

**Private means private**  
You may find your colleagues friendly, but that doesn't mean that they are your friends. Khusbhu Merchant learnt this the hard way, when she started discussing her personal problems with her teammates. "If I messed up at work, people started attributing it to my personal life, even when it was unrelated," says Merchant. In the first year of your job, people may try to exploit your vulnerabilities; don't throw your personal problems to the mix.

**Think before saying 'yes'**  
You don't have to impress your bosses all the time. You are new to the job and they understand that. So if they ask you to tackle something brand new, seek help. Here's how: Boss: Rohan, can you make a case study out of our last project? You: Yes sir, but can I do it with someone who has done it before so that I get it right, as this is my first time? Boss: Of course, of course. Sit with Shreya. This way, your boss will not only realise that you are aware of where you need to improve at work but also that you have good communication skills.

**Wait for approval**  
If you have a client-facing job, you might be in a position where clients ask you something that you don't have the official answer to. In such situations, do not respond. It is absolutely fine to say that you will get back to them, even if you know what the answer should be. Similarly, do not perform any task without your boss's instruction or approval. Nithin SV, a software consultant, says, "Once, I discussed a software upgrade with a customer who seemed interested. So I got cocky and did the upgrade before getting an approval. I got a lot of heat from the customer and my boss. This happened on the second day of my job."

**Stay away social from media**  
It's one thing to say, "I hate Mondays" and quite another to say, "Today I worked on the Reliance accounts file". You could put your company in trouble or inadvertently give information to your company's competition. You could even put your organisation, and yourself, at risk of legal action.

## Keyboard skills How to type faster



Typing fast is a skill that is fast becoming a necessity in today's time. How many times has it happened that you start typing and get bogged down by your slow speed? If you are hoping for some secret tips and tricks to help you type faster in a jiffy, let us tell you there aren't any. But there are ways, which with can help you improve your typing skills with regular practice. 1. Setup a proper workplace for your self The first thing you'll need before you sit and start typing is spacious and a comfortable workplace. Also you'll be better off working or typing on a table than your lap. 2. Believe it or not, the right body posture matters Try and sit straight and keep your wrists at level with the keyboard, so that your fingers can properly arch over the keys. Try not to slouch too much and sit at a comfortable

height. 3. Get your hand position right Wrong hand position is the first and most common mistake people make while typing. To type better, place your hand and fingers over the keys in the 'home row' and return to that position while at rest. The home row keys are as follows: • Left index finger on the letter F. • Left middle finger on the letter D. • Left ring finger on the letter S. • Left pinkie on the letter A. • Right index finger on the letter J. • Right middle finger on the letter K. • Right ring finger on the letter L. • Right pinkie finger on the colon/semicolon (; and :) key. • Left and right thumbs should rest on the space bar. 4. Try and practice some simple typing

exercises like: • Start with the home keys: asdf <space> jkl; • Then, type the home keys in capital letters, using the shift key: ASDF <space> JKL; • Now come to the bottom letters and type the bottom row: zxcvbnm.. • Next, skip over to the top row: qwertyuiop • Without looking at the keyboard try writing the complete alphabet. 5. Learn touch typing (typing without looking at the keyboard) It's a difficult skill to execute at first but touch typing is generally the fastest way to type once you've mastered it. So start slowly and try to type without looking at the keyboard. Build up your speed gradually and try to stick with it even if you find it difficult initially. 6. Practice, practice and practice Well, there are no shortcuts to practice and the more you perform the better and faster you'll get.

## India has more consistent compounders than China: Report

**NEW DELHI.** Marcellus Investment Managers said on Friday that among emerging markets, both India and China have produced a significant number of consistent compounders — companies that have consistently achieved 10% YoY revenue growth and 10% RoCE over a decade. However, India not only surpassed China in the number of consistent compounders but also outperformed by delivering more than double the shareholder returns as against its Chinese counterparts.

India has 162 compounders as against 126 in China. This is despite the fact that the Chinese economy and its capital market are much bigger than India.

The finding stated that over the long term, India's equity market (Nifty50) has given superior returns as against any other market in the world. In the last 20 years, Nifty50 has given an annual return of 11.6%. The US market (S&P 500) comes next at 9.9%. China's Shanghai Composite has had an annual return of 5.9% in the past 20 years. Marcellus said that global businesses look to diversify their supply chains away from China, India is poised to benefit. Key sectors like smartphones, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), and medical devices are expected to drive this growth, potentially contributing an additional \$300 billion to India's economy, it added.

The report said 5,000 companies that sit below the 800 most profitable companies in India are growing at a faster pace. It also stated that the share of the top 20 companies in overall PAT of India Inc (listed players) reached its peak during Covid but fell sharply after that.

## Karnataka High Court asks Byju's to maintain status quo

**BENGALURU.** The Karnataka High Court on Friday restrained ed-tech firm Byju's from proceeding with the second rights issue till the NCLT decides on the plea by a group of investors. Four investors had objected to Byju's second rights issue saying this would dilute their holding. A few days ago, a single judge of the Karnataka High Court had set aside the interim NCLT order that had restrained Byju's from launching a second rights issue. The NCLT has been directed to decide the application filed by investors by July 31. Earlier, Think and Learn Pvt Limited (Byju's) and



Byju Raveendran had filed writ petitions against the order of NCLT dated 12 June 2024. The High Court has remanded the matter to the NCLT for fresh consideration within 2 weeks from 4 July 2024.

"During the proceedings of remand and till the decision which may be taken by the NCLT, the parties shall maintain status quo about the subject matter dispute as obtained on today," the order stated.

The respondents shall not make allotment of shares in the interregnum, to be subject to the final order which may be passed by the NCLT, it added. Also, if any transactions took place from July 2-4, 2024, they will remain subject to a final order that may be passed by the NCLT and the rights in that regard will be governed accordingly.

## HDFC stock falls nearly 5%, drags sensx down



**MUMBAI.** HDFC Bank shares fell 4.6% on Friday, dragging the sensx below the 80,000 mark despite relatively strong sentiment in the equities market. The country's largest private lender came under pressure after it reported a decline in both loans and current & savings account deposits in the first quarter. The sensx closed 53 points down at 79,996 largely because of HDFC Bank. Nifty, which represents a broader range of stocks, continued to gain and closed 22 points higher at 24,324, with most of the gains coming in the last 30 minutes of the trade. According to brokers, if HDFC Bank's shares had not fallen, the sensx would have been up by over 500 points. Despite HDFC Bank being a drag, the sensx had its best week in over six months as well as the fifth consecutive week of gains.

Among the 30 sensx stocks, 17 posted gains. SBI shares gained the most at 2.5%, while Reliance Industries, which gained 2.3%, hit a new lifetime high at Rs 3,197. Shares of Raymond jumped 10% on Friday after the textile major said it will demerge its real estate business.

"The broader market outperformed the benchmarks, with Nifty mid-cap and small-cap indices gaining more than 0.5% each. Technically, Nifty managed to defend the 24,200 support level on a closing basis, indicating strength. As long as the index holds this support, it may attempt to test the levels of 24,500-24,600," said Hrishikesh Yedve of Asit C Mehta Investment. In Friday's session, HDFC Bank erased the gains it had made earlier in the week after reporting its June-end shareholding numbers.

# SMEs on IPO spree in April, May as corporates mobilise nearly Rs 85,000 crore from equity offerings

**Leading the equity issuance surge during the first two months were IPOs from the small and mid-cap (SME) segment, with 44 of these companies getting listed in the first two months of the current fiscal (FY25).**

**NEW DELHI.** In just the first two months of financial year 2024-25 (FY25), Indian corporates have mobilised Rs 84,866 crore through equity issuances, including initial public offerings (IPO), follow-on public issues and preferential allotment. In the twelve months of FY24, corporates had raised Rs 67,956 crore from the IPO market and are expected to mobilise over Rs 1 lakh crore through primary issuances in the current fiscal. Leading the equity issuance surge during the first two months were IPOs from the small and mid-cap

(SME) segment, with 44 of these companies getting listed in the first two months of the current fiscal (FY25). This comes amid the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch raising concerns over manipulation in the listing of SMEs a few months back. While 44 companies got listed on SME platforms of the BSE and the NSE in April and May, there were a total of 52 listings (main board IPOs plus SME IPOs) during the two month period. In fiscal 2023-24, the total number of SME companies that were listed was 196. A total of 21 SMEs got listed in April, raising Rs 527 crore, while there were 23 SME IPOs which mobilised Rs 673 crore in May, according to the data from Sebi data. In March this year, the Sebi Chairperson had said that there were signs of price manipulation in SME IPOs and trading of such shares in the secondary market. "The reality is that SMEs are relatively small entities, the market is small, the free float is small, it is relatively easy to manipulate both at the IPO level and the trading level," Buch



had said. On an overall basis, Indian corporates mobilised Rs 84,866 crore through equity issuances, including initial public offering (IPO), both mainboard and SME platform, follow-on public offering and preferential allotment in the first two months of fiscal 2024-24, the SEBI data showed. India Inc raised Rs 14,661 crore through eight main board IPOs in April and May, the data showed. Some of the main board IPOs included Aadhaar Housing Finance (Rs 3000 crore), Go Digit General Insurance Rs 2,614 crore and Awfis Space Solutions Ltd (Rs 599 crore). Indian corporates raised Rs 67,956 crore from the IPO market in FY24 and they are expected to

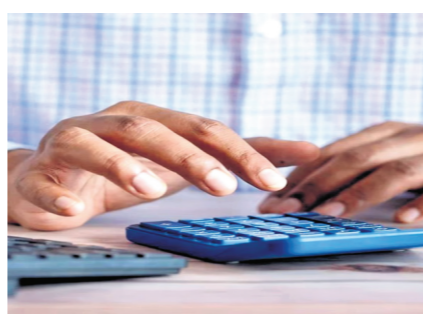
mobilise over Rs 1 lakh crore through primary issuances in the current fiscal. The rise in the number of companies raising money through IPOs can be attributed to the strong macroeconomic growth of the country, stable government and interest rates, and ease in inflation. According to Sebi data, corporates did not raise money through the follow-on public offer route in May this year.

However, in April, Rs 18,000 crore was raised through a single FPO of Vodafone Idea, which was the largest issue in the country. Funds amounting to Rs 3,798 crore were raised through 20 rights issues in April and May. Funds raised through preferential allotment during the two months stood at Rs 32,695 crore. The amount raised through QIP (Qualified Institutional Placement) stood at Rs 14,512 crore in the period. In May 2024, Rs 1,207 crore was mobilised through the public issue of debt, compared to the Rs 687 crore raised during April. Private placement of debt raised Rs 61,227 crore in May, compared to Rs 30,508 crore in April.

## Government unlikely to do away with angel tax, say experts

**NEW DELHI.** Even though the Department for Promotion of Industries and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has recommended the finance ministry remove the angel tax, it is unlikely that the government may pay attention to such recommendations. The DPIIT Secretary in a press briefing on Thursday said his department has recommended the removal of Angel Tax to the finance ministry and that it had done so in the past as well. "Ultimately, the decision has to be taken by the ministry," he told reporters on Thursday. However, tax experts are of the view that the government is unlikely to remove the angel tax, which is levied on unlisted companies raising capital through the issue of shares.

Rohinton Sidhwa, partner, of Deloitte India, told TNIE that the debate has died down because the government has largely fixed the issue though it's an irritating thing it involves a lot of documentation.



"Companies have, however, realised that they have to do the paperwork, but at least the issue has gone away," said Sidhwa. Shrutu KP, partner, taxation, AZB & Partners, says the likelihood of any major change (in Angel Tax) is quite limited. If at all, the government may try and provide more exceptions, rather than removing the angel tax provision entirely, she says. However, she admits that the angel tax is an unnecessary hassle and tax burden for businesses including for startups,

especially given that it now applies even to investments made by non-resident investors. "The so-called exceptions do not help very many businesses. As a tax professional, therefore, I do hope the MOF accepts the recommendation made by DPIIT," says Shrutu KP. Angel tax was introduced in 2012, and it is the tax that unlisted companies are liable to pay on the capital they raise through the issue of shares, and it is calculated based on the premium amount received above the fair market value of the shares. IT industry body Nasscom in its pre-budget meeting with the finance minister has raised the issue of angel tax. It said very few start-ups can avail the exemption from angel tax and even if a start-up avails exemption, it is not useful. "The end-use restrictions for utilising exempted investments are constraining and impact the business of start-ups," it added.

## Fintech funding falls 59% to \$795 mn in H1, 2024

**BENGALURU.** In the first half of this year (January-June 2024), the fintech sector witnessed a declining trend in funding as they could manage to raise only \$795 million, a 59% fall compared to \$1.93 billion raised in the same period last year. The sector garnered \$896.7 million in H2, 2023, according to market intelligence platform Tracxn. In its semi-annual report, the firm said the funding in late-stage rounds stood at \$551 million, a 63% decline from the \$1.5 billion the sector raised in H1, 2023.

Neha Singh, co-founder at Tracxn, said, "The slowdown in funding reflects the need for a cautious outlook and strategic planning among start-ups and investors. Our Fintech sector remains dynamic, and we are optimistic that a supportive policy environment and technological advancements will create new opportunities for growth and innovation in the



near future." The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently came up with the Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisation for FinTechs, and this is to promote self-regulation in the industry to adhere to government rules. "This can potentially help bring trust and stability to the sector and highlight the importance of Fintech start-ups in the country's financial system," the report said.

The funding in both the seed-stage and early-stage too declined in the first half of this year. About \$179 million was raised in early-stage rounds, which is a 50% decline from \$361 million raised in H1 2023. First quarter of 2024 (January-March) has been the major contributor to funding so far, as the quarter witnessed \$582 million in fundraising, and Q2, 2024 saw only \$214 million in funding. Alternative Lending, RegTech, and Banking Tech were the top-performing sectors in this space, and Perfios is the only start-up that turned unicorn in this space. With 37% of total funding (about \$297 million), Bengaluru leads the space in terms of total funds raised in this period, followed by Mumbai (\$231

## New norms for funding infra, setting standards

**NEW DELHI.** The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has unveiled scheme guidelines aimed at funding testing facilities, infrastructure, and institutional support to develop standards and regulatory frameworks under the National Green Hydrogen Mission. With a total budget of Rs 200 crore allocated until the financial year 2025-26, the scheme targets addressing gaps in existing testing facilities for components, technologies, and processes across the Green Hydrogen value chain. It will facilitate the establishment of new testing facilities and the enhancement of existing ones to ensure secure and efficient operations. "The scheme aims to identify and bridge gaps in the current testing facilities for components, technologies, and processes in the Green Hydrogen value chain. It will support the creation of new testing facilities and upgrade



existing ones to ensure safe and reliable operations," stated MNRE in a statement. The National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM), launched on January 4, 2023, with a budget of Rs 19,744 crore, aims to position India as a global hub for the production, usage, and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives. This initiative is a crucial step towards India's goal of achieving self-reliance through clean energy and will serve as a model for the global transition to clean energy. According to government sources, the National

**The National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM), launched on January 4, 2023, with a budget of Rs 19,744 crore, aims to position India as a global hub for the production, usage, and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.**

Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) will serve as the Scheme Implementation Agency (SIA). NISE's responsibilities will include developing robust quality and performance testing facilities to ensure the sustainability, safety, and high standards of Green Hydrogen (GH2) production and trade.

# Retail, apparel dominate informal enterprises, employ most workers

**The use of the internet for entrepreneurial purposes has increased by 7.2 per cent, indicating a rapid rate of digitisation in the sector, MoSPI said.**

**NEW DELHI.** Retail trade, manufacturing of wearing apparel, and community, social and personal services were the top activity categories in the informal sector and employed the highest number of workers among the informal enterprises, the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises (ASUSE) for 2021-22 and 2022-23 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Friday show. The total number of establishments



in the informal sector increased to 6.50 crore in 2022-23 from 5.97 crore in 2021-22, recording a 5.88 per cent annual growth. Out of the total number of establishments, other services sector topped with the highest share of enterprises at 37.88 per cent in ASUSE

2022-23, followed by trade (34.71 per cent) and manufacturing (27.41 per cent), the MoSPI release said. Other retail trade accounted for 30.38 per cent of the enterprises and employed 29.80 per cent of the total workers in ASUSE 2022-23, followed by manufacturing of wearing

apparel with 11.27 per cent share of establishments and 8.39 per cent share of total workers.

The unincorporated non-agricultural sector employed about 11 crore workers from October 2022 to September 2023, up from 9.8 crore in ASUSE 2021-22. More than one-third of this labour force was engaged in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. The use of the internet for entrepreneurial purposes has increased by 7.2 per cent, indicating a rapid rate of digitisation in the sector, MoSPI said. Unincorporated sector enterprises' Gross Value Added (GVA) grew 9.83 per cent at current prices in October 2022-September 2023 compared with the April 2021-March 2022 period. The highest number of establishments (rural and urban combined) were recorded in Uttar Pradesh, followed by West Bengal and Maharashtra. The proportion of female workers has marginally increased to 25.63 per cent in ASUSE 2022-23 from 25.52 per cent in ASUSE 2021-22.

## NEWS BOX

## ZIM vs IND, 1st T20I: Prediction, team news, pitch conditions and predicted XI

New Delhi. India have once again visited the shores of Zimbabwe as a goodwill gesture between the countries. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has for long used these bilateral series to find the next generation of international players and this time it is no different. The Indian team is set to play their first T20I match of the series on Saturday, 6 July, under the captaincy of young Shubman Gill. It is a win-win situation for both boards as the series is surely expected to grab eyeballs given the very low average-age of the Indian team. The GT captain is being seen as a long-time successor of Rohit Sharma in all formats of the game and has been given a chance to prove his mettle against a wily T20I side. Zimbabwe might have shockingly missed the T20 World Cup 2024 berth after their loss against Uganda, but are fully capable of springing up surprises. Players like Sikandar and Blessing Muzarabani have played in the Indian Premier League and are well-known for their T20 credentials across the world.

There is going to be high expectations from Abhishek Sharma and Riyan Parag, who have been superb in the IPL 2024 season. The Indian team would also like to test out young fast bowling contingent in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh, who have made the T20I spot their own. India captain Shubman Gill has already confirmed that he and his state teammate Abhishek Sharma are going to open the innings. This will mean a demotion for Ruturaj Gaikwad, who has captained India in the past and also opens for his side in the IPL. Harare is expected to be a high-scoring venue, and the match might bring a little refreshment for people who love to watch sixes getting hit, especially after the low-scoring T20 World Cup 2024.

## Cristiano Ronaldo consoles heartbroken Pepe after Portugal's Euro 2024 exit

New Delhi. Legendary Cristiano Ronaldo consoled his compatriot Pepe after Portugal were knocked out of the Euro 2024 after their quarter-final loss to France on Friday, 5 July. Portugal were beaten in the penalties 5-3 after the match remained 0-0 after Extra Time in Hamburg, Germany. Pepe broke into tears after the match as the 41-year-old Pepe signed off, from what surely is his final appearance in the competition.

Ronaldo, who had broken into tears after missing the penalty in the previous game, held things together as the players around him were inconsolable after the team's exit from the tournament. France secured a nail-biting win over Portugal via penalties, which marked a bitter-end to Cristiano Ronaldo's Euro 2024 journey. After a stalemate throughout the game, the match again found its way to the spot-kicks and France had the last laugh. There were very few factors to separate the two sides, but Joao Felix's penalty hitting the post sent Kylian Mbappe's side to the semi-final against Spain on July 10. France defender Theo Hernandez struck the winning penalty in a 5-3 shootout win against Portugal to reach the semi-finals of Euro 2024 where they will meet Spain. Joao Felix missed for Portugal during the shootout which came after the match finished 0-0 following extra time.

Both teams missed a string of chances in 120 minutes of open play at the Volksparkstadion, the best chance falling to Cristiano Ronaldo in the first period of extra time when he skied over from close range.

## Toni Kroos picks positives from bitter farewell vs Spain: The exit covers it all



NEW DELHI. Veteran Germany midfielder Toni Kroos opines there were a lot of positives for his national side to take away from their narrow loss to Spain after an action-packed UEFA Euro 2024 quarter-final on July 5. Kroos, who played his last professional football match in Germany's 2-1 loss to Spain in extra-time, believes that the future of his side is in good hands based on their performance on Friday. Spain knocked out the hosts to book their place in the semi-final, after a goal by Mikel Merino in the final minute of extra-time. Speaking post-match, Kroos reflected on the bitter end to what had been a phenomenal career, but did not shy away from marking the all-out approach of Germany against Spain.

"I would not say it was the most brutal match, but one where we put everything in. We did not want to lose, we were so close... Now at the moment the exit covers it all. We wanted to achieve something big and that dream is now gone. We will realise we played a good tournament, but being so close to reaching the next round is hard," Kroos said. "We can all be proud because we improved. I am happy to have helped Germany as a football nation to have hope again. In the future I am convinced the team will succeed, but today we are sad because we wanted to stay in this competition a bit longer," Kroos added.

## After King Kohli bids adieu to T20I, time for Prince Gill to stake claim of throne

## Star India off-spinner

## Ravichandran Ashwin

expressed his emotions seeing nationwide celebrations for the Indian team following their T20 World Cup 2024 victory.

New Delhi. Following India's historic T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies, the Men in Blue have lost arguably the greatest batter in T20Is in Virat Kohli. The 35-year-old bid adieu to the game being the highest run scorer in the history of T20 World Cup (1292 runs) and the second highest run scorer in T20Is (4188 runs).

In his illustrious career, Kohli took India home from several precarious situations after an early batting collapse stamping his authority as the 'chase master' in the shortest format of the game. However, with him gone, team India has massive shoes to fill as they look to find a worthy successor of the king. Hailed as the prince of Indian cricket for his rapid rise at the international level,



India captain for the Zimbabwe tour, Shubman Gill, will be eager to make a strong case for the king's throne in the upcoming series. In the 14 matches played in his T20I career so far, Gill has scored 335 runs from 14 innings at an average of 25.76 and a strike rate of 147.57. The 24-year-old has also

registered the highest individual score by an Indian batter in T20Is having scored a magnificent 126\* (63) against New Zealand in February 2023 in Ahmedabad. However, Gill hasn't had a memorable in the shortest format after scoring his century as he only has just one 50-plus score in the last eight

innings. During this time period, the right-handed batter has scored 133 runs from eight innings at an average of 16.62 and a strike rate of 126.66, out of which 77 came in just one innings against West Indies in August 2023. Gill further had a decent IPL season earlier this year where he scored 426 runs from 12 innings at an average of 38.72 and a strike rate of 147.40 with one hundred and two fifties.

## Gill to embark on India's new chapter in T20Is

However, it didn't prove to be enough for him to find a place in the 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup 2024 where he got included as a reserve. Hence, the upcoming series will be the perfect platform for Gill to start afresh in his T20I career and fill in the massive spot left behind by Virat Kohli.

The Punjab-born batter has shown enough promise at the international level in the two formats so far and will be eager to bring all his talent to the fore in the shortest format as well to embark on a new journey for the Indian T20I side.

## Rajeev Shukla responds to Aditya Thackrey's 'Hosting World Cup final in Mumbai' remark

New Delhi. BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) vice president Rajeev Shukla has responded to Shiv Sena Leader Aditya Thackrey's remark that BCCI should never take the World Cup final away from Mumbai. Notably, the Indian Cricket Team was given a rousing reception in Mumbai upon their arrival from Barbados following the T20 World Cup 2024 triumph. A special roadshow was organized by the BCCI for the World Champions where people turned up in huge numbers to see their stars up close. The entire squad was also felicitated at the Wankhede Stadium in front of a packed crowd who cheered at the top of their voices for the Men in Blue. Seeing the fervour for cricket in the people of Mumbai, Thackrey took to his X account and wrote, "Yesterday's celebration in Mumbai is also a strong message to the BCCI. Never take away a World Cup final from Mumbai." BCCI Vice President Rajeev Shukla has also reacted to the statement saying that as per the cricket board's policy, the final cannot always be given to a particular city.



"It is BCCI's policy that where the final should take place. It cannot always be given to a particular city. There has been a final match -- 1987 World Cup -- in Kolkata also, and Kolkata is considered as Mecca. So it can't be decided that it should always happen in a particular city," Shukla told PTI. "There are semi-finals and finals which have taken place in Mumbai. Similarly, the Ahmedabad ground has got a capacity of 1,30,000, and we go by capacity also," he continued. Kolkata (Eden Gardens) has got a big capacity, around 80,000 spectators (approx. 66,000) can be accommodated. Similarly, other cities also," he added. Notably, team India won the ODI World Cup 2011 at the

Wankhede Stadium. However, in the last year's edition of the tournament held in India, the hosting rights of the final were awarded to the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad which boasts a capacity of around 1,30,000. Unfortunately, India lost the final against Australia leading to a breakdown of cricket fans all over India.

Really delighted to see Mumbaikars and their response: Rajeev Shukla

Further speaking ahead, Shukla revealed that he was delighted to see such a response from Mumbai for the victory parade and said that the city is always their priority. "This is purely a decision keeping in mind the entire country and all the venues. You cannot confine to one venue. We were really delighted to see Mumbaikars and their response. Mumbai is always our priority. It's not that (it is not). But it has to be decided by the entire BCCI, where to host finals, where to have semi-finals... Every match is important. Mumbai is always on our priority list. But saying that all the finals should take place in one city... It never happens in any country," Shukla concluded.

## Saba Karim backs Abhishek Sharma to fulfil all-rounder's role vs Zimbabwe

New Delhi. Former India cricketer Saba Karim has backed Abhishek Sharma to fulfill all-rounder's role in the upcoming Zimbabwe vs India five-match T20I series. India will take on Zimbabwe in the first T20I on Saturday, July 6 at Harare Sports Club, Harare. For the tour, several players have earned their maiden India call-up and 23-year-old Abhishek Sharma is one of them. The opening batter had a phenomenal season with the bat in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 scoring a mammoth 484 runs from 16 innings at an average of 32.26 and a breathtaking strike rate of 204.21. The southpaw made headlines for exhibiting a fearless brand of cricket in the season and rightfully earned his place in the Indian team. Speaking about Abhishek ahead of the series, Saba Karim backed the youngster to not only contribute with the bat but also roll his arm over to chip

in a few overs with the ball. Former India cricketer Saba Karim has backed Abhishek Sharma to fulfill all-rounder's role in the



upcoming Zimbabwe vs India five-match T20I series. India will take on Zimbabwe in the first T20I on Saturday, July 6 at Harare Sports Club, Harare. For the tour, several players have earned their maiden India call-up and 23-year-old Abhishek Sharma is one

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The southpaw made headlines for exhibiting a fearless brand of cricket in the season and rightfully earned his place in the Indian team. Speaking about Abhishek ahead of the series, Saba Karim backed the youngster to not only contribute with the bat but also roll his arm over to chip in a few overs with the ball. "About whether he will get that role or not, I think that's the way the team management and I'm sure the selectors are also looking at him. If he has to play, as I said, I think it the opening slot is perfect for him because he has excelled and he has grown as a player. There's more maturity in him.



the other bowlers. I do give Shubman Gill a lot of respect because he's already performed a lot in international cricket. He's actually a big name in cricket world. But as for me, I just take every wicket as it comes, actually. So I don't really look at any player, and want to make any bunny or anything like that," said Muzarabani.

## Shubman Gill is a good player

Muzarabani said that the goal at the end of the day is to ensure Zimbabwe get over the line and he isn't really looking at the names he will be up against. "The goal is to win the game for Zimbabwe. Either take a wicket or don't take the wicket. So it's just all about us as a team and try and do what's required for me to win the game. So I'm not really looking at the names. Either I get them out or don't.

## Krunal Pandya pens emotional note for brother Hardik: 'People forgot he's a human'

## India cricketer Krunal Pandya

penned an emotional note for brother Hardik after his historic T20 World Cup 2024 triumph.

Hardik was booed by fans during IPL 2024 after replacing Rohit Sharma as skipper.

NEW DELHI. India cricketer Krunal Pandya penned an emotional note for his brother Hardik following his pivotal role in India's T20 World Cup 2024 triumph. Notably, Hardik bowled the crucial last over of the final against South Africa and successfully defended 15 runs by dismissing the dangerous David Miller on the first ball itself. As a result, India managed to win the match by seven runs and clinched their second T20 World Cup trophy ending their 11-year-long ICC Trophy

drought. Following their win, Hardik has become a national hero as all the hate which was spewed on the India all-rounder in the past few months has been replaced with loud cheers all around. Encapsulating his brother's struggles in an Instagram post, Krunal mentioned how the last few days have been emotional for him seeing Hardik at the centre of India's historic triumph.

"It's almost been a decade since Hardik and I started playing professional cricket. And the last few days have been like a fairy tale that we've dreamt off. Like every countryman I've lived this through our teams heroics and I couldn't be more emotional with my brother being at the heart of it," wrote Krunal in his Instagram post. Krunal further recalled Hardik's struggles in the last few months where he was booed and jeered by the crowd after replacing Rohit Sharma as the skipper of MI for Indian Premier League 2024 (IPL 2024). However, the elder Pandya lauded his brother for passing through that with a smile and working hard towards winning the World Cup for India. The last six months have been the toughest for Hardik. He



simply didn't deserve what he went through, and as a brother, I felt very, very bad for him. From booing, to people saying all kinds of nasty things, at the end of the day, we all forgot that he is just a human being who also has emotions. He somehow passed through all of this with a smile, though I know how hard it was for him to put on a smile. He kept working hard and focusing on what he needed to do to get the World Cup since that was his ultimate objective," he added. "He has now played his heart out to realise India's long standing dream - And nothing has ever meant to him more. From the age of 6 - It's playing for the country and winning the World Cup that's been the dream. I just want to remind people that what Hardik has

done in such a short span in his career is unbelievable. His efforts for the national team have never been compromised. Every time, at every stage of Hardik's life, people have written him off, and that has only motivated him to come back even stronger," Krunal further wrote. "For Hardik, it has always been country first, and it will always be that way. For a young boy coming from Baroda, there can be no bigger achievement than helping his team win the World Cup," he concluded.

## Hardik's all-round show in T20 World Cup

Notably, Hardik shined with both bat and ball in India's victorious campaign scoring 144 runs from six innings at an average of 48 and a strike rate of 151.57 registering one half century. His highest score of the tournament came against Bangladesh in the Super 8 stages when he scored an unbeaten 50\* (27). With the ball, the right-arm seamer picked up 11 wickets from eight innings at an average of 17.36 and an economy of 7.64. The 30-year-old saved his best bowling performance for the final picking up 3/20 in three overs which included the prized scalps of Heinrich Klaasen (52 off 27) and David Miller (21 off 17).

# Varun Dhawan

## Comes Out In Support of Samantha Prabhu After Doctor Calls Her 'Health Illiterate'

Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan and several other actors has stepped forward to defend Samantha Prabhu, after she was criticized by a doctor who labeled her as health illiterate. Earlier this morning, Samantha took to her Instagram stories when she recommended the use of hydrogen peroxide nebulisation. Her post caught The Liver Doc's attention who then called her "health and science illiterate" and mentioned that the use of hydrogen peroxide nebulisation "is dangerous for health". The doctor even demanded that Samantha should be jailed and added, "In a rational and scientifically progressive society, this woman will be charged with endangering public health and fined or put behind bars. She needs help or a better advisor in her team."



However, earlier today, Samantha reacted to the doctor's criticism and mentioned that she "merely suggested" the use of hydrogen peroxide nebulisation with "good intention" since it was suggested to her by a "highly qualified doctor".

Varun who would be seen sharing screen space with Samantha, took to the comments section dropped a heart emoji. Rhea Chakraborty on the other hand wrote, 'Potatoes gonna potato,' in the comments section. Other celebs like Kiara Advani, Tahira Kashyap, Rakul Preet Singh, and Manushi Chhillar liked her post.

Hours after Samantha's post went viral, Dr Cyriac Abby Philips aka The Liver Doc once again lashed out

at Samantha Ruth Prabhu for allegedly playing "victim". The doctor, who previously slammed the actress for recommending hydrogen peroxide nebulisation, has now called her a "serial offender". He called Samantha's claims about the use of hydrogen peroxide nebulisation "unscientific, pseudoscientific and baseless". "Please note, she is a serial offender in the context of healthcare misinformation and she has been in the line of fire previously too. The reason why doctors like me have to spend (waste) time from our busy schedules to fight misinformation online is because it is peddled by large influential "celebrity" accounts that have no regard for public health. Engagement and monetization is their concern," he wrote.



### Anushka Sharma To Permanently Move To London After Virat Kohli's Retirement? Here's What We Know



Anushka Sharma is currently in London with her two kids, Vamika and Akaay. Virat Kohli was also seen jetting off to meet them soon after he returned to India from Barbados. Virat Kohli recently announced his retirement from T20 cricket after Team India lifted the T20 World Cup on June 29. Now, fans suspect that the couple will permanently shift to London to live a 'normal' life. This speculation comes especially because Anushka and Virat have often been spotted in London. In 2023, Virat even took a break from his hectic schedule and spent some time with Anushka in London. A viral photo featured Anushka and Virat outside a restaurant in London. Virat was also seen with Vamika at a restaurant in London, days after Akaay's birth was announced.

This led to the belief that Akaay was born in London. Anushka Sharma reportedly spent several months of her pregnancy in London, away from the limelight. Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli announced the birth of their son five days after he was born and till then, fans had no clue about Akaay's birth - which is uncommon if a celebrity goes into labour in Mumbai. Reports also claimed that Virat Kohli missed the India vs England Test series and travelled to England for the birth of his second child.

Anushka Sharma's absence from Bollywood events and films also has led to this speculation. Last year, the actress said that she didn't want to do too many films anymore and spend time with her family instead. "I enjoy acting but I don't want to do too many films as much as I was doing earlier. I want to do one film a year, enjoy the process of acting which is what I like and balance my life out like the way I am, give time to family," she said. Virat Kohli has often expressed that he loves spending time with his family in London where they are not recognised. "We were not in the country. Just to feel normal for two months - for me, my family - it was a surreal experience. Couldn't have been more grateful to God for the opportunity to spend time with the family."

### There Is Nothing Dia Mirza Enjoys More Than Her Son Ayaan Azaad's Company; Here's Proof



Dia Mirza is happily engrossed in her maternal duties. The mother of two recently returned from a family vacation in London. Keeping her fans engaged, Dia has been sharing photos and videos on Instagram, capturing precious moments with her loved ones. She has now added a new clip to her London diaries on Instagram, and the wholesome video is filled with pure love. In a blissful scene, Dia Mirza was seen playing with her three-year-old son, Ayaan Azaad. With her little bundle of joy in her arms, the actress beamed with joy. The bright smile on her face as she lovingly gazed at her son is proof. Later, we can see the adorable duo in some more playful moments. For her causal day out, Dia sported a comfy look in a blue printed shirt and relaxed-fit jeans elevated with brown sneakers. Her little munchkin looked every bit cute in a printed co-ord set and little black shoes. Dia Mirza captioned her post, "Let go. Play, laugh, be joyful! Our children teach us this everyday. The art to be."

Beyond her professional endeavours, Dia Mirza is a devoted wife and mother. Not long ago, she marked Father's Day by honouring her husband, Vaibhav Rekhi through an Instagram post. She shared a series of photos featuring her son and step-daughter, Samaira along with husband Vaibhav. In her caption, the actress expressed her love and admiration for him, stating, "We love you. You are the absolute best." Dia Mirza entered marital bliss with businessman and investment banker Vaibhav Rekhi on February 15, 2021. In the same year, the couple embraced parenthood and welcomed their first child together, Ayaan. Before Vaibhav, Dia Mirza was married to Sahil Sangha. The former couple separated in August 2019.

# Shruti Haasan

## Teams Up With Rajnikanth For Lokesh Kanagaraj's 'Coolie'

Actor-musician Shruti Haasan has joined the cast of the much-anticipated film "Coolie" starring Superstar Rajnikanth. The Lokesh Kanagaraj directorial promises to be an action-packed drama combining Rajnikanth's screen presence and Kanagaraj's direction. Thalaivar 171 officially titled Coolie is now garnering headlines after Lokesh Kanagaraj recently shared the first look of Rajnikanth for the film. He also announced that the film's shooting will start from next month-July. The look test for Thalaivar 171 was recently conducted. On this occasion, Lokesh Kanagaraj shared the stylish look of Rajnikanth. The superstar was seen sitting before the mirror while Lokesh Kanagaraj stood behind him to snap the photo of the actor. Rajnikanth donned a black shirt along with beard and smoky hairstyle, the actor looks dashing as he poses for the picture. More than giving a glimpse of a possible look of Rajnikanth in the film, the director also delighted the superstar's fans with the announcement of the shooting date of Coolie. "Look test for #Coolie. On floors from July" wrote Lokesh Kanagaraj.

As soon as the photo was posted by the filmmaker, the fans flooded the comment box with compliments. "Rs 1000 crore loading," wrote one of the users. Another fan simply mentioned "Thalaivaa" in respect to the actor. Anirudh Ravichander will be composing the music for the film. The teaser released by the makers offered a noteworthy background score that sets the tone for what's to come. The film also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran, Ranveer Singh and Parvathy Thiruvothu in key roles. Produced by Sun Pictures, Coolie is expected to be released in 2025. This film will mark the first collaboration between director Lokesh Kanagaraj and Rajnikanth.

